# Module 11 – Communication



## Module 11 objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to…

* talk about what companies communicate about their brands.
* use adjectives to describe brands.
* evaluate strategies for learning English.
* talk about why communication problems occur in organizations.
* propose solutions to communication problems.
* investigate how much of an issue problems with communication is in Mexico.
* talk about facts and trends in English.
* talk about how to listen actively.
* be an effective active listener.
* describe yourself using personality adjectives.
* discuss the importance of writing in business communication.
* write an effective business email.
* tell an anecdote in English.

# Lesson 1 – What companies communicate about themselves



## Lesson 1 objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to…

* talk about what companies communicate about their brands.
* use adjectives to describe brands.
* evaluate strategies for learning English.

## Activate

Discuss with a partner. Share your answers with the rest of the class.

* Look at the photo at the beginning of the lesson. What can you see? Do you think this is an effective form of advertising? Why/why not?
* Think of a brand you love. What does the brand communicate to you? How do they do this?

## Learn

1. Look at the photos. Find the following.

* + A luxury brand • A tasty brand

* + An economy brand • An expert brand

* + A healthy brand • A comfortable brand



1. What is each brand communicating? How do they achieve this? Think about the colors they use, the packaging, the language they use and the environment they create in their stores.

1. Work with a partner. Choose adjectives to describe the products in Activity 1.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Nutritious |  | Reassuring | Cozy |
| Luxurious |  | Environmentally-friendly | Fashionable |
| Fun |  | Quick | Trustworthy |
| Delicious |  | Spicy | Expensive |
| Unhealthy |  | Convenient | Low-fat |
| Disposable |  | Socially responsible | Durable |

## Do

1. Work with a partner. Choose your favorite brand and describe it using the adjectives in Activity 3, or by using some of your own. Write your description in your portfolios.

1. Share your description with another pair. Which description do you like best? Theirs or yours? Explain why. Can you improve each other’s descriptions?

**Let’s use it!**

1. Work in a group of three. Choose one of the following products or services. Decide what you would like to communicate about your product or service. Use the adjectives you learned in Activity 3.

* + A personal robot
  + A flying car
  + A luxury hotel
  + A budget airline
  + An airplane which completely revolutionizes international travel
  + A luxury chocolate
  + The most practical bed ever
  + A product or service of your own – be imaginative!

1. Work in your groups. Create a short presentation about your product or service and what you would like to communicate about it with a voice over. Justify your decisions. Upload your presentation onto the class Wiki. Vote for the best presentation. Justify your votes.

1. Work in group of three. Discuss if it is possible to brand yourself. If you could brand yourself, what would you like to communicate to the world about yourself. Share your answers as a class.

|  |
| --- |
| **Bringing it all together!**  Your Generation English course is coming to a close. On your course, you have learned a lot of language and information. This Bringing it all together box in Modules 11 and 12 will help you to remember what you learned.  In Module 1, you talked about **Learning English**. Which of the following language learning strategies have you implemented during this course? Which are the most useful? Can you add any of your own? Compare your answers with a partner.   * Find similarities between Spanish and English to help you understand English and remember it. * Write down new words and phrases and memorize them. * Expose yourself to the language by watching TV and movies, and reading. * Chatting online with people who speak English. * Having clear why you are learning English. * Making a learning plan for what level you want to reach and how you are going to get there. |

**How did I do? Evaluate yourself.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **I can’t yet…** ☹ | **More or less (-)** | **Yes, I can!** 😊 | **If you need help, go to…** |
| I can talk about what companies communicate about their brands. |  |  |  | Activities 1 & 2 |
| I can use adjectives to describe brands. |  |  |  | Activities 3 to 8 |
| I can evaluate strategies for learning English. |  |  |  | Bringing it all together! |

# Lesson 2 – Communication in organizations



## Lesson 2 objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to…

* talk about why communication problems occur in organizations.
* propose solutions to communications problems.
* investigate how much of an issue problems with communication is in Mexico.
* talk about facts and trends in English.

## Activate

Discuss with a partner. Share your answers with the rest of the class.

* Why do you think communication problems between people are so common in companies and other organizations?
* How can learning a second language help with this problem?

## Learn

1. Work with a partner. Read the following case studies and match the communication problems in the box with each one.

Lack of clarity

Lack of personal contact

Lack of honesty

CASE STUDY 1 (communication problem: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Ricardo, Tomás, Luisa and Jimena form part of a Java programming team. They work in a small company operating out of a virtual office space with no designated desks. As a result, they can work from home and their work can all be done online. Because of this, they have decided that it is not necessary to meet face-to-face. They communicate via chat and email, and once a week they meet virtually by Skype. The weeks have passed, and they have not had one face-to-face meeting. They begin to notice that their project has run into problems. They are falling behind in their work and not meeting the deadlines in the project plan. Jimena has not said anything, but she notices that when she requests things from Ricardo, he ignores her or sends them to her late. Because Tomás joined the team after the others, he has never met Luisa. This makes it difficult for him to discuss delicate issues about the client with her as he does not feel that he knows her well enough to do this. Luisa feels that the team spirit she has experienced on other projects is lacking. What should the team do and why?

CASE STUDY 2 (communication problem: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Juan has a problem. He reads the angry email from his manager one more time. “If you deliver late one more time,” the email says, “we will have to terminate your contract.” The problem is that for Juan, he wasn’t delivering late. He thinks back to why this may have occurred. Then he identifies the problem. His boss’s assistant Lupita told him that the report could be delivered later in the week, without specifying the day. Juan had understood that today, Friday was fine. Actually, his boss wanted the report on Thursday. This was the third time that this kind of communication problem had occurred. What can Juan do to avoid this problem in future and why?

CASE STUDY 3 (communication problem: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Claudia asks Tom to close the door to her office. “Tom, I have something to tell you,” she says. Tom sits down and listens carefully. Claudia manages all the budgets that have to do with sales and marketing. So, she’s an important person to listen to. “Paulina has convinced the managing director to re-assign half of your marketing budget to her marketing budget and they haven’t told you.” Tom felt the anger rising up inside him, but he controlled himself, thanked Claudia, told her he would think about what to do, stood up and left her office. Tom never wanted to work with Paulina ever again. How could she do this without meeting with him first to ask his permission? And how could his boss do this? Tom cannot avoid working with Paulina. They are on the same team. What should Tom do and why?

1. Work with a partner. Think of a solution for each communication problem. Use the language in the box below. Justify your solutions. Share your answers as a class.

I think they should…

In my opinion, …

One possible solution might be to…

There are a few different things they could do. For example, …

He shouldn’t…

I wonder if he tried to…

They could try to…

If I were her, I would…

1. Listen to a business consultant talking about the solutions to each case. Work with your partner and discuss. Are his solutions the same as yours?

## Do

1. Work individually. Make notes in your portfolio. Think back to a communication problem you had with someone. Identify what kind of problem it was. Was it due to lack of clarity, lack of personal contact or lack of honesty? What could you have done to solve the communication problem? If you wish, you can share what you wrote with a partner.

**Let’s use it!**

1. Work with a partner. Investigate how big an issue communication problems in business is in Mexico. Do Mexican companies worry about this issue? What are the specific problems they face?

1. Work with a partner. Create a presentation with voice over about what you discover. Make recommendations to companies about how they could improve communication in their organizations. Upload the presentation onto the class Wiki. Vote for the best presentation. Justify your vote.

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| --- |
| **Bringing it all together!**  Your Generation English course is coming to a close. On your course, you have learned a lot of language and information. This Bringing it all together box will help you to remember what you learned.  In Module 1, you learned to express **facts and trends**. Look at the following sentences. Which are facts, and which are trends? What do you notice about the grammar of the sentences?   * The planet is getting warmer. * Mexico is a big country. * The coastal areas in Mexico are warmer than the mountains. * The price of oil is falling. * Juan is Mexican. * The Earth revolves around the Sun.   Work with a partner. In the space below, write some facts and trends about your state. |

**How did I do? Evaluate yourself.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **I can’t yet…** ☹ | **More or less (-)** | **Yes, I can!** 😊 | **If you need help, go to…** |
| I can talk about  why communication problems occur in organizations. |  |  |  | Activity 1 |
| I can propose solutions to communications problems. |  |  |  | Activities 2 to 4. |
| I can investigate how much of an issue problems with  communication is in Mexico. |  |  |  | Activities 5 & 6 |
| I can talk about facts and trends in English. |  |  |  | Bringing it all together! |

# Lesson 3 – Active listening



## Lesson 3 objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to…

* talk about how to listen actively.
* be an effective active listener.
* describe yourself using personality adjectives.

## Activate

Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

* What are the men in the photo doing?
* In Module 4, Lesson 4, we learned about active listening. Can you remember what it is?
* Why is listening important for improving communication?

## Learn

1. Work with a partner. Look back at Module 4, Lesson 4. What is the method for listening actively? Listen to the following meeting between a boss and his line managee. Is the boss using active listening? What are the consequences for the communication between them?

1. Discuss with a partner. Try to guess why David is feeling uncomfortable in the company.

1. Read the reason why David is feeling uncomfortable at the end of this module. Did you make the correct guess? How could Mr. Johnson have found out more about the situation using active listening?

## Do

1. Work with a partner. You are going to role play the conversation between David and Mr. Johnson but this time, Mr. Johnson is going to use active listening. Together, write the script for what you will say using Audio Script 11.2 as a model.

1. Work with your partner. Act out the conversation between David and Mr. Johnson. Video your conversation and upload it onto the class Wiki. Vote as a class for the conversation with the most effective active listening. Justify your vote.

**Let’s use it!**

1. Work in groups of three. You are going to practice active listening. Student A is going to tell Student B about a problem they are currently facing. Student C will listen and evaluate how good Student B is at active listening. Everyone should take turns to be Students A, B and C.

1. In your group, reflect on how well you performed as active listeners. Was there anything you could have improved in your performance?

1. Present what you learned in Activity 7. Vote for the best active listener in the class. Justify your vote.

**Bringing it all together!**

Your Generation English course is coming to a close. On your course, you have learned a lot of language and information. This Bringing it all together box will help you to remember what you learned.

In Module 2, you learned to **describe yourself using personality adjectives**. Look back at Module 2, Lesson 1. Which adjectives would you use to describe yourself? How would you describe your best friend? Write your ideas in the space below.

**How did I do? Evaluate yourself.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **I can’t yet…** ☹ | **More or less (-)** | **Yes, I can!** 😊 | **If you need help, go to…** |
| I can talk about how to listen actively. |  |  |  | Activate and  Activities 1, 2,  & 3 |
| I can be an effective active listener. |  |  |  | Activities 4 to 8 |
| I can describe myself using personality adjectives. |  |  |  | Bringing it all together! |

# Lesson 4 – Nobody writes anymore! (Or do they?)



## Lesson 4 objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to…

* discuss the importance of writing in business communication.
* write an effective business email.
* tell an anecdote in English.

## Activate

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

* Do you think writing skills should be taught at school? Why/why not?
* In what everyday situations do you write? What percentage of your day do you spend speaking and what percentage of your day do you spend messaging or sending emails?

## Learn

1. Work with a partner. Look at the following statements about business writing. Do any of them surprise you?

* + 30% of our work is achieved through written communication.
  + Today’s jobs require us to write emails, reports, brochures, presentations, sales materials, visual aids, and social media updates. None of this is possible if we do not have effective writing skills.
  + If your business writing is poor, for example, in an email with spelling mistakes, you give a bad impression and the people reading the email will see you as unprofessional.
  + Hiring managers tend to prefer to hire people with strong writing skills. This is because they have an ability to choose the best words to describe themselves and the company they work for.
  + One key business skill is writing proposals. It is often through writing effective proposals that a company wins business. This is not possible without strong writing skills.
  + People with strong writing skills give the impression that they are more intelligent and more trustworthy.
  + People with strong writing skills often express themselves better verbally than their counterparts with weak writing skills.
  + According to the Los Angeles Business Journal, billions of dollars are lost in the US each year due to poor writing skills.

1. Work with a partner. Do you agree with all of the statements? Why/why not? Share your answers as a class.

1. Work with a partner. Read the following Web page about how to develop your business writing skills. What are the main pieces of advice you can identify? Which piece of advice is the most useful in your case?

|  |
| --- |
| [www.yourbusinesswriting.com](http://www.yourbusinesswriting.com/) |
| When you want to write effectively in business English, there are a number of considerations to take into account.    Firstly, you should think about the purpose of what you are writing. What is the objective of the email, for example. Is it an email of complaint? Is it an email to promote your products and services? The reason behind what you are writing will determine what kind of language you use. It will also dictate the tone of what you write.    Secondly, think about your audience. Are you writing to a friend or to a client you do not know very well? Are the people reading doctors or business people? This will help you to decide what kind of language and tone you will use. |
| In terms of language, try to make your writing as clear as possible. There are a number of ways you can do this.     * Use active voice rather than passive voice, e.g. “I sent the letter” is much clearer than “The letter was sent by me”. * Avoid long phrases when a single word will do, e.g. “in order to” can be replaced by “to”. * Turn nouns into verbs, e.g. instead of “It is our recommendation that”, use   “We recommend that” – it’s clearer! |

## Do

4. In the text in Activity 3, the writer refers to the active voice. Work with a partner. Make the following passive voice sentences active using the examples in the box below.

### Active voice versus passive voice in writing

Examples of active and passive sentences:

Passive voice - America was discovered by Christopher Columbus

Active voice - Christopher Columbus discovered America.

Passive voice - The child was bitten by the dog.

Active voice - The dog bit the child.

When we write for business purposes, we prefer to use the active voice because it is easier for our readers to understand.

TIP: The active and passive voices work the same in English and Spanish.

1. The report was sent on Tuesday. (passive)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (active)

1. The presentation was given by Juan and Jimena. (passive)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (active)

1. The payment was made last week. (passive)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (active)

1. The appointment was made by me for today at 9am. (passive)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (active)

**Let’s use it!**

1. Work in groups. You are going to write a business email. Look at the instructions below and decide what the purpose of the email is and who the audience is.

You work for a large multinational company. You need to write an email to the head office of your company in Germany to ask them for server space for an important Web project you have with a large chain of pet stores in Mexico.

1. In your groups, write a draft of the email. Use what you learned in Activities 3 and 4. Also, use the following email of request as a model. Compare your draft with another group. What can be improved in the emails?

Model email of request:

Dear Mr. Reilly,

I hope you are well.

I am writing to you from our office in South Africa to ask your help with the following problem. A few weeks ago, we had a disciplinary issue with one of our staff. He stole company information and has been sending it to hackers. We would like to know if there is an international company policy on this issue.

I look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you in advance for all your help.

All the best,

Joe Johansen

1. In your groups, write a final draft of your email and upload it onto the class Wiki. Edit each other’s emails until you arrive at the best versions possible. Vote as a class on the most effective email. Justify your vote.

**Bringing it all together!**

Your Generation English course is coming to a close. On your course, you have learned a lot of language and information. This Bringing it all together box will help you to remember what you learned.

In Modules 2 and 3, you learned to **tell an anecdote**. Think back to an event in your childhood. Write about it in the space below. Be sure to use the past tense. Look back at Module 3, Lesson 2 if you need to remember how to form the past tense in English. Compare your anecdote with a partner.

**How did I do? Evaluate yourself.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **I can’t yet…** ☹ | **More or less (-)** | **Yes, I can!** 😊 | **If you need help, go to…** |
| I can discuss the importance of writing in business communication. |  |  |  | Activate,  Activities 1 & 2 |
| I can write an effective business email. |  |  |  | Activities 3 to 7 |
| I can tell an anecdote in English. |  |  |  | Bringing it all together! |

# Lesson 5 Product lesson – Writing a marketing communications plan



In this module, we learned how important communication is in business. In this product lesson, you are going to write a marketing communications plan for the product you chose in Lesson 1, Activity 6.

Work in groups of three. Use the Internet to find the answers to the following questions.

1. What marketing communications do companies use to advertise their products and services?
2. What is a marketing communications (MarComms) plan?
3. What are the elements of a marketing communications plan? (Look back at Module 7, Lesson 2 to remind yourselves of what a business plan should contain. A marketing communications plan will have similar elements.)

In your group of three, write a marketing communications plan in your portfolios for the product you chose in Lesson 1, Activity 6.

Video yourselves presenting your plans. Upload your videos onto the class Wiki. Vote as a class for the most effective interview. Justify your vote.

**I can learn**

**!**

What did you learn from this lesson?

Write your ideas in your portfolio. Compare what you write with a partner. Discuss what you

read in each other’s portfolios.



## Evaluate the product lesson

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Could be better** ☹ | **More or less**  **(-)** | **Yes, we did it!**  😊 | **What we can do next time to improve** |
| My partners and I worked well as a team. |  |  |  |  |
| Our product was interesting for the rest of the class. |  |  |  |  |
| We learned something that we can apply to our real lives. |  |  |  |  |
| We were able to reflect on what happened during the class. |  |  |  |  |

### Audio scripts

[Audio script 11.1]

OK, so let’s look at each of these communication problems one by one.

In the first case study, we have a team that never meets face-to-face. And, as a result, some of them don’t even know each other. Tom has never met Luisa, for instance. Another problem is that Ricardo appears to be ignoring requests from other team members. This is easy for him to do because he never sees them eye-to-eye, so he can simply not answer or deliver late. Then, there is the lack of trust. Tom doesn’t know Luisa, so he can’t discuss sensitive issues about their client with her. Also, Luisa has noticed that this doesn’t feel like a real team; because all communication is virtual, and they don’t really know each other, there is no team spirit. All of these problems are leading to problems with delivery: they are not working effectively as a team, basically. OK, so this one is easy to solve. The team should meet up in their virtual office space or in a café on a regular basis, say once a week, and discuss how the project is going. This face-to-face contact will mean that they get to know each other as real people and it will improve communication. Tom will be able to discuss sensitive issues about the client with Luisa. Ricardo will find it difficult to ignore Jimena for two reasons: firstly, he is unlikely to say no to someone he knows and secondly, Jimena can confront him in the team meeting in front of the others and ask him why he isn’t delivering. A team spirit will also start to develop as they will realize the problems that each faces, and start thinking about how they can work as a group to solve them. It is difficult to develop that team spirit by Skype.

In the second case study, we have an issue with lack of clarity. If Lupita had told Juan the exact date on which he needed to deliver the report to their boss, the problem could have been avoided. The use of vague language in companies is a common cause of communication problems. People neglect to mention the room the meeting will be held in, they don’t include all the details of what they need, or they don’t tell you exactly when they need the report by. This vagueness means that the team works less effectively, and it can lead to outbursts of anger, such as that coming from Juan’s boss. So, what should Juan do? He should ask more questions. He needs to get the detail that others aren’t giving him. For example, when Lupita said that the report was due for later in the week, Juan should have asked for the exact day and time. If he had done this, the problem could have been avoided altogether.

In the last case study, Paulina has diverted some of Tom’s budget to her budget by going to their boss and getting his approval to do this. The problem here is that neither Paulina nor the managing director have communicated this to Tom, and it is Claudia who is telling him this second-hand. So, what should Tom do? Because of the situation, he now doesn’t trust his boss or his work colleague, Paulina. This is a big problem, because it will lead to low morale in the team. Without trust, a team cannot function properly. This is a tricky situation, because we don’t know why Paulina didn’t ask Tom before doing what she did. It appears that she may have been hiding something. In this situation, however, honesty is the best policy. In my opinion, Tom should meet with Paulina and explain to her that her actions have led to him losing trust in her. He should state that he wants to work effectively with her and ask her to talk with him in the future before making decisions that directly affect his work. [Audio script 11.2]

David: Good morning, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: Oh, hello, David. How are you?

David: I’m fine thanks. May I come in?

Mr. Johnson: Yes… sure. Take a seat. It’ll be good to get the opportunity to talk; we hardly see each other.

David: There’s something I’d like to tell you.

Mr. Johnson: Oh, ok! What is it? Is everything ok?

David: Well, actually. I don’t feel that comfortable in the company right now.

Mr. Johnson: Oh! It is something I’ve done or said?

David: No, it isn’t that…

Mr. Johnson: Well, maybe you need to take a break. Why don’t you take a week off?

David: Well, that would be nice, but I’m not sure it will improve the situation.

Mr. Johnson: Well, I’m not quite sure what to suggest for you to feel more comfortable in the company. Maybe you just don’t fit in with our working culture. Is that it?

David: No, it’s not that either. Maybe I’ll come back another time, Mr. Johnson, don’t worry about it.

Mr. Johnson: Ok, David, that would be nice. It would be great to see you. My door’s always open!

Answer to Lesson 2, Activity 2

David is feeling uncomfortable because he has seen a workmate stealing money from the petty cash. When he visits Mr. Johnson, he is trying to find a way to tell him. He feels uncomfortable because he realizes that a colleague is capable of doing this and that the company does not have proper forms of supervision in place.