



Business Meetings:
Lesson 1 - Starting a Meeting

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Alex: On behalf of Vision Corporation, I'd like **to call this meeting to order**. This is a meeting of some of the **key players** in our company: our top managers. Our **purpose** this morning is to hear a presentation about a new **initiative** for **outreach** and **marketing**, and to discuss this plan with all of you.

This is a presentation that all of us have **looked forward to**. This initiative **marks** a new **milestone** in the **evolution** of our company. First, it serves as an **assessment** of where our company is now **in terms of** communicating its message to its customers domestically and abroad. **Furthermore**, this plan has the potential **to drive our company forward** by **transforming** our corporate outreach and marketing strategies.

We are delighted that all of the major contributors to this initiative are here today. They will use their unique **perspectives** to talk about the **current state of affairs** in terms of outreach and marketing, give details about the new proposed initiative, and **outline** the path for implementation.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Alex: Okay, everybody. Please **take a seat**. Let's get started. I've called this meeting of our top salespeople so that all of you get a chance to hear about the new plan **to get our company out there** in order to reach more of our **potential market**. First, we'll hear a presentation from the team that has been working on this. Then, we'll discuss it to get your **feedback** and **put our heads together** to see if there are any other ideas.

While the team is getting set up, let me **say a few words**. What does this new plan mean for our company? First, it's a **reality check** on where we are right now in terms of getting our message to our customers. Second, this plan has the potential to move the company forward. One of our main challenges, as you all know, is staying **relevant** in this changing market. Today's presentation has some really **innovative** ideas about how we can do this.



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GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

to call a meeting to order – to officially begin a meeting

* Mr. Powell always calls his meetings to order at exactly 8:05 a.m.

key player – important team members; people who are very important in a project or business

* Gavin is a key player in that organization, because he is the only person who understands the software program.

purpose – reason for existing; why one does something

* My purpose in applying for this job is to find interesting work in a national technology company.

initiative – program, idea, or project, usually to improve a situation; to use a new approach to do something

* That organization has an initiative to give free breakfasts to every poor child in the city.

outreach – communication with people outside of an organization or business

* The university has an outreach program that teaches farmers to use less water.

marketing – a plan for making other people want to buy a product or service

* The bank's marketing strategy includes giving customers free coffee when they come into the office.

to look forward to (something) – to anticipate something; to be excited about something that will happen in the future; to be eager for something to happen

* Saji hasn't had a vacation in five years, so he's looking forward to his trip to San Francisco this summer.

to mark – to note when or where something occurs; to record something

* Today marks our 10-year wedding anniversary, and I'm glad our friend and family can be here to celebrate it with us.

milestone – a small accomplishment or achievement that is part of a larger project or goal

* Earning a high school diploma and undergraduate degree were major milestones for Larry, who has always wanted to earn a Ph.D.



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evolution – development over time, usually of something that begins small or simple and changes to something bigger or more complex

* The evolution of the legal system in the United States has taken centuries.

assessment – evaluation of one's progress in doing something

* The army's assessment of soldiers' health includes their running speed and their strength.

in terms of – regarding; with reference to; related to

* The company has the highest sales in the country, but in terms of the number of employees, it is very small.

furthermore – in addition; also

* Building a new hospital is a good idea because it will bring better health care to the people who live in our city. Furthermore, building costs are very low now.

to drive (something) forward – to help something progress and become better

* Communication technology was driven forward by the Internet in the 1990s.

to transform – to change something in a big and important way

* Opening an international airport transformed the city into an important business center.

perspective – point of view; a way of looking at something

* Danitsa grew up in Eastern Europe, so she has a different perspective than we do about politics in that part of the world.

current state of affairs – the way that things are today; the status of something at the moment

* The current state of affairs is that all of our best employees are leaving because they can make more money at other companies.

to outline – to briefly describe the main points of an idea or plan

* When people don't have time to read a report, they sometimes ask their assistants to outline the most important ideas.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

to take a seat – to sit down

* Please take a seat in the front of the classroom so that you can hear the teacher better.



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to get (something) out there – to make something more familiar to the public; to increase something's public presence

* We need to get our message out there so that people know what great work our organization is doing.

potential market – the group of people who do not buy a product, but would probably be interested in it

* Our toys are used mostly by girls ages 4-6, but we believe that our potential market includes boys ages 5-7, too.

feedback – positive or negative reactions to an idea or to someone's work

* At the end of the course, the teacher will ask us to give our feedback about how to make it better next year.

to put (our/their) heads together – to work as a group to think of new ideas or better solutions

* When Brandon and Antonio put their heads together, they are able to think of some very creative new ideas.

to say a few words – to speak about something for a short period of time

* At weddings, the parents of the married couple usually say a few words to wish the couple a happy life together.

reality check – a realistic look at the true situation; an objective and factual analysis; a reminder of the true facts

* Amanda thought that her dog-walking business would be a great success, but learning that there were already 14 other such businesses in her city was a reality check for her.

relevant – important; related to the current situation

* The cost of books is very relevant for college students who don't have very much money.

innovative – new, creative, and interesting

* The new CD players have an innovative design that is very popular.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents "Business Meetings," a special 10-episode course to teach you business vocabulary in English. I'm Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California, and I'll be the host for this series.

In this course, you'll learn vocabulary for formal and informal business meetings. Each lesson has three parts: first, we will read a story or a dialogue slowly; second, we will give an explanation of what happened in the meeting and the vocabulary used; and third, we'll repeat the dialogue or story at a normal speed for native speakers. Each lesson will have both a formal and an informal meeting, so you can hear the differences between, for example, a more formal meeting with your boss or the head of the company, and a more informal meeting with your co-workers or fellow employees. The lesson will begin with the formal meeting first, followed by the informal meeting dialogue or story.

Are you ready? Let's begin with lesson one: "Starting a Meeting."

[start of formal meeting script]

Alex: On behalf of Vision Corporation, I'd like to call this meeting to order. This is a meeting of some of the key players in our company: our top managers. Our purpose this morning is to hear a presentation about a new initiative for outreach and marketing, and to discuss this plan with all of you.

This is a presentation that all of us have looked forward to. This initiative marks a new milestone in the evolution of our company. First, it serves as an assessment of where our company is now in terms of communicating its message to its customers domestically and abroad. Furthermore, this plan has the potential to drive our company forward by transforming our corporate outreach and marketing strategies.

We are delighted that all of the major contributors to this initiative are here today. They will use their unique perspectives to talk about the current state of affairs in terms of outreach and marketing, give details about the new proposed initiative, and outline the path for implementation.

[end of formal meeting script]



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Our script begins with Alex of the Vision Corporation “calling the meeting to order.” To “call a meeting to order” (order) means to officially begin the meeting. Alex says that it is a meeting of the “key (key) players,” or the people who have the most important positions or roles. He says that the “purpose” of the meeting, or the reason that everyone is meeting, is to hear a presentation about a new “initiative” (initiative), which is a new idea for a project or program, especially at work. This particular initiative is for “outreach” (outreach), which means communicating with people who aren’t involved with the company, and “marketing” (marketing), which means telling people about the company’s products and trying to increase sales.

He says that everyone has “looked forward to” the presentation. When we say that everyone looks forward to a meeting or presentation, we mean that they have been excited about the presentation for a long time and are eager and happy to hear it today. They want to hear about it. Then Alex says that the initiative “marks” (marks) a new “milestone” (milestone). To “mark” means to note when something happens. “We are going to mark our anniversary by having a party.” To “mark” is to note, to indicate to others. A “milestone” is an important achievement on the way to meeting a bigger goal. It’s one small step in a larger project. A “milestone” for you might be getting a driver’s license, graduating from college, or passing the TOEFL exam. Or, a “milestone” could be different sections of a big project.

Alex says that the presentation serves as an “assessment” (assessment) or measurement of where the company is now “in terms of” communicating its message. The phrase “in terms (terms) of” usually means “with regard to” or “regarding.” For example, Alex could have said “in terms of sales,” or “in terms of our employee’s qualifications” instead of “in terms of communicating its message.” He then says, “Furthermore, this plan has the potential to drive our company forward.” The word “furthermore” (furthermore) is used to present a new idea that builds on whatever was said before. You could say “in addition” here as well. “To drive something forward” means to help something become better or move into the future. When Alex talks about “transforming” corporate outreach and marketing strategies, he means changing the outreach and marketing in a big or important way. To transform means to change, to make different.

Next Alex says he is delighted that the major contributors are at the meeting and says that they will use their unique “perspectives” (perspectives) or “points of view” (opinions, or ideas), to talk about the “current state of affairs.” The “current state of affairs” (affairs) is just a fancy way to say the way things are today or the current status of something. The “current state of affairs” is what is going on



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now, at this time. A little later, Alex says that the participants will “outline” (outline) the path for implementation, meaning that they will briefly describe the main points or main ideas about implementation. To “implement” means to carry out, to do something.

Now let’s listen to the beginning of the formal meeting again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of formal meeting script]

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[end of formal meeting script]

Hopefully now you have a better understanding of the formal meeting. In the informal meeting, Alex is much more casual and relaxed. Let’s listen.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Okay, everybody. Please take a seat. Let’s get started. I’ve called this meeting of our top salespeople so that all of you get a chance to hear about the new plan to get our company out there in order to reach more of our potential market. First, we’ll hear a presentation from the team that has been working on this. Then, we’ll discuss it to get your feedback and put our heads together to see if there are any other ideas.

While the team is getting set up, let me say a few words. What does this



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new plan mean for our company? First, it's a reality check on where we are right now in terms of getting our message to our customers. Second, this plan has the potential to move the company forward. One of our main challenges, as you all know, is staying relevant in this changing market. Today's presentation has some really innovative ideas about how we can do this.

[end of informal meeting script]

Alex begins by asking everyone to “take a seat” (seat), which is an informal way of asking people to sit down in their chairs. He calls the meeting to order – he gets it started – by saying that this meeting is to hear about a new plan to “get the company out there.” The phrase “to get something out there” means to make something more familiar to the public. For example, a new website always wants to get its message out there so that people learn about it and begin to visit it. “To get out there” can mean to get noticed by other people. Alex says that doing so will help the company reach more of its “potential market.” Potential (potential) here means possible, so the “potential market” is a group of people who do not buy the product right now, but would probably or possibly be interested in it. You can also use potential as a noun, such as “He’s got great potential,” meaning he has great possibilities; he will do great things in the future.

Alex explains that after the presentation there will be a discussion to get people’s “feedback” (feedback), or positive and negative reactions about what they just heard. Then they will put their heads together to see if there are any other ideas. The phrase “to put our heads together” means to work as a group to think of new ideas about something. For example, Lucy and I always put our heads together to think of ideas for new and interesting ESL Podcasts.

Alex says that he wants “to say a few words” while the team is getting set up or getting ready to give the presentation. This means that he wants to speak about something for a short period of time, maybe a few minutes. Sometimes at a meeting, we ask someone to stand up and say a few words, meaning to talk to the whole group for a few minutes about some topic. Alex says that the new plan means three things for the company. First, it’s a “reality check.” “Reality” (reality) is another word for what is real, what is actually happening. A “check” (check) here means a look at or an examination of something to see how you are doing, how much progress you’ve made. So a “reality check” is a realistic look at the true facts of a situation, something that will tell you how you are doing. In this case, the reality check is about how well the company is communicating with its customers.



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Second, he says that the plan can help move the company forward by helping it stay “relevant” (relevant), meaning important or related to the current situation, even though the market is changing. Because the market is changing, the company has to make sure it is doing what their customers want or expect from them. We also use this word “relevant” to mean related to something, related to the current situation. The opposite would be “irrelevant.” If someone says that this is irrelevant, they mean it is not related to or connected to the current situation or idea.

Alex finishes by saying that the presentation has many “innovative” (innovative) ideas. “Innovative,” means new, something that hasn’t been done before, so “innovative ideas” are ideas that are new, creative, and interesting.

Now, let’s listen to the informal meeting again, this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Okay, everybody. Please take a seat. Let’s get started. I’ve called this meeting of our top salespeople so that all of you get a chance to hear about the new plan to get our company out there in order to reach more of our potential market. First, we’ll hear a presentation from the team that has been working on this. Then, we’ll discuss it to get your feedback and put our heads together to see if there are any other ideas.

While the team is getting set up, let me say a few words. What does this new plan mean for our company? First, it’s a reality check on where we are right now in terms of getting our message to our customers. Second, this plan has the potential to move the company forward. One of our main challenges, as you all know, is staying relevant in this changing market. Today’s presentation has some really innovative ideas about how we can do this.

[end of informal meeting script]

In this lesson, we learned about starting (or calling to order) a business meeting, both a formal meeting and an informal one. In the next lesson, you’ll learn about introducing the participants at a meeting.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.



English as a Second Language Podcast
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Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 2 – Introducing the Participants

SCRIPTS

Meeting A – Formal Meeting

Alex: Before we begin, I would like **to take a moment** to introduce the participants who have **graciously** agreed to share their time with us today. I believe that all of you already know me, Alex Aurora, the **CEO** of Vision Corporation.

On my **immediate** right is Ms. Hannah Graff, the account representative from our marketing consulting firm. She has been a **visionary** leader in coordinating the **focus groups** and helping us identify our **target market**.

On my **far** right, the **gentleman** in the gray suit is Mr. Chris Banda, who is the Senior Vice President of Product Development. Over the past few months, he has shown great **flexibility** and **willingness** to adapt his product **features** to better meet our customers' needs.

And **last but not least**, I'd like to introduce our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Mr. Shawn Edwards. He has been **coordinating** our marketing efforts for the past seven years, and his hard work is **culminating** in today's presentation.

With that, I'll **turn it over** to our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Shawn Edwards, who will **lead the proceedings** today. Thank you to all of you for being here, and welcome.

Meeting B – Informal Meeting

Alex: Before we **dive into** the presentation, I should probably start by saying that I'm Alex Aurora, the CEO of Vision Corporation, **just in case** there's anyone here who hasn't **met me in person** before today. Could I please get our key team members to introduce themselves? Hannah, **why don't we** start with you?

Hannah: Sure. I'm Hannah Graff, an **account representative** from the marketing firm that has been doing the focus groups. Today I'll be talking about your target market. It's my pleasure to join all of you today.



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Chris: I'm Christopher Hanson, the Senior V.P. of **Product Development**. I've been **tweaking** our product so that it's a better fit for what our customers are looking for.

Shawn: Hi, everybody. I'm Shawn Edwards, Senior V.P. of Marketing. I've spent the past few months trying **to keep up with** all the great work that Hannah and Chris have been doing.

Alex: Great, thanks. Now I'm going to turn it over to Shawn who'll be **running the show** today.

GLOSSARY

Meeting A – Formal Meeting

to take a moment – to do something for a short period of time; to pause or interrupt for a short time to do something; to delay the beginning of something briefly to do something

* Even though everyone is very busy with the project, I want to take a moment to thank the workers for everything they are doing.

graciously – generously; kindly; very thoughtfully; politely

* If you want to stay friends with the other players, it's a good idea to learn to lose games graciously, thanking the other person for the game instead of getting angry when you lose.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer; the person who leads a business, similar to a company president

* The CEO of the hospital said that she wants the hospital to purchase a new office building next year so that the hospital can expand.

immediate – next to; nearest; on the side of

* To get to their house, take an immediate left after the bridge.

visionary – full of new, creative, and intelligent ideas for the future

* Her visionary book describes a future where no one is poor.



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focus group – a small group of people who are asked to give their opinions about a product or a topic

* Last week, Darnell participated in a focus group about cable Internet services.

target market – the group of people that a company wants to sell its product to, usually with the same sex, race, education, and economic status

* The target market for the new car is well educated, married men who earn at least \$60,000 per year.

far – distant; not near or next to

* My favorite chair is in the far corner of the living room, away from the front door.

gentleman – a polite term for a man; a man who is polite and well respected

* When I was walking in the rain today, an elderly gentleman offered to share his umbrella with me.

flexibility – ability to adapt or adjust quickly to changes or new situations

* Vicky wants to work for a company with enough flexibility so that she can work from home a few days each week.

willingness – ready or prepared to do something; agreeing to do something

* Thank you very much for your willingness to come to the doctor's office with me.

feature – characteristic; something that a product has or does

* The new features on this camera include a better battery and a prettier design.

last but not least – a phrase used to introduce the last person or thing in a group, meaning that it is not less important than the other people or things already mentioned

* I've already shown you the living room, kitchen, and bedrooms in this new house. Last but not least, this is the garage.

to coordinate – to organize and lead

* Michelle coordinated the invitations, food, and music for the wedding.

to culminate – to reach the highest point in development; to finish with a specific result

* Their research studies culminated in a report published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.



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with that – a phrase used to show that one part of something has ended and now it is time to move to the next part

* The director will welcome the new employees, and with that we'll ask them to read and sign their contracts.

to turn (something) over to (someone) – to put someone in control of something

* When my co-worker left the company, all of his work was turned over to me for a few weeks.

to lead the proceedings – to run or guide a meeting or discussion

* Dr. McPherson was asked to lead the proceedings because she is a good speaker and she understands the topic very well.

Meeting B – Informal Meeting

to dive into (something) – to begin something right away

* I don't like cleaning the house, but let's dive into it and finish it as quickly as possible.

just in case – if something may happen; if something is possible

* Do you think you should take an umbrella just in case it rains?

to meet (someone) in person – to be introduced to someone while being in the same room, so that the two people see each other (not over the phone or email)

* Have you ever met a famous actor or singer in person?

why don't we – let's; a polite phrase used to suggest doing something

* Why don't we eat dinner at a restaurant tonight instead of cooking at home?

account representative – an employee at a consulting company in charge of a project for a company using the consulting company's services

* Who is the account representative for the new project with Acme Corporation?

product development – the work of creating and improving the products that a company sells

* Everyone in the product development department is really excited about the new cell phone that plays music, videos, and podcasts.



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to tweak – to make small changes to something

* Macarena has been tweaking her art project for hours, trying to make it perfect.

to keep up with (something) – to be familiar with all the latest changes in something; to keep up to date with something

* Have you been keeping up with the news about the storms in Florida?

to run the show – to be in charge of something; to lead a meeting or project

* I've asked Karen to run the show for today's conference, and to make sure we stay on schedule.

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the first lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for starting formal and informal business meetings. In this second lesson, we're going to learn how to introduce the participants, the people who are at the meeting.

Let's get started by listening to the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Alex: Before we begin, I would like **to take a moment** to introduce the participants who have **graciously** agreed to share their time with us today. I believe that all of you already know me, Alex Aurora, the **CEO** of Vision Corporation.

On my **immediate** right is Ms. Hannah Graff, the account representative from our marketing consulting firm. She has been a **visionary** leader in coordinating the **focus groups** and helping us identify our **target market**.

On my **far** right, the **gentleman** in the gray suit is Mr. Chris Banda, who is the Senior Vice President of Product Development. Over the past few months, he has shown great **flexibility** and **willingness** to



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adapt his product **features** to better meet our customers' needs.

And **last but not least**, I'd like to introduce our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Mr. Shawn Edwards. He has been **coordinating** our marketing efforts for the past seven years, and his hard work is **culminating** in today's presentation.

With that, I'll **turn it over** to our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Shawn Edwards, who will **lead the proceedings** today. Thank you to all of you for being here, and welcome.

[end of formal meeting script]

Alex starts by saying, "Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to introduce the participants." To "take a moment" means to do something for a short period of time or to pause or interrupt something for a short time. In this case, he is delaying the beginning of the meeting because he wants to introduce the participants first. For example, you might "take a moment" to put on your jacket before you go outside.

Alex says that the participants "have graciously agreed to share their time with us." The word "graciously" (graciously) means generously, kindly, or very thoughtfully. If someone graciously accepts an invitation, it means that he or she did so very kindly and politely. Then Alex introduces himself as the CEO of Vision Corporation. "CEO" means Chief Executive Officer; this is the person who leads a business, like a president, but more important. Some other titles you may hear related to leaders in a company are "CIO," which "stands for" (or means) Chief Information Officer, and "CFO," which is the Chief Financial Officer.

Then Alex begins introducing the other participants. He says that on his "immediate right" is Ms. Hannah Graff. To say that she is on his "immediate (immediate) right" means that she is right next to him on his right-hand side. And note that Alex uses Hannah's title, "Ms.," because this is a formal meeting. "Ms." is the most common title for a woman, whether she is married or not. You won't hear "Mrs." or "Miss" as much anymore in formal business meetings. In the informal meeting you'll see that people call each other by their first names.

Alex says that Hannah "has been a visionary leader in coordinating the focus groups." A "visionary (visionary) leader" is someone who has many new, creative, and intelligent ideas. "Visionary" comes from the word "vision," which means a plan for the future. "Visionaries" usually refer to people who are very creative. "Visionaries" today might be thinking about flying cars or space travel.



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A “focus group” is a small group of people who are asked to give their opinions about a product or a topic. Market research companies often ask focus groups for their opinions about new products or advertisements before they start selling or using them. This company is using focus groups to learn why its sales are falling. Alex says that in addition to coordinating the focus groups, Hannah has been helping the company identify its “target market” (target market), which is the group of people that a company wants to sell its product to, usually with the same sex, race, education, and economic status. The target market for dolls is young girls, and the target market for paint might be people who own their homes.

Next, Alex says that on his “far right, the gentleman in the gray suit is Mr. Chris Banda.” Being on the “far right” means that Chris is on Alex’s right-hand side, but further away from him, not right next to him (because that’s where Hannah is). “Far” means distant, not near. That’s why we sometimes say that something is “far away,” meaning it isn’t close to us. Alex calls Chris a “gentleman,” which is a polite and respectful word for a man. You have probably heard speeches that begin with “Ladies and gentlemen...” because that is a polite way to address the audience.

Alex says that Chris “has shown great flexibility and willingness.” “Flexibility” (flexibility) is the ability to adapt or adjust quickly to changes or new situations. Someone who knows that gas prices are going up and decides to use an electric car instead shows a lot of flexibility. “Willingness” (willingness) means that someone is ready or prepared to do something. For example, a person is more likely to get a job in international business if he or she has a willingness to travel a lot. Chris has shown flexibility and willingness to adapt his product features to better meet the customers’ needs. A “feature” is a characteristic. A “product feature” is something that a product has or does. For example, product features for a computer include its memory, screen size (if it’s a laptop), and speed.

Next, Alex says that “last but not least” he’d like to introduce Shawn. “Last but not least” is a phrase used to talk about the last person or thing in a group, meaning that it is not less important, however, than the other people or things that were already mentioned. In this case, Alex has already introduced Hannah and Chris. By saying “last but not least,” he’s telling people that even though Shawn is the third and last person to be introduced, he is not the least important. Alex says that Shawn has been “coordinating” the marketing efforts. The verb to “coordinate” means to organize and lead something. In other words, Shawn is in charge of the marketing efforts. You might be responsible for “coordinating” a party or a meeting. Finally, Alex says that Shawn’s hard work during the past seven years is “culminating” in today’s presentation. The verb to “culminate” (culminate) means to reach the highest point in the development of something, or



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to finish something with a specific result. Shawn's seven years of hard work have led up to this presentation, which is the final result of his work. One might say that years of a runner's training culminate in winning a race.

Alex ends the introductions by saying, "With that, I'll turn it over to Shawn." The phrase "with that" is used to show that one part of something has ended and now it is time to move to the next part. Alex is using the phrase to let people know that the introductions have finished and now it is Shawn's turn to speak. A student might say, "I've just finished two papers and with that, I'm ready for summer vacation!" This means that the student has finished the last two papers for the semester and now the semester has ended and the student can enjoy their vacation.

When Alex says that he'll "turn it over" to Shawn, he means he's going to put Shawn in control of something – in this case, Shawn is going to be in control of the next part of the presentation. If someone has too much work to do, he or she might turn a project over to a co-worker, so that someone else can do part of the work. Alex says that Shawn will "lead the proceedings today." To "lead (lead) the proceedings (proceedings)" means to run a meeting or guide a discussion.

Now that we have reviewed the new vocabulary, let's listen to the formal meeting again, this time at a normal rate of speech.

[start of formal meeting script]

Alex: Before we begin, I would like **to take a moment** to introduce the participants who have **graciously** agreed to share their time with us today. I believe that all of you already know me, Alex Aurora, the **CEO** of Vision Corporation.

On my **immediate** right is Ms. Hannah Graff, the account representative from our marketing consulting firm. She has been a **visionary** leader in coordinating the **focus groups** and helping us identify our **target market**.

On my **far** right, the **gentleman** in the gray suit is Mr. Chris Banda, who is the Senior Vice President of Product Development. Over the past few months, he has shown great **flexibility** and **willingness** to adapt his product **features** to better meet our customers' needs.

And **last but not least**, I'd like to introduce our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Mr. Shawn Edwards. He has been **coordinating** our



Business Meetings:
Lesson 2 – Introducing the Participants

marketing efforts for the past seven years, and his hard work is **culminating** in today's presentation.

With that, I'll **turn it over** to our Senior Vice President of Marketing, Shawn Edwards, who will **lead the proceedings** today. Thank you to all of you for being here, and welcome.

[end of formal meeting script]

Now that we have a better understanding of the formal meeting, let's listen to the same introductions at an informal meeting. In the formal meeting, Alex introduced all the other participants. In the informal meeting, you'll see that everyone is much more relaxed as the participants introduce themselves, using each other's first names.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Before we **dive into** the presentation, I should probably start by saying that I'm Alex Aurora, the CEO of Vision Corporation, **just in case** there's anyone here who hasn't **met me in person** before today. Could I please get our key team members to introduce themselves? Hannah, **why don't we** start with you?

Hannah: Sure. I'm Hannah Graff, an **account representative** from the marketing firm that has been doing the focus groups. Today I'll be talking about your target market. It's my pleasure to join all of you today.

Chris: I'm Christopher Hanson, the Senior V.P. of **Product Development**. I've been **tweaking** our product so that it's a better fit for what our customers are looking for.

Shawn: Hi, everybody. I'm Shawn Edwards, Senior V.P. of Marketing. I've spent the past few months trying **to keep up with** all the great work that Hannah and Chris have been doing.

Alex: Great, thanks. Now I'm going to turn it over to Shawn who will be **running the show** today.

[end of informal meeting script]



Business Meetings:
Lesson 2 – Introducing the Participants

Alex starts by saying, “Before we dive into the presentation, I should probably start by saying that I’m Alex Aurora.” To “dive into something” means to begin something right away, so when Alex says “before we dive into the presentation,” he means “before we begin the presentation.” If you are excited about a project, you probably want to dive into it right away. Alex introduces himself as “the CEO (or Chief Executive Officer) of Vision Corporation, just in case there’s anyone here who hasn’t met me in person before today.” The phrase “just in case” means if something may happen, or if something is possible. Someone might decide to buy groceries for the entire week, just in case they don’t have time to go shopping later in the week. Alex believes that most or all of the participants already know him, but just in case there is someone who hasn’t met him in person, he wants to introduce himself. To “meet someone in person” means to be introduced to someone while being in the same room, so that the two people see each other. If you’re introduced to someone over the phone or email, you haven’t met in person. Alex then asks each of the team members to introduce themselves and he says, “Hannah, why don’t we start with you?” The phrase “why don’t we” is a polite phrase that means “let’s – let us do this,” and is used to suggest doing something. For example, “Why don’t we listen to that podcast again?” Or, “Why don’t we go to the movies tonight?” You’re not really asking why we are not going to the movies. Instead, you’re suggesting that we go to the movies.

Hannah introduces herself as an “account representative,” which is an employee at a consulting company in charge of a project for a company using the consulting company’s services. Hannah doesn’t work for Vision Corporation. Vision Corporation hired a consulting company to help them with their market research, and Hannah is the “account representative,” or the person who works for the consulting company and is assigned to the Vision Corporation project. Hannah says that she has been working with the focus groups, the people who give their opinion about Vision Corporation’s product, and that today she’ll be talking about the target market, or the group of people that Vision Corporation is trying to sell its product to: the “target market.”

Next, Chris introduces himself as the Senior V.P., or Vice President, of Product Development. “Product development” is the work of creating and improving the products that a company sells. In the computer industry, for example, “product development” is about making computers smaller and faster. In the clothing industry, “product development” is about making new styles with a lot of fashion.

Chris says that he has been “tweaking” the product so that it’s a better fit for what the customers are looking for. To “tweak” (tweak) means to make small changes



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Lesson 2 – Introducing the Participants

to something. We often “tweak” the wording in these courses to try to make the definitions more accurate and easier to understand.

Finally, Shawn introduces himself and says that he has “spent the last few months trying to keep up with all the great work that Hannah and Chris have been doing.” To “keep up with” something means to be familiar with all the latest changes in something or to keep up to date with something. Shawn means that he has been trying to follow all of the work that Hannah and Chris are doing, so that he knows what’s going on. You might try to keep up with the news, or to keep up with changes in technology.

At the end of the meeting, Alex says he’s going to “turn it over to Shawn who’ll be running the show today.” To “run the show” means to be in charge of something or to lead a project or meeting. If you go to a disorganized event and you want to speak with the organizer, you might ask, “Who’s running the show here?” to find out who’s in charge.

We’ve reviewed all the vocabulary in the informal meeting, so now let’s listen to it again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Before we **dive into** the presentation, I should probably start by saying that I’m Alex Aurora, the CEO of Vision Corporation, **just in case** there’s anyone here who hasn’t **met me in person** before today. Could I please get our key team members to introduce themselves? Hannah, **why don’t we** start with you?

Hannah: Sure. I’m Hannah Graff, an **account representative** from the marketing firm that has been doing the focus groups. Today I’ll be talking about your target market. It’s my pleasure to join all of you today.

Chris: I’m Christopher Hanson, the Senior V.P. of **Product Development**. I’ve been **tweaking** our product so that it’s a better fit for what our customers are looking for.

Shawn: Hi, everybody. I’m Shawn Edwards, Senior V.P. of Marketing. I’ve spent the past few months trying to **keep up with** all the great work that Hannah and Chris have been doing.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 2 – Introducing the Participants

Alex: Great, thanks. Now I'm going to turn it over to Shawn who will be **running the show** today.

[end of informal meeting script]

I hope this has helped you become more familiar with the business vocabulary used to introduce participants at formal and informal business meetings. In our next lesson, we're going to look at how people begin meetings and how they let people know what's going to be discussed.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 3 – Beginning a Presentation

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Shawn: Thank you, Alex. And thank you to everyone who is here today. As you know, today's presentation **is designed to** present our **recommendations** about how Vision Corporation can increase its **market share** by reaching more of its potential market.

You should each have a copy of our **handouts** in front of you that **correspond** to the **slides** up here on the **screen**. This first slide shows our **agenda** for the day.

First, I will begin with an **overview** of how our market share has been **declining** during the past twelve months, and the reasons for that decline. **Then**, Ms. Graff will present the **data** that she **gathered** from the focus groups and her ideas for **clarifying** our target market. She **will be followed by** Mr. Hanson, who will discuss adapting our product to meet market needs, and he'll **conclude** with our main recommendations.

Since we have limited time today, please **hold your questions** until the end of the presentation.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Shawn: All right, let me start by saying thanks to all of you for your interest in this presentation. Does everyone have the printed handouts? Great. Let's start by taking a look at what we're going **to cover** today.

As you can see in this outline here, we'll **start off** by talking about how our market share has been falling over the past year, and the reasons why. **After that**, Hannah's going to tell you about the focus groups she **conducted** and what we can learn from them. She'll also **share her ideas** about who our target market really should be. We'll **finish off** with Chris talking about how his team has been able to change our product so that it has more **appeal** to our customers. Then he'll **wrap things up** with our team's recommendations.

Any questions so far? If you have questions later on during the presentation, **please feel free to interrupt** me at any time.



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GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

to be designed to – to be made or created for a specific purpose

* The Internet was designed for scientists, but today almost everyone uses it.

recommendation – suggestion; advice, usually about what someone should do; one's opinion about what another person should do

* The recommendations of the American Heart Association include eating more fruits and vegetables and exercising regularly.

market share – the percentage of sales that a company has in a specific market

* The market share of the two largest Japanese car companies is growing in the United States.

handouts – papers that are given to people in the audience during a presentation

* When you make handouts, don't forget to leave space for people to write their own notes on each page.

to correspond to – to match up with; to be related to

* The colors on the tickets correspond to how much people paid for their tickets.

slide – one page or picture in a visual presentation that is shown on a screen (flat white surface) so many people in a room can see it

* Your presentation will look more professional if each slide has the same colors and text size.

screen – a large piece of white fabric that hangs on a wall and is used to display pictures and images during a presentation so that many people in a room can see it

* We didn't have a screen, so we had to show the presentation on the wall.

agenda – a plan; a list of topics for a meeting; a list of things that will be discussed in a meeting and for how long

* If they follow the agenda, the meeting should last only two hours.

first – before anything else; to begin

* To make a cake, first turn on the oven.



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overview – a summary without very much detail; a broad view of something

* The first chapter of the book has an overview of the county's history, but the rest of the book is about the war.

to decline – to decrease; to become less or smaller; to fall

* The governor reported that the number of crimes is declining in our city.

then – next; later

* To go to their house, take bus number 42 across town and then get off at 122nd Street.

data – information; facts; results from a research project

* The scientists have gathered a lot of data from their experiments over 12 years.

to gather – to collect; to get from many sources or places

* The researchers called 100 homes to gather people's opinions about the new law.

to clarify – to make something clearer or more understandable

* Could you please clarify what you just said? I don't think I understood you correctly.

to be followed by – to have as the next event; to finish and to have something else begin

* Their wedding was followed by a large party at a restaurant.

to conclude – to end, usually a presentation or discussion

* Ms. Sanchez concluded the presentation by thanking everyone for having come to hear her speak.

to hold (one's) questions – to wait to ask questions until the end of a meeting or presentation

* The presenter had to ask everyone to hold their questions. Otherwise, he wasn't going to have enough time to finish his presentation.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

to cover – to talk about; to discuss

* This math course covers advanced algebra and basic trigonometry.

to start off – to begin

* The runner started off too quickly and became tired after only a few minutes.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 3 – Beginning a Presentation

after that – next; once that has finished

* We're going to eat dinner, and after that, we'll see a movie.

to conduct – to organize and lead something; to arrange and do something

* Mr. Rehman conducts workshops to help people start online businesses.

to share (one's) ideas – to say one's ideas, thoughts, and opinions in front of other people

* When Penny shares her ideas, everyone listens because she is very creative and intelligent.

to finish off – to end something; to finish doing something

* We'll finish off dinner with chocolate ice cream.

appeal – ability to attract people; pleasantness that other people like

* The appeal of a weekend trip to the country is that it helps people relax and forget about work.

to wrap things up – to end a presentation or project; to finish something

* At the end of our two-week vacation, we're going to wrap things up with a trip to Disneyland.

please feel free – please do something; please don't feel uncomfortable doing something; it is okay to do something

* Please feel free to eat whatever you want to while you're staying in our home.

to interrupt – to say or do something while another person is talking so that the other person has to stop speaking

* Many parents teach their children to say "excuse me" before they interrupt adults who are talking.

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson two. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 3 – Beginning a Presentation

In the second lesson of “Business Meetings,” we learned business vocabulary for introducing the participants at formal and informal business meetings. Now, in this third lesson, we’re going to learn how to begin a presentation and let people know what’s going to be discussed.

Let’s begin by listening to the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: Thank you, Alex. And thank you to everyone who is here today. As you know, today’s presentation **is designed to** present our **recommendations** about how Vision Corporation can increase its **market share** by reaching more of its potential market.

You should each have a copy of our **handouts** in front of you that **correspond** to the **slides** up here on the **screen**. This first slide shows our **agenda** for the day.

First, I will begin with an **overview** of how our market share has been **declining** during the past twelve months, and the reasons for that decline. **Then**, Ms. Graff will present the **data** that she **gathered** from the focus groups and her ideas for **clarifying** our target market. She **will be followed by** Mr. Hanson, who will discuss adapting our product to meet market needs, and he’ll **conclude** with our main recommendations.

Since we have limited time today, please **hold your questions** until the end of the presentation.

[end of formal meeting script]

Shawn begins by thanking the people for coming to hear his presentation. He says that “today’s presentation is designed to present our recommendations.” To be “designed” to do something means to be made or created for a specific purpose. The ESL Podcasts, for example, are designed to help you learn English. In this case, the presentation is designed to present recommendations. A “recommendation” (recommendation) is a suggestion, an opinion, or advice about what someone should do. A doctor’s recommendation might be for you to stop smoking, or a teacher’s recommendation might be for you to study more. Shawn’s recommendations are “about how Vision Corporation can increase its market share by reaching more of its potential market,” or the people who don’t buy the product now, but might be interested in it. So, Shawn is going to make



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suggestions about how Vision Corporation can raise (or increase – make larger) its market share by reaching (or getting to) more of its potential market.

“Market share” is the percentage of sales that a company has in a specific market or a specific area or group of people. For example, Chinese companies have a large market share of the clothing sold in the United States – a lot of the clothing sold in the United States is made in China. So, Chinese companies have a large market share (a large percentage) of the clothes sold here. Companies want to increase their market share by getting more customers to buy their products, and that's what Shawn's presentation is about.

Shawn says that each person should have a copy of the “handouts” (handouts). A “handout,” is a piece of paper that is given to people in the audience (people who are listening to the presentation) during a presentation, so that they have more information. It's a piece of paper that has, usually, information related to the presentation that you give people who are listening. Having handouts means that you don't have to spend as much time writing down notes as you're listening, because the information is already there on a piece of paper.

Shawn says that the handouts “correspond to the slides...on the screen.” To “correspond” to something means to match up with something or to be related to something. The amount of homework you have probably corresponds to the number of classes you're taking, meaning that if you take more classes you'll have more homework. In this case, the handouts correspond to the slides (they relate to the slides). A “slide” (slide) is one page in a visual presentation, such as a PowerPoint presentation. So what Shawn means is that the handouts have information for every slide in the presentation.

Shawn also says that the slides are on the “screen.” A “screen” (screen) is a large piece of white fabric (white material) that hangs on a wall and is used to display pictures and images during a presentation so that many people in the room can see it. When you go to a movie theater, you watch the movie on a large screen. In a meeting, the screen is smaller.

Shawn says that the “first slide shows our agenda for the day.” An “agenda” (agenda) is a plan or a list of topics for a meeting. In other words, it's a list of things that will be discussed in a meeting and for how long. The agenda for this lesson is to listen to the formal meeting, discuss the vocabulary, listen to the meeting again, and then do the same things for an informal meeting.

Then Shawn talks about the specific things on the agenda for this presentation. He says, “First, I will begin with an overview.” “First” means before anything else,



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or to begin. When you want to cook dinner, first you need to buy the “ingredients” (what you are going to use to cook). So Shawn is going to start with an overview. An “overview” (overview) is a summary or a broad view of something without very much detail. On the first day of a class, a professor usually provides an overview of what the class will be about. In Shawn's presentation, the overview is about how the company's “market share has been declining during the past twelve months.” The verb “to decline” (decline) means to decrease or to become less or smaller. For example, populations of lions and elephants are declining. In this case, market share is declining, meaning that the company is losing customers.

Shawn says, “Then, Ms. Graff will present the data she gathered from focus groups.” The word “then” means next or later, so Shawn means that Ms. Graff will speak after he finishes the overview. In this lesson, after we discuss the formal meeting, “then” we'll talk about the informal meeting.

Ms. Graff is going to present her data. “Data” can be any information, facts, or results from a research project. In this case, Hannah's data is about why customers aren't buying the product as much as they used to. Hannah, or Ms. Graff's data was “gathered” from the focus groups. To “gather” (gather) means to collect something or to get something from many sources or places. When you're planning a trip, you might gather information from many different travel books about the place where you're going. Hannah (Ms. Graff) gathered her data from the focus groups. “Focus groups” are the people who were asked to give or share their opinions about the company's product. Usually, a focus group has, maybe, 5, 10, possibly 15 people in it. It's a way for companies to get information – detailed information about what people think about their products (the things they make).

Shawn says that Hannah will present her ideas for “clarifying” the target market. To “clarify” (clarify) something means to make something clearer or more understandable. If someone doesn't understand something that you say, you may have to clarify it by saying the same idea again using different words. Hannah is clarifying the target market, meaning that she will clearly identify who the company should be selling its product to.

Shawn says that Hannah “will be followed by Mr. Hanson.” To “be followed by” someone or something means to finish and to have something else begin. My explanation of the vocabulary will be followed by listening to the formal meeting at a native rate of speech. Hannah being followed by Mr. Hanson means that once Hannah finishes speaking, Mr. Hanson will begin his part of the presentation.



Business Meetings:
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Shawn says that Mr. Hanson will discuss adapting, or changing, the product to meet market needs and that he'll conclude with the main recommendations or suggestions. To “conclude” (conclude) means to end something; usually this is a verb we use with a presentation or discussion. A speaker might conclude his speech by thanking people for listening, or by asking people to fill out an evaluation form before they leave. That's to “conclude,” to end a presentation or a discussion.

Finally, Shawn says that there isn't very much time, so he asks people to “hold their questions” until the end of the presentation. To “hold one's questions” means to wait to ask a question until the end of a meeting or a presentation. This is very common in formal meetings, but you'll see that in informal meetings it's more common for people to ask their questions whenever they think of them.

That “concludes” or ends our explanation of the vocabulary for the formal meeting. Let's listen to the meeting again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: Thank you, Alex. And thank you to everyone who is here today. As you know, today's presentation **is designed to** present our **recommendations** about how Vision Corporation can increase its **market share** by reaching more of its potential market.

You should each have a copy of our **handouts** in front of you that **correspond** to the **slides** up here on the **screen**. The first slide shows our **agenda** for the day.

First, I will begin with an **overview** of how our market share has been **declining** during the past twelve months, and the reasons for that decline. **Then**, Ms. Graff will present the **data** that she **gathered** from the focus groups and her ideas for **clarifying** our target market. She **will be followed by** Mr. Hanson, who will discuss adapting our product to meet market needs, and he'll **conclude** with our main recommendations.

Since we have limited time today, please **hold your questions** until the end of the presentation.

[end of formal meeting script]



Business Meetings:
Lesson 3 – Beginning a Presentation

Hopefully now you have a better understanding of the formal meeting. Now let's see how Shawn begins his presentation at an informal meeting.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: All right, let me start by saying thanks to all of you for your interest in this presentation. Does everyone have the printed handouts? Great. Let's start by taking a look at what we're going **to cover** today.

As you can see in this outline here, we'll **start off** by talking about how our market share has been falling over the past year, and the reasons why. **After that**, Hannah's going to tell you about the focus groups she **conducted** and what we can learn from them. She'll also **share her ideas** about who our target market really should be. We'll **finish off** with Chris talking about how his team has been able to change our product so that it has more **appeal** to our customers. Then he'll **wrap things up** with our team's recommendations.

Any questions so far? If you have questions later on during the presentation, **please feel free to interrupt** me at any time.

[end of informal meeting script]

In the informal meeting, Shawn begins by thanking everyone for coming and then asks if everyone has a copy of the handouts, or the pieces of paper that have some of the information that will be presented.

Then Shawn says, "Let's start by taking a look at what we're going to cover today." "Let's start," or let's begin, "by taking a look at," or examining, "what we are going to cover today." The verb "to cover" (cover) here means to talk about or to discuss. This lesson covers the vocabulary for beginning a presentation. Your English class probably covers – if you have one – grammar, vocabulary, conversation, listening, and so forth.

Shawn says that he'll "start off by talking about how our market share has been falling." "To start off" is an informal way of saying "to begin." For example, when you start off studying English, you should use a basic textbook. So Shawn's presentation is going to start off, or begin, by talking about the falling, or decreasing – declining, market share.

He says that "after that," Hannah will talk about the focus groups. The phrase "after that" means next, or once something else has finished. In other words,



Business Meetings:
Lesson 3 – Beginning a Presentation

after Shawn finishes talking about the falling market share, Hannah will begin talking about the focus groups that she conducted. To “conduct” (conduct) something means to organize and lead something, or to arrange or do something. Hannah conducted the focus groups, meaning that she organized them, invited people to them, and led the discussion.

Shawn says that Hannah will also “share her ideas” about the target market. “To share one’s ideas” means to say one’s ideas, or your thoughts and opinions, in front of other people. In class, your teacher might ask you to share your ideas about what you read the night before.

Shawn says that Chris will “finish off.” To “finish off” something means to end something or to finish doing something. We often finish off our phone calls by saying, “talk to you later.” In this case, Chris is going to “finish off,” or end, the presentation by talking about how his team has been able to change the product so that it has more appeal to the customers. “Appeal” (appeal) is the ability to attract people, or a pleasantness – a niceness – that other people like. The appeal of going to a restaurant is that you don’t have to cook at home. The appeal is what makes me want to go – it attracts me there. The appeal of a dishwasher might be that it makes your life easier because you don’t have to spend as much time washing dishes.

Shawn says that Chris will “wrap things up” with the team’s recommendations. “To wrap (wrap) things up” has the same meaning as “to conclude”: to end a presentation or a project, or to finish something. In other words, Chris is going to end the presentation by talking about the team’s recommendations. We’re going to “wrap things up” in this lesson by listening to the informal meeting at a native rate of speech.

Shawn asks the participants to “please feel free to interrupt” him during the presentation if they have any questions. When we tell someone to “please feel free” to do something, it’s a polite way to ask someone to please do something, or to let them know that it’s okay to do something. For example, you might say to someone, “Please feel free to call me if you have questions” – it’s okay for you to call me. The verb “interrupt” (interrupt) means to say or do something while another person is talking so that the other person has to stop speaking. It’s usually very rude (not polite) to interrupt another person, but in this case Shawn is asking people to “please feel free to interrupt” him, meaning that they should ask their questions whenever they have them, not waiting for him to stop speaking first.

Let’s listen to Shawn again as he speaks at a faster, native rate.



Business Meetings:
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[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: All right, let me start by saying thanks to all of you for your interest in this presentation. Does everyone have the printed handouts? Great. Let's start by taking a look at what we're going **to cover** today.

As you can see in this outline here, we'll **start off** by talking about how our market share has been falling over the past year, and the reasons why. **After that**, Hannah's going to tell you about the focus groups she **conducted** and what we can learn from them. She'll also **share her ideas** about who our target market really should be. We'll **finish off** with Chris talking about how his team has been able to change our product so that it has more **appeal** to our customers. Then he'll **wrap things up** with our team's recommendations.

Any questions so far? If you have questions later on during the presentation, **please feel free to interrupt** me at any time.

[end of informal meeting script]

I hope this lesson has helped you understand how to begin a presentation in formal and informal meetings in English. Our next lesson, number four, is about giving the actual formal and informal presentations in English.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 4 – Giving a Presentation: Part A

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Shawn: **As I mentioned**, our market share has been sliding for the past year. Naturally, Vision Corporation is **alarmed** by these changes and wants to understand the **underlying** reasons. The truth is, we're not entirely sure why we're losing market share, but we have identified three factors that may **contribute** to the **cause**: a growing number of **competitors**, our product's features, and poor **advertising**.

First, the number of competitors in our industry has **doubled** in the past year. **To counter** this, we must learn **to differentiate** Vision Corporation from the other companies. Second, our product **lacks** some of the features that customers are **looking for**. We need to improve our product and make it the best **market offering**. Third, our advertising has been **ineffective** in reaching our potential customers. We need **to rethink** our **marketing campaigns** and make sure that we're **targeting** the right market.

Now I'm going to turn things over to Ms. Graff, who will discuss the **findings** of her focus groups.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Shawn: **As I said a moment ago**, our market share has taken a **nosedive** in the last year. Why? We think it's a combination of three things: (one) there's a lot more competition now than there was a year ago, (two) our product isn't **meeting the needs** of the market, and (three) our advertising is speaking to the wrong customers. These are some pretty serious but not **insurmountable** problems, so let's take a look at the **solutions** we've **come up with**.

First, we're facing twice as many competitors as we were a year ago, so we need to make sure that customers know that Vision Corp. is the best in the business. Second, we need to make sure that our product has all the **bells and whistles** that our customers have come to expect. And third, we have **to revamp** our marketing efforts and make sure that our ads appeal to the right group of customers.

Hannah, can you please **take over** now and tell us what you learned from the focus groups?



Business Meetings:
Lesson 4 – Giving a Presentation: Part A

GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

As I mentioned... – a phrase used to refer back to something that was said earlier

* As I mentioned in our meeting last week, our new employee Chantrelle is going to start working here tomorrow.

alarmed – surprised in a negative way; shocked; disturbed

* The police are alarmed by the recent increase in crime in this neighborhood.

underlying – something that cannot be seen easily, but explains why something is happening

* The underlying reasons for the decrease in the number of fish in this lake include pollution and warmer than normal temperatures.

to contribute – to add to something; to make something stronger, bigger, or better

* A good educational system can contribute to a stronger economy.

cause – something that creates a change or results in something else happening

* One of the causes of global warming is the increase in the number of cars on the roads.

competitor – a person or a business that sells a similar product to a similar group of customers as you do

* Hewlett-Packard and Gateway are competitors in the computer industry.

advertising – the use of television commercials, radio commercials, and printed advertisements to make people want to buy a product or service

* Television advertising is much more expensive during important football games than during regular programs.

to double – to increase by two; to increase by 100%

* When Penelope changed jobs, her salary doubled from \$23,000 to \$46,000.

to counter – to work against something; to balance something by working in the opposite direction

* Daniel ate a lot of food during the holidays, but he countered the extra calories by running 10 miles each day.



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to differentiate – to distinguish; to make two similar things seem different

* Did you write this letter, or did your husband do it? I can't differentiate your handwriting.

to lack – to not have something; to be missing something

* Our city lacks a park for children to play in, but we're going to try to build one this year.

to look for – to search for; to seek; to try to find

* Eugene is looking for his keys. Have you seen them anywhere?

market offering – a product that is available for sale to customers

* Microsoft has many software programs among its market offerings.

ineffective – not effective; not able to do what something is supposed to do

* Medication is ineffective if patients forget to take it when they're supposed to.

to rethink – to think about something again; to think about another way to do something when the first way doesn't work well

* Lana isn't doing well in her biology classes, so she is rethinking her plan to become a doctor.

marketing campaign – a strategy for letting people know about a product or service and making them want to buy it

* The new marketing campaign includes a mixture of television and radio commercials.

to target – to aim for; to try to reach; to design something for

* The American Cancer Association tries to target smokers by educating them and helping them stop smoking.

findings – results of a research project; outcome of an investigation

* The researchers' findings showed that exercising 30 minutes each day can help people live longer.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

As I said a moment ago... – a phrase used when repeating something that one said a few minutes ago, usually as a reminder or to stress its importance

* As I said a moment ago, when you repeat information in a presentation, it is easier for people to remember it.



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nosedive – a quick decrease, fall, or decline; going down a lot and very quickly

* When the economy took a nosedive, many foreign companies stopped doing business in that country.

to meet the needs – to provide what someone is looking for; to give people what they require

* We could meet the needs of our busy customers better if our stores were open later each day.

insurmountable – without a solution; unable to overcome; unable to fix

* Yessinia's parents got divorced because of insurmountable differences between her mom and dad.

solution – an answer to a problem; a way to handle a difficult situation

* If you want your sons to fight less, one solution might be to give them their own bedrooms.

to come up with – to create or invent; to think of something new and creative

* Olga came up with a way to save her department \$100 each week.

bells and whistles – attractive, desirable, and extra features of a product that are not needed for its basic use or operation

* Today many cell phones are full of bells and whistles, such as cameras, games, and music players.

to revamp – to improve; to make better

* The Flores family revamped their home by painting all the walls.

to take over – to take control of something

* When Condi took over the business, sales increased very quickly in the first year.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 4 – Giving a Presentation: Part A

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson four. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the third lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for beginning a presentation and letting people know what will be discussed in formal and informal business meetings. In this fourth lesson, we're going to learn vocabulary for actually giving a presentation.

Let's start by listening to Shawn's presentation at the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: **As I mentioned**, our market share has been sliding for the past year. Naturally, Vision Corporation is **alarmed** by these changes and wants to understand the **underlying** reasons. The truth is, we're not entirely sure why we're losing market share, but we have identified three factors that may **contribute** to the **cause**: a growing number of **competitors**, our product's features, and poor **advertising**.

First, the number of competitors in our industry has **doubled** in the past year. **To counter** this, we must learn **to differentiate** Vision Corporation from the other companies. Second, our product **lacks** some of the features that customers are **looking for**. We need to improve our product and make it the best **market offering**. Third, our advertising has been **ineffective** in reaching our potential customers. We need **to rethink** our **marketing campaigns** and make sure that we're **targeting** the right market.

Now I'm going to turn things over to Ms. Graff, who will discuss the **findings** of her focus groups.

[end of formal meeting script]

Shawn begins by saying, "As I mentioned, our market share has been sliding." The phrase "as I mentioned" is used to refer back to something that was said earlier. In this case, Shawn has already said that market share was sliding, or falling, when he began the presentation. He says "as I mentioned" to remind people of this. I could say, "As I mentioned, this lesson is about making a



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presentation” – I already told you that; I’m reminding you that I told you that already – “as I mentioned.”

Shawn says that Vision Corporation is alarmed by these changes in the market share. To be “alarmed” (alarmed) means to be shocked, disturbed, or surprised in a negative way. You might be alarmed to learn that your friend’s car was stolen, for example – you are shocked; you are surprised; it’s a bad thing. Shawn says that the company wants to understand the underlying reasons for the changes in market share. An “underlying (underlying) reason” is an explanation that cannot be seen easily – that you can’t figure out right away – but it’s an explanation that tells you why something is happening. An underlying reason for the increase in global temperatures – in global warming – might be the use of oil (petroleum). That’s an example of an “underlying reason.”

Shawn doesn’t know exactly what the underlying reason is for the company losing market share, but he talks about three things that may “contribute to the cause”. “To contribute” (contribute) means to add to something or to make something stronger or better. If you give money to an organization, you are contributing to the organization. A “cause” (cause) is something that creates a change or results in something else happening. Bad weather might be the cause of an accident; it’s the reason why the accident happened.

When Shawn talks about three things that “contribute to the cause,” he means that he has identified three things that are part of the situation that is making the company lose its market share. Shawn says that the first thing is “a growing number of competitors.” When we say a number is “growing,” we mean it is increasing, so there is an increasing number of competitors. A “competitor” (competitor) is a person or a business that sells a similar product to a similar group of customers as you do. Toyota is a competitor for Honda for the car market in the United States. They are two companies that sell a similar product – a similar thing – to a similar group of people, or to the same group of people.

Shawn says that the second thing – the second reason why the company may be losing its market share – is the product’s features, or the characteristics of the product. And he says that the third thing is poor advertising. “Advertising” (advertising) is the use of television commercials, radio commercials, printed advertisements like in a newspaper, and the Internet to make people want to buy your product or service. Vision Corporation has poor advertising, meaning that it doesn’t do a very good job of making people want to buy its product. We use the word “poor,” here, to mean bad – not very good.



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Then Shawn says that the number of competitors in the industry has doubled in the past year. “To double” (double) means to increase two times, or twice as much – to increase 100%. For example, you might say that sales doubled from \$16,000 to \$32,000. Shawn says that to counter the large number of competitors, the company must learn to differentiate itself from other companies. “To counter (counter) something” means to work against something, or to balance something by working in the opposite direction. You might decide to drive less to counter the large amount of money you have to spend on high gasoline prices. “To differentiate” (differentiate) means to distinguish or to make two similar things seem different. When you fly on a plane and you go to get your luggage, you will notice that some people try to differentiate their luggage so that it doesn’t look like everyone else’s luggage. They may put some colored tape on it, for example, so they know that it is their bag – their piece of luggage. When Shawn says that to counter the falling market share they must learn to differentiate the products of Vision Corporation, he means that the way to increase market share is to make Vision Corporation seem different and better than its competitors – to make its products seem different.

Shawn then says that the product lacks some of the features, or product characteristics, that customers are looking for. “To lack” (lack) means not to have something, or to be missing something. Our podcasts have audio, but lack video – they don’t have video. “To look for something” means to seek or search for something, or to try to find something. Lucy and I are always looking for new ideas for our podcasts. When Shawn says that the “product lacks some of the features that customers are looking for,” then, he means that the product doesn’t have everything that customers want it to have. Shawn says that the company needs to improve the product and make it a better market offering. A “market offering” is a product that is available for sale to customers. A farmer’s market offerings might include potatoes, carrots, and lettuce, for example.

Shawn continues, saying that the advertising has been “ineffective” in reaching potential customers. The word “ineffective” (ineffective) means not effective, or not able to do what something is supposed to do. Vision Corporation has been doing some advertising – they’ve been advertising – but it isn’t working the way they want it to – the way it’s supposed to do, because it isn’t communicating with the right group of people. Shawn says that the company needs to “rethink” its “marketing campaign.” The verb “to rethink” (rethink) means to think about something again, or to think about another way to do something when the first way doesn’t work well. A “marketing campaign” (campaign) is a strategy for letting people know about a product or a service and making them want to buy it. To rethink a marketing campaign, then, means to look carefully at the existing marketing campaign – the one you have right now – and find ways to make it



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better. Shawn says that this is the way to target the right market. “To target” means to aim for something or to try to reach something. Our courses target people who are learning English as a second language. Vision Corporation’s advertising should be targeting the people who are interested in buying the type of product that the company offers.

Finally, Shawn says that he’s “going to turn things over to Hannah, who will discuss the findings of her focus groups.” He’s “going to turn things over,” meaning he’s going to let Hannah talk to the group. She’s going to talk about her findings. “Findings” (findings) are the results of a research project, or the outcome – the conclusion of an investigation. The findings of Hannah’s focus groups, in this case, are the opinions of the people who were there, who gave their advice and suggestions about the company’s product.

Let’s listen to the formal meeting again, this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: **As I mentioned**, our market share has been sliding for the past year. Naturally, Vision Corporation is **alarmed** by these changes and wants to understand the **underlying** reasons. The truth is, we’re not entirely sure why we’re losing market share, but we have identified three factors that may **contribute** to the **cause**: a growing number of **competitors**, our product’s features, and poor **advertising**.

First, the number of competitors in our industry has **doubled** in the past year. **To counter** this, we must learn **to differentiate** Vision Corporation from the other companies. Second, our product **lacks** some of the features that customers are **looking for**. We need to improve our product and make it the best **market offering**. Third, our advertising has been **ineffective** in reaching our potential customers. We need **to rethink** our **marketing campaigns** and make sure that we’re **targeting** the right market.

Now I’m going to turn things over to Ms. Graff, who will discuss the **findings** of her focus groups.

[end of formal meeting script]

Now that you better understand the formal meeting, let’s listen to Shawn make the same presentation at an informal meeting.



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[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: **As I said a moment ago**, our market share has taken a **nosedive** in the last year. Why? We think it's a combination of three things: (one) there's a lot more competition now than there was a year ago, (two) our product isn't **meeting the needs** of the market, and (three) our advertising is speaking to the wrong customers. These are some pretty serious but not **insurmountable** problems, so let's take a look at the **solutions** we've **come up with**.

First, we're facing twice as many competitors as we were a year ago, so we need to make sure that customers know that Vision Corp. is the best in the business. Second, we need to make sure that our product has all the **bells and whistles** that our customers have come to expect. And third, we have **to revamp** our marketing efforts and make sure that our ads appeal to the right group of customers.

Hannah, can you please **take over** now and tell us what you learned from the focus groups?

[end of informal meeting script]

Let's take a closer look at the vocabulary used in the informal meeting. Shawn begins by saying, "As I said a moment ago." That phrase is similar to the phrase "as I mentioned," which was used in the formal meeting. "As I said a moment ago" is a phrase used when repeating something that one said a few minutes ago, usually as a reminder or to stress its importance. As I said a moment ago, we're going to take a close look at the vocabulary used in the meeting. Shawn says, "As I said a moment ago, our market share has taken a nosedive in the last year." A "nosedive" (nosedive) is a quick or rapid decrease, fall, or decline, where something goes down a lot and very quickly. When the population of frogs takes a nosedive, biologists get very worried, because they think, maybe, there's something wrong with the environment where the frogs are living. So, anything that has a number can take a nosedive. Vision Corporation is worried about the nosedive, or the rapid decrease, in its market share.

As in the formal meeting, Shawn says that there are three reasons for the falling market share, or the decreasing market share. First, there are more competitors than there were before. Second, the product isn't meeting the needs of the market. "To meet the needs of someone" means to give or provide what someone is looking for, or to give people what they require. We hope that we're meeting your needs in improving your English comprehension. Shawn wants the



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product to meet the needs of the consumers, or customers, in the market. Shawn then says that the third reason for falling market share is that the advertising is speaking to the wrong customers. He says that “these are some pretty serious but not insurmountable problems.” If something is “insurmountable” (insurmountable) it doesn’t have a solution, and it is unable to be overcome or fixed. But Shawn says that these are *not* insurmountable problems, meaning that he thinks they can be fixed. He suggests taking a look at the solutions the team has come up with. A “solution” is an answer to a problem, or a way to handle a difficult situation. “To come up with something” means to create or invent something, or to think of something new and creative. We work hard to come up with new ideas for our podcasts each week. When Shawn suggests taking a look at the solutions his team has come up with, he means that he wants to review the ideas that his team has about how the company can fix its problems.

Shawn says that the company has twice as many competitors as it did one year ago, so it needs to find ways to let customers know that it’s the best company. Then Shawn says that Vision Corporation needs to make sure that the product has all the “bells and whistles” that customers expect. “Bells (bells) and whistles (whistles)” are attractive, desirable, and extra features, or characteristics, of a product that aren’t needed for its basic use and operation. A “bell” is, literally, something that rings – ding, ding, ding, ding, ding – that would be a bell. A “whistle” is like (Jeff whistles) – that would be a whistle. But the expression “bells and whistles,” together, refers to things that you have with a product that aren’t necessary but are nice – that make you like it more. For example, “bells and whistles” on a car – on an automobile – might include a CD player, automatic windows, or a navigation system – a satellite navigation system. You don’t need those things to drive your car, but they are nice extra things; those are the “bells and whistles.”

Shawn wants the company’s product to have more of these nice things that customers are looking for. Shawn also says that the company needs to revamp its marketing efforts. “To revamp (revamp) something” means to improve something, or make something better. Revamping the marketing efforts means changing the way that the company does its marketing. Revamping your room might mean painting the walls and buying new furniture – new chairs, a new desk, and so forth.

At the end of the meeting, Shawn asks Hannah to “take over” and talk about what she learned from the focus groups. “To take over” means to take control of something, to be in charge. In this case, Hannah is going to be in control, or be in charge, of the next section of the meeting.



Business Meetings:
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That's all the new vocabulary in the informal meeting. Let's listen to Shawn again, this time when he's speaking more quickly.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: **As I said a moment ago**, our market share has taken a **nosedive** in the last year. Why? We think it's a combination of three things: (one) there's a lot more competition now than there was a year ago, (two) our product isn't **meeting the needs** of the market, and (three) our advertising is speaking to the wrong customers. These are some pretty serious but not **insurmountable** problems, so let's take a look at the **solutions** we've **come up with**.

First, we're facing twice as many competitors as we were a year ago, so we need to make sure that customers know that Vision Corp. is the best in the business. Second, we need to make sure that our product has all the **bells and whistles** that our customers have come to expect. And third, we have **to revamp** our marketing efforts and make sure that our ads appeal to the right group of customers.

Hannah, can you please **take over** now and tell us what you learned from the focus groups?

[end of informal meeting script]

Now you know some of the business vocabulary used to make presentations. In the next lesson, number five, we're going to continue learning vocabulary for making presentations, but this time we will focus more on the vocabulary for using visuals, the drawings and images that help people understand what they're presenting.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

This course was produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan and Dr. Lucy Tse. Copyright 2007.

Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 5 – Giving a Presentation: Part B (Visuals)

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Hannah: Thank you, Mr. Edwards. We conducted eight focus groups, each with 10 to 12 people who currently use the product. In this **pie chart**, the **yellow-shaded area** represents those participants who buy the product from Vision Corporation, and they **comprise** only 13% of the people we spoke with. That's **consistent** with Vision Corporation's market share **segment**.

We asked the participants what features they wanted when purchasing the product and this **table** shows their answers in **descending order** of importance. As you can see across this **row** and down this **column**, Vision Corporation's current product offering includes only one of the top three most desired features.

Finally, we asked the participants **to rank** the product offered by Vision Corporation against those of the top four competitors, and the results are shown in this **bar chart**. Vision Corporation received the best rankings for "**affordability**," but **suffered** in all the other **categories**. This **line graph** shows that these figures have **held steady** over the four months we've conducted these focus groups. We believe this means that your company would be **justified** in raising the price of its product and using the additional **revenue** to improve the product's features.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Hannah: Thanks, Shawn. Each of the eight focus groups we spoke with had 10 to 12 participants who are users of the product, although not necessarily the one offered by Vision Corp. In this table, you can see that the **proportion** of people who use your company's product compared to the total market is fairly small, at only 13%. This, of course, means your competitors have a big **leg up** on the market with over 85%.

We asked participants what kinds of things they look for when deciding which product to buy. Let me **walk you through** this **chart** with my **laser pointer**. You can see that the most important features are listed **alphabetically** under the **header**, "Important Features." Unfortunately, your current product has only one of three most **sought-after** features.



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That may be one important reason why more customers aren't buying your product.

Finally, take a look at this bar chart, which shows how your product's features **stack up against** those of your competitors. Your product has good "affordability," but the truth is that your customers aren't that concerned about price. You could easily raise your prices and use the extra money from sales to better match your product with what customers are looking for.

GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

pie chart – a visual or picture used in reports and presentations that is a circle made of pieces of different colors where the size of each piece represents the percentage or number of something

* This pie chart shows that almost half of our customers have a college degree.

(color)-shaded area – the section of a chart or graph that is in a different color

* The blue-shaded area in this line chart represents our company, and the green-shaded area is our biggest competitor.

to comprise – to be a group that is made up of something; to be a group that contains different things or parts

* The band used to have six members, but now it's only comprised of one piano player, a drummer, and a singer.

consistent – compatible; being in agreement with; being what is expected; not surprising

* Tanya's favorite music was written by Bach, which is consistent with her love of complex and memorable melodies.

segment – a piece of something; a part or section of something

* Cars on the segment of freeway between Springfield and Davistown always move very slowly.



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table – a square or rectangular chart that lists information horizontally (side to side) and vertically (up and down)

* This table shows the ideal weights for men and women of different heights.

descending order – listed from biggest, best, or top to the smallest, worst, or bottom

* The sales information is listed in descending order, so the biggest sales are at the top of the list.

row – a horizontal (side to side) line in a table

* In this table, there is one row for every student in the class.

column – a vertical (top to bottom) line in a table

* Many tables have columns with information for different years.

to rank – to give a number to each thing in a list to show its importance

* We ranked the hotel from one (poor) to five (excellent) for its service, price, and cleanliness.

bar chart – a square or rectangular chart with boxes of different colors when the length or height of the boxes represents different amounts of something

* This bar chart shows how much money people earn in different countries.

affordability – low price; a price that people can pay easily

* When you buy a new home, affordability is important, but so is the safety of the area and its distance to good schools.

to suffer – to be hurt by something; to not do well because of something

* The local economy suffered when the factory closed.

category – a group of things that are similar

* Our major product categories are computers, printers, and scanners.

line graph – a square or rectangular chart with a line that goes from left to right and whose changing height shows how something changes (usually over time)

* This line graph shows how the number of deaths of babies has decreased during the last 50 years.

to hold steady – to be constant; to not change; to remain the same

* During most of the year our sales hold steady, but they increase before Christmas when many people buy gifts for their family and friends.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 5 – Giving a Presentation: Part B (Visuals)

justified – reasonable; able to be explained

* Mariana felt justified in buying the expensive dress because she had worked very hard all month to save her money for it.

revenue – income; money that a person or organization receives from selling something

* Our sales revenue is higher when we have more salespeople working for our company.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

proportion – a part of something larger; a section or segment of a whole

* A large proportion of college students get some money from their parents each month.

a leg up – an advantage; something that helps someone

* Joshua has a leg up in getting a job because his parents know almost everyone in this town.

to walk (one) through (something) – to explain something to someone in detail; to help someone understand something step by step

* Carolina walked us through the process of buying a home, and now we understand it much better.

chart – a square or rectangular visual or picture with information used for reports and presentations

* This chart shows how we spent our money last month.

laser pointer – a small machine held in one's hands that, when pushed, has a red light that can be used by the speaker to point at objects on a screen

* Since the chart can be confusing, I would suggest using a laser pointer during your presentation to explain the different parts.

alphabetically – in order from A to Z; in the order of the alphabet

* Phone books list people's last names alphabetically.

header – a word or phrase (usually the name of the category) at the top of a column in a table

* This table's headers include "price," "style," and "model number."



Business Meetings:
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sought-after – desired; wanted; looked for

* That computer game is one of the most sought-after Christmas gifts for young boys.

to stack up against – to compare with something

* Before buying a new car, it's important to know how it stacks up against similar cars made by other companies.

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson five. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the fourth lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned some vocabulary for giving a presentation at formal and informal business meetings. In this fifth lesson, we're going to continue talking about how to give presentations, but this time we'll focus on using visuals, the images and pictures that help people understand what's being presented.

First, let's listen to Hannah's presentation at the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Hannah: Thank you, Mr. Edwards. We conducted eight focus groups, each with 10 to 12 people who currently use the product. In this **pie chart**, the **yellow-shaded area** represents those participants who buy the product from Vision Corporation, and they **comprise** only 13% of the people we spoke with. That's **consistent** with Vision Corporation's market share **segment**.

We asked the participants what features they wanted when purchasing the product and this **table** shows their answers in **descending order** of importance. As you can see across this **row** and down this **column**, Vision Corporation's current product offering includes only one of the top three most desired features.

Finally, we asked the participants **to rank** the product offered by Vision



Business Meetings:
Lesson 5 – Giving a Presentation: Part B (Visuals)

Corporation against those of the top four competitors, and the results are shown in this **bar chart**. Vision Corporation received the best rankings for “**affordability**,” but **suffered** in all the other **categories**. This **line graph** shows that these figures have **held steady** over the four months we’ve conducted these focus groups. We believe this means that your company would be **justified** in raising the price of its product and using the additional **revenue** to improve the product’s features.

[end of formal meeting script]

Hannah begins her presentation by saying that she conducted eight focus groups, each with 10 to 12 people who currently use the product. That means that she asked a total of 80 to 96 people for their opinions about the product. Remember a focus group is a way that companies get information from their customers by bringing in 8 or 10, or 12 people into a single room, and asking them questions – interviewing them together.

Hannah says that in the pie chart she’s showing them, the yellow-shaded area represents the participants who buy the product from Vision Corporation. So, Hannah is showing them a pie chart. A “pie (pie) chart” is a visual or picture used in reports and presentations and it is a circle made of different colors where the size of each piece of the pie represents the percentage or number of something. A “pie” is normally a round thing that you eat; it’s a sweet dessert. Here, a “pie chart” means a round circle that is divided up into pieces that represent percentages or numbers. When Hannah says the “yellow-shaded area,” she means the section, or part, of the circle with a yellow color.

Hannah says that the participants represented in the yellow-shaded area comprise only 13% of the people she spoke with. To “comprise” (comprise) means to be a group that is made up of something or that contains different parts or things. You might say, for example, the United Nations is comprised of representatives from every country in the world; that would be a use of the verb “comprise.” In other words, Hannah is pointing to a pie chart that represents all the people she spoke with who use the product. One section of that pie chart represents 13% of the people; that part – that section is shaded, or colored, in yellow, representing the people who use the product that Vision Corporation sells.

Hannah says that this is “consistent with Vision Corporation’s market share segment.” To be “consistent” (consistent) is to be compatible with, or to be in agreement with something that is expected. Hannah is simply saying that the



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data (or information) that she found isn't surprising; it's consistent with their market share segment. It makes sense; it matches what they thought would be true. We could say, for example, that many people in Japan eat a lot of rice, and that's consistent with what people in Asia generally eat – or many people. So we know that many countries in Asia eat a lot of rice; Japan is a country in Asia, and Japan eats a lot of rice, so that's consistent with this other knowledge that we have. A "segment" (segment) is a piece or part or section of something, so a "market share segment" is the amount of the market share that the company has, or what percentage of product users buy Vision Corporation's product. When Hannah says that the data is consistent with Vision Corporation's market share segment, she means that they already knew their market share was approximately 13%, and learning that 13% of the focus group participants buy Vision Corporation's product confirmed or supported what they already knew.

Hannah says that she "asked the participants what features they wanted when purchasing the product and this table shows their answers." In this context, a "table" (table) is a square or rectangular chart that lists information horizontally (meaning side to side) and vertically (meaning up and down). Bus and train schedules are often shown in tables. Hannah says that in this table the answers are shown in "descending order" "Descending (descending) order (order)" means that the most important features or characteristics are listed at the top (they're at the top of the table), and the least important features are listed, or put, at the bottom. For example, the numbers 62, 41, 32, 19 are listed in descending order, because the biggest number, 62, is first and the smallest number, 19, is last. If they were listed or put on the table the other way, 19, 32, 41, 62, with 19 at the top and 62 at the bottom, they would be in "ascending order," "ascending (ascending) order (order)."

Then Hannah says, "As you can see across this row and down this column, Vision Corporation's current product offering includes only one of the top three most desired features." A couple of terms here that are important in explaining visuals, especially for a table. A table has rows and columns. A "row" (row) is one horizontal (or side-to-side) line in a table; it goes across from left to right. A "column" (column) is a line that goes from top to bottom, a vertical line. So, a table has sections that go across (horizontally) and up and down (vertically), and this, of course, makes a square or a rectangle. You can think of these as little boxes, and there are boxes that go horizontally (in a row) and go vertically (in a column). When you look at a television schedule, for example, usually the row are the different television channels, and the columns lists the shows at different times during the day.



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Hannah says that they asked the participants to rank the products offered by Vision Corporation. “To rank” means to give a number to each thing in a list to show or indicate its importance. In some restaurants for example, the waiter may give you a piece of paper and ask you to rank the food and services from one (meaning very poor) to five (meaning excellent). This is something you would find at a not very expensive restaurant. For example, in the United States, they sometimes ask for your opinion; they ask you to rank – to put things in order from most important to least important.

The focus group participants were asked to rank Vision Corporation’s product against those of the top four competitors, meaning they were asked to rank five different products, one from each of the five companies, and say which one was best, which one was second best, third best, fourth best, and then worst, or fifth. Hannah then says that the results of this ranking are shown in the bar chart. A “bar (bar) chart (chart)” is a square or rectangular chart with bars (or big boxes) of different colors where the length or the height of the box represents different amounts of something. We often see bar charts in magazines or newspapers when, for example, they show how well the economy is doing in different countries. A high line that goes vertically usually (from top to bottom) indicates a lot of something, and a small line indicates not very much of something; that would be a bar chart – we call each one of those lines a “bar.” In Hannah’s bar chart, there’s probably one bar for each of the five products, and a longer or a taller bar represents a higher ranking; that would be the product that the focus group liked the most.

Hannah says that “Vision Corporation received the best rankings for affordability. “Affordability” (affordability) means having a price that people can pay easily. To be able to “afford” something means you have enough money – it isn’t expensive. In other words, Vision Corporation’s product is less expensive than the other companies’ products. But Hannah says that the company suffered in all the other categories. To “suffer” (suffer) means to be hurt by something, or to not do well because of something. You might suffer from a headache, for example. A “category” (category) is a group of things that are similar. Some categories of vehicles (automobiles) would include sports cars, pickup trucks, station wagons; these are different types or different categories of cars. So when Hannah says that Vision Corporation’s product suffered in all the other categories, she means that although the company had high rankings for affordability, or price, it had much lower rankings on all the other categories, or things that participants were asked to rank. So, they didn’t like Vision Corporation’s product on almost all of the categories, but did like it for affordability, or price.



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Hannah says that her “line graph shows that these figures have held steady” over four months. A “line (line) graph (graph)” is also a square or rectangular chart, but one that has a line that goes from left to right. The line goes up or goes down; it changes height to show how something changes. Usually, a line graph is used to indicate changes over time, over several days or several months or several years. You could use a line chart to show how gasoline prices are increasing or decreasing over time in the last 10 years. So if you look at the chart, you see a line, if the line goes up, it’s gotten higher, if it goes down, it’s gotten lower.

To “hold steady” (steady) means to be constant – to not change. If prices increase but the amount of money that people earn (people get from their jobs) holds steady, then people aren’t going to buy as much. To “hold steady” means not to change. If gas prices hold steady, they aren’t going up and they aren’t going down – they’re staying the same.

Since Hannah says that the line graph shows that the figures, or rankings, have held steady over the past four months, this means that the line on the line graph is pretty straight, or flat – it doesn’t go up or it doesn’t go down very much over this four-month period.

Hannah says that she believes this means that the company would be justified in raising the price of its product. To be “justified” (justified) means to be reasonable or to be able to be explained. You might feel justified in going to the movies this weekend because you worked hard all week. When Hannah says that the company would be justified in raising the price of the product, she means that the company should increase, or raise the price and that there’s no reason not raise the price. It would be “justifiable,” or able to be “justified” – you can come up with a good reason why you should do something.

Finally, Hannah says that the company should use the additional revenue to improve the product’s features. “Revenue” (revenue) is income. It’s the money that a person or an organization receives (or gets) from selling something. If you are selling cars and you sell 10 cars, and each car costs \$10,000, you will have \$100,000 in revenue. Vision Corporation will receive more revenue, or income, if it increases the price of its product and if the same number of people buy the product. Of course, sometimes if you increase the price, fewer people will buy your product, so you may or may not get more revenue.

Now that we’re more familiar with the vocabulary, let’s listen to Hannah’s presentation at the formal meeting again, this time at a native rate of speech.



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[start of formal meeting script]

Hannah: Thank you, Mr. Edwards. We conducted eight focus groups, each with 10 to 12 people who currently use the product. In this **pie chart**, the **yellow-shaded area** represents those participants who buy the product from Vision Corporation, and they **comprise** only 13% of the people we spoke with. That's **consistent** with Vision Corporation's market share **segment**.

We asked the participants what features they wanted when purchasing the product and this **table** shows their answers in **descending order** of importance. As you can see across this **row** and down this **column**, Vision Corporation's current product offering includes only one of the top three most desired features.

Finally, we asked the participants **to rank** the product offered by Vision Corporation against those of the top four competitors, and the results are shown in this **bar chart**. Vision Corporation received the best rankings for "**affordability**," but **suffered** in all other **categories**. This **line graph** shows that these figures have **held steady** over the four months we've conducted these focus groups. We believe this means that your company would be **justified** in raising the price of its product and using the additional **revenue** to improve the product's features.

[end of formal meeting script]

In this next section, we're going to listen to the same presentation, but this time it will be at an informal meeting. Hannah uses less formal words and is much more relaxed.

[start of informal meeting script]

Hannah: Thanks, Shawn. Each of the eight focus groups we spoke with had 10 to 12 participants who are users of the product, although not necessarily the one offered by Vision Corp. In this table, you can see that the **proportion** of people who use your company's product compared to the total market is fairly small, at only 13%. This, of course, means your competitors have a big **leg up** on the market with over 85%.

We asked participants what kinds of things they look for when deciding which product to buy. Let me **walk you through** this **chart** with my



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laser pointer. You can see that the most important features are listed **alphabetically** under the **header**, “Important Features.” Unfortunately, your current product has only one of three most **sought-after** features.

That may be one important reason why more customers aren’t buying your product.

Finally, take a look at this bar chart, which shows how your product’s features **stack up against** those of your competitors. Your product has good “affordability,” but the truth is that your customers aren’t that concerned about price. You could easily raise your prices and use the extra money from sales to better match your product with what customers are looking for.

[end of informal meeting script]

Hannah starts by saying, “Each of the eight focus groups we spoke with had 10 to 12 participants who are users of the product, although not necessarily the one offered by Vision Corp. In this table, you can see that the **proportion** of people who use your company’s product compared to the total market is fairly small, at only 13%.” So Hannah is saying that when they talked to these people in their focus groups, all of them used a product, but not all of them used Vision Corporation’s product.

She points to a table and says that the proportion of people who use Vision corporation’s product, compared to all the people who use all of the products, is fairly, or very, small at 13. A “proportion” (proportion) is part of something, or a section. We could say a “segment” of something. For example, I might ask you, “What proportion of the students in your English class are women?” meaning what percentage, what part of the class – how many. When Hannah says that the proportion, or smaller group of people who use Vision Corporation’s product compared to the total market is fairly small, at only 13%, she means that only 13% of all the people who use the product buy it from Vision Corporation, and 13% is a small part of the entire market.

Hannah says that this means that the competitors have a big leg up on the market with over 85%. A “leg (leg) up” is an advantage, or something that helps someone. You may have a leg up in getting a job because you know someone in the company – you have a good connection to the company. In this case, because Vision Corporation has only 13% of the market share, its competitors must have 87%, which is a big advantage or “leg up” for these companies.



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Hannah asked the participants what kinds of things they look for when deciding which product to buy. She says, “Let me walk you through this chart.” To “walk someone through” something means to explain something to someone in detail, giving them all of the information, or to help someone understand something step by step. You’re going to take each part and explain it very carefully. Right now I’m walking you through the vocabulary in an informal business meeting; I’m explaining each word. A “chart” (chart) is a square or rectangular visual or picture with information that we use for reports and presentations. We’ve already talked about pie charts, bar charts, and line graphs; these are all types of charts.

So when Hannah says that she’s going to walk them through the chart, she means she’s going to explain her visual (or picture) in detail so that they can understand it better. She says she’s going to use her laser pointer. A “laser (laser) pointer (pointer)” is a small machine (it looks like a pen) that you hold in your hands, and when you push a button, there’s a red light (like a flashlight) that can be used by someone giving a presentation to point at certain objects on the screen. So it’s like a red flashlight, usually the size of a pen, that you can use to point something out on a screen with the red light. So Hannah is going to use this laser pointer to point to, or indicate, different parts of the chart to help people know what they’re looking at.

She says that the most important features are listed alphabetically under the header. If something is listed “alphabetically” (alphabetically), we mean it is listed (or put) in order from A to Z; it would be from A to Z in descending order, or in the order of the alphabet in the English alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and so forth. Phone books, for example, usually list, or put, people’s names alphabetically by their last name.

A “header” (header) is a word or phrase (usually the name of a category or group) at the top of a column in a table. So the first line in this table has a header called “Important Features,” and under that header (in the same column – in the boxes below) you will see the most important features, or characteristics, listed alphabetically, from A to Z.

Hannah says that, unfortunately, the Vision Corporation product has only one of the three most sought-after features. If something is “sought (sought) -after,” it is desired, or wanted; it’s something people are looking for. “Sought” is the past participle of the verb “to seek” (seek), which means to look for, to try to find. The people in the focus groups told Hannah that the three things they most wanted in a product, and Vision Corporation’s product has only one of those things. Hannah says that this may be one important reason why customers aren’t buying Vision Corporation’s products.



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Hannah then asks people to look at the bar chart, which shows how the product's features, or characteristics, stack up against those of the competitors. The expression to “stack (stack) up against” something means to compare with something. You might want to know how your salary (the money that the company gives you) stacks up against the money that your colleagues (or co-workers) get. You want to know how it compares to their salary.

Hannah's bar chart compares Vision Corporation's product with the products offered by the competitors. She shows how they “stack up” against the competitors – how they compare to them. Hannah says that Vision Corporation's product has good affordability, or price, but that this isn't very important to customers. That's why Hannah recommends, or suggests, that the company raise, or increase, its price and use the extra revenue, or money, to create a product that has more of the features that customers are looking for – the sought-after features.

Let's listen to Hannah's presentation again, this time when she's speaking more quickly.

[start of informal meeting script]

Hannah: Thanks, Shawn. Each of the eight focus groups we spoke with had 10 to 12 participants who are users of the product, although not necessarily the one offered by Vision Corp. In this table, you can see that the **proportion** of people who use your company's product compared to the total market is fairly small, at only 13%. This, of course, means your competitors have a big **leg up** on the market with over 85%.

We asked participants what kinds of things they look for when deciding which product to buy. Let me **walk you through** this **chart** with my **laser pointer**. You can see that the most important features are listed **alphabetically** under the **header**, “Important Features.” Unfortunately, your current product has only one of three most **sought-after** features.

That may be one important reason why more customers aren't buying your product.

Finally, take a look at this bar chart, which shows how your product's features **stack up against** those of your competitors. Your product has good “affordability,” but the truth is that your customers aren't that



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concerned about price. You could easily raise your prices and use the extra money from sales to better match your product with what customers are looking for.

[end of informal meeting script]

Now that we've listened to both the formal and informal meetings, I hope you have a better understanding of the business vocabulary used to present visuals in a presentation. In our next lesson, we're going to learn how to end a presentation.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 6 – Ending a Presentation

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Chris: Using all of the information that Ms. Graff has just presented as a **starting point**, my product development team has been trying to enhance our product to include more of customer's desired features. Our specific **proposals** were described in detail in the **memo** that was **circulated** last week, so I see no reason to cover them **in depth at this point in time**. However, we do need **to open a dialogue** about which changes we're going **to implement**, and a **timeline** for doing so.

So, as our presentation concludes, I want to repeat the **key points**. First, our market share is showing a downward **trend**. Second, our marketing campaign isn't appropriate for our target audience. Third, many key features are missing from our product. Our recommendations are to revamp our marketing campaign and redesign our product. We are **facing** some serious problems, and we need your **input** in order **to deal with** them as quickly as possible.

Without further ado, I'd like **to open the floor** for discussion. Shawn will be our **moderator**.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Chris: Our product development team has been busy trying **to synthesize** all the data that Hannah has just presented in order to create a better product for our customers. We sent out a memo last week that described our specific ideas, and based on all the signatures on the **routing slip**, it looks like most of you have already seen it, so I won't repeat everything. **In a minute**, we're going to ask you to help us **brainstorm** even more ideas.

Before you **get your creative juices flowing**, let's just briefly **recap** the main points of this presentation. Our market share has **taken a beating** and we're **missing the mark** with our marketing and our product. **To tackle** these problems, we recommend creating a better marketing campaign and creating a new version of our product. We're asking for your best ideas during the discussion. Shawn, will you **take the helm**?



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GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

starting point – the place where someone begins something; the information that one uses to begin something

* When Haydn was trying to decide which university to go to, his starting point was that it had to have a good physics program and a swim team.

proposal – one's suggestion or idea about what should be done, how, and when

* When the research scientist wanted to build a new laboratory on campus, she had to submit a proposal to the university president for his approval.

memo / memorandum – a short written message in business, usually to share information in an office

* The top of a memo usually lists the name of the person it's going to, the name of the person who wrote it, the date, and the subject.

to circulate – to move from one place to another; to pass from one person to another so that information is shared

* Lots of funny jokes circulate through email as friends send them to each other.

in depth – in detail; with a lot of detail

* Dr. Ringold plans to read the report in depth before making a decision at tomorrow's meeting.

at this point in time – now; right now; at this moment; at the present time

* At this point in time, we still don't know how many people were killed by the storm.

to open a dialogue – to begin to talk about something; to start a discussion

* Martin Luther King Jr. opened a dialogue in the United States about the relationship between the different races in this country.

to implement – to put something into action; to take a plan or idea and to make it happen

* The bank is going to implement its new policies beginning in March.

timeline – a plan showing when someone will do something over a period of time

* This timeline shows that they'll begin building the hospital next week, but it won't be finished for almost three years.



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key point – main idea; most important idea

* The key points in the president's speech was that we'll be closing down one of the offices by the end of the year and we'll have new management.

trend – something that changes in one direction over time; a general way that something is changing or developing over time

* There is an upward trend in the price of new homes in this area.

to face – to deal with; to confront; to have to address

* Mr. DeFazio faces problems at home and at work: his wife wants a divorce and his boss isn't satisfied with his work.

input – one's ideas, opinions, and suggestions about something, especially a project or idea

* Mariah's input on the report was very helpful because she helped us make the writing more direct and easier to understand.

to deal with – to handle; to manage; to answer; to address

* How can we deal with the high prices of gasoline?

without further ado – without any more delay; without waiting any longer

* You have all heard about our exciting new product. Now, without further ado, here is the item that will change the way companies do business.

to open the floor – to allow anyone in the room to speak; to invite comments from other people

* When the president opened the floor for discussion during the meeting last week, all of the employees began talking at the same time.

moderator – a person who guides a discussion and decides who may speak

* Without a good moderator, many meetings become discussions between only two or three people instead of the whole group.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

to synthesize – to understand information from many different sources; to put together and understand a lot of information

* Ms. O'Conner is very good at synthesizing complex information and explaining it to other people.



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routing slip – a small piece of paper with the names of everyone in an office that people sign to show that they have read a document, then they pass the document and routing slip to the next person on the list

* Please don't forget to add the new employee's name to the office routing slips.

in a minute – soon; very soon; in a little while

* Could you please turn on the TV? My favorite show is going to start in a minute.

to brainstorm – to make a long list of ideas, usually in a group with other people

* Jim, Phil, and Hal are in the other room brainstorming names for their band.

to get (one's) creative juices flowing – to begin thinking creatively

* Some people like to get their creative juices flowing by listening to music while they work.

to recap – to review; to summarize

* At the end of the presentation, don't forget to recap your main ideas to help people remember them.

to take a beating – to be hurt; to be damaged; to be defeated; to lose a lot of money

* Their house took a beating during last week's storm.

to miss the mark – to not be effective; to do the wrong thing for a specific purpose; to fail to reach a certain point or level

* The company missed the mark when it tried to sell rap music CDs to people over 80 years old.

to tackle – to fight against something; to work on something with a lot of effort

* Let's tackle the mess in this house one room at a time.

to take the helm – to lead something; to run a meeting

* When Ms. Hagstrom took the helm last year, the company began making more money.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson six. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the fifth lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for giving presentations and talking about visuals at formal and informal business meetings. In this sixth lesson, we're going to learn how to end a presentation.

Let's listen to Chris as he ends his presentation at the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Chris: Using all of the information that Ms. Graff has just presented as a **starting point**, my product development team has been trying to enhance our product to include more of customer's desired features. Our specific **proposals** were described in detail in the **memo** that was **circulated** last week, so I see no reason to cover them **in depth at this point in time**. However, we do need **to open a dialogue** about which changes we're going **to implement**, and a **timeline** for doing so.

So, as our presentation concludes, I want to repeat the **key points**. First, our market share is showing a downward **trend**. Second, our marketing campaign isn't appropriate for our target audience. Third, many key features are missing from our product. Our recommendations are to revamp our marketing campaign and redesign our product. We are **facing** some serious problems, and we need your **input** in order **to deal with** them as quickly as possible.

Without further ado, I'd like **to open the floor** for discussion. Shawn will be our **moderator**.

[end of formal meeting script]

Chris begins by saying that he's going to use all the information that Hannah (Ms. Graff) has presented as a starting point. A "starting point" is the place where someone begins something, or the information that one uses to begin something. If you want to lose 20 pounds (you want to go on a diet), your starting point may be how much you weigh right now. Chris's starting point is Ms. Graff's, or Hannah's, information, meaning that he's going to continue from where her information ended.



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Chris says that his product development team (the people who work on improving and making new products for the company) has been trying to enhance (enhance), or improve, the product to include more of the features, or product characteristics, that customers are looking for. He says that his specific proposals were described in detail in a memo. A “proposal” (proposal) is one’s suggestion or idea about what, how, and when something should be done. For example, when a nonprofit organization (a hospital or a school, for example) asks for money from businesses, it usually has to write a proposal to explain how the money will be spent. A “proposal” is usually a written plan about what you want to do – what you are suggesting.

Chris’s proposal is about how the product should be improved, or enhanced. A “memo” (memo), which is short for “memorandum” (memorandum), is a short written message in a company or a business, usually to share information in an office. A memo is usually written on a piece of paper. The top of a memo usually has at least four lines, with the name of the person who wrote it, the name of the person or people it was written for (the people who should read the memo), the date, and the subject of the memo (the topic of the memo).

Chris’s memo was about the team’s proposals, or ideas for improving the product. He said that the memo circulated last week. To “circulate” (circulate) means to move from one place to another, or to pass from one person to another so that the information is shared (everyone gets to see the information). To say that the memo circulated last week means it was sent to many people at the office last week.

Since everyone has seen the memo, Chris says that he sees no reason to cover his proposals in depth at this time. He says he sees no reason, meaning it is not necessary for him to cover, or to discuss, his proposals in depth. To cover something “in depth” (depth) means to discuss it with a lot of detail. You probably read the newspaper very quickly, but if you see an article (a story) that interests you, you may read it in depth (read the entire thing very closely). Chris says that he doesn’t want to cover his proposals in depth at this point in time. The expression “at this point in time” means now, or right now, at this moment. At this point in time, for example, we are about one-third of the way through the vocabulary explanations for the formal meeting; that’s where we are right now. So, Chris is saying right now, I don’t want to talk about the memo in depth because people have, or should have, already read the memo.

Chris says that we do, however, need to open a dialogue. To “open a dialogue” (dialogue – sometimes spelled dialog) is to begin to talk about something, or to start a discussion. For example, in recent years, countries have begun to open a



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dialogue about global climate change. Chris wants to open a dialogue, or start a conversation, about which changes the company is going to implement. To “implement” (implement) means to do something, to put something into action, to take a plan or an idea and actually do it, to make it happen; that’s to implement. We usually talk about implementing plans or strategies. In this case, Chris wants people to talk about implementing changes, or beginning to make those changes. He also wants to talk about a timeline for doing so. A “timeline” (timeline) is a plan showing when someone will do something over a period of time – a week, a month, a year. At ESLPod.com, for example, we have a timeline for making a certain number of podcasts each week. Chris is talking about a timeline, or plan, that will tell us when each change will be made.

Next Chris says that as the presentation concludes, or ends, he wants to repeat the key points. A “key (key) point” is a main idea, or one of the most important ideas. The key points of this “Business Meetings” course is that English speakers use different vocabulary for formal and informal meetings. For Chris, the key points are the main ideas that his team has been trying to communicate through the presentation. In a U.S. business setting, when you are presenting in English to U.S. business people, it is usually very important to repeat your key points as you’re ending a presentation, because this helps the audience (the people listening to your presentation) remember what you have said.

Chris’s first key point is that the market share is showing a downward trend. “Downward” (downward) means going down or descending (becoming smaller – becoming less). A “trend” (trend) is something that changes in one direction over time; it goes up or it goes down. It’s a general way that something is changing or developing over time. In this case Chris is talking about a downward trend, meaning that the market share for Vision Corp. is falling, or becoming less over time. Last year was more than this year, and next year will be less than this year; that’s a downward trend. You can also talk about an “upward (upward) trend” if something is going up. For example, there may be an upward trend in the price of a house. The price of houses is going up over time; that would be an upward trend. Chris’s second key point is that the marketing campaign isn’t appropriate for their target audience, and his third key point is that many important features, or characteristics, are missing, or are absent (are not there) in their current product.

Chris’s recommendations are to revamp, or improve, the marketing campaign and to redesign, or to design again (to plan and make again) their product. Chris says that the company is facing some serious problems. The verb “to face” (face) here means to deal with (to confront, to have to do something about, to address). Parents often face difficulties with their children; they are causing



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problems, for example. They have to do something about it; they have to deal with it.

Vision Corporation is facing problems with its product. Chris says that he wants and needs everyone's input. "Input" (input) is someone's ideas, opinions, or suggestions about something, especially something related to a project or an idea. Companies are often looking for input from their customers (information, ideas) that will help them make their product better. Chris wants the people at the meeting to give their input, or ideas and suggestions, in order to deal with the problems as quickly as possible. To "deal (deal) with" something means to handle, manage, maybe answer or address something. Some people think that the best way to deal with family members who they don't like is to move away from them (to go to a different city). That's one way of "dealing with," or trying to solve the problem. When Chris says that he wants people's input in order to deal with the problems as quickly as possible, he means that he wants people (the people at the meeting) to give their ideas for how the problems can be fixed, or solved, as quickly as possible (as soon as possible).

Chris ends his formal presentation by saying, "Without further ado, I'd like to open the floor for discussion." The phrase "without further (further) ado (ado)" means without any more delay, or without waiting any longer. It's a formal expression that you normally only hear at a formal presentation: "Without further ado, let me introduce the next speaker," or presenter. That means I'm going to do it right now. When Chris uses this phrase, it tells everyone that he is ending his presentation and it's time to start something else – in this case, to open the floor for discussion. The expression "to open the floor" means to allow anyone in the room to speak, or to invite comments from other people. Chris is asking people to begin talking to each other, participating in a discussion. At universities, for example, the professors, or teachers, often speak for an hour and then open for the floor for questions from the students.

Finally, Chris says that Shawn will be the moderator of the discussion (moderator). The "moderator" is a person who guides, or leads a discussion and decides who is going to speak next. A moderator is helpful when you have a big group because he or she can prevent, or stop, people from speaking at the same time, and they can make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak if they want to.

Before we go and listen to the discussion, which is the topic of our next lesson, let's listen to Chris ending his part of the formal presentation again, this time when he's speaking a little bit more quickly.



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[start of formal meeting script]

Chris: Using all of the information that Ms. Graff has just presented as a **starting point**, my product development team has been trying to enhance our product to include more of customer's desired features. Our specific **proposals** were described in detail in the **memo** that was **circulated** last week, so I see no reason to cover them **in depth at this point in time**. However, we do need **to open a dialogue** about which changes we're going **to implement**, and a **timeline** for doing so.

So, as our presentation concludes, I want to repeat the **key points**. First, our market share is showing a downward **trend**. Second, our marketing campaign isn't appropriate for our target audience. Third, many key features are missing from our product. Our recommendations are to revamp our marketing campaign and redesign our product. We are **facing** some serious problems, and we need your **input** in order **to deal with** them as quickly as possible.

Without further ado, I'd like **to open the floor** for discussion. Shawn will be our **moderator**.

[end of formal meeting script]

Now that you understand the formal meeting pretty well, let's listen to how Chris ends the presentation and prepares for a – the discussion at an informal meeting.

[start of informal meeting script]

Chris: Our product development team has been busy trying **to synthesize** all the data that Hannah has just presented in order to create a better product for our customers. We sent out a memo last week that described our specific ideas, and based on all the signatures on the **routing slip**, it looks like most of you have already seen it, so I won't repeat everything. **In a minute**, we're going to ask you to help us **brainstorm** even more ideas.

Before you **get your creative juices flowing**, let's just briefly **recap** the main points of this presentation. Our market share has **taken a beating** and we're **missing the mark** with our marketing and our product. **To tackle** these problems, we recommend creating a better marketing campaign and creating a new version of our product. We're asking for your best ideas during the discussion. Shawn, will you **take the helm**?



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[end of informal meeting script]

In the informal meeting, Chris begins by saying that the product development team has been busy trying to synthesize all of Hannah's data. To "synthesize" (synthesize) means to understand a lot of information, usually from many different places, or sources. Scientists are good at synthesizing a lot of data, or information, from their experiments. Chris is saying that Hannah has presented a lot of information and that the team has been trying to understand it all and decide how to use the information to improve the product.

Chris says the team sent out, or circulated, a memo last week that described the team's specific ideas. He says that based on all the signatures on the routing slip, it looks like most people have already seen it. A "routing (routing) slip (slip)" is a small piece of paper with the names of, for example, everyone in your department, or in your office at work. You put that slip onto a piece of paper (you staple it or clip it on), and then you give it to one of the people on the list. That person looks at it (reads it), and then signs their name on the slip, and then gives it to the next person on the routing slip. Many companies use routing slips to make sure that everyone has read important magazine articles or other company information. That way, they don't have to make a lot of copies of the document, because they know that everyone will see the same copy. It's also a way for the company to check (to make sure) that everyone has looked at the document. Chris sent his memo with a routing slip, and as people read the memo last week, they signed next to their names on the piece of paper (on the routing slip), so he knows that almost everyone has already read the memo.

Next, Chris says that in a minute, or very shortly, he's going to ask people to help the team brainstorm even more ideas. The phrase "in a minute" means soon, or in a little while. If someone calls your name in another room, you might yell, or shout, "In a minute!" to let the person know that you will come to them as soon as you can, even though it may not be exactly one minute. That's a common expression you may hear. To "brainstorm" (brainstorm) means to make a long list of ideas, usually in a group with other people. "Brainstorming" means that everyone tries to come up with an idea, and you don't talk about the ideas right away; you write them all down, and then you talk about them. Brainstorming is a good way to get a lot of creative ideas, and then later people decide which ideas are good and which ideas are bad. So when Chris says, "In a minute, we're going to ask you to help us brainstorm even more ideas," he means that soon he's going to ask the people in the room to be creative and to try to think of new ideas.



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Chris then says, “Before you get your creative juices flowing, let’s just briefly recap the main points of the presentation.” To get one’s “creative juices (juices) flowing” means to begin to think creatively, to begin to think of new ideas. Some people get their creative juices flowing by playing games or reading a book. The word “juice” (juice) usually refers to something that is liquid, such as orange juice. To “flow” means to move, so getting your creative juices flowing means getting your ideas and being creative.

Chris means that he wants people to think creatively while they’re sharing ideas, but first he wants to recap the main points. To “recap” (recap) means to review or to summarize something. “Recap” is short for “recapitulate”: to review; to repeat; to summarize. As I said before, in an U.S. presentation it’s expected that you will recap, or repeat and review, your key points so that people in the audience, listening and watching, will remember them better. In your classes, when you were in school, your teacher probably recapped the main points of the lesson before the class ended.

Chris says that the company’s market share has been taking a beating. To “beat” (beat) means to hit something hard, so to “take a beating” means to be hurt – someone else is hitting you; you’re being defeated or losing. You could be, in this case, losing a lot of money. The company is losing money; it’s taking a beating. A car, for example, takes a beating during an accident. You can invest money in the stock market, and if your stocks go down (if the price of the stocks that you bought go down), we would say you took a beating in the stock market – you lost; you were defeated. In this case, the company has taken a beating, meaning it has been hurt because it has lost market share.

Chris says that the company is missing the mark with its marketing and its product. To “miss the mark” (mark) means not to be effective, to do the wrong thing, or to fail to reach a certain point or level. The company wants to sell its product, but its marketing is missing the mark – it’s not going where it should; they’re not reaching their target audience.

Chris says that to tackle the problems, the team recommends creating a better marketing campaign and a new version of the product. The verb “to tackle” (tackle) usually means to knock someone down. For example, in American football, one player will “tackle” another player – they will grab him and knock them down. Here, the idea of “to tackle” is related to fighting against something, or working on something with a lot of effort. A student can tackle her homework; that would mean to work hard to finish their homework. You can tackle a problem, which means to work to solve or fix a problem. To help the team tackle the problems of the company, Chris wants people to share their best ideas, or



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brainstorm, during the discussion. Finally, he asks Shawn to take the helm. “To take the helm” (helm) means to lead something, to run a meeting, to be in charge, to be in control. In this case, Shawn is going to lead the discussion by being the moderator. The moderator is the person that decides who’s going to speak next. The verb we use for that is “to call on.” “The moderator called on Ms. Graff to give an explanation,” he is asking her to speak.

Let’s listen to Chris one more time as he ends the presentation at an informal meeting, this time at regular speed.

[start of informal meeting script]

Chris: Our product development team has been busy trying **to synthesize** all the data that Hannah has just presented in order to create a better product for our customers. We sent out a memo last week that described our specific ideas, and based on all the signatures on the **routing slip**, it looks like most of you have already seen it, so I won’t repeat everything. **In a minute**, we’re going to ask you to help us **brainstorm** even more ideas.

Before you **get your creative juices flowing**, let’s just briefly **recap** the main points of this presentation. Our market share has **taken a beating** and we’re **missing the mark** with our marketing and our product. **To tackle** these problems, we recommend creating a better marketing campaign and creating a new version of our product. We’re asking for your best ideas during the discussion. Shawn, will you **take the helm**?

[end of informal meeting script]

Now that we’ve gone through the formal and informal meetings, you should have a good idea of how to end presentations at business meetings. In our next lesson, number seven, we’re going to study the vocabulary for managing a discussion during a business meeting.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 7 –Managing a Discussion

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Shawn: When you have a question, please **raise your hand**. This will allow me **to call on** people one at a time and avoid having people **talk over each other**. Also please **make sure** that your questions are **on topic**. Who would like to begin?

Chris: I need **to voice my concern** about how the focus groups were not asked about color or design. I think this would have....

Hannah: Please **pardon my interruption**, but **with all due respect**, Mr. Hanson, I **completely disagree with** you. I **understand your concern**, but in our experience those product characteristics **pale in comparison** next to “affordability” and “**ease of use**.” I don’t have time **to address** your concern fully, but most customers aren’t interested in design as much.

Alex: If I may **offer my opinion**, I believe Mr. Hanson has a **legitimate concern** and I’m **glad he asked that question**, but Ms. Graff may be right about the importance of listening to our customers. However, this topic is **outside the scope of my expertise**.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Shawn: **Let’s get this show on the road**. This is an open discussion, so who wants to start off?

Chris: Hannah, even though I’ve **been knee-deep in** your data for months, there’s something I have **to get off my chest**. Why didn’t you ask the focus groups about our product’s color and design?

Hannah: I can **see your point**, Chris, but based on past experience, we know that customers mostly consider “affordability” and “ease of use” when deciding which product to buy. I can’t **go into this in detail** now, but most customers just want reliability, and the design is **secondary**.

Alex: Chris, you’ve **brought up** an interesting point, but I think Hannah is right. Don’t **take this the wrong way**, Chris, but the interests of engineers and our customers aren’t the same. But of course, I’m not a marketing expert **by any means**.



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GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

to raise (one's) hand – to put one's hand in the air to ask for permission to speak, usually in a classroom or in a large meeting

* If you know the answer to the teacher's question, raise your hand.

to call on – to say someone's name and ask him or her to speak

* The Senator called on the reporter from the New York Times during the press conference.

to talk over (someone) – to speak when someone else is speaking, so that two people are speaking at the same time and it is difficult to understand

* My brother was talking over my sister and my mother couldn't understand anything they were saying.

to make sure – to be certain; to be careful to do something in a certain way; to not forget to do something

* Please make sure that you pack your medicine for your trip next week.

on topic – related to the subject; relevant

* If your questions aren't on topic, the speaker won't answer them.

to voice (one's) concern – to express one's worry; to say what one is worried about

* Kensuke wants to voice his concern about Sheila's drinking, but he's worried that she'll be mad at him.

pardon my interruption – a phrase used to apologize when one has something important to say and speaks while another person is speaking, making him or her stop talking in the middle of a sentence

* Please pardon my interruption, but I think your cell phone is ringing.

with all due respect – a phrase used when one strongly disagrees with another person, but wants to say so as respectfully and nicely as possible

* I know that you want to work for our company, but with all due respect, you don't have enough experience yet.



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to completely disagree with (someone) – to not agree with someone at all; to strongly disagree with someone

* Guillermo completely disagrees with his wife about which house they should buy.

to understand (someone's) concern, but – a phrase used to show that one understands what another person is worried about, but disagrees with it

* I understand your concern about not getting into a good university, but I don't think you need to worry about it because you have very good high school grades.

to pale in comparison – to be less important than something else; to not be as important as something else that it's being compared to

* Some people think that problems of drinking and smoking pale in comparison to the problems of serious drug use.

ease of use – how easy or difficult it is to use a product

* This type of computer isn't very fast or powerful, but many people like it because of its ease of use.

to address (something) – to deal with; to manage; to handle; to answer

* Harvey believes that the best way to address the education problem in this country is to pay teachers more.

to offer (one's) opinion – to say what one thinks about something

* I'd like to offer my opinion about the best way to proceed with this project.

legitimate concern – a valid worry; a worry that makes sense or seems logical

* Sabrina's father thinks that he has a legitimate concern about whether she'll be able to make enough money while working as a full-time musician.

I'm glad (someone) asked that question – a phrase used to thank someone for asking a question; a phrase used to show appreciation for someone's participation

* I'm glad you asked that question because it's something our team hadn't thought about before.

to make a good point – to present a good idea during a meeting; to say something that makes the discussion better

* Ida made a good point about the need to find a good designer for our website.



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outside the scope of (one's) expertise – something that one doesn't know very much about; something that is not related to one's education or experience

* Questions about art are outside the scope of May's experience because she studied science.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Let's get this show on the road – a phrase used to begin something, such as a meeting, project, or trip

* The client has decided to use our services, so let's get this show on the road.

to be knee-deep in (something) – to be very involved in something; to be surrounded by something

* Our accountant is knee-deep in tax forms every March because her clients' taxes must be paid by April 15.

to get (something) off (one's) chest – to talk about something that has been bothering or worrying one for a long time

* Phil asked to meet with me alone. I think he wants to get something important off his chest.

to see (one's) point – to understand what someone is saying

* I think I see your point about why it's important to read the newspaper every day if I want to become a journalist one day.

to go into (something) in detail – to discuss or talk about something with a lot of detail or depth

* I wish you wouldn't go into your medical problems in detail with people you don't know very well.

secondary – less important than something else

* Where we go on vacation is secondary to the amount of time we'll be able to take for our vacation.

to bring up (something) – to raise a topic; to introduce something into a discussion or conversation

* I like working with Tabitha because she always brings up ideas that no one else is thinking about.



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to take (something) the wrong way – to be offended or insulted by something that someone says

* I hope you won't take this the wrong way, but I don't think that dress looks very good on you.

by any means – at all; in any way

* Juliana isn't the most beautiful woman in the world, but she isn't ugly by any means.

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson seven. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the sixth lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for ending presentations at formal and informal meetings. In this seventh lesson, we're going to learn how to manage a discussion.

When we ended lesson six, Shawn was asked to be the moderator, or the person who leads a discussion. Let's listen to Shawn managing the discussion at the formal business meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: When you have a question, please **raise your hand**. This will allow me **to call on** people one at a time and avoid having people **talk over each other**. Also please **make sure** that your questions are **on topic**. Who would like to begin?

Chris: I need **to voice my concern** about how the focus groups were not asked about color or design. I think this would have....

Hannah: Please **pardon my interruption**, but **with all due respect**, Mr. Hanson, I **completely disagree with** you. I **understand your concern**, but in our experience those product characteristics **pale in comparison** next to "affordability" and "**ease of use**." I don't have time **to address** your concern fully, but most customers aren't interested in design as much.



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Alex: If I may **offer my opinion**, I believe Mr. Hanson has a **legitimate concern** and **I'm glad he asked that question**, but Ms. Graff may be right about the importance of listening to our customers. However, this topic is **outside the scope of my expertise**.

[end of formal meeting script]

As the moderator, Shawn begins the discussion by asking people to please raise their hands when they have a question. To “raise one’s hand” means to put one’s hand in the air to ask for permission to speak, usually in a classroom or in a large meeting. In the United States, it is often considered rude (or not polite) to speak without first raising your hand and asking permission, especially if you are at a meeting or in a classroom.

Shawn says that if people raise their hands, he’ll be able to “call on” people one at a time. To “call on someone” means to say someone’s name and ask him or her to speak. In a classroom, the teacher calls on students to answer questions, and in this business meeting Shawn is going to call on the people who want to share their ideas. Shawn says that this will help to avoid having people talk over each other. To “talk over” someone means to speak when someone else is speaking, so that two people are speaking at the same time, which makes it difficult to understand. In the United States, in a business setting, you should always try to let the other person finish speaking before you begin speaking, because talking over another person is considered impolite, or rude.

Shawn asks people to make sure that their questions are on topic. To “make sure” (sure) means to be certain of something, or to be careful to do something in a certain way. You might ask your wife to be sure, or to not forget, to go to the store on her way home from work. “On topic” (topic) means relevant, or related to the subject. A question that is “on topic” is related to the discussion. The opposite would be called “off topic”; that would be a question that is not related to the subject. For example, if I’m speaking about U.S. history and you ask a question about Japanese Sumo wrestling, your question would be off topic. But if you ask about President Abraham Lincoln, your questions would be on topic. Shawn is asking everyone to please make sure, or be careful, that their questions are on topic, or related to the Vision Corporation product or marketing strategy. Then Shawn asks who would like to begin the discussion.

Chris says that he needs to voice his concern. To “voice one’s concern” means to say what you are worried about. You might need to voice your concern with your boss about not being able to finish a project on time. Chris is voicing a



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concern, or saying that he is worried, about how the focus groups weren't asked about the product's color or design. Chris begins to say, "I think this would have..." but he is interrupted by Hannah, meaning that she begins speaking before he is finished. This is normally not considered a polite thing to do, but notice what Hannah says next.

Hannah says, "Please pardon (pardon) my interruption." The phrase "please pardon my interruption," or you could also say, "forgive my interruption," is used to apologize when one person has something important to say and starts speaking while another person is speaking. It's a way of excusing yourself, to talk when someone else is talking – to interrupt them. Usually this is something that you will do if what you have is very important, so important that you need to stop the other person talking. So, Hannah is saying "sorry" to Chris for having interrupted him. If two people are talking, you might say, "Please pardon my interruption, sir, but you have a telephone call"; that would be considered something that would be okay to interrupt someone for.

Hannah says, "With all due respect, Mr. Hanson, I completely disagree with you." The phrase "with all due (due) respect," is used when one strongly disagrees with another person, but wants to say it so it is respectful – to say it as nicely as possible so that you are not impolite. If you disagree with someone, especially who is higher in the organization than you are – your boss, for example – you might want to say "with all due respect" before explaining why you disagree with him or her. Hannah says that she completely disagrees with Chris. To "completely disagree" with someone means not to agree with someone at all, or to very strongly disagree with someone. If your friend, for example, says that cats are the best pets, you may say, "I completely disagree with you, because dogs are much better pets." Or fish!

Hannah says, "I understand your concern, but..." The phrase "to understand someone's concern, but..." is used to show that one understands what the other person is worried about, but that you disagree with it. It's a polite way to show that you have heard and understood another person's concern; you've thought about it, but still disagree with it. For example, a wife might be worried that going to Hawaii is too expensive for a vacation, and her husband may say, "I understand your concern, but I think we should go on a nice vacation."

Next Hannah says that in her experience the product characteristics of color and design pale in comparison next to "affordability" and "ease of use." To "pale (pale) in comparison to," or "in comparison with" something means to be less important than something else, or is of less value than something else. The amount of money you would spend to rent a car for one day pales in comparison



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with the cost of buying a new car and driving it only one day. The two things are not equal; one is greater, or more important, than the other.

In this case, Hannah is saying that design and color are much less important than affordability and ease of use. “Ease (ease) of use” means how easy or difficult it is to use something – to use, in this case, Vision Corporation’s product. For example, most companies try to design their website so they have good ease of use, meaning it is easy for people to find the things they’re interested in.

Hannah says that she doesn’t have time to address Chris’s concern fully, but that most customers aren’t interested in design. To “address” something, here, means to manage, to handle, to answer, or to deal with something. You might address the problem of not having enough money by getting a second job. When Hannah says that she doesn’t have time to address Chris’s concern fully, she means that she doesn’t have enough time to completely answer Chris’s questions and worries right now in the meeting.

Next Alex begins to speak and says, “If I may offer my opinion, I believe Mr. Hanson has a legitimate concern.” To “offer one’s opinion” means to say what you think about something. You can offer your opinion about an idea or a project, for example. Alex’s opinion is that Mr. Hanson has a legitimate concern. A “legitimate (legitimate) concern” is a valid worry, or a worry that makes sense, or seems reasonable or logical. In other words, Alex is saying that Chris brought up an important point – a legitimate concern. A parent may have a legitimate concern about their son or daughter’s eating habits – if they are eating healthy food.

Alex says that he’s glad that Chris asked his question. The phrase “I’m glad you asked that question” is used to thank someone for asking a question and to show appreciation or gratitude for someone’s participation. If someone asks a very interesting question that creates a lot of discussion or makes you think about something you hadn’t considered before, you should say, “I’m glad you asked that question.”

Alex then says that Hannah may be right about the importance of listening to the customers, meaning she might be correct. Then Alex says that the topic is outside the scope of his expertise. To say something is “outside the scope (scope) of one’s expertise” is used to show that one doesn’t know very much about the topic, or that the topic is not related to your education or experience. “That’s outside my scope of expertise.” “Expertise” (expertise) is knowledge of something. Someone who knows a lot about a topic is called an “expert” (expert). By saying that this topic is outside the scope of his expertise, Alex is



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showing people that he’s going to rely on the opinions of the expert; in this case, the expert is Hannah.

Let’s listen to this interesting discussion between Chris, Hannah, and Alex again, this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: When you have a question, please **raise your hand**. This will allow me **to call on** people one at a time and avoid having people **talk over each other**. Also please **make sure** that your questions are **on topic**. Who would like to begin?

Chris: I need **to voice my concern** about how the focus groups were not asked about color or design. I think this would have....

Hannah: Please **pardon my interruption**, but **with all due respect**, Mr. Hanson, I **completely disagree with** you. I **understand your concern**, but in our experience those product characteristics **pale in comparison** next to “affordability” and “**ease of use**.” I don’t have time **to address** your concern fully, but most customers aren’t interested in design as much.

Alex: If I may **offer my opinion**, I believe Mr. Hanson has a **legitimate concern** and I’m **glad he asked that question**, but Ms. Graff may be right about the importance of listening to our customers. However, this topic is **outside the scope of my expertise**.

[end of formal meeting script]

Now let’s turn to the informal meeting, where Chris, Hannah, and Alex are having the same discussion, but in a more relaxed manner.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: **Let’s get this show on the road**. This is an open discussion, so who wants to start off?

Chris: Hannah, even though I’ve **been knee-deep in** your data for months, there’s something I have **to get off my chest**. Why didn’t you ask the focus groups about our product’s color and design?



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Hannah: I can **see your point**, Chris, but based on past experience, we know that customers mostly consider “affordability” and “ease of use” when deciding which product to buy. I can’t **go into this in detail** now, but most customers just want reliability, and the design is **secondary**.

Alex: Chris, you’ve **brought up** an interesting point, but I think Hannah is right. Don’t **take this the wrong way**, Chris, but the interests of engineers and our customers aren’t the same. But of course, I’m not a marketing expert **by any means**.

[end of informal meeting script]

Shawn, the moderator, begins by saying “Let’s get this show on the road.” The phrase “Let’s get this show on the road” (road) is very informal and is used to begin something, such as a meeting, or a trip. “Let’s get this show on the road” is sometimes used to express impatience (that you want things to move faster or to begin right away). Here, Shawn is just using it as a way of starting the discussion. The phrase tries to give you more energy and make people excited about what they’re going to do next.

Shawn says that this is an open discussion and asks who wants to begin. An “open discussion” is a discussion where anyone can participate, without raising their hand first. In normal meetings, if you want to talk, you normally will put your hand up in the air so that the person who is leading, or running, the meeting can call on you – can say, “Okay, you can go next.” But in open discussion, people can usually talk and participate without raising their hands first.

Chris begins by talking to Hannah, saying that he has been knee-deep in her data for months. The expression to “be knee (knee) -deep (deep)” in something means to be very involved in something or to be surrounded by something. In this case, Chris has been working with Hannah’s data for months and is very familiar with it. You might also use this expression, “knee-deep,” in talking about a project that you are doing at work that you have been working on for a long time and that is a lot of work. Or you might be knee-deep in emails (you have lots and lots of emails).

Chris says that there’s something he has to get off his chest (chest). The expression “to get something off your chest” means to talk about something that has been bothering you or worrying you for a long time. If your friend has been, for example, borrowing money from you for weeks but has not given the money back to you – has not paid you back – you might say to him, “I have to get something off my chest, because it really bothers me that you are taking my



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money without paying it back.” Of course, you have to be a pretty good friend to say something like that, but it’s a way of saying I am now going to tell you something that may be uncomfortable, or that you may not like, but that has been bothering me.

Chris asks Hannah why she didn’t ask the focus groups about the product’s color and design. This is what Chris has wanted to get off his chest; he wanted to ask that question of Hannah. Hannah answers his question by saying, “I can see your point, Chris.” To “see someone’s point” means to understand what someone is saying. If your sister thinks that a television show is bad and you agree with her, you might say, “I see your point.” But you can also use this expression even if you don’t agree with the other person, but you understand what they are saying.

Even though Hannah understands why Chris is asking the question, she doesn’t agree with him. She says, “Based on past experience (meaning her past experience, or the past experience with the company), we know that customers mostly consider ‘affordability’ and ‘ease of use’” to decide which product to buy. She says to Chris, “I can’t go into this in detail now.” To “go into something in detail” (detail) means to discuss or talk about something – talking about all the specific issues or problems, to talk about it in a lot of detail. Right now, in this lesson, we’re going into detail about the meaning of the new vocabulary words used at informal meetings. We’re talking about it a lot; we’re giving all of the specifics. When Hannah says she can’t go into detail now, she means that she doesn’t have time to explain things in detail, specifically, at this moment.

Finally, Hannah says that most customers want reliability, meaning they want the product to work, and that the design is secondary. If we say that something is “secondary” (secondary), we mean that something is less important than another thing. If you look at the word “secondary,” you can see the word “second,” meaning number two, so something that is secondary is less important. Something that would be number one – that would be most important – we would call “primary” (primary). In this case, design is less important than reliability – it’s secondary; reliability is primary. You might also say that being able to write in English is secondary if you have to speak it at your job, meaning it’s more important for you to be able to speak English than to write in English, for example.

Next Alex begins to speak and says that Chris has brought up an interesting point. To “bring up” something means to raise a topic or to introduce something into your discussion or your conversation. For example, teachers like it when students bring up interesting questions in class. But even though Chris brings up



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an interesting point, or presents an interesting idea, Alex thinks that Hannah is right, or correct. He says, “Don’t take this the wrong way, Chris.” The phrase to “take something the wrong way” means to be offended, to be mad, to be insulted by something that someone says. Alex is saying, “Don’t take this the wrong way,” because he is going to say something to Chris that he may not like, that may make him angry or mad. So he’s saying, “I don’t want you to be mad about what I am going to tell you right now.” He doesn’t want Chris to be offended or upset by what he’s going to say, which is that engineers and customers don’t always have the same interests.

Alex finishes by saying, “But of course, I’m not a marketing expert by any means.” The phrase “by any means” (means) is used to mean at all, or in any way. Alex means that there’s no way that anyone could consider him to be a marketing expert, and Alex agrees with that assessment; he’s not a marketing expert. I might say, I am not an expert in German linguistics by any means,” meaning I don’t have any knowledge in that area, or I am not an expert at all. This is similar to Alex’s statement that marketing was outside the scope of his expertise in the formal meeting; it has the same effect. You might say also, for example, you’re a good musician, but not professional by any means. This would mean that you enjoy music, you’re good at playing music, but you aren’t good enough to be paid for it – to get a full-time job doing it.

That covers the new vocabulary in the informal meeting. Let’s listen to the discussion again, this time when the conversation is a little faster.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: **Let’s get this show on the road.** This is an open discussion, so who wants to start off?

Chris: Hannah, even though I’ve **been knee-deep in** your data for months, there’s something I have **to get off my chest**. Why didn’t you ask the focus groups about our product’s color and design?

Hannah: I can **see your point**, Chris, but based on past experience, we know that customers mostly consider “affordability” and “ease of use” when deciding which product to buy. I can’t **go into this in detail** now, but most customers just want reliability, and the design is **secondary**.

Alex: Chris, you’ve **brought up** an interesting point, but I think Hannah is right. Don’t **take this the wrong way**, Chris, but the interests of



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engineers and our customers aren't the same. But of course, I'm not a marketing expert **by any means**.

[end of informal meeting script]

Now you understand the vocabulary needed to participate in discussions at formal and informal meetings. In our next episode, number eight, we're going to study the vocabulary for taking questions, or accepting and answering questions from other people at a meeting.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



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SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Shawn: Mr. Hanson, was Ms. Graff able **to allay** your concern? Good. Now we have time for only two more questions. Ms. Graff?

Hannah: My question is for Mr. Hanson. **I was wondering** whether you could **expand on** the section regarding product design. **Am I correct in assuming that** you want to offer the product in more colors?

Chris: **Let me see if I can shed better light on that.** Although colors may not be as important to consumers, **we are of the opinion that** having more variety will increase sales....

Hannah: Is that the only reason?

Chris: Please let me **finish my thought.** Another reason, which may be **beyond the scope of** your question, is that the increase in our costs will be small. Have I answered your question?

Shawn: Yes, **certainly**, Chris. You've made it clear for all of us. And now for our final question. Mr. Aurora?

Alex: **Given** the growing competition, **is it possible** for us **to drop** this product and move into a different market? **Can you speak to the implications** this would have on our strategy?

Shawn: We did consider that **option**, but we quickly **dismissed** it. We believe that we should **stick to** our **core competencies** and improve the product we currently have.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Shawn: I'm afraid we're **running out of time.** Let's **take** two more questions.

Hannah: Let me **jump in** with a question for Chris. Chris, I think your memo **hit the nail on the head.** But let me play **devil's advocate** for a minute. Our focus groups weren't very interested in design. Why are you suggesting that we offer the product in more colors?



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Chris: **I can see your point, but** we think that having more colors will raise sales at least a little bit. And we can do it very inexpensively.

Hannah: Oh, I see. That **clears things up** for me. Thanks.

Shawn: Alex, did you **have your hand up**?

Alex: I did. Thanks, Shawn. **What I'd like to know is** whether your team has thought about developing an entirely new product and entering a different market.

Shawn: Yes, we have, but we've **ruled it out** for now. We think it's best to use our company's strengths and improve our current product, rather than creating something new.

GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

to allay – to make someone stop worrying about something; to make something stop being a problem

* Maggie's worst fears were allayed when the doctor said that she didn't have any serious medical problems.

I was wondering... – I would like to know; I'm curious about

* I was wondering if he went to my high school because he looks very familiar.

to expand on (something) – to provide more detail about something; to describe something in more detail or to provide more information

* Can you please expand on your reasons for believing that we need a bigger office?

Am I correct in assuming that – Is what I'm saying correct? Do I understand you correctly?

* Since you don't eat ice cream or cheese, am I correct in assuming that you're allergic to milk?



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Let me see if I can shed better light on (something) – I am going to try to explain something better; I will try to help you understand something better

* Mr. Bale, I understand that you're confused about your telephone bill. Let me see if I can shed better light on how the costs are calculated.

to be of the opinion that – to believe that; to think that; to have the opinion that

* We are of the opinion that families should be together during the holidays, so my brothers and sisters always travel home for Christmas.

to finish (one's) thought – to finish talking about something; to say everything that one thinks about something without interruption

* He was telling them about his new business, but he couldn't finish his thought because his cell phone rang.

beyond the scope of (something) – not related to something; off topic

* Calling customers is beyond the scope of her job, but she agreed to do it because the other department needed her help.

certainly – definitely; without any doubt; for sure

* I certainly don't want to make you feel bad, but this report needs a lot of work.

given – considering; with reference to; in light of

* Given your high blood pressure, the doctor recommends eating less salt.

is it possible – can one do something; is it feasible; would one be able to do something

* Is it possible for you to take Shelly to school today? I don't think I'll have time.

to drop – to stop doing something; to leave something; to no longer use or produce something

* We dropped our home telephone service. We've decided to use only our cell phones for all of our calls.

can you speak to (something) – can you talk about something; can you address something; can you give more information or detail about something

* Mr. President, can you speak to how you're going to change science education in our country?

implication – consequence of doing something; what will happen if one does or does not do something; what doing something will mean

* One of the implications of email is that people send fewer regular letters to each other.



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option – choice; one way to do something; possibility

* You have three options: you can register for classes online, over the phone, or in the registration office.

to dismiss – to decide not to do something; to decide against something; to decide not to consider doing something

* Her proposal to improve the company's services was dismissed as being too expensive.

to stick to (something) – to continue to do or use something; to not change what one is doing

* Flying to Hawaii is too expensive. Let's stick to our original plan to spend our vacation closer to home this year.

core competency – something that a business is very good at doing; something that a company is known to be an expert in doing

* That company's services are very expensive, but its core competency is quick and friendly service, so many people are willing to pay more.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

to run out of time – to not have very much time left to do something; to be near the end of something; to have little time remaining

* The students were running out of time to finish their assignment, so they had to stay awake all night to work on it.

to take a question – to allow people in the audience to ask a question

* The spokesperson will take only five questions from reporters today.

to jump in – to join a discussion; to begin participating in something without delay

* The professor invited all the students to jump in and give their opinions.

to hit the nail on the head – to be exactly right; to do exactly what something was supposed to do

* Mindy's essay hit the nail on the head and the professor gave her an A+.

devil's advocate – a person who presents an unpopular or the opposite opinion in order to make the discussion better

* It's always a good idea to have one devil's advocate at a business meeting because it makes everyone think about other possible opinions.



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I can see your point, but... – I understand what you're saying, but I disagree with you; I understand your opinion, but I think you need to consider something else

* I can see your point about how owning your own business is a good idea, but I don't have enough money to start my own business right now.

to clear things up – to make things clearer or easier to understand; to clarify

* They had a big fight, but afterwards they talked for a half hour and cleared things up.

to have (one's) hand up – to hold one's hand in the air showing that one wants to speak or ask a question

* Georgette has had her hand up for almost ten minutes, but the speaker still hasn't seen her.

What I'd like to know is... – I would like to know; I want to know; Please tell me

* Dean says that he got his graduate degree in just six months, but what I'd like to know is whether it was from a real university or a school that exists only online.

to rule (something) out – to consider something as an option and then decide not to do it; to consider a list of things and decide not to use something

* We ruled out going to Alaska for vacation, because none of us like cold weather.

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson eight. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the seventh lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for managing discussions. In this eighth lesson, we're going to learn how to take questions. That is, how to accept and answer questions from the audience.

First we'll listen to the formal meeting at a slow speed.

[start of formal meeting script]



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- Shawn: Mr. Hanson, was Ms. Graff able **to allay** your concern? Good. Now we have time for only two more questions. Ms. Graff?
- Hannah: My question is for Mr. Hanson. **I was wondering** whether you could **expand on** the section regarding product design. **Am I correct in assuming that** you want to offer the product in more colors?
- Chris: **Let me see if I can shed better light on that.** Although colors may not be as important to consumers, **we are of the opinion that** having more variety will increase sales....
- Hannah: Is that the only reason?
- Chris: Please let me **finish my thought.** Another reason, which may be **beyond the scope of** your question, is that the increase in our costs will be small. Have I answered your question?
- Shawn: Yes, **certainly**, Chris. You've made it clear for all of us. And now for our final question. Mr. Aurora?
- Alex: **Given** the growing competition, **is it possible** for us **to drop** this product and move into a different market? **Can you speak to the implications** this would have on our strategy?
- Shawn: We did consider that **option**, but we quickly **dismissed** it. We believe that we should **stick to** our **core competencies** and improve the product we currently have.

[end of formal meeting script]

This part of the meeting begins by Shawn asking Chris whether Hannah has allayed his concerns. "To allay" (allay) means to make someone stop worrying about something, or to make something stop being a problem. Shawn could have asked whether Hannah had answered Chris's question, and that would mean the same thing as allay. When we say that you "allay" someone's concern, we mean that the person has an answer to their question, and they are no longer worried about it. You can answer someone's question, however, without allaying their concern; they could understand your answer but still be worried about it. So, Shawn is asking whether Chris has had his concerns allayed by Hannah. Chris nods (nods) his head, or moves his head up and down to indicate that yes, his question has been answered. We use this verb "to nod" when we are talking about saying "yes" by moving your head up and down. If you're going to say



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“no,” moving your head from side to side, we would probably use the verb “shake” (shake). So he shakes his head “no,” but he nods his head “yes.” Chris is nodding his head, saying that his question has been answered and his concern has been allayed. Shawn says “Good. Now we have time for only two more questions.”

Hannah asks the first question of Chris. She says “I was wondering whether you could expand on the section regarding product design.” The phrase “I was wondering...” means I would like to know, or I’m curious about something. You might be wondering, or wanting to know, whether this is the way people really speak at business meetings, and I can tell you that yes, it is. Hannah is wondering, or wants to know, whether Chris can expand on the section regarding product design. “To expand (expand) on something” means to provide more detail about something, to describe something in more detail, or to provide more information. Hannah wants more information about product design. We could expand, for example, on this definition more – give you more information, more details, but I think you probably understand it already. Hannah asks, “Am I correct in assuming that you want to offer the product in more colors?” The phrase, “Am I correct in assuming...” means “Is what I am saying right? Is what I am saying the truth, is it correct?” It could also mean “Do I understand what you are saying correctly?” She’s repeating what she understood from what Chris had said earlier, and she’s asking Chris to say whether or not she understood him correctly; did she get the right idea from Chris’s explanation.

Chris responds to Hannah by saying, “Let me see if I can shed better light on that.” The phrase “Let me see if I can shed (shed) better light on something” means “I’m going to try to explain something better,” or “I will try to help you understand something better.” That is to “shed more light,” or “better light” on something. In this case, it means that Chris is going to offer another explanation of what he said earlier, using more detail and, perhaps, different words. Chris says, “Although colors may not be as important to consumers, we are of the opinion that having more variety will increase sales.” “To be of the opinion that...” is a very formal phrase that means to believe, to think, or to have an opinion that something is true. Chris could simply say “we think that having more variety will increase sales,” and it would be the same thing – the same meaning, but it’s more formal to say “we are of the opinion that having more variety will increase sales.”

Hannah interrupts Chris by saying, “Is that the only reason?” before he finishes speaking. So, Hannah is interrupting, or talking, while Chris is trying to talk. Of course, Chris doesn’t like being interrupted, so he says politely back to Hannah, “Please let me finish my thought.” “To finish your thought” means to finish talking



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about something, or to say everything that you think about something without interruption – without someone else speaking while you are speaking. When Chris says “Please let me finish my thought,” then, he means “Please let me continue and finish what I am saying.” Chris goes on to say that another reason, which may be beyond the scope of Hannah’s question, is that the increase in costs will be small. The expression “beyond the scope” (scope) is a little bit like the expression “off topic,” which was discussed in an earlier lesson. “Beyond the scope of something” means not related to what is being discussed. Portuguese vocabulary, for example, is beyond the scope of this lesson, because it’s about English vocabulary. Chris means that one of his reasons for wanting to offer the product in more colors is that it will not increase costs very much, but he thinks that cost reduction isn’t related to Hannah’s original question, so he says it’s “beyond the scope” of her question. Then he asks, “Have I answered your question?” This is a polite thing to ask after answering a difficult question, because it lets the other person ask for more information – ask additional questions if he or she wants to.

Shawn speaks next by saying “Yes, certainly, Chris.” “Certainly” (certainly) means definitely, without any doubt, for sure. Shawn is saying that Chris entirely, or completely, answered Hannah’s questions. I certainly hope that you understand what this new word “certainly” means – for sure, without any doubt, definitely. Shawn says that Chris has made the subject clear, or understandable, for everyone. He calls on Alex for the final question, meaning he sees Alex’s hand raised and gives Alex permission to speak.

So Alex says, “Given the growing competition...” The word “given” (given) in this case means considering, with reference to, we might also say “in light of.” “Given the growing competition” – when we think about, or when we consider the growing competition. Given the possibility that it might rain, you should bring an umbrella. That’s like saying if you think about, if you consider the fact that it might rain, then you should bring an umbrella so you don’t get wet. Alex says, “Given the growing competition (or the increasing amount of competition), is it possible for us to drop this product and move into a different market?” The phrase, “Is it possible?” means, “Can we do this?” – “Is it feasible?” (feasible). To be “feasible” means you can do it. In other words, Shawn is asking, “Can we drop this product?” The verb “to drop” (drop), here, means to stop doing something, to leave something, or to no longer use or produce something. Alex wants to know whether the company can stop making this product and move into a different market, meaning produce or make a new product. At the university, for example, you might drop a course, meaning that you stop taking the class, or you might drop your membership to a local gym or health club. “To drop,” then, means to stop doing or stop using something.



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Alex then asks, “Can you speak to the implications this (that is, making a new product) would have on our strategy?” “Can you speak to the implications this would have on our strategy?” The phrase, “Can you speak to something?” means “Can you talk about this thing?”, “Can you address this issue?”, “Can you give us more information about it?” Alex wants someone to talk about the implications that changing products would have on the company’s strategy, or its plans for the future. An “implication” (implication) is a consequence or result of doing something. It’s what something will mean, or what will happen if you do something. What are implications of us not getting gas for our car? The implication would be that you will run out of gas and you will not be able to use your car. That’s a consequence or result of something. So, Alex is asking what will happen if the company starts making a new product.

Shawn answers Alex’s question by saying that the team did consider that option, but quickly dismissed it. An “option” (option) is a choice, a possibility, one way to do something. When you fly on a plane, for example, they may give you two options for dinner: chicken or beef. The Vision Corporation team had three options: to change the product, to continue to sell the same product, or to begin to make a different product. Shawn says that the team did consider the option of making a different product, but quickly dismissed it. “To dismiss (dismiss) something” means to decide not to do something, to decide against something, or to decide not to consider doing something. Shawn’s team considered the option of making other products, but then they dismissed it, or decided that it was not a good idea. For example, you might consider the idea of going to the state of Alaska for your winter vacation, but after looking at the temperature in Alaska during the wintertime, you dismiss that idea – you decide not to do it.

Finally, Shawn says, “We believe that we should stick to our core competencies and improve the product we currently have.” “To stick (stick) to something” means to continue to do something or to use something. “To stick to something” means not to change what you are doing. For example, you might stick to the same kind of toothpaste for many years, meaning that you continue to use that one kind of toothpaste – you don’t change. Shawn wants to stick to, or to continue to use, the company’s core competencies. A “core (core) competency (competency)” is something that your company or business does very well, or something that the company is known to be an expert in. One of Vision Corporation’s core competencies is producing, or making, this product – that’s what they’re good at. That’s why Shawn thinks that the company should stick to, or continue to make, the current product, improving the product instead of deciding to make a new one.



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Let's listen to these questions and answers at the formal meeting again, this time at a faster rate of speech.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: Mr. Hanson, was Ms. Graff able **to allay** your concern? Good. Now we have time for only two more questions. Ms. Graff?

Hannah: My question is for Mr. Hanson. **I was wondering** whether you could **expand on** the section regarding product design. **Am I correct in assuming that** you want to offer the product in more colors?

Chris: **Let me see if I can shed better light on that.** Although colors may not be as important to consumers, **we are of the opinion that** having more variety will increase sales....

Hannah: Is that the only reason?

Chris: Please let me **finish my thought.** Another reason, which may be **beyond the scope of** your question, is that the increase in our costs will be small. Have I answered your question?

Shawn: Yes, **certainly**, Chris. You've made it clear for all of us. And now for our final question. Mr. Aurora?

Alex: **Given** the growing competition, **is it possible** for us **to drop** this product and move into a different market? **Can you speak to the implications** this would have on our strategy?

Shawn: We did consider that **option**, but we quickly **dismissed** it. We believe that we should **stick to** our **core competencies** and improve the product we currently have.

[end of formal meeting script]

As you can see, there are a lot of opinions at this meeting and everyone wants to get as much information as they can. Now that we've heard how they speak at a formal meeting, let's listen to the same conversation at an informal business meeting.

[start of informal meeting script]



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Shawn: I'm afraid we're **running out of time**. Let's **take** two more questions.

Hannah: Let me **jump in** with a question for Chris. Chris, I think your memo **hit the nail on the head**. But let me play **devil's advocate** for a minute. Our focus groups weren't very interested in design. Why are you suggesting that we offer the product in more colors?

Chris: **I can see your point, but** we think that having more colors will raise sales at least a little bit. And we can do it very inexpensively.

Hannah: Oh, I see. That **clears things up** for me. Thanks.

Shawn: Alex, did you **have your hand up**?

Alex: I did. Thanks, Shawn. **What I'd like to know is** whether your team has thought about developing an entirely new product and entering a different market.

Shawn: Yes, we have, but we've **ruled it out** for now. We think it's best to use our company's strengths and improve our current product, rather than creating something new.

[end of informal meeting script]

Shawn begins this part of the meeting by saying, "I'm afraid we're running out of time." "To run out of time" means not to have very much time left to do something, to be near the end of something, or to have very little time remaining. Shawn is apologizing that they are almost at the end of the meeting and there isn't very much time left for more questions. Because there's so little time left, Shawn says that he can take only two more questions. "To take a question" means to allow people who are at the meeting to ask a question. After most speeches or lectures, the speaker often takes questions from the audience.

Hannah takes the first question by saying "Let me jump in with a question for Chris." "To jump in" means to join a discussion, or to begin participating in something right away, without delaying. Hannah means that she has a question for Chris and she wants to ask it right now. We also use this expression, "to jump in," when two other people or a group of people are talking and you want to ask a question or make a comment, you might say "Let me jump in here." Or, "Can I jump in here and ask a question?" Hannah is telling Chris that she thinks his memo hit the nail on the head. A "nail" (nail) is a long, thin piece of metal that has a point on one end – it's sharp on one end – and you use it to hold together



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two pieces of wood together. You usually use a hammer to hit the nail into the wood. The “head” of the nail is the flat part on top that you hit with the hammer. Literally, “to hit the nail on the head” means to move the hammer so that it hits the top of the head of the nail and pushes it into the wood. But here, we’re using this expression to mean that Chris is exactly correct, or is doing something exactly the way it should be done. Hannah means that Chris’s memo said exactly what it should have said. It “hit the nail on the head” – it addressed or talked about the issues that it should have talked about and addressed. In other words, Hannah liked the memo. But, she says, she wants to play the devil’s advocate for a minute. A “devil’s (devil’s) advocate (advocate)” is a person who presents an unpopular or opposing opinion in order to make the discussion better. The “devil” is, in Christian belief, the spirit or the force that causes evil or bad things in the world. The “devil’s advocate” would be the lawyer for the devil. An “advocate” is someone who is in favor of a certain position; a lawyer is an example of an advocate. So, the “devil’s advocate” is someone who tries to present another view – an opposite view. If you’re at a meeting, for example, and everyone agrees about something, one person may say, “Let me play (or be) the devil’s advocate and give a different opinion.” This helps people discuss the ideas and give the idea more consideration. When playing the devil’s advocate – and notice we use the verb “to play” with this expression – in playing the devil’s advocate, Hannah says that her focus groups weren’t very interested in design and asks Chris why he is suggesting that the company offer the product in more colors.

Chris responds, or answers her by saying, “I can see your point, but we think that having more colors will raise sales at least a little bit.” The phrase, “I can see your point, but...” is used to mean, “I understand what you’re saying, but I disagree with you,” or “I understand your opinion, but I think you need to consider (or think about) something else.” Chris means that he has heard and understood what Hannah said, but he has a different opinion: he thinks that having more colors will raise, or increase, sales. Chris also says that the company can offer the product in more colors without raising cost, meaning it would not cost the company more money.

Hannah then says, “Oh, I see,” meaning “I understand.” She says, “That clears things up for me. Thanks.” “To clear things up” means to clarify, to make things easier to understand. I hope that I’m clearing things up by talking about the vocabulary used in this meeting.

Next Shawn speaks and says, “Alex, did you have your hand up?” “To have one’s hand up” means to hold your hand in the air showing that you want to speak or ask a question. When you have a question in class, in a school, you



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normally raise your hand. When the teacher sees that you have your hand up, he or she might call on you, saying your name and giving you permission to ask your question.

Alex says that yes, he did have his hand up. He says, “What I’d like to know is whether your team has thought about developing an entirely new product and entering a different market.” The phrase “What I’d like to know is...” means “I would like to know...”, “I want to know...”, or “Please tell me....” Alex would like to know, or wants to know, whether the team considered the option, or the possibility, of having Vision Corporation start making a different type of product.

Shawn replies by saying yes, the team considered that option, but it has ruled it out. “To rule (rule) something out” means to consider something – to think about something – as a possibility, as an option, but then to decide not to do it, or to consider a list of things and decide not to use one of those things. We ruled it out; we decided we weren’t going to do it. Shawn’s team began with a list of options and one of the ones that they decided not to use was to make a new product. Why? Because the team thinks it’s best to use the company’s strengths, or core competencies, to improve the product it already has rather than, or instead of creating a new product. If you get sick when you see blood, for example, you might rule out being a doctor as your career – as what you want to do in your life because as a doctor, you have to see a lot of blood.

Now let’s listen to the informal meeting again, this time when they’re speaking at a normal speed.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: I’m afraid we’re **running out of time**. Let’s **take** two more questions.

Hannah: Let me **jump in** with a question for Chris. Chris, I think your memo **hit the nail on the head**. But let me play **devil’s advocate** for a minute. Our focus groups weren’t very interested in design. Why are you suggesting that we offer the product in more colors?

Chris: **I can see your point, but** we think that having more colors will raise sales at least a little bit. And we can do it very inexpensively.

Hannah: Oh, I see. That **clears things up** for me. Thanks.

Shawn: Alex, did you **have your hand up**?



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Alex: I did. Thanks, Shawn. **What I'd like to know is** whether your team has thought about developing an entirely new product and entering a different market.

Shawn: Yes, we have, but we've **ruled it out** for now. We think it's best to use our company's strengths and improve our current product, rather than creating something new.

[end of informal meeting script]

I hope that this lesson has helped you understand how to take questions at a formal and informal business meeting. In our next lesson, number nine, we're going to study the business vocabulary for ending a topic and planning for the future at both formal and informal meetings.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 9 – Ending a Topic / Planning for the Future

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Shawn: Unfortunately, our time together is **drawing to a close** and we won't be able to take any more questions today. I have been very **favorably impressed** by today's discussion, but **a great deal** of work **remains** to be done.

I propose that we **form** two **committees** to focus on the major **outstanding** issues. Ms. Graff, I would like you to **head** the first committee, which is **charged with** developing a new marketing campaign that will help us reach our target market. Mr. Hanson, you will be the **chairperson** of the second committee, which will begin making the proposed product changes **ASAP**.

I would also like **to establish** a regular meeting schedule so that we can **convene** and have the committees **report back** to the larger group about their progress. If this **time slot** is **convenient** for everyone, I propose that we meet at this time every Tuesday for the next two months. At that point, we can **reevaluate** our situation and **determine** whether we would like to continue with the meetings.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Shawn: We're almost out of time, so we need to end our **question-and-answer** session. I think we're **heading down the right path** with today's discussion, but we still have a lot of work **ahead of us**.

For us **to move ahead with** these changes, we'll need to create two committees: one for our new marketing campaign, and one for improving our product. Hannah and Chris, I'd like you **to be in charge of** each of these committees.

It will be important for everyone to get together regularly so that we can **monitor** the committees' progress. Let's **plan on** meeting **once a week**. Does this time on Tuesday **work for** everyone? Let's try it for two months and then we can make a decision as to whether we'd like to continue meeting so frequently.



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GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

to draw to a close – to be ending; to be finishing

* After three days of presentations and discussions, the workshop is finally drawing to a close.

favorably impressed – having a positive opinion of something; feeling admiration or respect for something

* They were so favorably impressed by Gerry's presentation that they're going to make him vice president.

a great deal – much; a large part; a large portion

* A great deal of his job requires traveling internationally.

to remain – to still be present; to not be gone or finished yet

* Are you going to remain in town for a few days after the conference, or will you go home right away?

to form – to create; to make; to build

* Did you hear that airplane pilots have formed a new professional association?

committee – a small group that works on a specific project, usually in an office or organization

* Who wants to join the ticket sales committee?

outstanding – not yet finished; ongoing; continuing; still needed

* They were able to hire three new people, but they have an outstanding need for another engineer.

to head – to lead; to be in charge of; to be the leader for

* Thelma has been asked to head the Physics Department at the university.

to be charged with (something) – to be given responsibility for something; to be placed in control of something; to be told to lead something

* The police department is charged with improving public safety in this city.

chairperson – a person who leads a committee; a committee leader

* A committee chairperson must be very well organized and able to lead discussions.



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ASAP / as soon as possible – without delay; right away

* Quick! I need you to send an email to our customer ASAP so he receives it before he leaves his office today.

to establish – to create; to make

* The students want to establish an acting club at their school.

to convene – to meet; to have many people come together for a meeting

* We've done enough for one day. Let's convene again on Wednesday at 11:30.

to report back – to return to a larger group of people and provide information about what one has done since the last meeting

* Today, Jennifer is going to report back to the whole department about what her team learned from the financial analysts.

time slot – a date and time on one's schedule

* Does your trainer at the gym have an open time slot today at 3:00?

convenient – easily fitting with one's schedule and other activities; not conflicting with one's other activities or plans; not creating problems

* Living downtown is convenient because we can walk to most places quickly and easily.

to reevaluate – to reconsider; to think about something again and decide whether it is good or bad

* I think that we should reevaluate our decision to buy a home this year because the market isn't very good right now.

to determine – to decide; to know for sure

* How will you determine which kind of car will work best for a family of five?

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

question and answer – an opportunity to ask questions and get answers from experts; an informational session where one can ask for additional information after someone has made a presentation

* Most websites have a question-and-answer page known as "FAQs" that stands for "Frequently Asked Questions."



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to head down the right path – to work on the right thing in the right way; to do what one should be doing

* No, we haven't found the problem yet, but we're headed down the right path by looking at the engine and we should know what's wrong with your car in a few hours.

ahead of (one) – in one's future; waiting for one

* Carlton has a lot of time ahead of him to make that decision.

to move ahead with (something) – to begin doing the next step or stage of something

* Our family bought the land many years ago, but we haven't moved head with our plan to turn it into a public garden.

to be in charge of (something) – to lead something; to have responsibility for something

* Who is in charge of finding a band for the wedding?

to monitor – to watch something to see whether and how it changes over time; to check on the progress of something, such as a project

* The doctor wants to monitor the health of the patient after his operation.

to plan on (something) – to decide to do something in the future; to make a plan

* Roberta had planned on going to Denver for a meeting, but there was too much snow overnight and her flight was canceled.

once a week – one time per week; weekly

* My mother came over to my apartment and said, "You should clean your bathroom once a week!"

to work for (someone) – to be convenient for someone; to not create problems for someone

* I'm really tired. Will it work for you if we go to the movies next week instead of tonight as we had planned?



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson nine. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the eighth lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for taking questions at formal and informal business meetings. Now, in this ninth lesson, we're going to learn how to end a topic and plan for the future at business meetings.

Let's listen to Shawn speak at the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: Unfortunately, our time together is **drawing to a close** and we won't be able to take any more questions today. I have been very **favorably impressed** by today's discussion, but **a great deal** of work **remains** to be done.

I propose that we **form** two **committees** to focus on the major **outstanding** issues. Ms. Graff, I would like you to **head** the first committee, which is **charged with** developing a new marketing campaign that will help us reach our target market. Mr. Hanson, you will be the **chairperson** of the second committee, which will begin making the proposed product changes **ASAP**.

I would also like to **establish** a regular meeting schedule so that we can **convene** and have the committees **report back** to the larger group about their progress. If this **time slot** is **convenient** for everyone, I propose that we meet at this time every Tuesday for the next two months. At that point, we can **reevaluate** our situation and **determine** whether we would like to continue with the meetings.

[end of formal meeting script]

Shawn begins this section by saying, "Unfortunately, our time together is drawing to a close and we won't be able to take any more questions today." "To draw to a close" means to be ending or finishing something. You might feel sad when your vacation draws to a close, for example. Our "Business Meeting" course is drawing to a close because we are already in the ninth lesson and there's only



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one more left. Shawn can't take any more questions because their time together drawing to a close, or ending.

Shawn says that he has been very favorably impressed by today's discussion. The expression "favorably impressed" (impressed) means having a positive opinion of something, or a feeling of admiration or respect for something. In other words, he liked the discussion and is pleased with it. We always hope that our bosses are favorably impressed with our work, meaning they like it. Shawn says that "a great deal of work remains to be done." A "great deal" means much, a large part, or a large portion of something, so a great deal of work means a lot of work. You might own, for example, a great deal of land – you would have a lot of land. "To remain" (remain) means to be present, or to not be gone or finished yet. You might, for example, remain at the office until 8:00 if there's a lot of work to do – you will stay at the office until 8:00 p.m. When Shawn says that "a great deal of work remains to be done," he means there is still a lot of work to do and they haven't finished working on these problems.

Shawn proposes, or suggests a plan, to form two committees. The verb "to form," here, means to create, or to make. It can also be used to mean to build something – to make it bigger. You might form, or create, a club or an association in your community. A "committee" is a small group of people that works on a specific project, usually in an office or in an organization. Sometimes it is difficult to have large groups of people all trying to work on something, so businesses often have committees do the work instead. These are smaller groups of people. There are sales committees, marketing committees, technology committees, and so on. Shawn proposes forming two committees, or making two small groups "to focus on the major outstanding issues." If something is "outstanding," we mean that it is continuing or ongoing, something that is not yet finished. That's one use of the word "outstanding," the word "outstanding" can also be used to mean great or wonderful. Someone who is the best in their area would be "outstanding." Here it means not finished – not completed. The people at this meeting, that we have been listening to, have not decided how they are going to change the marketing campaign or the product, so these are still outstanding issues – they aren't finished yet.

Shawn asks Hannah to head the first committee. "To head" (head) something means to lead or to be in charge of something. Shawn is asking Hannah to be the leader of the committee. A president of a company heads her business; that's because she is the leader, she is the one who takes care of or is in charge of. Shawn says that Hannah's committee is charged with developing a new market campaign that will help the company reach its target market. The expression "to be charged with something," here, means to be given



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responsibility for something, to be told to lead something, or be placed in control of something. “To be charged with” has other meanings as well: it’s often used in a legal sense. When you commit a crime – when you do something wrong – and the police catch you, they can “charge” you with a crime – they can accuse you of doing something wrong. Here, however, “to be charged with” means to be given the responsibility to do. So, Hannah’s committee is responsible for developing a new marketing campaign.

Next Shawn asks Chris to be the chairperson of the second committee. A “chairperson” is a person who heads or leads the committee. So the leader of the committee is usually called a “chairperson.” It could be a “chairman” for a man, or a “chairwoman” for a woman; a more general term is “chairperson” (all one word – chairperson). The word “chairperson” has become more common in American businesses to refer to both men and women. Shawn says that Chris’s committee will begin making the proposed product changes ASAP. “ASAP” (all capital letters) is an abbreviation for “as soon as possible” and means, here, without delay or right away. If someone says he needs something ASAP, he means he needs it immediately – right away. Shawn, here, is saying that Chris’s committee should start making the changes on the product as soon and as quickly as it can.

Shawn says that he would like to establish a regular meeting schedule. “To establish” (establish) means to create or to make something – to start something. An organization might be established, for example, or created. Shawn wants the group to establish, or create, a schedule for meeting regularly – for meeting every week or every month; that would be to “meet regularly.” Shawn says he wants a schedule of when the committee will convene. “To convene” (convene) is a formal verb, a formal way of saying to meet, or to have people come together for a meeting. You can say “We are going to convene a meeting,” meaning we are going to have a meeting – we are going to meet together to talk. Shawn says that when the group convenes, or meets the whole group, the committees will report back to the larger group about their progress. “To report back” means to return to a larger group of people and give them information about what you have done since the last meeting. So if you meet every month, you would report back to the committee about what you did in the past month. Here, the committees are going to report back to the whole group to say what they’ve done.

Shawn says that if this time slot is convenient for everyone, he proposes, or suggests, meeting every Tuesday for the next two months. A “time slot” (slot) is a date and time on your schedule. For example, many people have their lunch time slot between 12:00 and 1:00 in the afternoon. When Shawn says he wants a time slot that is convenient (convenient), he means easily fitting into one’s



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schedule or other activities, or not creating problems by conflicting with another plan or activity that you have. You want something so that everyone can “make it” to the meeting – everyone can go to the meeting. It should be at a convenient time that people are able to actually go. Shawn is saying that if the time slot, or date and time, when they are meeting currently is convenient for everyone, or easily fitting into everyone’s schedule, then he thinks they should meet at the same time every Tuesday for the next two months. Shawn says that at this point, two month from now, the group can reevaluate the situation and determine whether it would like to continue with the meetings. “To reevaluate” (reevaluate) means to look at something again – to evaluate it again, to reconsider, or to think about something again and decide whether you like it or don’t like it, whether it is good or bad. You might, for example, reevaluate your decision to buy a new car – you’ll think about it again to see if it really is a good idea. “To determine” means to decide something or to know something for sure. For example, you might determine, or decide, this isn’t the best time to buy a new car and that you should wait until next year. Shawn is saying that two months from now the group can reevaluate, or look at again, its meeting schedule and determine, or decide, whether it wants to continue meeting every Tuesday.

Shawn has ended the discussion, from the previous lesson, and is helping the group plan for the future, or decide what will happen once this meeting has ended. Let’s listen to him again, this time when he is speaking at a normal rate of speech.

[start of formal meeting script]

Shawn: Unfortunately, our time together is **drawing to a close** and we won’t be able to take any more questions today. I have been very **favorably impressed** by today’s discussion, but a **great deal** of work **remains** to be done.

I propose that we **form** two **committees** to focus on the major **outstanding** issues. Ms. Graff, I would like you to **head** the first committee, which is **charged with** developing a new marketing campaign that will help us reach our target market. Mr. Hanson, you will be the **chairperson** of the second committee, which will begin making the proposed product changes **ASAP**.

I would also like **to establish** a regular meeting schedule so that we can **convene** and have the committees **report back** to the larger group about their progress. If this **time slot** is **convenient** for everyone, I propose that we meet at this time every Tuesday for the



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next two months. At that point, we can **reevaluate** our situation and **determine** whether we would like to continue with the meetings.

[end of formal meeting script]

Now let's listen to how Shawn ends the topic and prepares for the future at an informal meeting.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: We're almost out of time, so we need to end our **question-and-answer** session. I think we're **heading down the right path** with today's discussion, but we still have a lot of work **ahead of us**.

For us **to move ahead with** these changes, we'll need to create two committees: one for our new marketing campaign, and one for improving our product. Hannah and Chris, I'd like you **to be in charge of** each of these committees.

It will be important for everyone to get together regularly so that we can **monitor** the committees' progress. Let's **plan on** meeting **once a week**. Does this time on Tuesday **work for** everyone? Let's try it for two months and then we can make a decision as to whether we'd like to continue meeting so frequently.

[end of informal meeting script]

Shawn says that they're almost out of time, meaning they're near the end of the meeting, and that they need to end their question-and-answer session. "Question-and-answer" is an opportunity at a meeting to ask questions and to get answers from experts, or an informational session where one can ask for additional information after someone has made a presentation. Many websites have question-and-answer pages where they write down the most common or most frequently asked questions they receive and the answers to those questions. The discussion during the previous lesson, number eight, was a question-and-answer session, because Shawn was taking questions from the people at the meeting.

Shawn says that he thinks the group is heading down the right path with its discussion. "To head down the right path" means to work on the right thing, or correct thing, in the right way, or to do what you should be doing. A "path" (path) is like a road. It's a place where you walk, normally, but here it means the



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direction that they are going – the things that they are doing. So Shawn is saying that their discussion was focused on the right problems, the problems that they need to address. If you are working hard and studying English, for example, you may be headed down the right path for getting a better job. But Shawn says the group still has a lot of work ahead of it. The expression “ahead of” means that it is in the future or waiting for one to do. “We have a lot of work ahead of us” means there is still a lot of work to do and the group isn’t finished yet. You could say that a young child has a lot of time ahead of him to decide what he wants to be when he or she grows up.

Next Shawn says, “For us to move ahead with these changes, we’ll need to create two committees: one for our new marketing campaign, and one for improving our product.” “To move ahead with something” means to begin doing the next step or stage of something. You might ask someone when they’re going to move ahead with planning their vacation – when are they going to continue, or go to the next level or step of that process. Notice we have several similar words here: we have “to head down,” “to head,” meaning to be the leader of, and here we have “ahead of” (ahead) of something, which would be before. Now, we are talking about moving ahead – going forward. So it can be a little confusing, since each of these terms or expressions is slightly different.

Shawn wants to create two committees so that the company can move ahead with the changes, or begin implementing the things that need to be done to improve the sales of the product. Shawn asks Hannah and Chris to be in charge of each of the committees. “To be in charge of something” means to lead something or to have responsibility for leading a group. As in the formal meetings, Hannah and Chris are going to be the leaders, we could call them the “chairpersons,” of the committees.

Shawn says that it is important for everyone to get together, or to meet, regularly so that they can monitor the committees’ progress. “To monitor (monitor) something” means to watch something to see whether and how it changes over time. It can mean to check on the progress of a project or something similar – “to monitor something.” Monitoring the committees’ progress means knowing what the committees are doing. While you’re exercising, for example, you might monitor your heart to know how hard it is working.

Shawn says, “Let’s plan on meeting once a week.” “To plan on something” means to decide to do something in the future, or to make a plan. “Once a week” means one time per week; you could also say “weekly” (weekly), such as every Monday, every Wednesday, or every Saturday. Shawn wants the group to meet one time per week. Next he says, “Does this time on Tuesday work for



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everyone?” The expression “to work for someone” means to be convenient for someone, or not to create problems for someone. He’s saying that he thinks the weekly meetings should be every Tuesday, but he wants to make sure that this won’t conflict with other plans and activities – it won’t get in the way of, it won’t be at the same time of something else. You might answer this question by saying, “Yes, that works for me,” meaning you will be able, in this case, to meet every Tuesday without problems. Finally, Shawn suggests that the group try meeting every Tuesday for two months and then decide whether it wants to continue meeting so frequently, or so often.

Let’s listen to Shawn at the informal meeting one more time, this time when he’s speaking at a native rate.

[start of informal meeting script]

Shawn: We’re almost out of time, so we need to end our **question-and-answer** session. I think we’re **heading down the right path** with today’s discussion, but we still have a lot of work **ahead of us**.

For us **to move ahead with** these changes, we’ll need to create two committees: one for our new marketing campaign, and one for improving our product. Hannah and Chris, I’d like you **to be in charge of** each of these committees.

It will be important for everyone to get together regularly so that we can **monitor** the committees’ progress. Let’s **plan on** meeting **once a week**. Does this time on Tuesday **work for** everyone? Let’s try it for two months and then we can make a decision as to whether we’d like to continue meeting so frequently.

[end of informal meeting script]

I hope this lesson has helped you understand how to end a topic and prepare for the future at formal and informal business meetings. In our tenth and final, or last, lesson, we’re going to learn vocabulary for ending a meeting and, with that, we will end our “Business Meetings” course.

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Business Meetings:
Lesson 9 – Ending a Topic / Planning for the Future

Contributors to this series are Jessica Brown, Lucy Tse, and Jeff McQuillan.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 10 – Ending a Meeting

SCRIPTS

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

Alex: Shawn, **on behalf of** all the attendees, I want to thank you for leading such an interesting and **productive** meeting. I think we have all learned something here today and we have a clear **action plan** for the **next steps**.

Our secretary will type up the **minutes** for today's meeting and we'll distribute them **via** email for **comments**. She will also **reserve** a **conference room** for next Tuesday's meeting and you'll be **apprised** of the location as soon as we know it.

Please **sign** your names on this **sheet** of paper before leaving today, so that we'll have a **record** of who was at today's meeting. Our secretary will **type up** a list with your **contact information**, and we'll **disseminate** the **participant list** to all of you.

For now, I'm **adjourning** this meeting. We will see each other again next Tuesday. Thank you to all of you for your participation.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

Alex: Shawn, thank you for organizing this meeting. We all **appreciate** you telling us about the work that your team has done. The new committees **have a lot on their plate** over the **coming** weeks and months.

Our secretary will send an email with the minutes for today's meeting. Please read them and let us know if you have any **corrections** or **additions**. She'll also try to find us a meeting space for next Tuesday and she'll send a **reminder** with that info a few days before the meeting.

Before you leave, I'm passing around this list with contact information for all of you. Please **check off** your name once you've double-checked that it's correct. You'll get a copy of this list within a few days so that we can all **keep in touch** between meetings.

Okay, everybody. **That's a wrap**. Thanks for your attention. See you on Tuesday.



Business Meetings:
Lesson 10 – Ending a Meeting

GLOSSARY

Meeting A - Formal Meeting

on behalf of (someone) – a phrase used to show that one is speaking for another person or group, expressing others' opinions or thoughts

* On behalf of all the students, Rhea presented the flowers to the dance instructor and thanked her for the classes.

productive – effective at getting work done well and quickly

* Carlos is a very productive writer, finishing more than 30 pages of his book every day.

action plan – a plan about what one will do step by step for a project during a period of time in the future

* Jefferson's action plan for buying a new home is to look at five homes each weekend until he finds one that he likes.

next step – the next thing that one will do or needs to do

* After mixing all the ingredients and putting them into a pan, the next step is to put the dish in the oven for 40 minutes.

minutes – a written detailed description of what was discussed during a meeting used as a record of the meeting

* Have you received the minutes from last week's staff meeting?

via – through; by; by way of

* We're supposed to get the report via fax this afternoon, but it hasn't come though yet.

comment – an opinion about something; a statement about whether one likes or agrees with something

* Charlene's only comment about the movie was that it was too long.

to reserve – to arrange for something to be available for one's use at a future date and time

* Have you reserved a hotel room in Minneapolis yet?

conference room – a small room in an office building with a large table and many chairs for meetings

* Let's meet in the managers' conference room. It has comfortable chairs and a good view of the city.



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to apprise – to explain; to tell; to describe

* The manager quickly apprised us of the project's status.

to sign – to write one's name on a piece of paper to show that one has read and agreed to something

* The lawyers prepared these papers for their clients to sign after both sides came to an agreement.

sheet – one piece of paper, usually 8½ x 11 inches

* Could you please write down directions to your house on a sheet of paper?

record – something that is written down so that one can remember things later

* Do you keep your financial records on paper or electronically on a computer?

to type up – to take the information that is written on a piece of paper and type it on a computer

* My boss gave me his notes to type up, but I can't read his handwriting!

contact information – one's address, email, telephone number, and fax number; the information that can be used to communicate with someone

* Don't forget to put your contact information at the bottom of your emails so that people can call you easily if they have questions.

to disseminate – to distribute; to give something to many people; to circulate

* The researchers wanted to disseminate the findings of their study to the news agencies as quickly as possible.

participant list – a list of the names of people who were at a meeting or event

* More than 60 people were on the participant list for last month's conference.

to adjourn – to end something, especially a meeting; to stop something

* Christopher had to adjourn the meeting early because there was a fire in the building.

Meeting B - Informal Meeting

to appreciate – to feel grateful or thankful for something

* I appreciate your concern about my health, but I'm really doing fine now.



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to have a lot on (one's) plate – to be very busy; to have a lot of work to do; to have many responsibilities

* Donna is a wife, mother, business owner, and part-time student, so she has a lot on her plate.

coming – pending; upcoming; something that will happen in the near future

* Before the movie started, there were several trailers showing the coming attractions.

correction – a change needed to fix a problem, usually in a written document

* I made one correction to your paper by changing “they’re” to “their.”

addition – something that is added to something else

* This biography would be better with the addition of more information about the artist’s early childhood.

reminder – something that makes one remember to do something

* Harvey’s watch makes a noise twice a day as a reminder for him to take his medication.

to check off – to put a check symbol (✓) next to something in a list

* Many people like to make lists of the things they need to do and the check them off as they finish them.

to keep in touch – to remain in contact; to continue to communicate with someone

* Have you kept in touch with very many of your friends from high school?

That’s a wrap – an informal phrase used at the end of a presentation or meeting

* That’s a wrap. I hope to see you on Thursday at our next class.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Business Meetings" course: lesson 10. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In the ninth lesson of "Business Meetings," we learned business vocabulary for ending a topic and planning for the future at formal and informal business meetings. In this tenth and final, or last, lesson, we're going to learn how to end formal and informal meetings.

To begin, let's listen to how Alex ends the formal meeting.

[start of formal meeting script]

Alex: Shawn, **on behalf of** all the attendees, I want to thank you for leading such an interesting and **productive** meeting. I think we have all learned something here today and we have a clear **action plan** for the **next steps**.

Our secretary will type up the **minutes** for today's meeting and we'll distribute them **via** email for **comments**. She will also **reserve** a **conference room** for next Tuesday's meeting and you'll be **apprised** of the location as soon as we know it.

Please **sign** your names on this **sheet** of paper before leaving today, so that we'll have a **record** of who was at today's meeting. Our secretary will **type up** a list with your **contact information**, and we'll **disseminate** the **participant list** to all of you.

For now, I'm **adjourning** this meeting. We will see each other again next Tuesday. Thank you to all of you for your participation.

[end of formal meeting script]

Alex begins by saying, "Shawn, on behalf of all the attendees, I want to thank you." The expression, "on the behalf (behalf) of someone" means that you are speaking for another person or another group, that you're expressing someone else's opinion or thoughts. In this case, Alex is thanking Shawn, and he's also expressing the thanks of everyone else in the room – "on behalf of" everyone in the room. If you are a team leader, for example, and your team receives an award, you might say, "On behalf of all my team, I want to thank you for this



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award.” Alex is thanking Shawn for leading an interesting and productive meeting. If something is “productive” (productive) it’s effective in getting work done well and quickly. For example, if you type 100 words per minute, you’re probably more productive than someone who types 20 words per minute, because you can type more quickly. A productive meeting, then, is a meeting where the people are able to get a lot of work done and they feel it was a good use of their time.

Alex says, “I think we have all learned something here today and we have a clear action plan for the next steps.” An “action plan” is a plan or a list of what you are going to do that tells you each part of what you need to do. We would say that gives you a “step by step” for doing a project over a certain amount of time. First you do this, then you do that, then you do this; it tells you what you are going to do in the future. That’s an “action plan.” The action plan for Vision Corporation is to work in two committees, or small groups, on the marketing campaign and on the product changes. A “next step” is the next thing that you need to do, or that you will do. Your next step after listening to this lesson, for example, may be to read the transcript over again.

Alex says that the secretary will type up the minutes for today’s meeting. In this context, “minutes” are a written detailed description of what was discussed during a meeting. It’s used as a record of the meeting to tell you what happened in the meeting, we call those the “minutes,” it’s always plural. Normally someone is assigned, or asked, to take minutes – note the use of the verb “to take” with this noun, “minutes” – to take minutes for a business meeting, because then, later on, people can remember what happened at the meeting by looking at the minutes. The minutes are not usually a transcript; that is, they don’t have every word that everyone said. It’s like a summary of the main things – the main ideas – of the meeting.

Alex says that the secretary will distribute the minutes via email for comments. The word “via” (via - sometimes pronounced “via”) means through, by, or by way of, so in the expression “distribute the minutes via email” we mean to send the minutes – the document that has the summary of the meeting – to people by email, probably as an email attachment. Alex says that the secretary will distribute the minutes via email for comments. A “comment” is, in this case, an opinion about something, or a statement about whether one likes or agrees with something. The minutes will be distributed for comments so that people can say whether they agree with the minutes or if they think something needs to be changed or added. So perhaps, you said something that you thought was important and it is not in the minutes, you can ask to have the minutes changed by giving your comments.



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Alex says that the secretary will reserve a conference room for next Tuesday's meeting. "To reserve" (reserve) means to arrange for something to be available, usually for a future date and time. You might need to reserve a hotel room so that you know there will be a place for you to sleep. "To reserve" means to call or to contact someone and say, "I want to use this in the future; on this day and at this time." In this case, the conference room is being reserved for next Tuesday. A "conference room" is a small room in an office building, usually with a large table (and many chairs) that you sit next to for your meeting. We would actually use the expression you "sit around the table." Everyone is sitting next to the table, and that would be a conference room, or in a conference room. When Alex says that the secretary will reserve a conference room, then, he means that the secretary will arrange to have their meeting in a large room next Tuesday. Alex says that everyone will be apprised of the location as soon as it is known. "To apprise" (apprise) means to explain, or to tell; it could also mean to describe something so that you understand it. To "give someone information" is another possibility here. "I will apprise you of the time" means I will tell you the time. Once the secretary knows which conference room the meeting will be in, she will apprise, or tell, everyone.

Alex asks everyone to sign their names on a sheet of paper before leaving. "To sign one's name" means to write your name on a piece of paper to show that you have read or agreed to something. We typically sign checks from the bank, for example, or letters, or maybe contracts. In this case, the people at the meeting are going to sign a piece of paper. We call that piece of paper a "sheet" (sheet). A "sheet" of paper is one piece of paper; in most American offices it is 8½ x 11 inches – that's the size of the paper, but a sheet of paper can be any size. Alex says that the signed sheet of paper will give them a record of who was at the meeting. In this case, a "record" is something that is written down so that you can remember it later. The sheet of paper that Alex is talking about will provide a record, or a way of remembering, who was at the meeting.

Next Alex says that the secretary will type up a list. "To type up something" means to take information that someone has written on a piece of paper and put it on a computer – to type it in, or to enter it into a computer. Sometimes it is difficult to type up other people's notes and comments because it is difficult to read their handwriting. "Handwriting" is what you put on a piece of paper with your hand: letters and numbers and so forth. The secretary is going to type up a list of everyone's contact information. Your "contact (contact) information" is your address, your email, your telephone number, perhaps your fax number, any information that can be used to communicate with you – to, we would say "get in touch with," to communicate with you, to get in touch with you. Many websites,



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for example, ask you to provide your contact information. Alex, in the meeting, is asking people for their contact information so that he will know how to communicate with them and they can communicate with each other. Alex says that the secretary will disseminate the participant list to everyone. “To disseminate” means to distribute, or to circulate, to give something to many different people. For example, if you want to disseminate information about your party, you might put up posters, signs, send emails, or make telephone calls to let people know about your party. To give information out to people is to disseminate the information. The secretary is going to disseminate, or send, the list of the people who were at the meeting; we call this the “participant list.” A “participant” (participant) is someone who is part of something, someone who “participates” in something.

Alex officially ends the meeting by saying, “For now, I’m adjourning this meeting.” “To adjourn” (adjourn) is a formal verb that means to end or stop something, usually a meeting. After someone adjourns a meeting, you might stay in the room for a while, talking to other people who are there, but when the meeting is adjourned, it is over – it is officially finished. Alex says, “We will see each other again next Tuesday,” reminding people of that the next meeting will be on Tuesday. Finally, he thanks everyone for their participation.

Now that we understand the new words, let’s listen to how Alex ends the formal meeting again. This time he will speak more quickly.

[start of formal meeting script]

Alex: Shawn, **on behalf of** all the attendees, I want to thank you for leading such an interesting and **productive** meeting. I think we have all learned something here today and we have a clear **action plan** for the **next steps**.

Our secretary will type up the **minutes** for today’s meeting and we’ll distribute them **via** email for **comments**. She will also **reserve** a **conference room** for next Tuesday’s meeting and you’ll be **apprised** of the location as soon as we know it.

Please **sign** your names on this **sheet** of paper before leaving today, so that we’ll have a **record** of who was at today’s meeting. Our secretary will **type up** a list with your **contact information**, and we’ll **disseminate** the **participant list** to all of you.



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For now, I'm **adjourning** this meeting. We will see each other again next Tuesday. Thank you to all of you for your participation.

[end of formal meeting script]

And so our formal meeting has ended. Now let's listen to how Alex ends the informal meeting.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Shawn, thank you for organizing this meeting. We all **appreciate** you telling us about the work that your team has done. The new committees **have a lot on their plate** over the **coming** weeks and months.

Our secretary will send an email with the minutes for today's meeting. Please read them and let us know if you have any **corrections** or **additions**. She'll also try to find us a meeting space for next Tuesday and she'll send a **reminder** with that info a few days before the meeting.

Before you leave, I'm passing around this list with contact information for all of you. Please **check off** your name once you've double-checked that it's correct. You'll get a copy of this list within a few days so that we can all **keep in touch** between meetings.

Okay, everybody. **That's a wrap**. Thanks for your attention. See you on Tuesday.

[end of informal meeting script]

In the informal meeting, Alex first thanks Shawn for organizing the meeting. He says, "We all appreciate you telling us about the work that your team has done." "To appreciate" (appreciate) means to feel grateful or thankful for something. "I appreciate you coming here" means "I want to thank you for coming here." Alex then says that "The new committees have a lot on their plate (plate) over the coming weeks and months." "To have a lot on your plate" means to be very busy, to have a lot of work to do, or to have many responsibilities. If you say "I have a lot on my plate right now," you mean you have a lot to do; you have, perhaps, too much to do. When Alex says the committees have a lot on their plate over the coming weeks and months, he means the committees have a lot of work to do. The word "coming," here, means something that will happen in the near future. The "coming weeks and months" means the weeks and months that



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are near to us in the future. The coming weeks and months, then, are the ones that are coming soon.

Alex says that the secretary will send an email with the minutes, or written notes, for the meeting. Alex asks people to read the minutes and let him know if they have any corrections or additions. “Corrections” are changes that are needed to fix a problem, usually something that is in a written document. “I have some corrections to your letter” – I have some changes, there are some things that are wrong that you need to fix. An “addition” is something that is added to something else. You might make an addition to the minutes by saying that “I said something that was not in the minutes, so I want to add it.” Alex wants people to make corrections to the minutes if they read anything that is wrong – that is incorrect, and additions if they think that something is missing. Alex also says that the secretary will try to find a meeting space, or place to meet, for next Tuesday. He says that the secretary will send everyone a reminder with that info a few days before the meeting. A “reminder” (reminder) is something that helps you remember something else. A reminder could be on your calendar, or it could be someone sending you an email saying, “I am reminding you (I am asking you to remember) our appointment,” for example. “Info” (info) is short for information. It’s a more informal way of saying “information.”

Next Alex says that he is passing around a list with contact information (names, telephone numbers, and email addresses) for everyone. “To pass around” means to give to people who are usually sitting in a group; they might even be sitting in a circle, but not necessarily. “To pass something around” means to give it to one person, and then give it to the next person, and so forth, in a group. Alex is going to pass around something that has contact information for everyone. He asks people to check off their names once they have double-checked that the information is correct. “To check (check) off something” means to put a check symbol (✓) next to something on a list – a little mark on the paper. “To double-check,” as a verb, means to look at something again to make sure that it is correct, or to confirm something. Alex is asking people to read the list, and if their information is correct, to put a check symbol, or a checkmark, next to their name. Alex says that everyone will get a copy of the list within a few days so that they can keep in touch between meetings. “To keep in touch” means to remain in contact, to continue to communicate with someone.

At the end of the meeting, Alex says, “That’s a wrap” (wrap). “That’s a wrap” is a very informal expression used to end a presentation or a meeting. It’s actually an expression that is used when someone is making a movie, and when they are finished with a particular part of the movie that they are filming, the person who is the leader – the director of the movie may say, “That’s a wrap,” meaning “we’re



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done for now, everyone can relax.” Finally, Alex thanks everyone for their attention and says, “See you on Tuesday,” which is an informal way of saying “I will see everyone here next Tuesday.”

Let’s listen to the informal meeting again, this time with Alex speaking at a native rate of speech.

[start of informal meeting script]

Alex: Shawn, thank you for organizing this meeting. We all **appreciate** you telling us about the work that your team has done. The new committees **have a lot on their plate** over the **coming** weeks and months.

Our secretary will send an email with the minutes for today’s meeting. Please read them and let us know if you have any **corrections** or **additions**. She’ll also try to find us a meeting space for next Tuesday and she’ll send a **reminder** with that info a few days before the meeting.

Before you leave, I’m passing around this list with contact information for all of you. Please **check off** your name once you’ve double-checked that it’s correct. You’ll get a copy of this list within a few days so that we can all **keep in touch** between meetings.

Okay, everybody. **That’s a wrap**. Thanks for your attention. See you on Tuesday.

[end of informal meeting script]

And “that’s a wrap” for our tenth and final lesson in this “Business Meetings” course. I hope you have all enjoyed these ten lessons and that they’ve helped you become more familiar with the vocabulary used at formal and informal business meetings.

Be sure to visit our website at eslpod.com for more useful courses to help you improve your personal and professional English.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening.

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