

BEP 361 – Virtual Teams 3: Video Conferencing with Clients

Hello and welcome back to Business English Pod. My name's Edwin, and I'll be your host for today's lesson on English for video conference meetings with clients.

In the past, meeting with clients often meant you had to travel. That might mean across town, or it might mean across the country or overseas. But with modern video conferencing tools, you can now meet with your clients without ever leaving your office.

But running a virtual meeting doesn't look exactly the same as an in-person meeting. While you use a lot of the same skills, those skills will sound a bit different in action. And there are some new skills you'll need to develop, as you have to manage not only a group of people, but also the technology.

At the start of a meeting, you'll probably get things going with a semi-formal welcome, before giving a rough outline for the meeting. At some point, you'll have to ask for people's patience while you take care of a technical issue, like sharing your screen or admitting new people to the meeting room.

One big difference between in-person and virtual meetings is how you deal with questions. Yes, you'll have to call on people that you can see have a question, but you may also need to deal with questions or comments that come through the chat function.

In today's dialog, we'll listen to a meeting being run by Adam and Cathy, two business consultants. They're talking with a group of managers, including Sophie and Fareed, at Healthwise, a chain of health food stores that is trying to improve their online sales. You will hear Adam and Cathy demonstrate the skills you need to run a client meeting by video conference.

As you listen to the dialog, try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the rough outline for the meeting that Adam provides?
2. Adam asks for his clients' patience while he deals with what technical matter?
3. How does Adam know that Sophie has a question?

Vocabulary

On the nose: exactly, for numbers, time, or measurements; "The invoice from our web designer came to \$12,000 on the nose."

To be up to: to be doing something; "Hey Gail, just wanted to call and see what you've been up to lately."

Discovery results: the findings of the first stage of a project, where you conduct research and assess needs; "Our discovery results clearly show that we need greater community buy-in for this project."

All ears: listening carefully or attentively; "Sure thing, I'm happy to chat about your issue, just let me finish up this email and I'll be all ears."

To bear with someone: to be patient or wait while someone does something; "Listen folks, I'm sorry I haven't been so productive. My son is very ill, so please bear with me this month."

Online set-up: any platform or website used for a specific purpose, such as selling goods; "I had a look at your online set-up, and I think we could really improve the whole interface."

In-store: happening within a physical store, as opposed to online; "Besides our big social media push, we're doing in-store marketing and promotions that customers have responded well to."

To reiterate: to say again for emphasis; "Can I just reiterate what I said yesterday? We are *not* opening this new store until we're totally ready."

Sixty-sixty rule: a principle of online sales that says customers will buy additional products 60% of the time and for up to 60% of the original purchase price; "The sixty-sixty rule makes sense, but to use it you have to actually offer something to customers."

To upsell: to convince someone to buy more of something or a more expensive product than they intended; "A good salesperson knows when to try to upsell and when to back off."

Product congruency: a match between products that you are trying to sell; "Rather than advertising a bunch of random products, why don't we shoot for more product congruency in our promotions?"

Number one: most important or best; "Salary is not necessarily the number one concern for people looking for a job. Many say that workplace culture is more important."

Sweet spot: the best possible place, price, or combination of factors; "After struggling with large work teams, we've found the sweet spot to be five people."

Profitability: how much a business or activity produces financial gain; "We really love the idea for this app, and we think it's fun, but we doubt its profitability."

Likelihood: the chance or probability that something will happen; "Given the economic troubles, I think there's a strong likelihood that the government will lower interest rates."

To take into account: to consider something when making a decision or trying to understand; "Sure, it's a great job, but you haven't really taken into account that you'll have to travel an hour to and from work."

To fulfill a promise: to do what you said you would definitely do; "I told Madison that I'd support her in her case against her former employer, and I intend to fulfill that promise."

Capacity: the power or capability to produce something or do something; "We would like to increase our order to 10,000 units a month, but do you have the capacity to produce that many?"

Strategic: carefully planned to achieve a goal; "We need to be strategic about partnerships. We can't just take the first company that calls."

Dialog

Adam: Well, looks like it's 10:00 **on the nose** here, so... hello everyone. I'm Adam as you all know, and I've got Cathy with me here today. Glad to have this chance to talk with you all.

Fareed: Yes, thanks for setting this up Adam. Excited to hear what you've **been up to**.

Adam: Great, well I thought we could start by sharing some of our **discovery results** from the past two weeks... give you a chance to ask some questions, and then we've got a few questions for you... Sound good?

Sophie: For sure. **All ears**.

Adam: Okay, so I'm going to share my screen now... if you can just **bear with** me for one second here... Everyone see that okay?

Fareed: Looking good.

Adam: Super. All right, a few initial things here. First, we've gone through your existing **online set-up** and looked at what's been selling and what hasn't. And we've compared that with your **in-store** performance, just to see how things look there...

Cathy: ...okay, and before we move on to questions, if I can just **reiterate**, as Adam said, these are *possibilities* for further exploration.

Adam: Exactly. Thanks Cathy. So... Sophie, I think I saw your hand up there. You had a question on this?

Sophie: Yeah, just curious about this **sixty-sixty rule** about **upselling** you mentioned. I mean, isn't it more about product matching? Like, if they're buying soy cheese, they'll probably buy soy milk too? You know, rather than it being about price?

Adam: Great question. And yes, it is absolutely about **product congruency**, as we say. When a customer buys a laptop, you offer a laptop case, not a hat. So congruency is **number one**. But then what you're offering has to be cheaper, and the **sweet spot** there is about 60% of the price of the first item. That's in terms of **profitability** and **likelihood** of purchase.

Sophie: I get it now. So both are important.

Cathy: Precisely. It's not just one or the other. You have to **take both into account**. Now, just looking at the chat here, and I see there are a couple of comments that we should probably address... First off, there's a question about delivery. It says: "how do we manage increasing orders and still **fulfill** our delivery **promise**?" So this question is about increasing delivery **capacity**, right?

Fareed: Yes. Seems like that would be a huge challenge.

Cathy: Definitely a challenge. And we really need to be **strategic** about how we do this. Trying this out in just one store at the beginning will help us get a better idea of how that will work...

Debrief

Now let's go through the dialog again and look at the language and techniques Adam used in the meeting.

Adam: Well, looks like it's 10:00 **on the nose** here, so... hello everyone. I'm Adam as you all know, and I've got Cathy with me here today. Glad to have this chance to talk with you all.

Adam gets the meeting off to a great start by beginning right on time, which people always appreciate. Not only does he begin on time, he also provides a very nice semi-formal welcome to the meeting. That involves saying hello, introducing himself and his colleague, and making a positive comment.

Other things you might hear at the start of a meeting are thanking people for attending and wishing people a good day, as we can hear in the following examples.

- Hi everyone, thanks so much for being here today.
- I'd like to start off by wishing everyone a happy Friday!
- Okay, I think we're about ready to get going, so welcome everyone!
- All right folks, my name is Fiona, and I'll be leading the meeting today.

Let's listen as Adam continues with his meeting intro.

Fareed: Yes, thanks for setting this up Adam. Excited to hear what you've **been up to**.

Adam: Great, well I thought we could start by sharing some of our **discovery results** from the past two weeks... give you a chance to ask some questions, and then we've got a few questions for you... Sound good?

It's always a good idea to state what you're going to cover in a meeting. You might not have a formal printed agenda, but it's still wise to give people a rough meeting outline. And as Adam shows, it's a good idea to keep it simple. In this particular meeting, he wants to look at their "discovery results," or what they've learned through research, then each side can ask some questions.

What do other rough meeting outlines sound like? Let's run through a few more examples.

- We're going to begin by looking at the draft case for support.
- After a quick update, I'll open it up for questions.
- So, we'll talk about three things today: the budget, the timeline, and next steps.
- Let's have Kent give his report, then we can get into the marketing plan.

So the first topic for the meeting is sharing discovery results. Let's hear how Adam begins.

Sophie: For sure. **All ears.**

Adam: Okay, so I'm going to share my screen now... if you can just **bear with** me for one second here... Everyone see that okay?

Adam asks his clients to “bear with” him, or wait patiently, as he shares his screen. Of course, if you were doing an in-person meeting, you might be projecting a PowerPoint presentation or distributing handouts. But in the virtual setting, you’ll need to handle these functions through the features of the software you’re using.

Meeting participants can’t really see what you’re doing, so it’s a good idea to *tell* them and ask for their patience if you’re taking care of a technical task. Let’s practice some more ways of doing this.

- Okay, if you can hang on a second, I’ll post the link in chat.
- Please just give me a moment to share the powerpoint with you.
- Let me check the connection here... I’ll just be a minute.
- Bear with me a sec... I need to admit a couple of latecomers to the meeting.

Now let’s get back to the meeting, as Adam begins discussing what they’ve learned about his clients’ “online set-up,” or ecommerce platform.

Fareed: Looking good.

Adam: Super. All right, a few initial things here. First, we’ve gone through your existing **online set-up** and looked at what’s been selling and what hasn’t. And we’ve compared that with your **in-store** performance, just to see how things look there...

Again Adam outlines what he’s going to talk about, but we’re not going to hear their entire presentation. Instead, let’s jump ahead and listen as they move on to the discussion stage of the meeting.

Cathy: ...okay, and before we move on to questions, if I can just **reiterate**, as Adam said, these are *possibilities* for further exploration.

Adam: Exactly. Thanks Cathy. So... Sophie, I think I saw your hand up there. You had a question on this?

In this situation, Adam sees that one of the clients has raised her hand, and so he calls on her directly. Sometimes in a video conference people will put their actual hand up to show they have a comment or question. They may not *leave* it up, but rather just trust that the host has seen that they have a question.

Some video conferencing platforms also have a “raised hand” button for signaling you want to ask a question. Either way, your job as the host is to take note, and to call on people for their questions and comments. What are some other ways of calling on people? Let’s try a few more examples.

- Yes, Fiona I think you had a question on this?
- I see you’ve got your hand raised there Amy. You have a question?
- Okay, so... yes Scott did you have something you wanted to ask?
- I’ll take your question first Asha, then we’ll go to Ian.

Now that Adam has called on Sophie, she can ask her question.

Sophie: Yeah, just curious about this **sixty-sixty rule** about **upselling** you mentioned. I mean, isn't it more about product matching? Like, if they're buying soy cheese, they'll probably buy soy milk too? You know, rather than it being about price?

Adam: Great question. And yes, it is absolutely about **product congruency**, as we say. When a customer buys a laptop, you offer a laptop case, not a hat. So congruency is **number one**. But then what you're offering has to be cheaper, and the **sweet spot** there is about 60% of the price of the first item. That's in terms of **profitability** and **likelihood** of purchase.

You'll notice that Adam started his response by saying "great question." Complementing someone on a question is a good way of encouraging further participation. Adam then goes on to explain what Sophie asked about, which was the sixty-sixty rule related to "upselling." Upselling is when you try to sell a customer a *better* product or *more* products.

Now, raising your hand – either in real life or virtually – is one way of showing you have a question. But another common way is to type your comment or question into the chat function of the video conferencing platform. Let's hear how Cathy handles that.

Sophie: I get it now. So both are important.

Cathy: Precisely. It's not just one or the other. You have to **take both into account**. Now, just looking at the chat here, and I see there are a couple of comments that we should probably address... First off, there's a question about delivery. It says: "how do we manage increasing orders and still **fulfill** our delivery **promise**?" So this question is about increasing delivery **capacity**, right?

Cathy starts by saying that she sees some questions in the chat, and then reads one of the questions out loud so everyone knows what she's referring to. The question is about "fulfilling their delivery promise," which means delivering consistently on time while handling increased orders.

Before answering the question, Cathy asks for a bit of clarification. That will help if you want to ensure your response is clear, as Adam demonstrated with his answer.

Whether you're meeting with clients or colleagues, you'll surely have to monitor the chat for questions. So let's run through some more examples of dealing with such questions.

- I see here in the chat someone's asking about our safety policy.
- All right, a few questions coming through in the chat. Let's start with Hannah's...
- Let me just address the issue that Ryan has brought up in chat.
- Someone has posted a question about the finish date that I'd like to talk about.

Now let's finish up the dialog.

Fareed: Yes. Seems like that would be a huge challenge.

Cathy: Definitely a challenge. And we really need to be **strategic** about how we do this. Trying this out in just one store at the beginning will help us get a better idea of how that will work...

We heard Adam say "great question," and now we hear another way to establish rapport and engagement: by repeating people's words back to them as a way of agreeing with their point.

Overall, Adam and Cathy are doing a great job of engaging their clients during the video conference meeting. Of course, it's much easier when there are two of you running the meeting, because in a video conference there's a lot to think about. You're not only watching the people in the virtual room, you're also watching the chat and taking care of technical issues.

Now let's practice some of the language we learned in today's lesson. Imagine you work for a web development company. You're meeting with some clients whose website you've been redesigning. You'll hear a cue from the client, then I'll give you a suggestion for what you can say in response. We'll guide you through each step in the practice and provide an example answer for each response.

Ready? Let's give it a go.

Start by welcoming everyone and saying you're excited to talk with them today.

Answer: _____

Cue 2: Yes, and we're keen to see what you've been working on.

Now say that you'll start by showing the draft website, then open it up for questions.

Answer: _____

Cue 3: Sounds like a plan. I'm sure everyone will have lots to ask about.

Next, ask for their patience while you share your screen.

Answer: _____

Later in the meeting you see someone put their hand up. Ask if the person has a question.

Answer: _____

Cue 5: Yeah, just curious if those are the final images that will be used on the homepage?

Say it's a great question, and add that another person asked the same thing in the chat.

Answer: _____

Answer 1: Hello and welcome everyone. I'm very excited to talk with you all today.

Answer 2: Great. So let me show you the draft website, then I'll open it up for questions.

Answer 3: Okay, so just give me a second here while I share my screen...

Answer 4: Ah, I see a hand up. Did you have a question for me?

Answer 5: Great question, and it looks like someone else has asked the same thing in the chat.

Now let's practice some of the vocabulary we've covered in this lesson. In a moment, you'll hear a series of sentences with a word replaced with a beep. Repeat each sentence, *including* the missing word.

For example, if you hear:

Example Cue: Please tell me about the problem Kendra, I'm all <beep>.

You can say:

Example Answer: Please tell me about the problem Kendra, I'm all **ears**.

After each response, we'll provide the correct answer. Let's begin.

Cue 1: When you're pricing new products, you really need to find the sweet <beep>.

Answer: _____

Cue 2: In the budget, it looks like we didn't take fuel costs into <beep>.

Answer: _____

Cue 3: Let's move on. We need to finish at 3:00 on the <beep>.

Answer: _____

Cue 4: This is important, so let me <beep> what I said earlier about the budget.

Answer: _____

Answer 1: When you're pricing new products, you really need to find the sweet **spot**.

Answer 2: In the budget, it looks like we didn't take fuel costs into **account**.

Answer 3: Let's move on. We need to finish at 3:00 on the **nose**.

Answer 4: This is important, so let me **reiterate** what I said earlier about the budget.

We've reached the end of this lesson, the third in our series on virtual teams. We've learned how to deliver an opening welcome and give a rough outline of the meeting. We've also covered how to ask for patience while you deal with technical issues, call on people with questions, and deal with questions coming through the chat.

Thanks for listening and see you again soon!

Language Review

A. Review Quiz

For each question, you must choose the sentence that best fulfills the given language function or purpose.

1. How might you give a semi-formal welcome at the start of a meeting?
 - a) Ladies and gentlemen, it is now time for the beginning of our meeting.
 - b) All right everyone, I'm Dan and I'd like to welcome you to the meeting.
 - c) I think everyone's here, so, yeah, what would you like to talk about today?
2. How could you give a rough meeting outline?
 - a) Let's just start off by introducing ourselves. Name and position please.
 - b) You should have all received the meeting agenda by email last week.
 - c) Today I'll show you the new design, you can ask questions, then I'll talk about next steps.
3. Which of the following is a good way to ask for patience while taking care of technological issues?
 - a) If you can just bear with me, I'd like to share my screen with you.
 - b) Let's see... maybe if I press this button... no, maybe this one...
 - c) You need to be patient with me. I have no idea how to work this.
4. How could you call on someone with a question during a video conference?
 - a) Okay, does anyone have anything they'd like to ask? Anyone?
 - b) Yes, Miranda it looks like you have a question?
 - c) Okay Brad, maybe you have something you'd like to contribute here?
5. How might you deal with a question that someone has written in the chat?
 - a) If you could just put any questions you have or concerns in the chat box please.
 - b) I see some things in the chat... unfortunately we won't have time today.
 - c) Okay, I see that someone has asked about the project deadline in the chat.

B. Vocabulary and Idioms

Fill in the blanks with words from the box below. Be sure to put any verbs in the right tense.

**take
sweet**

**nose
upsell**

**ears
bear**

1. Please go ahead Dina, I'm all _____. Tell me about the problem you've been having.
2. I'd like everyone to arrive a bit early so we can start our meeting at 10:00 on the _____.
3. I just need to organize these breakout rooms here, so please _____ with me.
4. \$30 just seems too expensive to me. I think the _____ spot on this product would be about \$24.
5. Looks like we failed to _____ price increases into account in our budget.
6. I was going to buy the Sportage, but the sales guy managed to _____ me and I came away with the pricier Telluride.

Study Strategy

It's important to get a meeting off to a good start. This is true about video conferences just as much as it is about in-person meetings. And a great way to start a meeting right is to give a nice welcome and a rough meeting outline. That way people feel welcome, and they know what they'll be talking about.

Think about the different kinds of meetings that you have to run or attend. You might think of regular meetings, or specific meetings you've had recently. Write down the purpose of those meetings. Then create a very brief outline for the meeting. Finally, think about all the different ways you can start a meeting and welcome people.

Now, with a colleague or friend, imagine you are starting those meetings you've listed. Begin each one with a different kind of opening or welcome, then give the rough outline for the meeting. When you're finished, switch roles and let your partner try.

Answers

Listening Questions

1. Adam says that he will share discovery results, then answer questions, then ask some questions to his clients.
2. Adam asks for patience while he shares his screen.
3. Adam recognizes that Sophie has a question because she raises her hand.

A. Review Quiz

1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b; 5. c

B. Vocabulary and Idioms

1. Please go ahead Dina, I'm all **ears**. Tell me about the problem you've been having.
2. I'd like everyone to arrive a bit early so we can start our meeting at 10:00 on the **nose**.
3. I just need to organize these breakout rooms here, so please **bear** with me.
4. \$30 just seems too expensive to me. I think the **sweet** spot on this product would be about \$24.
5. Looks like we failed to **take** price increases into account in our budget.
6. I was going to buy the Sportage, but the sales guy managed to **upsell** me and I came away with the pricier Telluride.