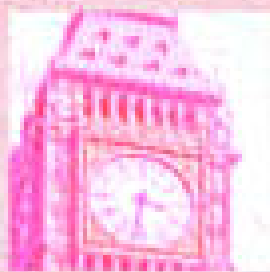


# Business English

10 best communication secrets



Can I  
help  
you?

[ˈma:stə]



- ▶ Active dialogues
- ▶ Effective letters
- ▶ Good relationships
- ▶ Telephone techniques

John A. Doorbar

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**10 best communication secrets**

▷ Active dialogues

▷ Effective letters

▷ Good relationships

▷ Telephone techniques

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## Impressum

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Business English

10 best communication secrets

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## The author

John A. Doorbar was born in Nantwich, UK, in 1961. He currently works as a Communication Skills Trainer for international firms working in Germany. These companies need to be able to communicate effectively in English to be successful in their business.

He originally studied Theology at the University of Oxford, and then went on to train in Accelerated Learning Techniques. He has lived and worked in Italy, England and Germany where he has trained company staff and managers.

His seminars and workshops focus on the following topics:

- Presenting with impact
- Win-win Negotiating skills
- Communication and Conflict Resolution
- Essential Communication skills for Executive Secretaries

As a keen sportsman and golf coach he also offers: Golf and Communication skills for Executives. Here the golf game is used as a metaphor for effective management.

## Forward

This book is designed as a practical guide to the key communication skills you need when doing international business in English.

It has two main sections:

1. A story which runs throughout the book. Here a wise old man gives practical suggestions to the new manager, Andreas Blunt, who is willing and open to learning the skills he needs to run his company.
2. An explanation of the 10 secrets along with exercises which are designed to be done as you work through the book.

I really hope you enjoy reading and practising with the book and wish you every success in your international business in English.

With kind regards,

John A. Doorbar

P.S. If you wish to contact me personally I am available at:

**Doorbar@t-online.de**



# 1 Introduction

## The start and the challenge

The young businessman had all the qualifications a person could wish for: a first class degree from the University of Oxford, an MBA from the LSE. He lacked nothing from an academic point of view. He had quite a good number of contacts but ... all was not well.

*What makes people successful?*

He had just taken over from a really experienced MD called Freddy Franton who had always been extremely well-liked. Andreas could never exactly see why others were so impressed by Freddy's way with people and this was Andreas' main challenge: How to manage people. How to use language in a way that inspired, motivated and supported both the staff and the customers. He needed an intensive seminar in peoples skills. And fast.

We join his assistant in the cafeteria. She and a friend are discussing the serious situation of the drop in sales since Freddy Franton had left for his well-earned retirement in New Zealand.

## Introduction

Laura: *I just don't know what to do to help my boss improve his style in English.*

Claudia: *Why is that?*

Laura: *Well: Some things he says to his clients sound so direct. If he isn't really careful, he'll lose some of them.*

Claudia: *Well, why don't you tell him?*

- Laura: *I'm not sure how to ... I mean he is one of these few managers with the power of attorney. And you are suggesting I give him feedback.*
- Claudia: *Yes ... as I see it he needs to know how he comes across.*
- Laura: *That would be a great help.*
- Claudia: *And what do you feel he needs to learn?*
- Laura: *I have just read an absolutely fascinating book and it seems there are ten key secrets for doing effective international business. If we could teach him these he'd do a lot better.*
- Claudia: *And is he prepared to be trained by his assistant?*
- Laura: *I spoke to him on Thursday and he said he'd appreciate any advice I could give him. He said anything to help him keep his key accounts from going over to the competitors. But I personally think he needs a really special teacher. So, I've made some very special arrangements!*
- Claudia: *Great, it sounds like a real adventure.*
- Laura: *Yes ... I think it will be and it will certainly help our profits.*

Andreas was in his office wondering about the secrets of his predecessor, Freddy Franton. How did he manage to lead so effectively?

In the ten years he had been the Managing Director business had really boomed. And his „colleagues“ as he called his employees thought he was wonderful.

A question kept going round and round in Andreas' mind.

*„What's the difference that makes the difference between Freddy and other less successful managers?“*

Then he heard a knock at the door.

Andreas: *Come in!*

A rotund, jovial, white-haired man put his head round the door, smiling.

Andreas: *Hello!*

Man: *Great day, isn't it!*

Andreas: *Why?*

Man: *Beautiful weather and a new day.*

Andreas: *What can I do for you?*

The man was standing in front of the huge office window which looked out onto a wonderful lake. Suddenly the man turned to Andreas.

Man: *Look at that crane. He has got his eye on a fish.*

Andreas: *Oh great ... my company is losing orders and you are teaching me about birds.*

Man: *Well ... if you think about it carefully the way they work is similar to a top business owner. An absolutely clear goal. And brilliant focus.*

Andreas looked up with interest.

Andreas: *Laura always tells me how my predecessor set crystal clear goals for everything he did.*

Man: *And he was extremely successful, wasn't he.*

Andreas: *And where did you learn to set „crystal clear“ goals?*

Man: *I learnt it from a leading expert in the US, called Brian Tracy, a man who has spent his whole life researching into*

*what it was that made successful people so successful. On one of his seminars I learnt the first secret to successful business.*

He pulled out an old notebook covered in artistic handwriting.

*This is what I learnt.*

**Man:** He handed Andreas one page from the book with a coloured mindmap of the secrets he had learned.

**Andreas:** *May I borrow it?*

But the white-haired man had gone. This was what the notes contained:

## **1/1      Secret 1: Set goals**

### **Goal setting: Imagine the result**

We need to set goals to achieve anything of value. While reading this book it is helpful to have clear goals in mind. This helps you to focus on the result you want.

A good way to do this is to imagine you have already worked through the book and have achieved what you want to be able to do in English.

Time to think

Choose the **4 most important goals** to concentrate on the first time you read this book.

**By the end of the book I can ...**

- write effective letters.
- telephone to make appointments.
- keep a conversation moving.
- present myself or write a speech for my boss.
- understand false friends.
- know what to say and what not to say to American and British business people.
- know what to say in meetings.
- talk confidently to customers.

It is also important to set goals in a learner-friendly way to make sure that they support your learning.

The SMART Formula will help you here.

## **1/2 The SMART Formula**

- S** Specific ... i.e. not wishy-washy
- M** Measurable
- A** Achievable
- R** Results-oriented
- T** Time limit

So, as an example for your improved communication skills you could write:

*By January 2003 I can make a five-minute company presentation to 20 visitors and can use six signalling phrases. I feel confident and also enjoy answering the visitor's questions.*

## Time to think

Write a goal for your communication skills as you work through this book. Remember your SMART Formula.

**1/3**

## Why are goals so important?

*Goals as  
our  
life-guides*

Goals help to give meaning to our lives. There was a very interesting study at Harvard University and the whole of the graduating year of 1953 were asked if they had any goals for their lives. Amazingly, only 3% knew what they wanted to do and had written down their goals.

25 years later the researchers found out that those 3% who had set goals had three common characteristics:

- They had more stable marriages.
- They were healthier and happier.
- They had more money than the other 97%.

The goals had given a clear guideline to their lives which they were able to continually work towards.

## 2 Secret 2: Powerful presenting

### 2/1 Active dialogue: Presenting

Andreas: *The man who I spoke to is incredible. He has such a spontaneous and natural way of dealing with people. But where did he go?*

The man just reappeared as if he'd never been away.

*Body language is important to transport a message*

Man: *So, how are you getting on with your goal setting?*

Andreas: *Really good, thanks. And so, what's on the agenda for today?*

Man: *Presenting! Let me tell you a fascinating piece of information: Americans are more afraid of doing a presentation in front of a group than of death!*

Andreas: *Really? Unbelievable!*

Man: *But absolutely true. And I remember days when I felt just the same. So I went to one of the leading rhetorical trainers in Europe, named Nikolaus B. Enkelmann. He taught me a fascinating thing. In order to learn to speak in front of a group you need to speak in front of a group!*

Andreas: *Sorry?*

Man: *Well, you need to be put in a situation where you have to speak. Like an antidote for a snake bite you need to receive just a little amount of venom to help the antidote to work. In the same way, just a little adrenalin and nervousness works wonders when you want to give an effective speech.*

Andreas: *And what's that got to do with me? Laura writes my presentations for me and I just read them out when my visitors come.*

Man: *You just read them?*

Andreas: *Well, I thought that is all I needed to do. Let's face it I have got a lot of work to do here in the office.*

Man: *In my view, presenting is the most important thing a director has to do. Guests judge the professionalism of a company by the way the managers look to the outside world.*

Andreas: *So you think I need to practise my presentation techniques?*

Man: *It is absolutely essential if you are going to have a successful company. And not only you need to be able to present but also your staff. Your assistant, Laura, when she presents plays a key role in informing and influencing your clients to buy from you.*

Andreas: *So how do I learn how to do that?*

Man: *Watch the experts and see how they do it! Use them as a model to plan and deliver your own professional presentations.*

Andreas: *Sorry ... but I'm not sure how to do this.*

Man: *Let me give you an example. There are twelve words which specialists like the Canadian wordsmith Ted Nicholas have found to influence the listeners to buy a product.*

Andreas: *You mean the way you describe the product has a direct impact on sales? That's incredible ...*



- Man: *That's right! So if you use the same words in the same way you will get the same result.*
- Andreas: *And what are these magic words?*
- Man: *There's time for that later. First, a vital question:  
How much of a message is transported by  
the words,  
the intonation and  
the body language?*

The man wrote the three points on Andreas' white-board which stood in his office.

- Man: *Guess!*
- Andreas: *I'd say ... 20 %, 30 % and 30 %.*
- Man: *That's what I thought when I first heard the same question.*
- Andreas: *So ... what is the answer then?*
- Man: *Albert Mehrabian did research in the USA and discovered that the words themselves have just 7 % of the message. The intonation is responsible for 38 %. And that leaves 55 % for the body language.*
- Andreas: *Wow! So I need to learn more about body language then.*
- Man: *You would do yourself and your firm a lot of good if you did.*

Andreas leant down and took out a brand-new leather-bound notebook from his desk. *The wisdom I am learning from the man is too important to forget*, Andreas whispered to himself.

When he looked up he was alone in his office. On the desk was an old notebook with the same artistic wri-

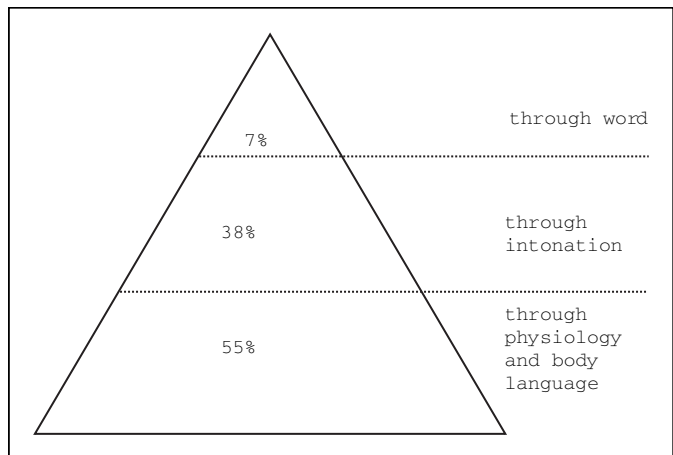
ting he had seen before. He turned to a section headed „The Power of Presenting“.

He started to read and was captivated by the content. There were explanations and exercises. He took notes on what he read.

The most important ideas that Andreas discovered are written on the following pages.

**2/2**

## **Albert Mehrabian's pyramid**



You see that intonation and body language are very important.

Before a presentation ask a colleague to listen to a part of your presentation and give you specific feedback on your voice/intonation and body language.

## 2/3      **A confident company presentation**

Probably the most common type of presentation you need to make is when you, as executive secretary, introduce your company.

You can use a RHISA formula to help you plan your company presentation:

### **The RHISA Model**

#### **RHETORICAL QUESTION**

**What are the most important factors** in helping a company prosper?

One key factor is clearly the way they invest in the training of their staff. Because without quality staff we have no quality in the company. This makes the audience get involved right at the start.

#### **INTENTION**

Today we intend to show you exactly how your staff can benefit from our highly interactive training. You say what you want to achieve.

#### **SIGNPOSTING**

Firstly, we'll show you the structure of the eleven week training. Then we'll give a short 20 minute live demonstration by one of our main trainers. At the end, we'll show you how we tailor-make our seminars to fit in with your specific company needs. This helps to give your talk a clear structure.

#### **ACTIVATION**

To start with, write down three key words that come to mind when thinking about in-company training. Useful if you want to get people involved in the presentation. Americans like this method. They like to be active.

### Time to think

Learn the first three sentences by heart. This gives you confidence and helps you to calm down your nerves at the start.

Use image streaming to help you remember the vocabulary.

### How to image stream

1. Get a tape recorder with an empty tape.
2. Press the record button.
3. Close your eyes and imagine the scene of the presentation:  
How does it feel?  
What does the room look like?  
Imagine the guests enjoying your talk.  
Imagine the applause at the end.
4. Then speak the talk aloud onto the tape from memory.
5. Listen to the result.
6. Repeat the process until you are happy you can remember the most important words.



Use magic sales words. If you have to sell ideas or products you need to use words that influence people to buy.

## 2/4

## The 12 most influential words

Here are the twelve most influential words in the English language:

you	money	save
new	results	easy
health	safety	love
discovery	proven	guarantee

So, if you wish you could integrate these into your own company presentation.

**Example:**

*By the end of the morning we **guarantee a new and proven way of looking at training for you and your colleagues.***

*It is **easy to implement and will save you money.***

*Now I'd like to show you what you can **discover today.***

## 2/5      **How to sell your company's benefits**

Benefits sell products, not features! As the executive secretary you will need to demonstrate the benefits of your company's products. This will help your guests to see the clear advantages they will receive. If you do not guide the visitor's line of thought by mentioning only features you may give the wrong impression.

Let's imagine you answer the question:

- What advantages does your product have?  
With „... *we have quality control*“.
- S/he then thinks either positively:  
„*Great, then we will have no problems.*“
- or negatively:  
„*Probably because they need it.*“



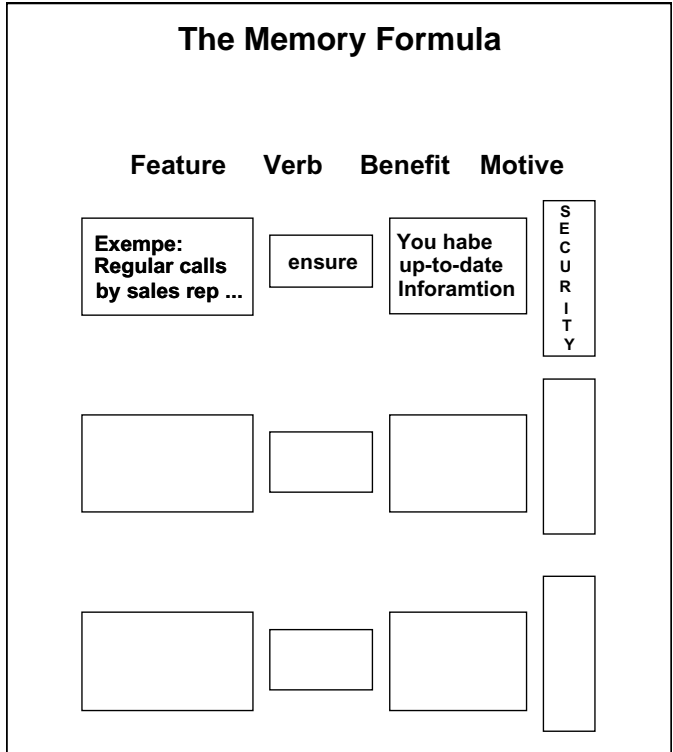
The problem with this is that the benefit for the customer in having quality control is not clear.

Time to think

Think of three benefits the clients have when they buy your product. Why should I buy from your firm?

**Example:**

*Frequent visits by one of our sales representatives guarantee that you will always have up-to-date information on our offers and latest developments.*



2/6

**Structure of presentation**

**Introduction**

*I'd like to begin by introducing our new idea ...*

**Listing ideas**

*I'll begin with ...*

*Then I'll look at ...*

*Finally I'll discuss the three main benefits our product has.*

**Checking understanding**

*OK so far?*

**Dealing with questions**

*Right, now let me answer your questions. Go ahead.*

*Does that answer your question?*

**Finishing**

*So, that brings me to the end of my presentation.*

*Thank you.*

**Get into a good state**



Before your presentation think of a time when you did something really well.

- How did it feel?
- What did you see?
- What did you hear people saying?

*Do it like a sportsman*

Now imagine your next presentation going really well in the same way. By imagining it you help your mind to focus on the results you want in the future. Top sportsmen always use this method before they compete. This will give you confidence for the presentation to come.

## 3 Secret 3: Writing with impact

### 3/1 Active dialogue: Effective letters

Andreas looked in horror as he read his mail. He started to turn white. It was a letter from another key account (a really large customer). It said ...

*Dear Mr Blunt,  
We are sorry to have to inform you that we are strongly considering changing our supplier. On a number of occasions my staff have complained about the „rather direct“ (rude) way they have been spoken to by the new Managing Director. The letters we have received from your office also reflect a similarly blunt and unfriendly style. If nothing changes within the next three weeks we will be forced to change our supplier at the start of the next fiscal year.*

*Kind regards,  
David Steel*

Andreas: *Oh, no ... it's just going from bad to worse.*

The man had appeared and was standing at the photocopier.

The man: *Could we just make a copy of one of these letters. Let's have a look at your style! It reminds me of how I used to write when I started as MD. It got me into all kinds of trouble!*

Andreas: *So what is wrong with my letters the way they are?*

Man: *Well, actually there is a lot that's good. You clearly have a wide vocabulary, for*



*example. So we just need to rub off the rough edges and to fit the letter into the culture of the person you are writing to.*

Andreas: *You think they sound too direct?*

Man: *That depends on who you are writing to! But when you write to people for the first time it is recommendable to keep on the more formal side. Particularly when you are corresponding with high level business people.*

Andreas: *Why? Do you think they are a bit snobbish?*

Man: *No ... not at all. On the other hand, it is a question of what they are comfortable with. Business people tend to write in a formal style. That's what they know. If you change that right from the start it is a bit like throwing someone in freezing cold water.*

Andreas: *A terrible shock you mean.*

Man: *It can be an unexpected surprise. Let's look at your letter, shall we?*

Andreas: *OK, here it is.*

### **Examples:**

#### *Bad letter*

*Dear Johnny,*

*When are you going to send me the order? In our meeting you said you and your colleagues were interested in our new CiLT telephone system. If you don't order now you will miss the introductory offer. So call my assistant today before 12 o'clock (I am busy – sorry) so that she can tell you how to fill in the order form properly.*

*Last time a company placing their first order caused problems by ticking the wrong boxes and this delayed delivery.*

Andreas: *I don't know why but the next day the MD, Johnny French, cancelled the order and said he didn't want to do any further business with us. So what went wrong?*

Man: *In my view there are basically three things you need to communicate in your letters. These are: **respect, warmth and appreciation.***

Andreas: *But you can't do that in a letter!*

Laura: *Hold your horses, Mr Blunt.*

Andreas: *Mr Blunt ... what is the matter with you? You have been calling me Andreas since we met.*

Laura: *Alright ... sorry ... I just wanted to make a point by showing you how sensitive people are when you use their names in an inappropriate way. In your case it sounds really strange for me to speak to you in a very formal way after we have already said we are on first name terms.*

Andreas: *And what you are saying is that it is the same if you address people in an informal way who you don't know very well.*

Laura: *Absolutely.*

Andreas: *Oh no ... now I see what you mean. I had met Johnny ... err ... sorry Mr French only once for five minutes in London and I called him by his first name without asking if that's alright.*

Laura: *Yes, and because he is British and MD and is an experienced business man he'd expect a more formal approach. And then gradually you could get to know him on a more personal level. It is a way of showing respect, you see.*

Andreas: *And what do you mean by warmth? I tried to be friendly in my letter.*

Laura: *Well ... warmth can be conveyed in various ways. Normally, it is done through the choice of words or by the length of sentences and the start of the letter. Let's see how you begin: „When are you going to send me the order?“*

Andreas: *This was supposed to be a joke. I did not mean it in this way. You know my sense of humour, don't you?*

Laura: *Yes, but Mr French doesn't because he hasn't known you long enough.*

Andreas: *So, if I get you right you think he probably feels I am an impolite European!*

Laura: *That could be the case but that is easy to put right!*

Andreas: *What else would you change?*

Laura: *Warmth can be expressed by making your sentences longer and therefore less direct. So for example, instead of: „When are you going to send me the order?“ you could write ...*

### *Good letter*

*Dear Mr Swan,*

*Thank you very much for your interest in our firm and its products. We understand that you need a product that will help you to save on your telephone bill as well as giving you a 24 hour-a-day service.*

*Over the last six months our most important customers have tried and tested our service and would be pleased to give you an objective assessment of the benefits they have received from their new telephone provider.*

*Please feel free to contact me if you wish to speak to them by telephone. I will be pleased to give you their telephone number. You will then be in a position to*

*decide for yourself how much you can benefit from using our product.*

*Thank you very much for your interest.*

*With kind regards,  
Andreas Blunt*

## 3/2 In a nutshell

- Thank you.
- Active listening or checking on the client's needs.
- An offer to contact current clients.
- Allow the customer to decide.

Andreas: *Sounds really good ... and what about appreciation?*

Man: *That's easy to express. Start by mentioning your previous contact, e.g. „It was good to speak to you personally on the phone.“ And then end on a positive note: „I look forward to speaking to you next week.“*

Andreas: *Is there anything else I should keep in mind?*

Man: *Well, there is one point I would like to mention. And that is the work of two wonderful people named Milton Erikson and Virginia Satir. They were able to help people recover from psychological difficulties in a very short time.*

Andreas: *And how did they do that?*

Man: *One thing they did was to build up a very strong relationship based on trust. They intuitively used words which matched the favourite word patterns of*

*their patients. Some preferred visual words like „What’s your view on this?“ Others liked auditory phrases like „Oh, that rings a bell.“ And others liked more feeling-based expressions like „I need to get hold of this idea.“*

Andreas: *And how can that help my letters?*

Man: *Well, if you use a variety of these expressions in a letter you can be sure to match your business colleagues’ favourite pattern.*

Andreas: *It would be great if I could learn to use these ideas, too.*

Man: *You can, in fact I went on a seminar with a super trainer. I wrote page after page of notes and still look at them at least once a week.*

Andreas raised his head to ask another question. On the table lay another notebook. In it were the best practical tips on how to write the very best letters:

- sales letters
- invitations
- letters of apology

But the man was nowhere to be seen. Andreas picked up the book and wrote the following notes in his own special notebook.

He started with the SCRAP formula for writing letters and e-mails. It is based on the really useful booklet „The business letter business.“

## **3/3 The SCRAP Formula**

### **Situation**

Here you describe the main point of the letter.

### **Complication**

This section looks at the problem. What is the reason for the letter?

### **Resolution**

Here you think of a solution or answer to the question.

### **Action**

So, what is the next step?

### **Politeness**

End on a polite and positive note.

So let us use this format to help Andreas Blunt write his letter of apology to Mr Steel.

### **Example:**

**(Situation)** *I am writing about your letter which I received this morning.*

**(Complication)** *When I read your letter I felt unhappy that you have received an unfriendly service especially from my office. Please accept my personal apologies. I can imagine just how you felt especially as you have always been used to excellent and warm service from my predecessor Mr Franton.*

**(Resolution)** *As you can imagine, our main goal is to put this situation right and I really appreciate your willingness to give us three weeks to improve our customer service. In fact, I have been attending intensive training in Effective Customer Contact for the last week. It really makes a big difference.*

**(Action)** *You would be very welcome to visit our company so that you can get to know our new team personally. I will contact you by telephone to ask if you would be able to visit us or to make other suitable arrangements. If you prefer I would be pleased to come and visit you in your office.*

**(Politeness)** *I look forward to speaking to you again on Friday. Thank you very much for your patience and understanding.*

*With kind regards,*

### 3/4 **Vocabulary for practical correspondence**

In addition to the SCRAP structure you need at least ten sentences to help you write letters, e-mails and faxes. Which of these you choose will depend on the type of letter you are writing.

#### **Exercise 1 (Solution see 11/1)**

Decide which categories these phrases best fit into. For example:

1	Beginning	<i>I am writing to explain ...</i>	J	<i>I am contacting you to inform you.</i>
---	-----------	------------------------------------	---	---

- A *Would you like me to ...?*
- B *Could you possibly ...?*
- C *Please find enclosed ...*
- D *You will be pleased to hear that ...*
- E *Unfortunately, ...*
- F *We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.*
- G *Thank you for your letter of 24th July referring to ...*
- H *If I can help in any way, please feel free to contact me.*
- I *I look forward to meeting you next week.*
- J *I am contacting you to inform you.*

Please assign the phrases to this categories:

	Categories		Phrases
1	Beginning	<i>I am writing to explain ...</i>	
2	Referring to previous situation	<i>With reference to your fax of July 24th ...</i>	
3	Good news	<i>I am pleased to inform you ...</i>	
4	Bad news	<i>We regret to inform you ...</i>	
5	Asking someone to do something	<i>Would you please ...?</i>	
6	Offer help	<i>If you like we would be happy to ...</i>	
7	Saying sorry	<i>We would like to apologize for ...</i>	
8	Sending documents	<i>I am enclosing ...</i>	
9	Final comments	<i>Thank you for your help.</i>	
10	Future contact	<i>I look forward to meeting you again soon.</i>	



## **A sales letter**

*Dear Mr Block,  
Thank you for your interest in our latest offer. As a frequent organiser of conferences and meetings you will be pleased to hear about our new Meridian hotel which now includes a new seminar suite.  
We know that the quality of seminar facilities is a key factor in the success of the seminar itself.  
Ideally located near a park and next to a tube station, the hotel offers you a large variety of options for your training sessions. Why not come to check them out for yourself. Please find enclosed our new brochure.*

*My secretary will telephone you to arrange a suitable time. All our colleagues look forward to welcoming you. I look forward to meeting you personally.*

*Yours sincerely,  
James Turner*

## **Use visual, auditory and feeling expressions!**

When writing your letters, running meetings or telephoning you can also select expressions from each of these three groups and use them:

### **Visual:**

- *What we are focusing on here is ...*
- *I quite see what you mean ...*
- *My viewpoint is ...*

**Auditory:**

- *I hear what you are saying ...*
- *We clearly speak the same language ...*
- *We are on the same wavelength ...*

**Feeling:**

- *I'm not with you ...*
- *Basically, you've on the right track*
- *My standpoint is ...*



If you listen to yourself and your colleagues you will notice you tend to favour one type of expression. The more you can match your partner's favourite type of expression the better you will be able to communicate.

## 4

## Secret 4: The way to build relationships

### 4/1

### Active dialogue: Good relationships

Man: *Do you mind if I call you by your first name?*

Andreas looked really surprised ...

Andreas: *No ... err please feel free. Andreas.*

Man: *And I am Freddy. I'll never forget receiving a lovely magnum of champagne from my boss after I had been working just for one year in the firm. I was absolutely delighted and honoured that he had not only remembered that one year had gone by. He had also remembered my wife's and little boy's names and included it on the card.*

Andreas: *That sounds really great. I must say I have never done anything like that ... I have never really thought it was important.*

Man: *I am sure that it is crucial if you want to motivate your staff. And it is essential if you want to develop good relationships with your clients.*

Andreas: *I must say all the clients call Laura by her first name and they seem to get on really well. I have often wondered how she does it.*

Man: *You could ask her, you know. She'd be delighted to let you in on her secrets. Why don't you invite her for lunch and ask her how she does it?*

Andreas: *OK, I will.*

Over lunch:

Andreas: *I am really pleased you have been able to come, Laura. This week has been really different. I have met this elderly white-haired man who has been telling me the secrets of effective business communication. But first of all, what would you like to drink?*

Laura: *A dry white wine, please.*

Andreas: *I'll just ask the waiter to come over, just a second. A dry white wine and half of lager, please.*

Laura: *Can you recommend anything special?*

Andreas: *Last time I had the chicken in a wine sauce ... coq au vin I think it was called.*

Laura: *Great, I'll have that then.*

Andreas: *We'd like two coq au vin, please.*

Laura: *Now you were asking me about developing a good relationship with our clients.*

Andreas: *Yes ... what is the trick?*

Laura: *No tricks ... rather openness and a system for recording important information.*

Andreas: *A system?*

Laura: *Yes ... Before I went to a brilliant seminar by a man named Robert Russell I had no idea how to develop a good business relationship. He taught me that it is often the little things that make a big difference. He told us a nice story to illustrate. He had a seminar participant who had a cat and she was very fond of her beautiful moggy. Mark realised this and remembered its name. Two years later on another seminar Mark asked ... and how is your cat Francis? The lady*

*smiled with delight and instantly started up conversation. What Mark taught us is that you can develop a system to do this as often as you wish.*

Andreas: *And how does the system work?*

Laura: *Well, it involves noting down important information about the people you meet. You can design a table if you want. This is mine.*

She showed Andreas her notes.

Andreas: *Great idea! And enjoy your meal.*

Laura: *Thanks, the same to you.*

They both took a bite, simultaneously said „um, ... delicious“ .... and laughed at each other. Back in the office. Andreas and the man are having a cup of tea.

Andreas: *What a great cup of tea! Thank you for bringing your delicious English twinings tea. A really kind thought and especially for me!*

Man: *My pleasure! I get a buzz out of giving.*

Andreas: *And thanks for suggesting going out with Laura. She is great company.*

Man: *Yes ... and a communication expert. Have you noticed how she gets people talking by asking open questions and finding common ground to talk about?*

Andreas: *Actually I did. And I'd be keen to know just how she does it.*

Man: *Then read her book. It's a bestseller.*

Andreas couldn't believe his ears.

Andreas: *She's written a bestseller?*

And Andreas turned to check he had heard right. However, as usual the man had gone! He looked over to the coffee table in his office and there was a book titled „Tips for communicators“ by Laura McDermott. Andreas opened it and started to read. He got out his special notebook and took careful notes.

Here are the most important points he discovered in Laura’s bestseller.

4/2

## Open and closed questions



Probably the most important way to get to know someone socially is by asking him questions.

Compare these two approaches:

### 1. You have only just met this person.

You: *Hello, are you from this area?*

Partner: *Err ... yes ...*

You: *Do you work in one of the large firms around Mannheim?*

Partner: *No, I don't.*

You: *Are you a keen sportsman?*

Partner: *Yes, I am.*

You: *Oh, really? Do you jog?*

Partner: *No, I don't.*

### 2. You have just met this person at the bar.

You: *That's an unusual badge. May I ask what it is?*

Partner: *Yes, it's a networking badge.*

You: *A networking badge? What do you mean by networking?*

Partner: *Well, we meet regularly every week to discuss how we can help our members to get more customers.*

You: *Sounds interesting! Oh please excuse me ... I'm John Doorbar. I'm from England originally!*  
Partner: *Yes, I noticed a slight accent, I'm Stefan.*  
You: *Pleased to meet you!*  
Partner: *Pleased to meet you, too.*

What is the difference between these two dialogues?

*Open questions help a conversation to flow*

The first one never really got off the ground, did it? Closed questions tend to kill a conversation. The second one was more interesting. The open questions allowed my conversation partner to speak about his networking organisation.

When you meet people for the first time it is important to have a good supply of open questions to ask them.

### **Exercise 2 (Solution see 11/1)**

Imagine you are meeting a business partner from Brazil at the airport.

**Here are ten open questions on the following general topics. Please complete them:**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Question</b>
Come/from?	<i>Where do you come from?</i>
Journey?	<i>How ...</i>
Do/for a living?	
Be/to Germany before?	
How long/work at AMB?	

What sort/wine/people drink in that part of the country?	
What/like to eat/drink?	
What/most popular/sports/Brazil?	
How many/people/responsible for?	
How long/stay/in London?	

If you only ask these questions as they are then your opening discussion could sound like a police hearing. It is recommendable to use an introductory opener. This prepares your partner and acts as a sign saying: Here is my next question.

*e.g. I'd be interested to find out ... how many people work in your department at the moment?*

### **Here are four introductory openers:**

- *Could you tell me ...?*
- *I'd be interested to hear ...*
- *Could you tell me something about ...?*
- *I am keen on wine myself, tell me ...*

## **4/3**

### **7 ways to keep a conversation moving**

Have you ever been in a situation when you don't know what to say next? This can be uncomfortable or embarrassing especially if your partner is an important potential client.



There are some practical ways to keep a conversation going. Here they are along with examples of each:

1. Give a little more information than is asked for.  
*Actually I come from Mannheim ... that's a town near Heidelberg on the Bergstraße.*  
*Oh, my brother's been there on holiday. He's a great wine lover.*  
The more information you give the more chance the partner has to make a relevant comment.
2. Make a related comment.  
*You brother enjoys football, you say! I loved football at school and believe it or not I was the captain of the school team.*
3. Repeat key words.  
*I come from Wellington, New Zealand ... from New Zealand.*
4. React in some creative way.  
*This is the 10th time I've been to London.*  
*The 10th time ... I can imagine it's starting to feel like your second home.*
5. Add comments.  
*We have been doing really well from a business point of view when you consider the recession.*  
*Yes, in Germany the recession has caused lots of firms to cut back and you are increasing all the time ... How do you keep this growth going?*
6. Ask related questions.  
*You drink more wine than in Argentina? Really, what's the reason for that?*
7. Use question tags.  
*Oh, ... you live in Brasilia, do you?*

Question tags also help a conversation to flow, don't they?

### Exercise 3 (Solutions see 11/1)

Complete these sentences, would you?

Interesting job ...
Friendly couple ...
That's a super idea ...
You're from AMB ...
The next flight hasn't been cancelled ...
We've met before ...
We'll see you in Paris ...

### Listening „noises“ and phrases

Another way to keep a conversation going is by making listening noises. They demonstrate that you are listening. They are easy to use

**Here is a list:**

Right	Really	Oh, yes! understand
Mmm	I see	That's interesting!

## 4/4 Politeness

Politeness can be shown by saying the right thing at the right time. It takes a little practice.

It is helpful to understand how we express politeness. There are five basic ways to do this:

1. **Offering:**  
*Would you like me to ...?*  
*What can I get you ...?*
2. **Suggesting:**  
*Let's go to the meeting room, shall we?*  
*How about going ...?*  
*Shall we ...?*  
*What about ...?*
3. **Handing people things:**  
*Can I give you this?*  
*Would you like to have a look at this?*  
*Here you are.*  
*I don't think you've got this, have you?*
4. **Asking for people to go first (very British!):**  
*After you!*  
*I'll follow you.*
5. **„Could/would“ to instruct people or warn them:**  
*If you could keep to the pathway, please.*  
*Perhaps you could ...*  
*Would you keep together, please!*

### **Exercise 4 (Solutions see 11/1)**

What would you say in the following situations? Be polite!

#### **The politeness quiz**

1. Offer a visitor something to drink.
2. Your visitor says: *Is it OK if I smoke?* Say no!
3. Introduce yourself and welcome your visitor to the firm.
4. You hand your visitor a document.
5. Suggest to your visitor that you go to the meeting-room.
6. Everybody has arrived to the meeting. Suggest you start.

7. You want your visitor to enter the lift before you.
8. Warn your visitors where to walk on their factory tour.

## 4/5 Food and Drink

What to say	Meaning
In the hotel bar	
I'll get these	I'm paying
This is on the house	The company is paying
Just before you drink	Here's to your health
A drink before you leave	One for the road?
In the restaurant:	
To help your guest choose you may need these adjectives:	
Delicious, tasty, excellent, superb	To say it's good
Spicy, mild, filling, light, a national speciality, a local speciality	What is the food like?

## 5 Secret 5: The effective way to telephone

### 5/1 Active dialogue: Telephone techniques

The telephone rings.

Andreas: *Yes ... Blunt. ... err ... no she's not in. Thanks bye!*

The white-haired man is standing at the window.

*Developing  
a warm  
telephone  
style*

Man: *Would you say that was a typical call?*

Andreas: *I suppose so. These calls always disturb my work.*

Man: *These calls are your work. Without calls from customers you could all pack your bags and go home.*

Andreas: *I have never looked at it like that.*

Man: *When you see the calls as a way of discovering your clients' needs you will be able to react in a more appropriate way.*

Andreas: *And so what should I say? (Smiling sarcastically) „I am extremely sorry she isn't in at the moment. When she gets back I will ask her to call you back. May I have your telephone number, please? Thank you for your call!“*

Man: *Sounds good.*

Andreas: *I am not a secretary ... you expect me to say that?*

Man: *If you want to keep your customers satisfied I would strongly recommend it.*

*All you need to do is to develop a warm telephone style. This is the basis of all telephone calls, whether you are calling to confirm appointments or to make sales calls.*

Andreas: *I must say I also have the feeling I should make more calls to new potential customers, but how should I do it?*

Man: *Yes, I think that's a great idea. The telephone is an excellent tool for finding new clients. A superb trainer colleague of mine makes appointments all the time. He has written a wonderful little booklet „Phoning for business“.*

Andreas: *And what's the trick?*

Man: *No trick ... just a system and a little patience.*

Andreas: *Well, we could certainly do with more clients.*

Man: *Let's make some appointments then. I'll show you how he does it but only if you promise to make at least three appointments with potential customers by tomorrow at 3.00 p.m.*

Andreas: *Three appointments ... that sounds a hard bargain. But I have no choice, do I?*

Man: *Not really, no promise, no system!*

Andreas: *OK, then I'll do it.*

Man: *All you need to remember is to use the telephone sandwich called BLJIO. I have just looked at your new brochure to prepare for our call. Let me now show you the system.*

The man picks up the phone and dials.

Man: *Hello, this is Mr ... from Teleworld. May I speak to the person responsi-*

*ble for telecommunication in your company, please?*

Switchboard: *Yes, I'll put you through.*

Man: *Thanks a lot.*

Lady: *Hello, Kuster here.*

Man: *Hello Frau Kuster. Mr ... from Tele-world here.*

Frau Kuster: *What do you want?*

Man: *Briefly how interesting would it be if you could save costs on all calls both inland and abroad?*

Frau Kuster: *Well, yes that would be good, of course.*

Man: *That's just why I am calling ... when may I introduce our product to you?*

Frau Kuster: *I am very short of time.*

Man: *It would take just twelve minutes of your time ... Would you prefer me to visit you on Thursday at 10.00 or Friday at 11.00?*

Frau Kuster: *OK then ... let's say Friday at 11.00 but only for twelve minutes!*

Man: *Yes, I promise only twelve minutes. I really look forward to meeting you, Frau Kuster.*

Andreas: *Blimey, that sounded easy.*

Man: *It is not so hard if you keep to the script. BLJIO ... We'll also have to prepare the company presentation and think about how best you can organize the meeting with Frau Kuster.*

Andreas: *How I can do the meeting? You made the appointment.*

Man: *You want the new customers, don't you?*

Andreas: *Well, yes!*

Man: *And remember ... by 3.00 p.m. tomorrow we want three appointments, ... OK. And here is a little present to help you get them.*

The man gave Andreas a little booklet: „Phoning for business“. He started reading and didn't finish until he got to the end.

Here are the notes he wrote. It starts with an explanation of the telephone sandwich:

## 5/2 **BIJIO – A memory keep for sales calls**

### **Making appointments by phone**

It may be that you have to set up appointments for your boss so that he can meet them to present your company's products. If so, here is a way to get appointments:

Laura Schmidt: *Hello Herr Siegler, Laura Schmidt here from Teleworld. We offer a high quality telephone service at a very competitive price. Herr Siegler, I understand you are responsible for all decisions concerning telephones in your company.*

Herr Sieger: *Yes, that's right.*

Laura: **Briefly**, *what it's about is this. How interesting would it be to learn about a telephone company that offered you an opportunity for big cost cuts in telephoning*



*and at the same time giving a personal service.*

Herr Sieger: *Yes, sounds good.*

Laura: *Great, Herr Siegler that's **just** why I'm calling. When can I come round to **introduce** the company to you? It would take just twelve minutes. Shall I come round on Wednesday at 9.45 a.m. or on Thursday at 10.20 a.m.?*

Herr Sieger: *Let's say 10.20.*

<b>Words you use</b>	<b>„Behind the words“</b>
Briefly	<i>It won't take long</i>
Interesting	<i>Awakens interest</i>
Just	<i>Quickly get to the point</i>
Introduce	<i>Short presentation</i>
Or	<i>Two alternative times to meet</i>

## **5/3      5 Key telephone situations for the executive secretary**

Below are examples of various situations you have to deal with in your responsibility as assistant to the MD.

### **Your boss is out**

An urgent call from the US.

Jim Holden: *Hi, Jim Holden here. I need to speak to Andreas Blunt.*

Laura: *Can you hold for just one minute? I'll see if I can find him. (...) No I'm sorry, he's gone to a meeting out of town.*

Jim Holden: *Please ask him to call me back as soon as possible. It's urgent.*

Laura: *Perhaps I can help you?*

Jim Holden: *Well, it's a really sensitive issue.*

Laura: *It's confidential you mean ... If you want me to give Andreas a message I'll call him on his mobile right now.*

Jim Holden: *You see ... the congress has been cancelled as three of our main customers have pulled out.*

Laura: *Oh that's serious. Just a minute. Andreas it's Jim Holden. He needs to speak to you urgently.*

Andreas: *OK, could you put him through?*

Laura: *Sure.*

## **A trip to the US**

Andreas: *Laura ... I need to go to the US tomorrow.*

Laura: *Shall I book you a flight and reserve a hotel?*

Andreas: *Please.*

Laura calls an American last minute flight office.

Laura: *Hello, this is Laura Schmidt here. I'd like to book a flight to San Francisco for tomorrow morning, please.*

Travel office: *We're booked out, sorry.*

Laura: *Do you have any cancellations? It really is urgent.*

Travel office: *Just hold on, madam.*  
Laura: *Any luck?*  
Travel office: *Yes, there's a flight leaving at 10.55 from Frankfurt. Shall I confirm that for you, madam?*  
Laura: *Yes, please. And thank you for your help.*  
Travel agent: *My pleasure. Have a nice day.*

## Booking a hotel

Laura is booking a hotel for Andreas.

Hotel: *San Francisco City hotel.*  
Laura: *Do you have a single room for tomorrow evening until Thursday?*  
Hotel: *We do ... what kind of room do you need?*  
Laura: *A single room with a bathroom. How much would that be, please?*  
Hotel: *198 dollars.*  
Laura: *What other facilities do you have, please?*  
Hotel: *We have a sauna and a heated pool.*  
Laura: *Great, so I'd like to book that, please.*  
Hotel: *I need your credit card number please.*  
Laura: *Yes, certainly, it's ... Could you please confirm the booking?*  
Hotel: *Certainly, madam. I'll do that right away. Thank you for your booking.*  
Laura: *Thank you. Goodbye.*

## Making appointments

Sue: *Good morning ... Teleworld. Sue Mild speaking ... how can I help?*

Laura: *Good morning. Laura here calling from Germany. May I speak to Mr Hartman, please.*

Sue: *Oh hello, Laura, certainly. I'll just put you through.*

Hartman: *Oh, hello, Tom Hartman.*

Sue: *Hi, Mr Hartman, how are things?*

Hartman: *Great, thanks, Mrs Schmidt. I read your article in the newsletter last week. Really interesting!*

Laura: *Oh thanks. I am calling to ask when you'd have time to arrange an appointment to discuss the new marketing campaign.*

Hartman: *Good you mention it. It really slipped my mind. Let me just get my diary. Just one minute. Tuesday 30th August looks good.*

Laura: *Yes, Andreas is free then, too.*

Hartman: *Great, so shall we fix it here and now?*

Laura: *Yes, please. And I'll arrange a hotel for you as usual. Was the last one comfortable?*

Hartman: *Absolutely fine. And thanks for your call. Look forward to seeing you again.*

Laura: *Me too and Andreas sends his regards.*

## Dealing with complaints

One of the most difficult kinds of call is when your partner is angry. You need a system to help you. What to say:

### 1. Listen actively:

- *I understand.*
- *I'm listening.*

**2. Step into his shoes:**

- *I see just what you mean.*
- *Well, I can see why you are angry.*
- *This must make things very difficult for you.*

**3. Find out what happened:**

- *So, what you are saying is ...?*
- *You received only 15 units, you say?*

**4. Action plan:** Here you make suggestions for a practical solution.

- *Would you accept ...?*
- *What if we ..., does that sound OK to you?*
- *I suggest ..., how do you feel about that?*

**5. Carry out plan and check:** Here you say what you have done and what you will do soon.

- *I've checked with the dispatch department.*
- *You will be notified when the goods are sent out.*
- *Your consignment will be delivered on Wednesday 10th.*

**Here is an example of how Laura deals with a complaint:**

**Step 1: Just Listen**

- Hamill: *Hello. Is that Teleworld? Hamill here.*  
Laura: *Yes, Laura speaking. How can I help, Mr Hamill?*  
Hamill: *Help! You must be joking. We've been waiting for your specialists to come and install our new system.*  
Laura: *I'm really sorry to hear that, Mr Hamill. What's happened?*

Hamill: *We placed our order in June 30th and now it's the end of July. That's what's happened. We've had hundreds of complaints from our customers that they can't reach us.*

Laura: *Oh, no.*

Hamill: *Oh, yes. Now what are you going to do about it?*



Tip:

- Use the caller's name.
- Use listening noises: *Oh/yes/really/Oh dear*
- Do not argue or make excuses.

## Step 2: Show you understand

Hamill: *Can you imagine how much this will cost us?*

Laura: *I can imagine, a lot ... I can certainly see why you are angry. It really is an important order.*

Hamill: *You just tell me one reason I should trust your cowboys again?*

Laura: *Well, you were quite right to let us know really quickly, Mr Hamill.*



Tip:

- Do not comment!
- Use: *quite right, correct, understand, important*

### Step 3: Find out what happened

- Laura: *Well, you were quite right to let us know really quickly, Mr Hamill.*
- Hamill: *You'd better solve this fast, or else ...*
- Laura: *You said the order was placed in June and is now three weeks late, is that correct?*
- Hamill: *Yes.*
- Laura: *Could you give me the order number?*
- Hamill: *Yes, it's NN 342.*
- Laura: *I have it here. You ordered 35 new lines to be set up by July 3rd.*
- Hamill: *And we have received only 25 lines.*
- Laura: *You have 25 lines.*
- Hamill: *So, what's the next step?*



#### Tip:

- Keep to the facts!
- Don't try to explain things!

### Step 4: Action plan

- Laura: *Your extension number is 0621 – 445 334, is that right, Mr Hamill?*
- Hamill: *Correct.*
- Laura: *Can I get hold of you on that number in the next hour?*
- Hamill: *Yes, but I have an important meeting at 12.30.*
- Laura: *I see ... You will receive a call within half an hour. I am going to contact our installation unit and arrange a team to come and install the lines in the morning. Would that be OK?*

Hamill: *I'd prefer the afternoon. I want to be there personally.*

Laura: *Fine, so I'll call you again shortly and thanks for letting us know about the delay early.*



Tip:

- Be specific!
- Check that the caller agrees with your suggestion.

### Step 5: Carry out plan and check

Laura: *Good afternoon, Mr Hamill. I'm calling back about your order as we arranged.*

Hamill: *Good afternoon. What's the situation?*

Laura: *I've checked with the department and you will get the new lines installed by 14.00 tomorrow afternoon. Is that alright?*

Hamill: *That sounds reasonable. They'll be here by 14.00, you said?*

Laura: *That's right. And of course, we will take over any of the additional costs.*

Hamill: *I should certainly hope so! I appreciate you helping to solve this problem.*

Laura: *That's my pleasure. It's important you are satisfied with our service. If I can help in future do feel free to call me.*

Hamill: *Thanks a lot, bye.*



Tip:

- Use „you“: *It's important you are satisfied with our service.*
- Use: *I've checked for you.*



## What to say if you do not understand?

Often on the phone you deal with non-native speakers who are sometimes hard to understand.



Tip: Ask them to repeat

- *Sorry*
- *I'm sorry*
- *I'm sorry, could you say it again?*
- *I'm really not sure I quite follow.*
- *I'm really sorry but I can't quite follow. Would you mind sending me a fax?*

## 5/4

## Cultural points to note when calling Britain and the US

- Americans are quick to use first names.
  - The British are more reserved.
  - Different cultures have different rules for the use of first names. Surnames are safest.
1. **Repetition:** It is very important on the phone to check understanding. *So, what you need is a flight to LA on Friday at 22.00: Is that right?*
  2. **KISS:** Use the KISS principle. **Keep it short and simple.**  
Use simple language. Idiomatic language is hard to understand on the phone.
  3. **Friendliness:** Some cultures mistake overfriendliness for unprofessionalism.
  4. **Small talk:** Small talk is expected in Britain when phoning. In US it is not so common.

## 5/5 Keeping records

### *Phone-checklist*

Make a note of your important telephone calls:

	✓
Date of call	
What was agreed?	
The main points	
Action you need to take	
Action customer agreed to take	
Agreed next contact (day and time)	

## 6 Secret 6: The power of words

### 6/1 Active dialogue: Important vocabulary

The elderly white-haired man was sitting in Andreas' waiting-room area reading a book.

He was so fascinated by the content he didn't notice Andreas walk past. It was exactly 3.00 p.m. He looked up after a short time and smiled.

Man: *So how did you get on?*

Andreas: *Really well ... I called 20 firms and made four appointments.*

Man: *Well done.*

Andreas: *Thanks for the great book. It is so easy to follow and has all the phrases you need.*

Man: *I find it wonderful how words can be used to influence. They have a magic power to help people to achieve their goals.*

Andreas: *Sometimes they have got me into trouble!*

Man: *Oh yes ... tell me more.*

Andreas: *Well, one morning one of our secretaries came into the office and I wanted to pay her a compliment. She wore really smart clothes.*

Man: *Sounds nice ... what did you say?*

Andreas: *I like your pants.*

Man: *Oh dear, ... what did she say?*

Andreas: *You like what ... you macho!*

Man: *Oh dear, you made two mistakes here. Pants in Britain are underpants. In the US they are trousers. Secondly, you have to be really careful about making comments which might be interpreted as sexist. This is a good example of a compliment that was taken wrongly.*

- Andreas: *Oh, I see. I will apologize to her when I see her next. Are there other words which can be misunderstood?*
- Man: *Oh yes. Plenty of them. In fact a friend of mine, a man called Don Smitt, has compiled a list of the most important false friends. I will give you an exercise to practice if you wish.*
- Andreas: *That would be great, thanks. Do you have any tips for improving my ability to explain difficult words?*
- Man: *Sure ... I personally find it good to do two things: Firstly, simplify and secondly, learn the eight ways to explain words to foreigners.*
- Andreas: *Sounds interesting.*
- Man: *I like to use mindmaps to help me remember words as well as image streaming.*
- Andreas: *Never heard of any of those.*
- Man: *If you like I'll explain them to you. All you need to do is make notes or perhaps a mindmap!*
- Andreas: *May I invite you to a drink and perhaps a bite to eat? You have been most helpful.*
- Man: *Sounds wonderful!*

Andreas and the man left the pub at 11.30 p.m.

- Andreas: *Thanks for a great evening.*
- Man: *It has been my pleasure. I really enjoyed it.*
- Andreas: *And tomorrow we have our first meeting with a potential new client.*
- Man: *Yes ... and that needs good preparation. Listen to this before I see you tomorrow. And have a good night.*

The man gave Andreas a CD ...

„*Thank you*“ said Andreas. „*Good night*“ said the old man as he stepped into his waiting taxi.

He looked at the CD. He read the contents:

- False friends
- Mindmaps
- The linguistic connection between German and English

These are the notes Andreas made after listening to the CD.

## 6/2 False friends

Have you ever had a friend who turned out not to be a real friend? When you really needed him he was nowhere to be seen. In English we call these fairweather friends (they only want to know you when things are good) or false friends.

There are also linguistic false friends, too. They look like a German word, however have a different meaning. Sometimes funny, sometimes embarrassing.

### Example:

Ambulanz looks like ambulance, doesn't it? However, the German word Ambulanz means *outpatient's department* (i.e. part of a hospital) while the English word ambulance means *Krankenwagen*.

### Exercise 5 (Solutions see 11/1)

Correct these sentences. They can cause potential embarrassing misunderstandings!

1. Jim: *I was rather disappointed with the provision I received last September.*  
George: *Really ... why was that?*  
Jim: *Because my sales were up 14 % on last year.*
2. Mark: *Have you written the protocols yet, Dave?*  
Tim: *Sorry?*  
Mark: *The notes for the meeting.*  
Tim: *Oh yes ... you mean the \_\_\_\_\_ ... I mailed them to you 20 minutes ago.*
3. Susan: *What's your opinion, Alex?*  
Alex: *I mean the new project is an excellent chance for all of us.*
4. *My handy is really handy ... It fits perfectly into my jacket pocket.*
5. Janet: *Paulo is a really good undertaker.*  
Thomas: *Oh ... I thought he is in Sales.*  
Janet: *Pardon?*  
Thomas: *Yes ... he is in Sales.*  
Janet: *Oh sorry. I mean ... he's a good ...!*  
Thomas: *Ah, ... now I'm with you.*
6. *Did you know we are writing a new prospect? It should look really nice. It'll be in full colour.*
7. *It's extremely difficult to read what is on the backside of her document.*
8. Alan: *Do you feel like coming round to visit me this evening?*  
Barbara: *Eventually, it depends how long the meeting lasts.*
9. Elizabeth: *I also work as a procurer.*  
Edward: *Really! I would never have believed it!*

## 6/3      **The 12 most important false friends**

Here is a table which contains 12 of the most important false friends for business.

## Secret 6: The power of words

---

What you mean ...	What you should say ...
aktuell	current
Chef	boss
Provision	commission
Protokoll	minutes
Handy	mobile
meinen	to think, feel
Unternehmer	business person
Prokurist	manager with power of attorney
muss nicht	don't have to
rentabel	lucrative, profitable
konsequent	consistent

What you should NOT say	Why not? Because ...
actual	<i>actual</i> means <i>tatsächlich</i>
chef or chief	<i>chef</i> means Koch, <i>chief</i> means Häuptling
provision	provision means Vorkehrung
protocol	protocol means Vorgehensweise
handy	handy means praktisch
to mean	<i>to mean</i> means <i>bedeuten</i>
undertaker	<i>undertaker</i> means <i>Leichenbestatter</i>
procurer	<i>procurer</i> means <i>Zuhälter</i>
must not	<i>must not</i> means <i>darf nicht</i>
rentable	<i>rentable</i> means <i>mietbar</i>
consequent	<i>consequent</i> means <i>folgend</i>

## 6/4 Explaining difficult words

### *Missing vocabulary*

Have you ever been in a situation when you wanted to say something but you just couldn't think of the right word? This happens both in our native language and when we are speaking a second or foreign language.

For this situation we need tools to help us to explain. We will combine this with a mindmap which helps us to express information in a visual way.

Let's imagine you want to explain the word *audio cassette* to a person whose English is not very good. What can you say?

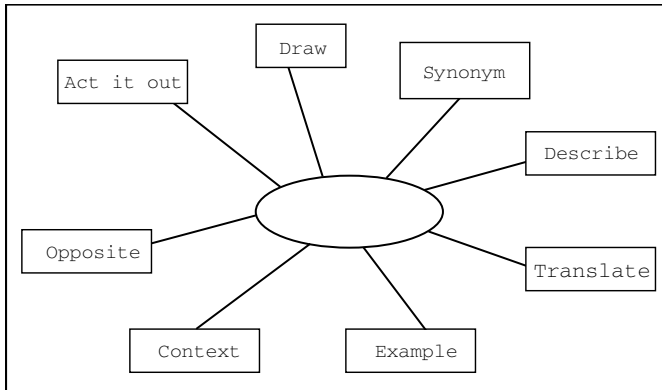
### **Examples:**

*I have these in my car and I can listen to them. They have music or words on them.*

- Opposite: *It's not a CD!*
- Translate it: The easiest alternative
- Describe: *It's about 7 cms long by 4 cms wide. It's about 7 mm thick.*
- Act it out: If you can act it out often people can guess. You could act out sliding the cassette into a tape machine.
- Find a similar word: Synonyms can help. A plastic case with a roll of tape
- Draw it: A quick sketch/drawing can save lots of time.
- Context: It helps to give a context. Think of a sentence which contains the word, e.g. *I use my cassette tapes when I want to practise doing my presentations. It is helpful if I can hear how my voice sounds.*



## 6/5 Mindmap – How to explain words



## 6/6 The German English connection

Apart from false friends German and English have many connections. Here are eight useful ways to help you remember the links.

**Rule 1:** ch in German becomes k

Buch	book
Milch	milk
buchen	to book
kochen	to cook

**Rule 2:** ff becomes p/pp, f becomes p

hoffen	hope
reif	ripe
Kupfer	copper
Affe	ape
Pfeffer	pepper

**Rule 3:** ei becomes o

Stein	stone
allein	alone
ein	one

**Rule 4:** ss/s in German is often t in English

Wasser	water
ich muss	I must
aus	out

**Rule 5:** z in German is often t in English, tz is often t

zwei	two
Katze	cat
Zunge	tongue
Salz	salt

**Rule 6:** d in German is often th

Ding	thing
Distel	thistle
Dank	thanks
Dieb	thief

**Rule 7:** t in German is often d

laut	loud
reiten	ride
kalt	cold

**Rule 8:** ch in German is often gh in English

Tochter	daughter
Fracht	freight
Macht	might

## 7 Secret 7: Managing good meetings

### 7/1 Active dialogue: Running good meetings

*Preparation is essential*

Man: *Why do you think effective meeting management is so important to every business person?*

Andreas: *I think it reflects the culture of the company. If they are professionally run then it motivates the staff to work in a professional way.*

Man: *Studies show that more than half of all the meetings run are not necessary at all.*

Andreas: *As I see it, the preparation is essential.*

Man: *Yes ... you are quite right. And what else makes a good meeting in your opinion?*

Andreas: *Laura is great at meetings and she says there are three main points apart from the preparation. These are: effective chairing, effective participation of the delegates, knowing the key language.*

Man: *My suggestion would be to put this into practice. You mentioned in the pub last night that you have arranged a meeting with Ms Johnson to discuss possible co-operation with the new international marketing group. They are keen to save money on their telephone bills!*

Andreas: *And what do you suggest?*

Man: *I would suggest inviting Ms Johnson and her sales director Mr Holmes to our company to discuss future strategic*

*plans. Then you could prepare and carry out the meeting with Laura ... You can learn a lot from her, you know.*

Andreas: *Yes, she's extremely good.*

**The meeting:**

Laura: *Please come in. It's great to see you both again.*

Ms Johnson: *Hi Laura. It has been a long time ... Jenny, Frank ... let me introduce you to our new MD Mr Andreas Blunt.*

Andreas: *Very pleased to meet you. I see that you are on first name terms. Would you mind if I call you by your first names?*

Jenny: *Not all, I'm Jenny.*

Frank: *And my name's Frank.*

Andreas: *And my name's Andreas.*

Laura: *Great, so let's arrange some tea. Here we are. A friend of mine brought it from England last week.*

Jenny: *There is nothing like a good cup of tea to start the day off, is there?*

Andreas: *And how about a chocolate biscuit? These are my favourites.*

Frank: *Thanks.*

Laura: *Cheers.*

Jenny: *Not for me, thanks. It'll spoil my dinner!*

Laura: *So let's see what's on the agenda, shall we?*

**Agenda:**

Laura: *Andreas would like to give his philosophy of where he feels we should be going over the next five years. Then we have a brainstorming session.*

*Goal setting: What do we want to achieve together?*

*And you mentioned you'd like to look at „Communication problems“.*

*Does that go along with what we said were the key issues when we spoke on the phone last week?*

Frank and Jenny: *Absolutely!*

Laura: *Great, so let's look at the first point on the agenda.*

Andreas: *Thank you, Laura.*

### **After the meeting:**

Andreas: *Thank you, Laura. May I ask you something?*

Laura: *Sure, go ahead.*

Andreas: *How did you learn to do your meetings in such a professional way? It really was impressive.*

Laura: *Oh thanks for the compliment. It took me lots of practice and my boss helped me to try out parts of the meeting I'd never done before. After a year he asked me to take over the chairing role. I was so nervous. But he said he knew I could do it. He said it helped him to concentrate on the body language and subtle gestures of our customers. I was able to run the meetings and his mind was free to come up with creative solutions. A perfect team.*

Andreas: *That really is a hard act to follow.*

Laura: *I can help you if you want. I went on a great seminar: „Managing meetings professionally“. I can get you the folder. Just hold on a moment. I'll be right back.*

Laura: *Here it is. Study it carefully. It is worth its weight in gold.*

Andreas: *Thanks very much indeed.*

Andreas picked up the file and made detailed notes on what he learned. Here are the results of his work.

## 7/2 **A preparation checklist**

If you are organizing a meeting for your boss you will need to think about the following points:

### *Checklist*

Time and place:	If you are presenting, be there at least 30 minutes before your guests.
People:	Who will attend?
Purpose:	What are the objectives of the meeting?
Facilities:	Do you have a room with the necessary equipment?
Communication:	What documentation is needed? Do you need to send your participants an agenda?
The start:	Think about how you want to begin the meeting.
Names:	Have a list of everybody's names.
Plan B:	In case your speaker isn't able to come have an alternative plan (plan „B“).

## 7/3      **The executive secretary's role in a meeting**

As executive secretary you need to support your manager so that he/she can concentrate on the content of the meeting.

There are a number of ways you can do this.

*The language you need*

Welcoming the attendees to create a good atmosphere:

- *Really great to see you again.*
- *It's good to see you after such a long time, Alison.*
- *I'm really pleased you've been able to make it.*
- *Andrew, how nice to have you with us.*

Directing people to their seats:

- *We've got a seat for you over here.*
- *Would you like to sit there next to Jane?*
- *Make yourself at home over there.*

Offering them refreshments:

- *Can I get you something to drink?*
- *What can I bring you, Mr Cooper?*
- *How about English tea or would you prefer an espresso, Paolo? I've organized one especially for you.*
- *Please help yourselves to whatever you like.*

Explaining that the meeting will start soon:

- *We'll be getting started very soon.*
- *We'll just give Don and Matthew a few more minutes. They called me to say there was a hold-up on the motorway.*

## 7/4 A short welcome speech

Laura is looking after Andreas' guests because Andreas has just phoned to explain he is stuck in a traffic jam.

Andreas has asked Laura to start the meeting with a short welcome speech. Luckily she is prepared.

She uses the following structure:

- Rhetorical question: e.g. *Don't you think it's great to have such a wonderful multi-cultural mixture of guests for our annual conference?*
- Say something personal and interesting about the guests: e.g. *Paolo's new marketing ...*
- Use their names.
- Surprise element in this case: e.g. gliding as a hobby.
- Explain the structure for the day.
- Bathroom (avoid the word „toilet“ for Americans)
- Clearly, Laura has thought carefully about the evening programme.
- A very brief introduction.
- Avoid LONG boring introductions.
- Two minutes per person is plenty!

### **Laura's example:**

*Don't you think it's great to have such a wonderful multi-cultural mixture of guests for our annual conference.*

*Tom and Bob are here from the States!*

*Golf's on the agenda for tomorrow, guys.*

*Ms Banjeree has travelled all the way from India.*

*Hope you like the Indian tea! And I bet none of our guests can guess what her hobby is?*

*Wait ... she loves flying gliders, an exciting hobby!*



*Paolo's here to tell us about the new Italian marketing plan. Thanks for agreeing to speak, Paolo.*

*And Jenny is over from Ireland where we are opening a new branch. Welcome to Germany, Jenny. A little bird told me you've only been in the company since last Monday!*

*And Andreas is going to take us through the meeting for the day ... he'll be here in a few minutes.*

*Before we start the formal part of the meeting let me just give you an idea of the timetable and, even more important, tell you where the bathrooms are!*

*Along this corridor, the ladies are on the right, the gents on the left.*

*We'll go on until 12.30 ... have a break for lunch. We've planned an hour but we can decide together how long we'd like.*

*Then we will go on until 17.30 followed by an evening meal which is, of course, our treat! With all our backgrounds I thought it may be nice to go to a multi-cultural centre which has just opened. We can perhaps talk about that in the breaks.*

Andreas arrives.

Laura: *That's great timing, Andreas. We've just dealt with the timing for the day. If I remember right I think we wanted to start with a very brief introduction. I don't know about you, but if I am in an unknown town I just like to get a brief idea of:  
where people are from,  
what they are responsible for and  
what their main goal is for the meeting.  
It makes me feel more at home.*

Andreas: *Shall I start by saying a few words about me?*

## 7/5 Taking care of your visitors

### Social language – Helping your guests

- **Clothes:** *Can I help you with your coat/jacket?/ There's an umbrella stand over there!* (Important in England)
- **Bathroom:** *Perhaps I could just show you where the bathrooms are?/If you'd like to freshen up ...*
- **Arranging transport:** *I'll send a taxi over right away./Wait there and I'll come and pick you up.*
- **Introducing people:** *Dave, let me introduce you to a good friend of mine./This is Sandra ... she's from Italy.*
- **Offering help/equipment/support:** *If there's anything you need please do ask./I'll be pleased to arrange any equipment you need for the presentation.*

The best way to prepare is to see how you would answer the following questions.

### Exercise 6 (Solutions see 11/1)

What would you say to help your guests?

1. Your visitors have just arrived. They want to freshen up.
2. It's hot. Perhaps your guest is thirsty.
3. You arrive and see your colleague from France is standing looking lost. Introduce him to someone.

4. A delegate calls from the airport. He speaks no German. Offer to arrange his transfer to your conference hotel.
5. You are going to the room with an Italian colleague who is going to do a presentation. You know he has no digital projector. Offer to help him.
6. Your visitor is looking for somewhere to put her coat.

## 7/6      **Diplomacy in meetings**

Avoid using very direct language in meetings. It could hurt someone's feelings.

- Use **would, could** or **may**:  
NOT: *This is a problem.*  
INSTEAD: *This could be a problem/rather tricky.*
- Use **softeners**:  
NOT: *You are behind schedule.*  
RATHER: *I think we are a little/slightly behind schedule.*
- Do not use negative words: e.g.  
NOT: *It was terrible/awful.*  
RATHER: *It wasn't very good.*

## 8 Secret 8: Dealing with strong emotions

### 8/1 Active dialogue: Calming people down

The man was waiting at the door. He could hear voices being raised. „*Surely it wasn't Andreas*“ he thought.

But it was. Clearly he needed to learn how to deal with angry people in an effective way.

Andreas slammed down the telephone.

*Method of dealing with angry people*

Man: *What was all that about?*

Andreas: *He was so rude ... He said we should learn to deliver on time! This was the third time he'd been promised special delivery. But nothing had changed. What does he expect?*

Man: *An excellent service from a professional provider! If I were in his shoes I'd feel just the same.*

Andreas: *But why doesn't he learn something about manners and politeness?*

Man (smiling): *Would you like to learn a method of dealing with angry people to calm them down and then to solve problems together?*

Andreas: *Sounds good but I can't imagine how it works.*

Man: *We need to understand an important psychological aspect to getting angry. When you are angry you are so emotional you can't think straight. If you try to*

*Speak logically to an angry person s/he won't hear you.*

Andreas: *You mean you are so involved in your angry mood that you are unable to think on a logical level?*

Man: *Exactly, you have hit the nail on the head.*

Andreas: *So, what is the solution, then?*

Man: *It is important to demonstrate that you understand the person's anger by mirroring his energy level. You do this by speaking louder than you would normally ... not quite as loud as your angry partner.*

Andreas: *And this demonstrates that you understand him/her. I always tend to speak quietly but this makes people even more angry, I find.*

Man: *Yes, that has been my experience, too, and then you allow the person to blow off steam. Let them speak until they have started to calm down a little.*

Andreas: *Then what?*

Man: *Show you understand by putting yourself in her/his shoes. Say something like „I can hear that you are really angry about this delayed delivery. I'd feel just the same if I were in your shoes.“*

Andreas: *And after that?*

Man: *Ask a question. Like „How would you suggest we solve the situation?“*

Andreas: *Then allow the person to make suggestions?*

Man: *That's right ... You could brainstorm ideas and find alternative solutions.*

Andreas: *And how do you make sure that the ideas are recorded and understood correctly? Often misunderstandings occur*

- after the meeting. People come out of the meeting with very different ideas as to what they think has been decided upon.*
- Man: *Yes, so to help understanding you need three tools:  
Summarizing,  
active listening and  
an action plan (or to-do list).*
- Andreas: *Sounds really useful. Can you recommend a good book to read on this topic?*
- Man: *Certainly ... here's a good one by Marshall Rosenberg and some notes I have from a conflict resolution seminar.*

Andreas looks at Rosenberg's book.

- Andreas: *„Non-violent Communication“ – an interesting title. May I borrow it?*
- Man: *Certainly ...*
- Andreas: *I'll let you have them all back tomorrow.*

Andreas started reading and making notes from the book and the seminar documents. Here they are.

## 8/2      **The language you need**

The key to dealing with angry people is to use the following tools:

- Show empathy.
- Put yourself in the other's shoes.
- Use active listening.
- Use solution-oriented questions rather than problem-oriented ones.  
e.g. *How can we work together to solve this?*  
is much better than  
*So what's the problem?*

## 8/3      **9-step Formula**

### **Step 1: Apologize**

- *I'm really sorry that this has happened.*
- *Please accept my apologies on behalf of the company.*

### **Step 2: Show understanding**

- *If I were in your shoes I'd feel just the same.*
- *If that happened to me I'd also feel very strongly.*

### **Step 3: Recognize the problem**

- *Yes ... I can see it is an extremely difficult situation.*
- *Yes ... it's a very sensitive issue.*

### **Step 4: Pace the energy**

- *You clearly feel very strongly.*
- *I can understand that you are angry as a result of this.*

### **Step 5: Offer creative solutions**

- *What would you suggest as the best way to deal with this?*
- *What about discussing a few options to see how we can best solve the difficulties?*

### **Step 6: Active listening**

- *So if I understand you right what you are saying is ...*
- *Just let me check I have got you right, ... what you are saying is ...*

### **Step 7: Questions**

- *May I ask you exactly what happened?*
- *Can you just give me an idea of what happened?*

### **Step 8: Get commitment**

- *So if we send the goods by Friday at 17.30 would that solve the situation for you?*
- *If we can send our best engineer to visit you first thing tomorrow would that be early enough?*

### **Step 9: Action plan**

- *So we will deliver the missing goods by Monday at 11.00 p.m. and we will call to check they have arrived ... does that fit in with your needs?*

## **8/4 The elegant use of „I“-statements**

As you express your views, you are less likely to provoke if you speak about yourself, rather than about him/her.

### **Example:**

A teenager comes home at 3.00 a.m. after promising to be home at 12.00 p.m. You could say:

- *You broke your word.*
- *You're irresponsible.*
- *You only think about yourself.*
- *You never think about your family.*

The result of this is that the teenager naturally becomes defensive and angry.



Let us imagine you use a different method. You say:

- *Ken, when I looked at the clock and saw it was 3.00 a.m. ...*  
The situation: He hadn't come home. It was 3.00.
- *I worried myself sick that something terrible had happened to you. I even called the police to see if you'd been in an accident.*  
The feelings associated with the lateness.
- *I needed to know you were safe.*  
Expression of a basic human need: In this case, safety of a loved one.
- *In fut*
- *ure I'd like you to be home when I ask you or, if you are delayed, to let me know by phone exactly where you are.*  
My wish for the future.

By expressing the situation in this way there is a higher chance that you will be heard. It therefore saves time and misunderstandings.

### Useful phrases to use here are:

- *I feel ...*
- *I get upset when ...*
- *I'm not comfortable with ...*
- *The way I see it is ...*



### Beware!

Beware of just putting an I- in front of a you-statement.

- *I feel that you have been irresponsible.*
- *I feel that you broke your word.*

Here: „feel“ does not express a real feeling. Rather it is the same as saying:

- *I think ...*
- *In my opinion ...*
- *As I see it ...*

It is a judgement dressed up to look more friendly.

An „I“-statement then focuses on your needs, concerns, feelings and desires and not on your opponent's „mistakes“.

### To sum up



Express yourself with:

- An observation: *When I see/hear ...*
- How you feel: *I feel ...*
- Your needs: *Because I need ...*
- A request: *And I would like you to ...*

## 9 Secret 9: Influencing in the office

### 9/1 Active dialogue: The power of influence

Andreas and the white-haired man were sitting over a coffee after having enjoyed a cafeteria meal.

*Influencing people with words*

Man: *I had a wonderful boss when I first started my career. I don't know why but we all enjoyed being influenced by him. And we were able to influence what happened in the office. If he heard people say something like „I can't do anything about it, it's not my job“, he'd encourage them to take responsibility and say e.g. „Let me tell you the person at headquarters you'd need to contact concerning that issue.“*

Andreas: *You felt empowered to change things.*

Man: *Absolutely, and words are the tools we use to influence. Imagine the different feeling you'd have if you heard someone say these two sentences to you:*

*„No, that's not the way to do it.“*

*„Well, I can see where you are coming from, and that you have found that this works and I'd like you to think about this approach as well.“*

Andreas: *I used to work in a company where the MD seemed to have no influence at all. This made people feel very uneasy. Then one Monday he came to work and something changed. He seemed to have a clear vision. And there was more clarity in his statements. People commen-*

- ted on the change and he said he had been taking coaching to improve his leadership and influencing skills.*
- Man: *I bet you were impressed.*
- Andreas: *Yes, we were. And later he said he'd read a superb book called „Influence“ by a man named Cialdini.*
- Man: *And what is it about?*
- Andreas: *It discusses various ways we influence and are influenced by others. I was surprised how practical some of the ideas were.*
- Man: *Could you give me an example?*
- Andreas: *Sure. A lot of companies use the principle of give and take to develop very strong business relationships with their clients. A particularly successful UK supplier of cassette tapes offers this principle by giving a free 30-day trial period. People are more prepared to try something out if the risk is very low.*
- Man: *You could use the same idea here, couldn't you? A free trial for potential new clients.*
- Andreas: *Lower your company phone bill for 30 days! Risk-free. Sounds a good idea.*
- Man: *And the other principles?*
- Andreas: *Well, Cialdini found out that you are prepared to do business with people who you like and hear from regularly.*
- Man: *So, if you continually remind people you are available sooner or later they will need your service. It's only a question of time.*
- Andreas: *One of the most successful car dealers in the US used this principle to boost sales enormously.*
- Man: *And how did they do that?*

- Andreas: *They sent their 30,000 customers a card every month.*
- Man: *Do you do the same?*
- Andreas: *Err ... no ... but we will. We certainly need to improve our customer relations.*
- Man: *What you find is that satisfied clients are happy to recommend you to their friends. The more your customers think of you the more they will talk about you to friends.*
- Andreas: *Sounds like an ideal way of doing business.*
- Man: *Yes, it is. By the way, could you let me have a copy of your notes on Cialdini's „Influence“?*
- Andreas: *Certainly ...*

These are the notes Andreas made.

## 9/2 The principle of liking

People want to do business with people they like. There are four ways that you can demonstrate you like someone:

- **Attractiveness:** By presenting yourself in a professional way. Research shows that more products are sold by people who look attractive and dress well!
- **Similarity:** People tend to favour those who look like themselves. Research demonstrates that we like people who speak and behave in a similar way to us. A similar body language and voice tone help to create understanding between people.

Have you ever noticed that when you get on well with someone you tend to have the same body

language? This is what we call good rapport. The better you can match your partner's body language the better you can understand each other.

- **Compliments:** We have an automatic positive reaction to compliments. However, they have to be given correctly, e.g. *You have got a really great office. Everywhere looks really modern. Tell me how do you design something like this?*
- **Familiarity:** The more often you hear from a person the more attractive they seem. When you receive mail from friends or businesses your natural reaction is often „... *this person has thought of me? That's good of her/him.*“ If you keep in touch with your clients they will be more willing to buy from you.

## 9/3

### Language to demonstrate interest

- *Hello, this is Laura here from Teleworld. I was just wondering how you are getting on?*
- *Is there anything I can do to support you?*
- *I'm calling to let you know that we are having our 5th anniversary. We'd like to invite you to our party.*
- *I haven't heard from you for so long I thought I'd just call to say hello. How are things?*

## 9/4

### The principle of scarcity

Another fascinating principle of influencing is the idea of scarcity.

People give more value to opportunities or products when they are less available. This is because things

which are difficult to have are typically more valuable. When we cannot have what we want we tend to want them more.

In an experiment people were given a chocolate biscuit from a jar and then asked to rate its quality and taste. For some of the participants the jar contained ten biscuits. For others the jar contained only five. Although the biscuits were exactly the same, those in the jar containing only five were felt to be: „More expensive and better in taste and quality.“

**A practical way companies use this principle:** „This special offer only available until 10th August!“

As you can see, it is very important to understand how sellers try to influence us to buy from them. If we know the principles we can use them to protect ourselves from unscrupulous salespeople.

We can also use the principle of liking and interest to help customers to buy more of our products or services!

## 10 Secret 10: The influence of culture

### 10/1 Active dialogue: Cultural differences

- Man: *Do you ever do business with the US?*
- Andreas: *Yes, we do. I must say Americans have a different way of doing business and of communicating with each other than we do.*
- Man: *Yes, that's right and we need to understand how to talk to them.*
- Andreas: *Yes ... especially as more and more business is being done with the US these days.*
- Man: *When I was working in large multi-nationals we noticed the difference between the British and the Americans. We just didn't know how to react so I did a special seminar called „Where cultures come together“.*
- Andreas: *Sounds interesting.*
- Man: *It was! In a book I read called „The New International Manager“ the author reported a training session in which Americans, British and Germans were grouped according to their nationality and asked to write down adjectives to show how they thought other cultures saw them. Would you be interested in the results?*
- Andreas: *Yes please. (please see 10/2)*
- Man: *Another interesting way of categorizing cultures is to see where they are on the continuum between group-oriented cultures and results-based.*



- Andreas: *I'd say Americans are very results-based, the British a little less so. A friend of mine is from Indonesia and they are extremely group-oriented.*
- Man: *Yes, the research supports your ideas. What is interesting for us when doing business with the Americans and the British is that we can use these inter-cultural insights to decide:*
- 1. How to present to them and*
  - 2. what types of phrases to use.*
- Andreas: *In general, the Americans are quite direct while the British tend to beat around the bush. This is reflected in their choice of phrases and style. I have noticed that in our meetings.*
- Man: *Yes ... an example from a meeting would be:*
- American chairman: ... It's time to start.*
- British chairman: ... I think it about time we thought about starting.*
- Andreas: *A very different style ... A list of these differences would be helpful. Do you have one by any chance?*
- Man: *Yes, the seminar notes were extremely comprehensive and gave great insights into what to say and what not to say to Americans and the British.*
- Andreas: *Next week Laura and I have an important presentation at an American company. Do you have a checklist for us to help us prepare the presentation from a cultural point of view?*
- Man: *Yes ... I've got a great list you can use. I'll bring it round tomorrow morning with the notes from the cultural seminar.*

Andreas: *Thanks so much! I get the feeling I am starting to understand that business is more about communication and relationships than best scores on University tests!*

Man: *I couldn't agree more.*

Here are Andreas' notes.

## 10/2 How we think others see us?

German	American	British
on time	arrogant	imperialist
tidy	enterprising	isolationist
hard working	superficial	principled
stubborn	uncultured	dry humour
meticulous	open	don't give up easily
fond of beer	money-oriented	phlegmatic

Report from: The New International Manager by V. Guy and J. Mattock

We can use this important information to decide:

- How to behave with e.g. British and Americans,
- what to say and the words we choose.

If we look at the language we can see that dry humour comes across in the British expressions. Openness and extreme confidence come across in the Americanisms.

### 10/3 Language differences








American	British
Jim'll go absolutely crazy.	Our MD might disagree with that suggestion.
He'll do his best to make it fly.	He will do all he can to ensure success.
You gonna get hurt here.	I'm not quite sure this is advantageous for you.
You're talking bullshit!	I am not quite with you on that.
You got to be kidding. (you gotta be kiddin)	That's an interesting idea. (= you disagree)

### 10/4 Warming-up times for various nationalities

When arranging meetings for your boss it is important to keep in mind where your guests come from. Different nationalities need a longer or shorter warm-up period.

## Cultural variables and expectations

From R.D. Lewis

Germany 	Formal intro. Sit down. Begin.
Finland 	Formal intro. Cup of coffee. Sit down. Begin.
USA 	Informal intro. Cup of coffee. Wisecrack. Sit down. Begin.
UK 	Formal intro. Cup of tea and biscuits. Ten minutes small talk (weather, comfort, sport). Casual beginning.
France 	Formal intro. 15 minutes small talk (politics, scandal, etc.). Begin.
Japan 	Formal intro. Protocol seating. Green tea. 15–20 minutes small talk (harmonious pleasantries). Sudden signal from senior Japanese. Begin.
Spain/Italy 	20–30 minutes small talk (football, family matters) while others arrive. Begin when all are there.



## 10/5 Audience expectations

When you or your boss make presentations consider audience expectations:

### Checklist

US	UK	Germany
jokes	a story	no jokes
modern	reasonable price	good price
unexpected	nice product	solid company

hard sell	traditional/not modern	good quality
slogans	quality	lots of print
audience		
involvement		

Adapted from: *When Cultures Collide* by Richard Lewis

## 10/6 How Americans behave in meetings

- Brainstorming ideas:  
*So let's collect ideas on this topic, shall we?*
- Changing tasks to fit situation:  
*I see this isn't going to work ... We'll go with plan B.*
- Wrap up criticism in friendly words:  
*If I were you I'd try ...*
- Try things out/then analyse later:  
*Let's try it and see if it works.*

### Who was the man with the beard?

Man: *Well, Laura, do you think we've have done a good job? It was an important project.*

Laura: *I certainly have a better feeling than two weeks ago. I think Andreas is a great student.*

Man: *And you are a super teacher, Laura. I think it was a great idea of yours to help me to train him.*

He takes off his white false beard to reveal the face of the former director.

Laura: *I don't know how to thank you enough ... You gave up two weeks of your retirement for me.*

Man: *... and the company ... and don't forget I was here for 25 years. I couldn't stand seeing our best clients leave for other suppliers. Andreas will make an excellent director, Laura.*

Laura: *Now he has an idea of how to deal with people like you. I'm sure he'll help the company become a great success! Have a great retirement, Freddy!*

Man: *Thanks, Laura!*

## 10/7 Tenses check

Laura is talking to her colleague, Claudia.

Claudia: *If only I could improve my English grammar!*

Laura: *Well, that's not so difficult. Do you know the 80/20 rule?*

Claudia: *No, what's that?*

Laura: *It says that the most results 80 % come from 20 % input. So, for example, if you know the four basic tenses you can speak English in 80 % of situations correctly. So, let's see how you can translate these sentences.*

Claudia: *Alright.*

Laura: *They include the present perfect, simple past, simple present and present continuous.*

- Claudia: *Those are the tricky ones.*  
Laura: *And when you know the principle it's quite easy to improve your accuracy. I'll show you.*  
Claudia: *Germans have this tendency to speak English in a German way and that's what I want to improve.*  
Laura: *Yes, that is called interference and through an understanding of the rules you can soon make improvements. Could you do this test for me please?*  
Claudia: *Sure ... anything to get my tenses right.*

Claudia completes the test.

### **Exercise 7 (Solutions see 11/1)**

Check your tenses: Translate the following sentences:

1. Ich habe den Brief vor 30 Minuten abgeschickt.
2. Sie arbeitet bei uns in Mannheim.
3. Was macht sie? Sie schreibt gerade eine E-Mail.
4. Wir sind seit zehn Jahren in Deutschland.
5. Ich bin 1998 in Neuseeland gewesen.
6. Wo wohnst du?
7. Zurzeit verkauft sich alles sehr gut.
8. Wie lange arbeiten Sie schon in London?

- Laura: *Let's have a look, shall we? Can you see any similarities in the sentence structure?*  
Claudia: *Yes, 1 and 5 are both simple past completed actions.*  
Laura: *Yes, they have a time in the sentence.*  
Claudia: *4 and 8 are both „have done“ ...*  
Laura: *Yes, the present perfect as we call it!*

Claudia: *These are actions which are still current.*

Laura: *That's right.*

Claudia: *Then we have 3 and 7 ... things which are happening at the moment.*

Laura: *And finally 2 and 6?*

Claudia: *They are regular repeated activities ... the present simple.*

Laura: *Great, you have got it, Claudia.*



## 11 Essential vocabulary

### Relationship building

#### Invitations

- *Would you like to have dinner next Saturday?*
- *Yes, I'd love to. That would be great/lovely.*
- *That's very kind of you. I'd like that very much.*
- *That would be nice but I'm afraid I've made other arrangements.*

#### Meeting again

*It's great to see you again after such a long time.*

#### Saying sorry

*I am extremely sorry to be late. There was an accident on the motorway.*

#### Thankyou and goodbye

*It's been really great. Thank you for going to so much trouble to show us around.*

### Telephoning

#### Making sure you understand

- *Could you repeat that please?*
- *Sorry I didn't get that.*
- *Could you spell that for me please?*

### Making an appointment

- *Can we fix a meeting?*
- *When would it suit you?*
- *How about next Friday?*
- *Are you available next Friday?*
- *Yes, I'd prefer the afternoon at 16.30.*
- *Good, that's fine for me, too.*
- *So, that's 16.30 on Friday then! Looking forward to it.*

### Dealing with complaints

- *We haven't received our goods yet.*
- *Oh, very sorry to hear that. It was an oversight on our part.*
- *We'll send them out by express delivery today. They will be with you tomorrow. I do apologize for the mix-up.*

## Meetings

### Helpful expressions

- *to arrange a meeting*
- *to postpone a meeting*
- *to take part in a meeting*
- *to cancel a meeting*
- *to miss a meeting*

### A typical meeting

- Andreas welcomes the participants: *Good morning. Thank you all for coming.*
- He gives the goals: *The reason for this meeting is to ...*

- He explains the timing: *The meeting is due to go on until 14.30.*
- He asks John to write notes: *Could you take the minutes, John?*
- He asks Jane to introduce point 1: *Would you like to start with this point, Jane?*
- Tim supports Jane's ideas: *I absolutely agree with you on that.*
- Beatrice disagrees: *I totally disagree.*
- Christiane brings up another option: *I'd like to make an alternative suggestion.*

## Presentations

Stress key points

- *I want to emphasize that ...*
- *I want to underline the point that ...*

Give examples

- *Let me give you an example ...*
- *A good example of this is ...*

Create rapport with the audience

- *I'm sure you all realize that ...*
- *I know you are aware of the fact that ...*

Give facts

- *According to a recent study ...*

## Persuading

- *I suggest that ...*
- *I would strongly recommend that ...*

## 11/1      **Answers to exercises**

### Exercise 1

Decide where these phrases best fit.

- A *Would you like me to ...?*
- B *Could you possibly ...?*
- C *Please find enclosed ...*
- D *You will be pleased to hear that ...*
- E *Unfortunately, ...*
- F *We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.*
- G *Thank you for your letter of 24th July referring to ...*
- H *If I can help in any way, please feel free to contact me.*
- I *I look forward to meeting you next week.*
- J *I am contacting you to inform you.*

### Solution:

	Categories		Phrases
1	Beginning	<i>I am writing to explain ...</i>	<b>J</b> <b>I am contacting you to inform you.</b>
2	Referring to previous situation	<i>With reference to your fax of July 24th ...</i>	<b>G</b> <b>Thank you for your letter of 24th July referring to ...</b>

3	Good news	<i>I am pleased to inform you ...</i>	<b>D</b>	<b>You will be pleased to hear that ...</b>
4	Bad news	<i>We regret to inform you ...</i>	<b>E</b>	<b>Unfortunately, ...</b>
5	Asking someone to do something	<i>Would you please ...?</i>	<b>B</b>	<b>Could you possibly ...?</b>
6	Offer help	<i>If you like we would be happy to ...</i>	<b>A</b>	<b>Would you like me to ...?</b>
7	Saying sorry	<i>We would like to apologize for ...</i>	<b>F</b>	<b>We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.</b>
8	Sending documents	<i>I am enclosing ...</i>	<b>C</b>	<b>Please find enclosed ...</b>
9	Final comments	<i>Thank you for your help.</i>	<b>H</b>	<b>If I can help in any way, please feel free to contact me.</b>
10	Future contact	<i>I look forward to meeting you again soon.</i>	<b>I</b>	<b>I look forward to meeting you next week.</b>

## Exercise 2

Here are ten open questions on the following general topics. Please complete them.

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Question</b>
Come/from?	<b>Where do you come from?</b>
Journey?	<b>How was the journey?</b>
Do/for a living?	<b>What do you do for a living?</b>
Be/to Germany before?	<b>Have you ever been to Germany before?</b>
How long/work at AMB?	<b>How long have you been working at AMB?</b>
What/wine/people drink in that part of the country?	<b>What sort of wine do people drink in that part of the country?</b>
What/like to eat/drink?	<b>What do people like to eat or drink?</b>
What/most popular/sports in Brazil?	<b>What are the most popular sports in Brazil?</b>
How many/people/responsible for?	<b>How many people are you responsible for?</b>
How long/stay/in London?	<b>How long are you staying in London?</b>

### Exercise 3

#### Question tags

Question tags also help a conversation to flow, **don't they?** Complete these sentences, **would you?**

1. *Interesting job, isn't it?*
2. *Friendly couple, aren't they?*
3. *That's a super idea, isn't it?*
4. *You're from AMB, aren't you?*
5. *The next flight hasn't been cancelled, has it?*
6. *We've met before, haven't we?*
7. *We'll see you in Paris, won't we?*

### Exercise 4

#### The politeness quiz

1. Offer a visitor something to drink:  
*What can I bring/get you to drink. We've got ...*
2. Your visitor says *Is it OK if I smoke?* Say no!  
*Well, we'd rather you didn't.*
3. Introduce yourself and welcome your visitor to the firm:  
*Hello, I'm Andreas Blunt, a very warm welcome.*
4. You hand your visitor a document:  
*This is the new contract ... here you are.*
5. Suggest to your visitor that you go to the meeting-room:  
*Shall we make out way to the meeting-room?*
6. Everybody has arrived to the meeting. Suggest you start:  
*Shall we think about starting soon?*
7. You want your visitor to enter the lift before you:  
*After you ... we are going to the 5th floor.*
8. Warn your visitors where to walk on their factory tour:  
*If you could keep to the path then it will be safer for all of us. Our regulations are really strict.*

## Exercise 5

*False  
friends:  
Practice*

Correct these sentences. They can cause potential embarrassing misunderstandings!

1. Jim: *I was rather disappointed with the commission I received last September.*  
George: *Really ... why was that?*  
Jim: *Because my sales were up 14 % on last year.*
2. Mark: *Have you written the protocols yet, Dave?*  
Tim: *Sorry?*  
Mark: *The notes for the meeting.*  
Tim: *Oh yes ... you mean the minutes ... I mailed them to you 20 minutes ago.*
3. Susan: *What's your opinion, Alex?*  
Alex: *I think the new project is an excellent chance for all of us.*
4. *My mobile is really handy ... It fits perfectly into my jacket pocket.*
5. Janet: *Paulo is a really good undertaker.*  
Thomas: *Oh ... I thought he is in Sales.*  
Janet: *Pardon?*  
Thomas: *Yes ... he is in Sales.*  
Janet: *Oh, sorry I mean ... he's a good businessman.*  
Thomas: *Ah, ... now I'm with you.*
6. *Did you know we are writing a new brochure? It should look really nice. It'll be in full colour.*
7. *It's extremely difficult to read what is on the back of her document.*
8. Alan: *Do you feel like coming round to visit me this evening?*  
Barbara: *Possibly, it depends how long the meeting lasts.*
9. Elizabeth: *I also work as an officer with the power of attorney.*  
Edward: *Really! I would never have believed it!*



## Exercise 6

What would you say to help your guests?

1. Your visitors have just arrived. They want to freshen up:  
*Perhaps you'd like me to show you where the bathroom is so that you can freshen up.*
2. It's hot. Perhaps your guest is thirsty:  
*It's a hot day, isn't it? What can I get you to drink?*
3. You arrive and see your colleague from France is standing looking lost. Introduce him to someone:  
*Fabrice, let me introduce you to one of our new sales staff from Hamburg. Jürgen, this is Fabrice from our Paris branch.*
4. A delegate calls from the airport. He speaks no German. Offer to arrange his transfer to your conference hotel:  
*Could you give me your mobile number, I'll arrange for one of our drivers to come and pick you up.  
I'll call you back within the next five minutes.*
5. You are going to the room with an Italian colleague who is going to do a presentation. You know he has no digital projector. Offer to help him:  
*If you need a digital projector you would be very welcome to use mine. It's compatible with most computers.*
6. Your visitor is looking for somewhere to put her coat:  
*Would you like me to take your coat?*

## Exercise 7

1. Ich habe den Brief vor 30 Minuten abgeschickt.  
*I sent the letter 30 minutes ago.*
2. Sie arbeitet bei uns in Mannheim.  
*She works with us in Mannheim.*
3. Was macht sie? Sie schreibt gerade eine E-Mail.  
*What is she doing? She's writing an e-mail.*
4. Wir sind seit zehn Jahren in Deutschland.  
*We've been in Germany for ten years.*
5. Ich bin 1998 in Neuseeland gewesen.  
*I was in New Zealand in 1998.*
6. Wo wohnst du?  
*Where do you live?*
7. Zurzeit verkauft sich alles sehr gut.  
*Everything is selling really well at the moment.*
8. Wie lange arbeiten Sie schon in London?  
*How long have you worked in London?*

## 11/2 Language List

ability	Fähigkeit
accelerate	beschleunigen
according	nach
accuracy	Genauigkeit
achieve	erreichen
advice	Rat
agree	zustimmen
allow	erlauben
amazingly	erstaunlich
amount	Menge
antidote	Gegenmittel
apologize	entschuldigen
appreciate	schätzen
approach	sich nähern
artistic handwriting	künstlerische Schrift

assessment	Einschätzung
attorney	Rechtsanwalt (am.)
bargain	Sonderangebot
basically	im Grunde
benefits	Vorteile, hier: Nutzen
blimey	meine Güte
boost	Verstärkung
brainstorming	Brainstorming
briefly	kurz
calm	ruhig
cancelled	abgesagt
captivated	faszinieren, entzücken
career	Karriere
carry out	durchführen
categorizing	klassifizieren
caused	verursacht
certainly	sicherlich
chair	leiten
challenge	Herausforderung
cheers	Prosit
choice	Wahl
common	gemeinsam
competitors	Konkurrent
complain	sich beschweren
comprehensive	umfassend, ausführlich
confidently	zuversichtlich
confirm	bestätigen
connection	Verbindung
considering	wenn man bedenkt ...
convey	vermitteln
cooperation	Zusammenarbeit
crane	Kranich
crucial	sehr wichtig
crystal clear	glasklar
currently	aktuell
decide	entscheiden
delayed	verspätet
delighted	entzückt

deliver	liefern
delivery	Lieferung
develop	entwickeln
discovering	entdecken
disturb	stören
drop	fallen lassen
elderly	älterer
embarrassing	peinlich
empowered	bemächtigt
encourage	ermutigen
enjoy	genießen
enormously	enorm
enterprising	unternehmerisch
executive	geschäftsführend
experienced	erfahren
expressed	ausgedrückt
fascinating	faszinierend
fear	Angst
first class degree	beste Note
firstly	erstens
fiscal	steuerlich
focus	konzentriert
forced	gezwungen
foreigners	Ausländer
forward	Vorwort
further	weiter
general	allgemein
gradually	allmählich
graduating	Uni-Abschluss
headquarters	Hauptstelle
hold your horses	Moment mal
honoured	geehrt
huge	riesig
imagine	sich vorstellen
impact	Auswirkung
imperialist	imperialistisch
impolite	unhöflich
impressed	beeindruckt

impressive	beeindruckend
improve	verbessern
inappropriate	nicht angemessen
included	beinhaltet
incredible	unglaublich
indeed	wirklich
influence	Einfluss
insights	Einsichten
inspired	inspiriert/begeistert
instantly	sofort
interference	Störung
introduce	einleiten, sich vorstellen
intuitively	intuitiv
involves	beinhaltet
isolationist	isolationistisch
issues	Punkte
joyful	lustig
judge	beurteilen
keen	begeistert
key accounts	Haupt-/Großkunde
lack	fehlen
lager	Biersorte
leading expert	führender Experte
lean	hinunterbeugen
length	Länge
linguistic	sprachwissenschaftlich
LSE	London School of Economics
magnum	1,5-Liter-Flasche Sekt
manners	Manieren
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MD	Managing Director
meaning	Bedeutung
measurable	messbar
mention	erwähnen
meticulous	sorgfältig
mindmap	Mindmap

mirroring	spiegeln
miss	verpassen
moggy	Katze (Umgangssprache)
mood	Laune
occasion	Anlass
occur	passieren
offend	beleidigen
offer	Angebot
opinion	Meinung
originally	ursprünglich
PA	persönlicher Assistent
pants	Hose (Am) Unterhose (Br)
participant	Teilnehmer
participation	Teilnahme
particularly	besonders
patience	Geduld
patterns	Muster
persuade	überreden
phlegmatic	träge
phrases	Phrasen
politeness	Höflichkeit
possible	möglich
predecessor	Vorgänger
preferred	bevorzugt
prepared	vorbereitet
previous	vorhergehend
properly	richtig
provider	Anbieter
qualifications	Qualifikation
quietly	leise
realize	erkennen
reappear	wiedererscheinen
receive	erhalten
recommendable	empfehlenswert
reflect	nachdenken
regularly	regelmäßig
relationship	Beziehung

researching	untersuchen
resolution	Lösung
responsible	verantwortlich
results	Ergebnisse
retirement	Rente
reveal	offenbaren
rotund	gut ernährt
rough edges	raue Kanten
rub off	wegreiben
rude	unhöflich
satisfy	befriedigen
scores	Noten
secondly	zweitens
secrets	Geheimnisse
sense of humour	Sinn für Humor
serious	ernst
session	Sitzung
similarly blunt	genauso grob
simplify	vereinfachen
simultaneously	gleichzeitig
skills	Fertigkeiten
slam	knallen
snobbish	hochnäsig
solutions	Lösungen
solve	lösen
spoil	verderben
spontaneous	spontan
statement	Aussage
stubborn	stur
style	Stil
subtle gestures	subtile Gestik
successful	erfolgreich
suggest	Vorschlag
superb	toll
superficial	oberflächlich
supplier	Lieferant
support	unterstützen
supposed	erwartet

switchboard	Telefonzentrale
tend	neigen
tendency	Neigung
tenses	Zeiten
tidy	ordentlich
to beat around the bush	um den Brei herumreden
to blow off steam	Dampf ablassen
to start the day off	den Tag anfangen
tool	Werkzeug
topic	Thema
towards	in Richtung
trust	Vertrauen
twinnings	englische Teesorte
underpants	Unterhose
unexpected	unerwartet
unscrupulous	gewissenlos
value	Wert
variety	Vielfalt
various	verschieden
venom	Gift
vital	unerlässlich
warmth	Wärme
weight	Gewicht
well-earned	wohlverdient
well-liked	gemocht
wordsmith	Wortgenie
worth	wert

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