

# 01

*All things being equal, people will buy from a friend. All things being not quite so equal, people will still buy from a friend.*

Mark McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*

Do you ever do business with friends?

## Learning objectives: Unit 1

**Business communication skills** Discussing corporate entertainment; Sharing information to select appropriate corporate events for clients; Avoiding saying 'no'; Paying and receiving compliments; Fluency: Keeping up a conversation

**Reading** Information on four corporate events in the UK

**Listening** People chatting at corporate events; Discussing corporate entertainment

**Vocabulary** Small talk

**Grammar** Tense review

**Phrase bank** Making conversation

So, how are you enjoying ...?  
 Isn't this weather ...?  
 Where are you from originally ... what's it like?  
 Am I right in thinking you ...?  
 Ah, I see. So ...?  
 Oh, that's interesting, because I ...  
 Really? That's a coincidence!  
 So, tell me more about ...  
 Well, it's been nice talking to you.

# Business or pleasure?

- 1 How important do you think it is to actually like the people you do business with?
- 2 Read these two short extracts from different business articles. Is the point they are making equally valid in your country?

A study at the Stanford University School of Business tracked MBAs ten years after they graduated. The result? Grade point averages had no bearing on their success – but their ability to converse with others did. Being able to connect with others through small talk can lead to big things.



When Jack Welch gave a guest lecture at MIT's Sloan School of Management in 2005, someone in the crowd asked, 'What should we be learning in business school?' Welch's reply: 'Just concentrate on networking. Everything else you need to know, you can learn on the job.'



- 3 How good are you at small talk? Are you comfortable talking to strangers? You are going to practise networking with a business contact.

a Note down some information about yourself in the chart below.

| Birthplace | Languages | Interests | Current job or employer | Travel | Studies |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|---------|
|            |           |           |                         |        |         |

- b Work with a partner to set the scene of your conversation. Where are you – at a conference reception, a social event, in the coffee break at a training seminar?
  - c Swap personal information with your partner and use this and the scene you built up in b as the basis for your conversation. How long can you keep the conversation going? Use the language in the box on the left to help you.
- 4 How did the conversation go? Which topics had the most mileage? Did you find anything in common?

## Corporate entertainment


**1** The world economy has had its ups and downs, but many companies continue to invest in corporate hospitality. In uncertain economic times, can this kind of spending be justified? How can entertaining clients and colleagues be good for business?

**2** Complete the extract from a corporate entertainment company's website using the words in the box. Are you persuaded by what it says?

box clients cuisine experience members office  
relationships seats service setting team viewing

What better way to build and maintain (a) \_\_\_\_\_ with key (b) \_\_\_\_\_ and to reward star (c) \_\_\_\_\_ of your (d) \_\_\_\_\_, than to offer them a unique and unforgettable (e) \_\_\_\_\_ far away from the pressures and constraints of an (f) \_\_\_\_\_ environment? Whether it's front row (g) \_\_\_\_\_ at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, a VIP (h) \_\_\_\_\_ at the World Cup Final, a private (i) \_\_\_\_\_ at the Guggenheim Gallery in Bilbao or fine French (j) \_\_\_\_\_ at the Paris Ritz, we can provide the ideal (k) \_\_\_\_\_ and first-class (l) \_\_\_\_\_ that will leave your guests simply saying 'Wow!'



**3**  **1.01** A group of Russian businesspeople, who are about to collaborate with you on a major international project, are visiting your London office. As part of the planning committee, it's your job to decide on a special event to celebrate their visit. Listen to some of the considerations of the other committee members and take notes.

**4** Work in two groups to find out about four different events you could take your Russian visitors to. Group A turn to page 118. Group B turn to page 129.

**5** Work with a partner from the other group and discuss the options. Prepare to present your recommendations.





## Making conversation

**1**  **1.02-1.03** Listen to some businesspeople chatting at two of the corporate events you discussed, and answer the questions.

### Conversation 1

- a** What's the connection between Helen Keating, James McRae and Alan Sullivan?  
**b** When Helen asks James 'Mind if I join you?', how does he reply?  
 N \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_. B \_\_\_\_\_ m \_\_\_\_\_ g \_\_\_\_\_.
- c** What excuse does Helen make for leaving the rest of the party?  
**d** Two of the following mean 'That can't be true'. Which two?  
 You're joking!   
 You're fooling!   
 You're kidding!
- e** Helen and James use several expressions to refer to memories. Can you remember the first three words of each expression? Contractions (*it's*, *you're* etc) count as one word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ somewhere before?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ me to forget a face.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ recognized you.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ back to me now.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ remember spending most of the evening trying to avoid some annoying little guy called Alan.

### Conversation 2

- a** How would you describe relations between Mr Ishida and Mr Thompson?  
 warm  amicable  cordial  cool  strained  frosty
- b** Mr Thompson uses the word 'so' five times during the conversation:

*So, Mr Ishida, let me freshen your glass.*

*So, how are you enjoying the match?*

*So, tell me, have you been to one of these big tournaments before?*

*So, shall we return to our seats?*

*So, do you still play?*

Why does he need to use it so often? What's the equivalent word or expression in your own language?

- c** Mr Ishida says he's too old to play table tennis now. Mr Thompson replies 'Oh, I'm sure that's not true.' Is he:  
 paying Mr Ishida a compliment?  calling Mr Ishida a liar?
- d** Mr Thompson tries to use his background knowledge to keep the conversation going. Complete his remarks below.
- I h \_\_\_\_\_ you're quite a tennis fan.
  - I u \_\_\_\_\_ the Japanese are world table tennis champions.
  - I s \_\_\_\_\_ the Nikkei's looking strong. That m \_\_\_\_\_ be good news for you.
- e** What word is Mr Ishida avoiding by saying the following?

*Not at the moment, thank you.*

*Not really.*

*Not especially.*

*Not any more.*

*As a matter of fact, ...*

2 Work with a partner. Practise avoiding saying 'no' by playing the no-no game.

# THE no-no GAME

### Prepare

Write down six false (but believable) statements about yourself, your job, your family, your interests, your company or your country. When you are ready, swap lists with a partner.

Your objective is to get the other person to say 'no'. Their objective is the same. Use the useful expressions below to help you to avoid saying 'no'.

Whoever says 'no' first loses.

### Play

Imagine the two of you are chatting at a conference or corporate event. Take it in turns to make wrong assumptions about each other using the lists as a starting point but adding remarks of your own if you can.

*I hear you're based in Rotterdam.*

*I understand you're a keen golfer.*

*I believe your company's about to be involved in a merger.*

- Not very.
- Not really.
- Not especially.
- Not exactly.
- Not yet.
- Not any more.
- Not at the moment.
- Not as far as I know.
- Actually, ...
- As a matter of fact, ...

3  1.04-1.05 Listen to some businesspeople chatting at the other two corporate events you discussed and answer the questions.

### Conversation 1

- a How would you describe the Hamiltons? Compare your impressions with a partner.
- b Put the words in the following greetings and introductions in the correct order, adding punctuation where necessary.

- 1 Dan call please me
- 2 meet last to both pleasure at a you
- 3 mentioned name Julian's course your of
- 4 Fiona calling me mind do don't you you you?

- c It's common when someone joins a group at a party to tell them a bit about the conversation you've just been having. Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

discussing saying talking trying wondering

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ what a marvellous party this is.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ these new tax laws they're bringing in.
- We were just 3 \_\_\_\_\_ about you - how are things?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ what this pile of dirty laundry was doing in an art gallery.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ to work out what this whole thing must have cost.
- d Why does Dan say to Alistair 'I wonder if we could have a word?' when they're already talking?

- e All the expressions below mean 'I'm going'. Which also mean 'but I'm coming back'? Some of them were in the conversation you just listened to.

- |                                |                          |                               |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| It's been nice talking to you. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Would you excuse me a moment? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I'll have to be going.         | <input type="checkbox"/> | I'll be right back.           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you'll excuse me.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is that the time?             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't go away.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I'll catch you later.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- f Are you a fan of contemporary art?

### Conversation 2

- a Do Tom and Ricardo do a deal?
- b What expression does Tom use to switch from discussing motor racing to discussing business?  
T \_\_\_\_\_ o \_\_\_\_\_ races, how's the South African bid going?
- c Complete the expressions below. They were all in the conversation you just listened to.

- 1 Glad \_\_\_\_\_ make it.
- 2 I \_\_\_\_\_ missed it for the world.
- 3 There's \_\_\_\_\_ like you to meet.
- 4 Can't \_\_\_\_\_ standing there with an empty glass.
- 5 So, \_\_\_\_\_ person you wanted me to meet?
- 6 I \_\_\_\_\_ two know each other already.
- 7 I'll \_\_\_\_\_ two to chat. See you later.

d What do the following remarks tell you about Ricardo and Élise's relationship?

Long time no see.

You haven't changed a bit.

Neither have you!

Ricardo and I go back a long way.

I'll have whatever you're having.

4 Work with a partner. Practise paying and receiving compliments.

You're looking well!  
Great to see you again ...  
I (really) like your ...!  
Where did you get it/  
them?  
By the way, you did  
a great job in the  
meeting/presentation  
the other day.  
Compliments on your  
brilliant project design!  
You really know how to  
captivate an audience!  
Great presentation  
style.

## THE mutual appreciation GAME

### Prepare

Spend a few minutes thinking of compliments you could pay your partner. Use the expressions on the left to help you.

### Play

When you are ready,

- start exchanging compliments with your partner.
  - respond to each compliment you receive in an appreciative but modest way.
- See who can give the most compliments in under a minute!

5 They say 'Flattery will get you everywhere.' How important is it in your culture to give compliments? Can compliments be risky? How?

6 According to Dale Carnegie, author of the best-selling people skills book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 'You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.'

Work with a partner to practise keeping up a conversation.

- First choose just three 'hot buttons' from the list below – topics you are especially interested in talking about, but don't tell your partner what they are!
- Then take turns to ask each other questions from the list. Whenever your partner asks you about one of your hot buttons, you should speak enthusiastically about the topic for a minute or so. If the topic is not hot, then just reply very briefly and ask your next question.
- Whenever one of you hits a hot button, you score five points. When you miss, you lose one point.
- The game ends after ten minutes or when one of you has hit all the other's hot buttons. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

## THE hot buttons GAME

| Topics      | Conversation starters  | Hot or not? |
|-------------|--|-------------|
| WORK        | How's business? I hear ...   | Hot / Not   |
| RECENT NEWS | Have you heard about ...? ... news, isn't it?                          | Hot / Not   |
| THE ECONOMY | I see the stock markets are ...<br>It's probably a good time to ...    | Hot / Not   |
| SPORT       | Are you into sport at all?<br>Did you see the game/match on ...?       | Hot / Not   |
| MUSIC       | What kind of music are you into?<br>Have you heard ...'s latest album? | Hot / Not   |
| MOVIES      | Have you seen any good films lately? I quite liked ...                 | Hot / Not   |
| TRAVEL      | Do you get to do much travelling?<br>Have you ever been to ...?        | Hot / Not   |
| FOOD/DRINK  | Shall we get ourselves ...?<br>What would you like? How about ...?     | Hot / Not   |

# 01 Business or pleasure?

## Vocabulary

### Small talk

- 1 Put the conversation in the correct order.
- a We were just talking about this new sports centre they're building. Do you play any sport at all, Kim?  7
- b Oh, right. Thanks for telling me. Incidentally, have you still got my Coldplay CD?
- c Did you? Me too. I was never any good, though.
- d Me? Well, not really. I used to play a bit of football.
- e No, me neither. Talking of football, did you see the match last night?
- f Yeah, I sent it yesterday. Oh, that reminds me. Clive said to tell you he won't be able to make Thursday's meeting. He said he'd call you.
- g Against Real Madrid? No, I missed it. I had to go to a birthday party.
- h No problem. Oh, before I forget. I've got two tickets to see them in Manchester if you're interested.
- i Not yet, no. Why, are you doing something?
- j Pity. It was a great game. On the subject of parties, have you made any plans for New Year's Eve yet?
- k No, nothing special. By the way, sorry to talk business, but did you remember to send that estimate to Clive?
- l Are you kidding? Of course I'm interested! I've never seen them live.
- m Oops! Yeah, sorry. I meant to give it back to you. I'll bring it in tomorrow. Thanks for lending it to me.

2 Find six expressions in 1 to guide the conversation or change the subject.

- a I \_\_\_\_\_, ...
- b T\_\_\_\_\_ of ...
- c B\_\_\_\_\_ the w\_\_\_\_\_, ...
- d B\_\_\_\_\_ I f\_\_\_\_\_, ...
- e T\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_ me, ...
- f O\_\_\_\_\_ t\_\_\_\_\_ s\_\_\_\_\_ of ...

3 Which words and phrases in 1 could you replace with the following?

- a Not so far.
- b Not to worry.
- c Nor me.
- d Shame.
- e So did I.
- f Are you joking?

## Grammar

### Tense review

1 Try to complete the tense quiz in under five minutes.

- 1 *He **leaves** at five* means  
a today      b every day      c either
- 2 *We're **having** a meeting* means  
a now      b soon      c either
- 3 *Profits **went up***. Are profits up now?  
a yes      b no      c maybe
- 4 *Profits **have gone up***. Are profits up now?  
a yes      b no      c maybe
- 5 *He's **gone***. Is he here?  
a yes      b no      c maybe
- 6 *I've **just been***. Am I back?  
a yes      b no      c maybe
- 7 *When I arrived he **was just leaving***. Was he there when I arrived?  
a yes      b no      c we don't know
- 8 *When I arrived he **'d just left***. Was he there when I arrived?  
a yes      b no      c we don't know
- 9 *I've **tried** to phone her*. Am I still trying?  
a probably      b probably not      c we don't know
- 10 *I've **been trying** to contact her all morning*. Am I still trying?  
a probably      b probably not      c we don't know

2 Read the email and underline the best grammatical choice in each case.

**From:** Charles Wellcome  
**To:** Deborah Newton, Stephen Clark, Willem Maes, Tatiana Korbutt  
**Subject:** This year's client hospitality event

Dear all

As you (1) **know / are knowing**, the annual client hospitality event (2) **is fast approaching / will fast approach**. As of yet, we (3) **did not make / have not made** a final decision on where to hold it this year. One or two of you (4) **already came forward / have already come forward** with suggestions, which (5) **are currently considered / are currently being considered**. However, as we (6) **will have to / are having to** make the necessary arrangements quite soon, I'd like everybody's input on this asap.

**CONTINUE** ➤



◀ CONTINUE

What I particularly (7) **want / am wanting** to avoid is a repetition of the fiasco from last year's showjumping event. First, very few of our clients (8) **had / were having** even the remotest interest in the sport. And the atrocious weather (9) **meant / was meaning** that we (10) **walked / were walking** backwards and forwards through the mud between the show ring and the hospitality tent all day. The whole thing (11) **was / has been** a complete disaster. People (12) **still complained / were still complaining** about it six months later!

This year we (13) **have planned / had planned** to do something more cultural like going to the opera or even a musical, but (14) **I've wondered / I've been wondering** if this is a good idea. A musical event (15) **doesn't seem / isn't seeming** to be the best place to network or to have a quiet, friendly chat!

I (16) **do think / am thinking**, however, that an indoor event (17) **makes / is making** most sense, so can I ask you to (18) **think / be thinking** along those lines over the next few days? (19) **I've scheduled / I'd scheduled** a meeting for next Friday to discuss the matter further. So, (20) **I'm speaking / I'll speak** to you all then.

You use the **Present Simple** to talk about permanent facts (*I'm Spanish*), routines (*I get home at seven each evening*) and scheduled future (*The bus gets in at one*).

You use the **Present Continuous** to talk about current, perhaps temporary, activities and situations (*I'm staying at the Hilton*) or future arrangements (*I'm flying to Rome in the morning*).

Some 'state' verbs like *think, know, understand, need, want* and *seem* are not generally used in the continuous form unless the meaning is different: *I think* = I believe; *I'm thinking* = I'm considering something.

You use the **Present Perfect** to talk about things that started in the past and continue up to the present (*It's rained for a fortnight*), personal experiences no matter when they happened (*I've only ever snowboarded once*) and things which have an immediate consequence (*I've lost my car keys*). Words like *already, yet* and *since* are often in the same sentence as a present perfect verb.

You use the **Present Perfect Continuous** to talk about things that started in the past and may be recently completed or not yet completed (*She's been rearranging her office, I've been working here since January 2002*).

You use the **Past Simple** to talk about finished past actions or states (*I studied engineering at Oxford, I was a happy child*). Phrases like *last week, a year ago, in 2006*, etc make the time reference clear.

You use the **Past Continuous** to talk about an action in progress in the past (*The company was losing money*). The Past Continuous gives the background to more important events which are in the Past Simple at a specific time in the completed past.

You use the **Past Perfect** to emphasize that one event happened before another in the past (*By the time I left college, I'd already decided I didn't want to be a lawyer*). *will* is a modal verb and, amongst its other uses, one of many ways of talking about the future (*I'll see you later*).

### Phrase bank: Making conversation

Complete the tips on how to master the art of small talk with the words in the box.

break bring change compliment  
contradict start

- 1 Use what you already know about people to \_\_\_\_\_ up a conversation.
- 2 Try to \_\_\_\_\_ people into conversation with others you know.
- 3 Show enthusiasm; pay people you know well the occasional \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ people too directly.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ the subject smoothly by referring to what others have said.
- 6 Don't \_\_\_\_\_ off the conversation too abruptly at the end.

Now match two phrases to each of the tips above.

- a I hear you speak Cantonese, is that right?
- b Kenichi, there's someone I'd like you to meet.
- c Well, it's been really nice talking to you.
- d I'm afraid I'll have to be going. But let me give you my card.
- e I understand you work for 3M.
- f You're looking well. Been on holiday?
- g Congratulations on the promotion, by the way!
- h Funny you should say that, something very similar happened to me.
- i Well, that's not entirely true, but I know what you mean.
- j On the subject of the merger, have you heard the latest?
- k Let's see what Max thinks. Max, we've got a question for you.
- l Actually, it's not as bad as you might think.