

BUSINESS APPLICATIONS Solving Problems

you learn how to make and understand phone calls
how to deal with complaints
how to write a simple e-mail or letter

Business calls

1) Listen to / Read the two calls about problems Dave Bull, the managing director of the bio-supermarket "The Real Food Store", has in his shop. Give a short account of the problems involved.

2) Listen to each call individually and answer the questions at the end of each text.

Problem One

Dave Good morning, Dave Bull speaking, of "The Real Food Store", how can I help you?

Bill Morning, Dave. This is Bill Jones.

Dave Hello, Bill. How are you this morning?

Bill I'm fine, thanks, Dave. This lovely weather makes you feel good, doesn't it?

Dave How are things with you?

Bill Fine, thanks. I hope I'll find time to get out in the sun this evening, so long as I don't have to sort out too many problems here.

Dave Well, I'm afraid there is a bit of a problem about your last order number 20/P/654 for chicken pâté. I'm sorry, Dave, but the supplier who prints our labels will deliver them late this month, so we will be at least three weeks late delivering the pâté.

Dave Well, that's a pity. I think we're nearly out of pâté. But you needn't put the labels on, you know. I can tell my customers what it is.

Bill Sorry, Dave, but I mustn't sell jars without the proper labels. Bio-food regulations, you know. All the information about the contents must always be on the jar.

Dave Yes, you're right. Well then, there's not much we can do about it. Send me the order as soon as you possibly can, won't you?

Bill Of course I will. And I'm really sorry about the delay. I hope it won't cause you too many problems.

Dave That's OK, Bill. Don't worry about it. It's not your fault. Goodbye for now.

Bill Bye, Dave.

Comprehension

1. Is Bill Jones a regular supplier to the shop? Why / Why not?
2. Do Bill and Dave know each other personally, as well as in business? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What is the purpose of the first part of their conversation?
4. Is the call any different from a German call, in similar circumstances?
5. What does Dave say he can do with the pâté jars, and what is Bill's reaction?
6. Listen again and list the expressions used to apologise and to accept an apology. Add other expressions you know.

Problem Two

Switchb. = Switchboard Emerg. = Emergency services

Dave Oh no. What's wrong now? The system's crashed. The same thing happened yesterday morning at the same time. Everything's just shut down. That guy they sent from the PC company started it up again, but I lost a lot of data, not to speak of time. And I've got a lot to do today. What can I do now?

Sarah Try turning the power switch off and starting it up again.

Dave Nothing happens. It doesn't react at all.

Sarah I'll ring the hot line. (picks up the receiver and starts to dial the number)

Dave Give me the phone. I'll tell them what I think of their system!

Switchb. This is PC Office Systems Ltd, your call will be answered as soon as possible. Please hold the line.

Dave Oh bother, now I've got to wait ... Oh, hello, look, I've just had a completely new PC installed and it has broken down. No, not a software problem, the whole system has gone down. Your company has to put it right. And don't put me on hold again. I've wasted enough time already. I apologise for keeping you waiting. I will put you through to emergency services straight away.

Switchb. One moment, please.

Emerg. Hello, PC Office Systems Ltd, emergency services, how can I help you?

Dave Look, I've been on the phone now for a long time. I want to speak to the boss. The system was only installed a week ago and ...

Emerg. Yes, sir, we will do everything we can to sort this out for you. Please give me your name and your customer number.

Dave Dave Bull speaking, from The Real Food Store. - Sarah, what is our customer number? - Oh, thanks, it is C 2001/5/678-TS.

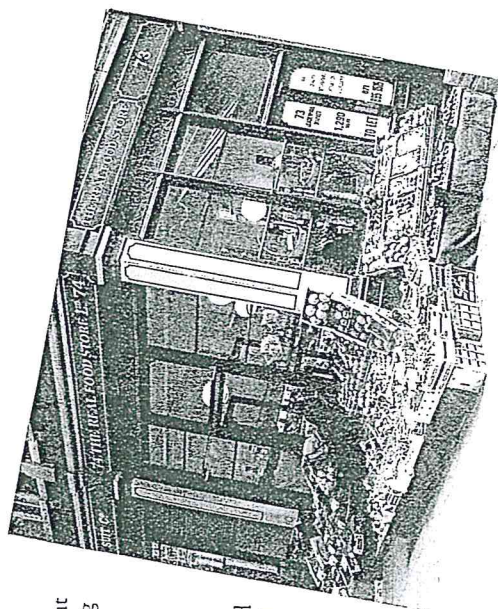
Emerg. Thank you, Mr Bull. Please hold the line.

... Hello, Tim Saunders speaking. How are you, Dave? I'm so sorry you are having problems again. Is it the same as last time?

Dave Yes. Look, it just isn't good enough. You promised that the system would work, and it doesn't. You must put it right, now!

Tim I'm sure we can sort it out quickly, Dave, you needn't worry. Now, could you just run through everything that happened this morning up to the crash?

Dave Well, I got here at 7:30 and started the computer. I was just entering some new data when the whole system went dead. Thank God I didn't take your advice and computerise the whole store. At least I can open the shop.



Tim We'll soon have your office PC up and running again. Don't worry. Can you remember what time it went down?

Dave Yes, at about 8:15, just like yesterday.

Tim Could you just check that the power supply is working?

Dave Look, the lights are on, and I can hear the vacuum cleaner in the hall outside. We have not got a power cut. Your PC is useless. I'll send it back.

Tim Of course, we'll take it back if it's faulty. That is in our guarantee. But don't get rid of it yet, let's check everything through. Just to rule out power failure, would you mind checking the supply to the system? First switch the PC off, then unplug it and plug another device into the same socket. If I remember rightly, it is a multi-socket extension from a socket in the hall, isn't it?

Dave Yes, that's correct. - Oh. My desk lamp doesn't work from here.

Tim It seems you have a problem of power supply. What happens in your office every morning at around 8:15 that could cause short circuit?

Dave Wait a moment, Tim. I'll check it out and call you back.

Tim OK Dave, call me on my extension, that's 087 456 921. Then you don't go through the switchboard. Bye for now.

Dave Bye.

Comprehension

1. What annoys Dave while he is calling the computer company?
2. Are there any points in the conversations which show differences in the relationship between Dave and Bill, and Dave and Tim?
3. Why is there no "small talk" in this call?
4. Tim Saunders asks Dave to do some things. How does he make his requests sound polite?
5. Translate the following into German:
 - a) Don't get rid of it yet.
 - b) To rule out power failure please check the power supply.
 - c) The power supply isn't working.
 - d) Would you mind checking the power supply?

Input from you

1. What do you find annoying when you are on the telephone?

Use the expressions below and add more:

What really annoys me is ...

Yes, but it's even worse (when you have to listen to "please hold the line" for ages.)

The worst thing of all is ...

I hate ...

My pet hate is ...

I don't like ...

(people who eat or drink loudly when they are on the phone.)

2. Role play: Partner A rings up to complain that partner B sold him / her something (e.g. a second hand PC, a printer) which does not work. Partner B points out politely that Partner A has not followed the instructions for use correctly.

Partner A: You are angry, but try not to be impolite.

Partner B: Avoid expressions like: *it is not my fault, I can't do anything about that, you must have done something wrong, it is your fault.*

The mystery is solved

Listen to the call Dave made to Tim on the following day and his explanation for the problem. After listening once, answer the questions below.

Comprehension

1. What is the cause for the breakdown of Dave's PC?
2. What will Dave do for Tim and why?
3. What other problem does Dave want to solve?
4. What does Tim suggest Dave should get?
5. What makes this call sound more friendly and relaxed than the last one?

Listen again and answer questions 6-8.

6. Dave has rung Tim's extension. Why does he ask for him by name?
7. Dave and Tim use some simple expressions to show each other that they are interested and listening. What are these?
8. What does Tim ask Dave to say to Sarah?

More business calls

- 1) Read the following three phone calls and put a suitable word or phrase into each gap.
- 2) Listen to the recorded version and compare it with yours.
- 3) Which description fits which phone call?
 - call to a customer-service centre (polite but brief)
 - business call between business partners (efficient but friendly)
 - high-rate call for specialist information (short as possible)

a) *Judy Day* Hello, Sales Department.

Carol Dean Hi, Judy,

Judy Hi, Carol! I haven't seen you for ages. ?

Carol I'm fine. I just got back from a holiday in Greece.

Judy ! Did you enjoy it?

Carol , but now I've got a huge pile of work on my desk. And I have got to contact Peter Smith urgently. his mobile number?

Yes of course.

Judy I hope it is not too much trouble.

Carol Of course not. Here it is. 071432891.

Carol Thanks a lot, Judy.

Judy Yes, you can tell me about your holiday.

FURTHER APPLICATIONS

Grammar Update

will – want to / like – would like

Note the differences:

will (*wird / werden*)

I will see you tomorrow.

Ich werde dich morgen sehen.

like (*mag / mögen*)

I like tea.

Ich mag Tee.

Translate into German.

a) I will find a new job.

b) He wants to change his job.

c) We like the new computer.

d) I'd like a new computer.

e) We won't go to the party.

f) We want to have a party next week.

Auxiliary verbs (must / have to / need to)

must (*müssen*) but must not (*nicht dürfen*)

have to (*müssen*) but don't have to (*nicht müssen*)

need to (*brauchen*) but need not (*nicht brauchen / müssen*)

Put the correct form of the above verbs into the gaps.

a) You always close down your PC in the correct way, or data can be lost.

b) Please be careful! You spill coffee over the keyboard.

c) You use the mouse, you can use the hot keys to perform many operations.

d) I finish this report, the boss wants it this afternoon.

e) Lovely, it is Sunday morning. I get up early!

f) I told my kid brother he make copies of games and play them on my computer.

g) You touch the inside of the monitor.

h) You switch the PC off, it will automatically go into power-save mode.



What is the greatest piece of computer fiction?

Vocabulary Trainer

1) Words and expressions for telephoning. Match word and definition.

extension number • (telephone) receiver • socket • extension cable • mobile phone*

- The part of the telephone set which you hold in your hand when speaking
- The direct-dial number to get to the right person in a company
- A length of cable which you can plug into a socket, and which has another socket at the other end
- A small portable telephone handset used with a cellular radio or other communication system
- A connection to the main electric supply

* BE = mobile phone, AE = cell phone / cellular phone



Many words have more than one meaning, so it is useful to include a sentence when you make word lists. You can use a table, with two columns (German / English), or, better, with three columns, (German, English sample sentence, English). Then you can order the words alphabetically, in German and / or in English. Most dictionaries tell you whether the word is a verb (v), an adjective (adj) or a noun (n).

2) In the table below, the German words have been missed out. Copy the table and place the correct form and word type in the gaps.

German	Sample sentence	English	Word type
a) funktionieren	This machine does not work.	work	v
b)	He works in a shop.	work	
c)	You can close down your computer now.	close	
d)	They are very close friends.	close	
e)	The program reports on current events.	current	
f)	This device needs direct current.	current	

3) Match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dial | the power supply? |
| Pick up | some new data. |
| Have you checked | on hold. |
| He is entering | the receiver. |
| Put the caller | the number. |
| You must ring | the line. |
| Please would you spell | my booking for tomorrow. |

Text File

Read this part of a presentation given at a client care and communication workshop and find a suitable title for it.

When you answer the phone at work, you represent your company for the caller. Could you improve your telephone image?

1) Are you a good professional phone-communicator?

Do you

- project a positive image of the organisation?
- give the best possible service to the client?
- maintain a good business relationship with the client?

2) What makes an unprofessional call?

<i>mechanical problems (bad line)</i>	<i>unable to understand properly</i>	<i>late answer</i>
<i>being passed on to uninform people</i>	<i>Dissatisfied Client</i>	<i>rudeness</i>
<i>distractions</i>	<i>no pen and paper to hand</i>	<i>lack of interest</i>

3) What makes a professional call?

<i>being kept informed</i>	<i>quick answer</i>	<i>positive attitude</i>
<i>being referred to by name</i>	<i>Satisfied Client</i>	<i>friendly, helpful manner</i>
		<i>getting agreed results at the agreed time</i>

Comprehension

1. Which types of behaviour could be used as an example for which question under "Are you professional phone communicator"?

- Try to remember client details, or keep a record you can easily look up.
- Always speak clearly, and give your name and the company name when you answer the phone.
- Never say "I cannot help that" or "I don't know": say you will find out.
- Do not become angry, even if the customer is angry and shouts at you.
- If you make a promise on the phone, then do not forget it, keep it!
- Do not forget to say "good morning" or "good afternoon" and to repeat the customer's name.

2. These are caller reactions or answers. Which type of behaviour listed under "What makes a unprofessional call" would make people react in this way?

- Well, if that is your attitude, then I will talk to my lawyer.
- Oh no, I can't sit here all day and let the phone ring!
- But I only just explained that, and my name is Smith, not Jones.
- Look, this call has already cost me a lot of time and money, can't you just take down the details straight away?
- I told your colleague all about it just a minute ago.
- I can't hear you at all, what is that noise?
- Hey, is anybody there? Hello, hello ...

3. Give specific examples of the kind of professional behaviour which makes for a satisfied client.