



BUSINESS ENGLISH

Training material

Part 2

INCONEXT PROJECT

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Learning Business English Online

Following links may support you in learning business English. This links will help you writing e-mails, preparing and holding your presentations, coping with meetings and social events.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/talkingbusiness/> - This course gives the participant useful language and phrases to improve spoken communication skills in English in different business situations.

<http://beo-businessenglishonline.wikispaces.com/Doing+business> – online tool to find material on various business topics in English.

<http://www.businessenglishpod.com/business-english-podcast-lessons/> - Business English Podcast Lessons

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/intercultural-business-communication/tool.php> - Intercultural Business Communication tool. This simple online tool offers a great resource for people wanting to get some intercultural business communication tips when working with people from different cultures.

<http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/reader/15##> - e-book Business Communication for Success by Scott McLean

Exercise: Access some of the web pages and do the exercises there

English in meetings

In international meetings the participants normally speak English. There are specific phrases you should learn, whenever participating or organising a meeting. Following links may help you to learn necessary vocabulary and to cope with the attendance and organisation of international meetings:

<http://www.businessenglishpod.com/category/meetings/>

<http://www.englishclub.com/business-english/meetings.htm>

Exercise: After going through the online material try to write a meeting agenda. Write an invitation to a meeting in English.

Presentations in international meetings

When preparing for a presentation it is important to keep an eye on your personal strengths and weaknesses. The aim of your presentation should be to communicate information. This is not so easy, as for the impression of the auditorium the technical aspects of your presentations is only relevant to a small degree, while everything else has a major impact on the audience. Following recommendations can serve as guideline: (taken from Jansen 2003)

- **Planning of your presentation**
 - Timing: define a timeframe and try to stick to it. Tell the timeframe to the audience, if it was not predetermined by the agenda.
 - Give yourself a leitmotif for the presentation and stick to it. Do not deviate from your leitmotif, otherwise your presentations is in danger to look distracted. Interposing questions should be answered after the presentations. Think about possible questions on your presentations during your preparations.
 - If possible, use more than one medium in your presentation.
- **Powerpoint slides**
 - Choose the number of your slides carefully. Too many slides make the audience tired and uninterested. A thumb rule: the maximum number of slides = length in minutes/3
 - Slides should be designed clearly. Don't use irrelevant information. Design your slides pictorially, apply colours purposeful. Details should also be recognized in the last rows of the auditorium. Use titles to structure your presentation
- **Presentation style**
 - Focus on the auditorium: Your goal is to impart information. Adapt the presentation to your audience. Put yourself into the position of your listeners and think, what your audience wants to hear. Don't bore your audience with contribution that would fit to the topic, but no one is interested in. Talk directly to your audience. The audience should not have the feeling that they are not

involved in your presentation. Your audience should feel as if they are in the center of your presentation. Therefore look in the audience, when you are speaking. It is best to have eye contact with one or the other person in the audience. If you get confused having eye contact, you should focus on an imaginary point in the direction of your audience.

- Avoid taking a reading. The final formulation should be done, when you are speaking. This prevents you from fast and monotone presentation. A necessary condition is thorough preparation to the topic.
 - Use examples, images and comparisons. One exemplary illustration can replace many theoretical descriptions. Your own interest and engagement is reflected by your presentation, therefore it is legit to speak about personal experiences or problems concerning the topic. This way the listeners may find easier access to the presented topic
 - Try to speak slowly and sufficiently loud. Small breaks are not embarrassing, but help the listeners to process what you have said. If you realize that your audience is bored and does not listen anymore, then you rebuild attention by varying your tone.
- **Own appearance**
 - It is not only important to get across the content of your presentation, but also that you are the competent person for it. Otherwise no one would listen to you.
 - Your attitude to the topic is always shining through, no matter how much effort you make to hide it. Therefore be committed to your presentation. A convincing appearance creates a positive atmosphere.
 - Try to prevent a hectic rush – that gives the impression of a lacking self-confidence. If you are not feeling confident, then hold your presentation in front of a mirror or friends, before you present it.
 - **Language:**
 - Talking in a foreign language is difficult for many people. It is even worse when presenting to a bigger audience. On the other side your listeners will understand your situation and will be more patient and sympathetic.
 - Use standard English and try to avoid lingo or slang.
 - Use softeners: In English softeners – phrases that let you sound more diplomatic – are often used. "I **sometimes** think we are **just a little** too price-conscious." Read the sentence with the two bold phrases and without them. The second form sounds harsher, does it?
 - You are not a native speaker, so you are allowed to make mistakes. It is more important to appear authentic and humane than to have perfect, but boring presentation.

Exercise: Prepare a presentation in English. Present it in the lecture.

Conclusion

In this module you have learnt to communicate in the most common business language: English. First you were introduced into the topic followed by recommendations how to best learn vocabulary. Some web pages that support learning business English and English in meetings are presented. At last a guideline for presentations is given.

The training material should show you how to practice business English before actually going into the course. It will also give you the opportunity to prepare some content for the course.

Sources:

Infolinks (2006) Lernen mit Spass, retrieved from <http://www.lernen-mit-spess.ch/team/team.php> on 14/04/2012.

Hoffmann R. (2012); Vokabeln leichter lernen, retrieved from <http://www.vokabeln.com/> on 14/04/2012.

Jansen D. (2003) Tipps für die Präsentation. Deutsche Hochschule für Verwaltungswissenschaften: Speyer.