

01

A conference is a gathering of important people who singly can do nothing, but together decide that nothing can be done.

Fred Allen, US comedian

How often do you attend or take part in a conference?

Learning objectives: Unit 1

Business communication skills

Describing people; Discussing appropriate conversation topics; Keeping the conversation going; Fluency: Networking with colleagues and business contacts

Reading A blog about conference attendance

Listening An extract from a business travel programme on conference venues; People gossiping at a conference; People socializing at a conference

Vocabulary Conferences

Grammar Present Simple and Present Continuous

Phrase bank Networking

Making contacts

1 Your boss tells you she's sending you to a three-day international conference. Which of the following cities do you hope it's in this year?

Abu Dhabi Barcelona Budapest Buenos Aires Chicago Edinburgh Johannesburg
Milan Moscow Mumbai Prague Rio de Janeiro Shanghai Stockholm Sydney
Tokyo Toronto Warsaw

2 Explain your preference to a partner and tell them what you'd like to do if you could add one extra day onto your trip.

3 The blog below was posted on a business travel message board. A business traveller is asking for advice. Write down two or three tips for him.

ASK ExecTravelBuddy.com

2 October 2014
3.56 pm
3 replies
52 views


Any advice for a first time conference-goer?

I'm going to my first conference next month, and am looking for some general tips and advice from experienced conference-goers on how to get the most out of it. The conference is in Rome, which I've never been to, so I'm quite excited about going. I'm generally a bit shy in large groups, but would like to try and use the event as a networking opportunity as well as a learning experience. It's a three-day event with a reception afterwards. I'm the only person representing my company at the conference. Fortunately, I'm not giving a presentation! But my boss has told me to come back with some useful contacts. Help!

4 Swap and discuss tips with a partner.


5 Read some of the replies this posting received. Speaker A see page 126. Speaker B see page 139. Compare the tips one by one with your partner. Which advice sounds the best to you?

Conference venues

1  1.01 Listen to three extracts from a business travel programme. Which venues below do you think the extracts refer to?

Venue A = Extract _____ Venue B = Extract _____ Venue C = Extract _____



2  **1.01** Listen again and match the figures to each venue. What do the figures refer to?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| a 321 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | d 2,300 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | g 170-780 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b 426 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | e 10-30% Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | h 95 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c 27th Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | f 3,000 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> | i 200 Venue <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 What other facilities does each venue have? Match the collocations below. They were all in the extracts you just listened to.

Venue A		Venue B		Venue C	
a unique	1 activities	a 24-hour	1 club	a central	1 deluxe suites
b convention	2 atmosphere	b health	2 service	b flight	2 location
c team-building	3 centre	c car rental	3 room service	c spacious	3 connections
d banqueting	4 tournaments	d express	4 pools	d Internet	4 restaurant
e golf	5 space	e exclusive private	5 checkout	e world-class	5 views
f exhibition	6 facilities	f outdoor	6 beach	f spectacular	6 access

4 Your company agrees to send you to an international conference at one of the venues in 1. Which would you choose and why?

Who's who?

1 One of the main reasons for going to conferences is to meet the right people. Complete the following questions and answers with the prepositions in the box.

at (x2) by for in (x2) on to with

Who's that guy/woman over there ...

a standing _____ the entrance?
him/herself?

b _____ the long dark hair?
the loud voice?

c _____ the corner?
the blue suit?

d _____ the bar?
the table in the corner?

e talking _____ the waiter?
those people?

f is _____ financial services.

g works _____ Chase-Manhattan.

h is staying _____ the Hilton.


i is giving a talk _____ globalization.

Oh, that's Kim Lane. (I think) she/he ...

2 Use the model in 1 to make new sentences with the phrases in the box.

her back to us negotiating skills pharmaceuticals Renault the awful tie the buffet
the conference organizer the glasses the Hyatt the Italian accent the long dress
the moustache the ponytail



3  **1.02-1.05** Listen to some delegates chatting at a conference reception. Decide which four people in the photo they are talking about and complete the information below.

1

Name: Karl Schelling
Company: _____
Position: _____
Based in: _____
Hotel: _____
Subject of talk: _____
Gossip: _____

2

Name: William Hall
Company: _____
Position: _____
Based in: _____
Hotel: _____
Subject of talk: _____
Gossip: _____

3

Name: Irena Stefanowitz
Company: _____
Position: _____
Based in: _____
Hotel: _____
Subject of talk: _____
Gossip: _____

4

Name: Margo Timmerman
Company: _____
Position: _____
Based in: _____
Hotel: _____
Subject of talk: _____
Gossip: _____



Taboo or not taboo?

1 Work with a partner. You meet some business people at a conference for the first time. Which of the following topics are:

- interesting?
- safe?
- conversation killers?
- a bit risky?
- taboo?

books clothes family food and drink
 gadgets how work's going jewellery
 movies music people you both know
 politics religion sport
 the city you're in the hotel you're staying at
 the news the weather your country
 your health your holiday plans



2 **1.06-1.10** Listen to some people socializing at a conference. What are they talking about? Do they get on with each other?

	Topics of conversation	Do the speakers get on?
a		
b		
c		
d		
e		

Keeping the conversation going

1 **1.06-1.10** The expressions below were in the conversations you just listened to. Write in the first three words of each expression. Contractions (*it's, you'll, I'm*, etc) count as one word. If necessary, listen again and check.

- a _____ first visit to Russia?
- b _____ do, by the way?
- c _____ you a drink?
- d _____ business are you in?
- e _____ these – they're delicious.
- f _____ somewhere before?
- g _____ me, I have to make a phone call.
- h _____ talking to you.
- i _____ your talk this morning.
- j _____ enjoying the conference?
- k _____ awful? Half a metre of snow this morning, I heard.
- l _____ me a moment? I'll be right back.
- m _____ go and say hello to someone.
- n _____ many people here?
- o _____ you anything from the buffet?

2 Look at the expressions in 1.

- a Which would be good ways of opening a conversation?
- b Which would help you to keep a conversation going?
- c Which could you use to politely end a conversation?



At a conference party

Work as a class to keep the conversation going at a conference party at Disneyland®, Paris. It's a warm summer evening and the place is full of delegates. The conference theme is *Web 2.0: Business in the connected economy*.

1 Invent a fantasy business card for yourself! Include the following information:

- name (You could change nationality!)
- company (You could choose a company you've always wanted to work for!)
- brief contact details (mobile phone, email)

2 Write the questions below. Think of possible answers for each and make notes in the space provided.

Q So, who / work for?

A _____

Q How / business?

A _____

Q first time / Paris?

A _____

Q know many people here?

A _____

Q And what / do there?

A _____

Q Can / get / drink?

A _____

Q How / enjoying / conference?

A _____

Q So, where / staying?

A _____

Q Where / based?

A _____

Q Where / from originally?

A _____

Q giving / presentation?

A _____

Q Can / get / anything / buffet?

A _____

3 When everyone is ready:

- mingle with the other people in the class.
- introduce yourself to as many people as possible and show interest in what they tell you.
- use the questions in 2 to try to keep the conversation going. (Remember that you can talk about other people in the room as well as yourself.)
- exchange business cards and fix appointments with anyone you could do business with – see how many cards you can collect!

01 Making contacts

Vocabulary

Conferences

When business people get together, they often just talk about work. This is called 'talking shop'. Complete the sentences with the pairs of words in the box.

down + factory for + contract in + distributor of + job off + workers
out + product to + office under + takeover up + plant with + supplier

- a A** I hear GEC are setting _____ a new _____ in Warsaw.
B Warsaw? I thought it was Prague.
- b A** I understand you're _____ talks with a local _____ in Naples.
B Yeah, that's right. In fact, we've already reached an agreement.
- c A** They say GM are laying _____ 5,000 _____ in the UK.
B Is that right? Well, I knew they were downsizing.
- d A** Someone told me Sony® are bringing _____ a new _____ in December.
B Yes, I heard that too. Some kind of multimedia entertainment system.
- e A** I hear you're thinking _____ leaving your _____ at Hewlett-Packard.
B Well, yes. Just between us, I'm moving to Sony.
- f A** I understand you're being transferred _____ head _____ in Stockholm.
B Well, it's not official yet, but I'm going after Christmas.
- g A** They say they're _____ threat from a hostile _____ bid.
B Really? It's the first I've heard of it.
- h A** Someone told me they're doing a deal _____ a _____ in Tel Aviv.
B Well, that makes sense. They do most of their business there.
- i A** I hear you're bidding _____ a new _____ in Singapore.
B Yeah, we are. The negotiations are going quite well.
- j A** Someone told me they're closing _____ the Liverpool _____.
B It doesn't surprise me. From what I heard, they're trying to centralize production.

Grammar

Present Simple

About half of all spoken English is in the Present Simple. You use it to talk about actions and states which are always or generally true.

Affirmative		Negative		Interrogative			Spelling changes	
I		I		Do	I		verb	he/she/it
You	work.	You	don't work.	Don't	you	work?	go	goes
We		We			we		watch	watches
They		They			they		push	pushes
He		He	doesn't work.	Does	he	work?	miss	misses
She	works.	She		Doesn't	she		fax	faxes
It		It			it		try	tries

- 1** Correct the conversations using the information above.
- a A** Works he for the BBC?
B No, he don't work for them anymore. He work for CNN.
- b A** Where work you?
B I works for a design company in Frankfurt.
- c** At our firm, we doesn't work on Friday afternoons.
d On Mondays our CEO usually flies to Oslo.
- 2** Match the sentences (a-h) to their functions (1-4).
- a** I live just outside Munich.
- b** He runs five kilometres every day.
- c** Your presentation is this afternoon.
- d** The United States has the world's strongest economy.
- e** That's a good idea!
- f** She works on Saturdays.
- g** I love Vienna at Christmas.
- h** My train leaves at 7.30.
- 1** describes habits and routines
2 refers to schedules and timetables
3 expresses thoughts, feelings and opinions
4 refers to long-term situations or facts

Present Continuous

You use the Present Continuous to talk about current situations in progress and future arrangements:

- *They're staying at the Hilton.*
- *He's giving a talk on globalization at three o'clock.*

Affirmative		Negative		Interrogative		Spelling changes	
I'm	working.	I'm not	working.	Am Aren't	I	verb	-ing form
You're		You aren't		Are Aren't	you	make	making
We're		We aren't		Are Aren't	we	come	coming
They're		They aren't		Are Aren't	they	run	running
He's		He isn't		Is Isn't	he	drop	dropping
She's		She isn't		Is Isn't	she	forget	forgetting
It's		It isn't		Is Isn't	it	lie	lying

3 Read the conversation.

- A** Alison?
B Yes. Who's calling? (a)
A It's Paco ... About our appointment, we're meeting (b) on Thursday, right?
B That's right. Are you flying (c) to Heathrow?
A No. I'm working (d) in Zaragoza this month. So Gatwick's easier for me.
B Fine. Oh! The batteries are going (e) on my mobile. Can I call you back?

In the conversation, find examples of the following.

- 1** something happening right at this moment
2 something happening around the present time
3 a future arrangement

Present Simple or Continuous?

Some verbs are not 'action' verbs and are not usually used in the continuous form.

be believe hear know like mean need
 see seem think understand want

4 Choose the best alternatives in the following conversation.

- A** What (a) *do you do / are you doing?*
B (b) *I'm / I'm being* an electrical engineer for Siemens.
A Really? Here in Munich?
B That's right. (c) *Do you know / Are you knowing* Munich?
A Oh, yes, great city. So, how (d) *do you enjoy / are you enjoying* the conference so far?
B Well, it's all right, (e) *I guess / I'm guessing*. (f) *Do you give / Are you giving* a talk?
A No, no. (g) *I only come / I'm only coming* to these things to get out of the office for a few days. Where (h) *do you stay / are you staying*, by the way?
B At the Avalon. (i) *I usually stay / I'm usually staying* at the Bauer Hotel in Münchenerstrasse, but it was full.
A Well, if (j) *you don't do / you aren't doing* anything later, do you want to go for something to eat?

Phrase bank: Networking

Match the sentence beginnings (a–k) to the pairs of endings (1–11).

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| a What do you | 1 introduce you to someone.
give you my card. |
| b Who do you | 2 enjoying the conference?
getting back to your hotel? |
| c Where are you | 3 nice talking to you.
a pleasure meeting you. |
| d How are you | 4 based?
staying? |
| e Isn't this | 5 with the beard?
in the dark suit? |
| f Who's the guy | 6 work for?
know here? |
| g I think he's | 7 a drink?
anything from the buffet? |
| h Can I get you | 8 a moment, I'll be right back.
I have to make a phone call. |
| i Let me | 9 do, by the way?
think of the venue? |
| j If you'll excuse me | 10 an amazing place?
weather awful? |
| k It's been | 11 in logistics.
giving a talk on PR. |

- a** **b** **c** **d** **e** **f**
g **h** **i** **j** **k**