

KEY PHRASES FOR MEETINGS



Effective Communication
series



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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

S E R I E S

KEY PHRASES FOR MEETINGS

WELCOME

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Do not hesitate to contact ECSPLICITE if you have any questions.

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Key phrases for Meetings, by Laurent Sorgato
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1. THE OPENING

1.1. Starting

- Let's begin.
- Thank you all for being here today.
- Let's get down to business.
- It's 9 o'clock. We'd better get started if we want to stay on schedule. Could you all have a seat, please?

1.2. Introducing

- I'm Mary Lynch, and I work in the planning office.
- First of all, I want to introduce Ann Smith. She's the team leader for the new project.
- Could everyone briefly introduce themselves?
- I'd like to begin by introducing our new production manager, Bob Smith. He'll be presenting his plans to speed up the production of our latest model later on.

1.3. Presenting goals

- Our aim here is to define the new advertising policy.
- Our purpose today is only to look at all the options open to us.
- We're here today to decide on an action plan.
- By the end of this meeting, we need to agree on a negotiating strategy.

1.4. Presenting the agenda

- Let's look at the agenda.
- Do you all have a copy of the agenda?
- First of all, I suggest we look at the agenda.
- As you can see on the agenda, we'll be looking at all the different aspects of the problem, and then deciding on a solution that suits everyone.

1.5. Adding to the agenda

- Is there anything else that needs discussing?
- Would any of you like to add an item to the agenda?
- Does anyone see any other points that need consideration?

1.6. Setting time limits

- This business should take about an hour.
- Time short, so please keep your comments brief.
- The room is ours until 11:30, so let's move on to the first point.
- Please limit your contributions to 5 minutes so that everybody gets a chance to speak.

1.7. Defining roles

- Who volunteers to take the minutes?
- Tom, will you take the minutes?

2. THE AGENDA

2.1. Presenting the first item

- Let's begin with the first point here.
- The first item here is the rising cost. John, would you start?
- Who'd like to give us their point of view on the first question here?

2.2. Moving on to the next item

- That about covers the first item. Let's move on to the next point.
- If no one has anything to add here, let's move on the next item.
- We're behind schedule, so let's leave that point and go on to the following one.
- We've covered the question of machine failures, so now we come to the problem of suppliers' delays.

2.3. Respecting the agenda

- We'll come to that in a minute.
- We've already looked at that question.
- Could we just deal with the scheduling problem for now?
- It might be better if you took that up directly with the suppliers.

2.4. Diverging from the agenda

- Could I just mention the Morrison contract?
- Incidentally, we've had to reschedule other deliveries, too.
- This might be a good time to bring up the problems we've been having in purchasing.
- By the way, some defects went undetected in testing. Could someone from testing and finishing fill us in on that?

2.5. Keeping on schedule

- Time is getting short here.
- We're almost out of time.
- I'm afraid we're running out of time.
- we're running behind schedule, so let's kip the next item and take it up at another time.

2.6. Opening the last item

- We've covered everything except item 7.
- Now we come to the final item on the agenda today.
- That's brings us to the final point on today's agenda.

3. THE SPEAKING ORDER

3.1. Suggesting compromises

- I'd like to hear what you all have to say before we decide.
- How about going round the table? Jane, will you start?
- Let's go around the table so that everyone gets a turn to speak.
- Could you each let us have your opinion on this, one at a time?

3.2. Recognising a speaker

- Eric, do you have a question?
- Anna, what do you want to add?
- David, the floor is yours.
- Donna has been trying to add something. Donna?

3.3. Asking someone to speak

- I've heard there's a problem in assembly. Eric, could you tell us about it?
- Tom, I'd like to hear what you have to say about this.
- Mr. Brown, could you give us a progress report on the committee's work?
- Mary, you're the expert in this field. Would you give us your opinion?

3.4. Asking someone to answer a question

- Harry, you're our specialist here. Would you answer that?
- I'd like to ask Ms. Jones to answer that question.
- I think Anna is more qualified than I am to answer that. Anna?
- I'm sure Larry can answer that better than me. Larry?

4. INTERRUPTIONS

4.1. Interrupting

- Excuse me, but you're forgetting the financial aspects.
- If I could just add something here.
- Could I just come in here to make a point?
- I'd just like to ask if you've given any thought to the feasibility of all this.

4.2. Dealing with interruptions

- Could I just finish, please?
- I'll answer that in a minute.
- You'll have an opportunity to comment on this as soon as I've finished.
- If you could just wait until finish, I'll be glad to answer your questions.

4.3. Ignoring interruptions

- We'll get to that point later on.
- I'm afraid that point isn't on today's agenda.
- Let's just finish discussing problems in design before we start on the financial side.

5. CERTAINTY

5.1. Saying that something is certain

- I'm 100% sure of this.
- It's obvious that the answer lies in marketing.
- I'm certain there won't be any problem if we launch the new design now.
- There's no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the problem lies in the design itself.

5.2. Saying that something is likely

- I'm virtually sure that this will solve the problem.
- It's very likely that none of these problems will occur.
- I'm quite certain that the launching will go smoothly.

5.3. Saying that something is possible

- The design may be flawed.
- We may have to postpone production until next year.
- This might create problems for some of our customers.
- We could lose a large part of our market share.

5.4. Saying that something is unlikely

- We probably won't see any results before the end of the year.
- That's unlikely to affect the cost of the program.
- I doubt that a small delay in production will have any long-term effects.
- I doubt think our customers will mind the delay if the product is more reliable in the end.

5.5. Saying that something is impossible

- It's obvious that there won't be any more damage.
- I'm convinced that we won't lose any more money on this.
- I'm 100% sure that the situation won't deteriorate any further.
- We can't possibly finish the research program before this summer.

6. IMPORTANCE

6.1. Saying that something is most important

- The important thing here is speed.
- It's the total cost that really matters.
- In my opinion, the results are highly significant.
- Let me stress here how essential a budget increase is to the project.

6.2. Saying that something is rather important

- I'd like to stress that there are too many defects on line 206.
- Packaging is quite important, but so is reliability.
- Their continuing growth is of considerable interest to us.
- I attach quite a lot of importance to staff enthusiasm for new projects.

6.3. Saying that something is not very important

- That's of minor importance here.
- It doesn't matter much one way or the other.
- The actual number of batches affected doesn't really matter right now.
- Creating new products isn't as important as improving our current product line.

6.4. Saying that something is negligible

- This really doesn't matter at all.
- These categories are totally irrelevant.
- If we don't get the contract, the delivery schedule is of no importance.
- It isn't the color of the car that matters, but what's under the hood.

7. SOFTENING THE TONE

7.1. Starting gently

- To be honest, I won't be ready.
- Actually, we can't solve the problem.
- In fact, the results aren't very good.
- Frankly, we don't agree with this.
- I'm afraid the board will refuse your request for more funds.

7.2. Using modals

- That would be difficult to guarantee.
- Could you do it as soon as possible?
- The shipment might be delayed.

7.3. Using questions

- Could I have it by Friday?
- Is 3:30 convenient?

7.4. Using negative questions

- Couldn't you postpone the announcement?

7.1. Using quite/slight/etc...

- Progress is quite slow.
- There were some failures.
- Things are a little slow.
- Could you do it a bit faster?
- There will be a slight delay.

8.OPINIONS (1)

8.1. Asking for opinions

- Any views on this?
- What do you think about this, Dan?
- How do you feel about this, Mary?
- Exactly where do you stand on this issue, Nancy?
- Let me now summarize.

8.2. Giving opinions

- I think we should go ahead.
- I feel we could do better if we tried harder.
- I believe they can beat us if we're not very careful.
- I think his suggestion is worth serious consideration.

8.3. Nuancing opinions and reactions

- That's great!
- That's pretty good.
- No bad.
- That's awful!
- That's pretty bad.
- That's not too good.
- That would be disastrous!
- That won't work.
- That probably won't work.
- There's no doubt in my mind that this is the best solution.
- As I see it, this is the best solution.
- As far as I can judge, this is the best solution.
- I firmly believe that this will end the crisis.
- I believe that this could end the crisis.
- I think that might end the crisis.
- I'm convinced that this will work.
- I think that this will work.
- I think this might work.
- I'm absolutely certain that he's right.
- In my opinion he's right.
- It seems to me that he's right.

8.4. Stressing opinions

- The important thing here is speed.
- Could I just remind you that they are major customers?
- Let me just point out that this doesn't solve the problem in the long run.
- I'd like to draw your attention to the advantages of this offer.

8.OPINIONS (2)

8.5. Commenting

- Yes, I see.
- That's an interesting idea.
- That's a good point you've made there.

8.6. Asking to be convinced

- So convince me.
- I think I see what you're getting at.
- I'm not sure you've convinced me.

8.7. Asking for clarification

- I'm not sure what you're trying to say here.
- I don't see what you're getting at.
- Could you go into a little more detail?
- What do you mean by a "permanent" solution?

8.8. Clarifying

- I mean that it should be cheaper.
- You have to understand that it's too expensive to be competitive.
- What I'm saying is that we must raise more capital.

8.9. Stating preferences

- I'd rather cut work hours than cut staff.
- I prefer cutting work hours to cutting staff.
- The big advantage of XEROX over MINOCH is its brand recognition.

8.10. Accepting and rejecting

- I think you're absolutely right.
- I can see your point.
- I think you're wrong.
- I think you're dead wrong.
- My opinion exactly.
- I think you're on the right track.
- I think you're on the wrong track.
- You're completely mistaken.
- I agree with you completely.
- I think you're right up to a point.
- I think there are some gaps in your theory.
- I totally disagree.
- I couldn't agree with you more.
- You have a point here, but I think we have to develop this further.
- I'm afraid I can't share your views on that.
- I couldn't agree to that under any circumstances.

9. SUGGESTIONS

9.1. Asking for suggestions

- Could I have your suggestions?
- I think that Bob has something to propose. Bob?
- So, how do you recommend that we solve the problem?
- We need to discuss ways to cut spending.

9.2. Considering alternatives

- Well, we can either lay some of the workers off or eliminate overtime.
- We need to look at this from our customers' point of view.
- What about using black-and-white instead of color?
- On the one hand, we could reduce the number of ads we run. On the other hand, we could reduce the size of the ads.

9.3. Making suggestions

- I think we have to increase our advertising budget.
- Why don't we eliminate a few of our regular TV commercials?
- Maybe we could limit overtime pay.
- We must find a way to make our ads more effective.
- We should target young consumers in particular.
- Couldn't we spend less on office supplies?
- We propose to begin by cutting waste in the offices.
- I suggest we reduce the global ad campaign budget.
- I wonder if we could reduce the size of our magazine ads?
- I strongly recommend that we begin by taking pay cuts.
- I recommend that we decrease the entertainment account.
- Perhaps we could limit expense account lunches.

9.4. Challenging

- You do realize that our customers won't buy this.
- We have to take the trade-unions into account.
- Wouldn't it be better if we left expense accounts as they are?
- Has it occurred to you that this won't reduce costs by very much?

9.5. Reacting to suggestions

- That's absolutely right.
- I'm in favor of that.
- In my opinion, this is a bit off track.
- That's out of the question. It's a waste of time.
- I agree with you completely.
- I can agree to that.
- Doesn't this proposal go a little too far?
- I'm afraid I have to disagree with you on this.
- You have my full support on this.
- I could support that with a few minor changes.
- Without substantial changes, I couldn't accept this.
- Frankly, I see no good reason to adopt your proposal.
- I approve of that entirely.
- From my point of view, that appears to be an effective solution.
- I can foresee certain problems if we implement this.
- As it stands, this proposal is totally unacceptable.

10. CONVINCING

10.1. Presenting arguments

- There are four points I want to make here.
- Could I just mention three points in our favor?
- I would like to begin by describing our latest model.
- Let me begin by asking if all of you are familiar with our latest products.

10.2. Sequencing

- The first point is that we are the market leaders in the field.
- First of all, our new model presents all the features of our other models, plus some innovations.
- Secondly, we have a network that allows instant communication with all our offices worldwide.
- The next item is the reliability of all our products.

10.3. Generalizing

- In general, it takes our technicians 8 hours at the most to install the equipment.
- As a rule, orders are ready to be shipped within a week.
- On the whole, this is the best product on the market.

10.4. Convincing with questions

- Wouldn't it be easier to deal directly with the suppliers?
- Shouldn't we be talking about cutting our order instead of just delaying delivery.

10.5. Considering alternatives

- This model is faster, but the other is cheaper.
- This model is better in spite of the cost.
- This model is better, although it is considerably more expensive.
- On the one hand, we have speed, but on the other hand, we have real economy.

10.6. Adding information

- In addition, it is very easy to install.
- Furthermore, it requires no special electric installation.
- On top of that, this machine costs only a fraction of the other models on the market.
- Not only is it economical to run, but it's very compact too.

10.7. Giving examples

- For example, it can be installed on a desk.
- Let me give you an example.
- I'd like to tell you about one case where our equipment saved a company a considerable amount of money.

10.8. Concluding

- I'd like to end this on a happy note.
- Let me end here by saying that you won't regret switching to us.
- In conclusion, I am pleased to welcome you to our company.
- I'd like to conclude by thanking you for your warm welcome today.

11. COMPROMISING

11.1. Suggesting compromises

- I think we can find a delivery date if we agree on a price.
- We are ready to offer you a larger discount as long as we receive \$5,000 up front.
- We are prepared to accept your terms on condition that our lawyers draw up the contract.
- I'm prepared to accept your terms on conditions providing that we receive stronger guarantees.

11.2. Warning

- You're forcing us to take a hard line here.
- If you can't lower the price, we won't sign the contract.
- We won't agree to your start-up date unless you provide us the final plans by the end of the month.
- Unless you grant us new concessions, we will be forced to find another supplier.

11.3. Questioning

- Is that acceptable?
- Is that a suitable compromise?
- Would that be a satisfactory solution?

11.4. Accepting compromises

- We have no more objections.
- I think we can agree to this.
- I think we've finally found an acceptable compromise.
- Let's break out the champagne!

11.5. Rejecting compromises

- This looks like the end of the road.
- I guess we'll have to agree or to disagree for now.
- You've put us in a very difficult position here.
- In that case, we have no alternative but to contact our lawyers.

12. DISCUSSION

12.1. Keeping it on track

- That's completely off track.
- Can we go back to our subject, please?
- I think we're getting off the subject here.
- Could you stick to the item under discussion, please?

12.2. Raising objections

- How about going around the table?
- We keep hearing from the same people. You all must have some opinion. Bob?
- Don't all speak at the same time.
- Could we hear from those who haven't spoken yet, please?

12.3. Quieting it down

- One at a time, please. You'll all get a turn.
- Could you take turns speaking, please?
- Don't raise your voices, please. Everyone has a right to be heard.

12.4. Postponing it

- We'll get to that point in just a moment.
- I think we'd better continue this discussion next time.
- Could you hold that question until we've finished discussing the preliminary points?

13. CLARIFICATION

13.1. “I understand”

- I see what you mean.
- I think I’m beginning to understand.
- I see what you’re getting at.

13.2. “Do you understand?”

- Do you understand?
- Are you following me?
- Do you see what I’m getting at?

13.3. “I don’t understand?”

- Sorry, I’m not following.
- What do you mean by that?
- Could you over that last part again, please?
- Are you suggesting we might lose the contract?

13.4. Hearing

- Excuse me?
- Sorry. What was that?
- Could you speak up, please?
- Could you repeat that, please?

13.5. Correcting misunderstandings

- You’re misquoting me there.
- That’s not quite what I meant.
- Let’s look at this another way.

13.6. Dealing with language problems

- What does “up front” mean?
- I didn’t quite catch that.
- Could you slow down, please?
- I’m afraid I can’t follow when you speak that fast.

14. CLOSING

14.1. Summarizing

- In short, here are the main points we've agreed on.
- To sum up, we've made five main points.
- Briefly, I'd like to sum up the points we've covered.
- Before we finish, let's go over the main items we've seen.

14.2. Closing

- That just about covers everything. Let's call it a day.
- If there's nothing more to discuss, let's stop here.
- It looks like we've covered all of the main points on the agenda.
- I'm afraid we're completely out of time for today, so we'll have to finish here.

14.3. Scheduling the meeting

- Next Monday, same time, same place.
- When can we meet again?
- What about Tuesday 5th at 4:00?
- I'd like to remind you that our next meetings falls on Wednesday, April 5th at 10:30.
- I'm sorry to cut you off. Could you briefly finish? Then we'll listen to the ideas of the others.

14.4. Thanking everyone

- Thanks for coming. See you next Monday.
- Thank you all for your time and participation. See you all on the 5th at 4 p.m.
- I'd like to thank everyone for being here today. I hope you'll be able to make it next time.