



1

First impressions

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about first impressions
- Introducing yourself by email
- Making a follow-up call
- Arranging to meet
- Exchanging contact details
- Talking about your work and company using present simple or continuous

Case study

- Making business connections

Starting point

- 1 What are your first impressions of the business in the picture? What kind of business could it be? What impression could it want to give?
- 2 What first impressions do you think people have of you and your company?

Working with words | Talking about first impressions

1 Read this text and answer questions 1–2.

- 1 Is any one factor more important than others for a company's image?
- 2 What else does a company operating internationally need to think about?

Impressions

A company's image is like an orchestra. No single instrument is responsible for an orchestra's success or failure. Likewise, the image that a company projects is not based on a single business card, glossy brochure or fashionable display, but on the total impression created by all of these things and more. There are many intangibles that can be critical, like the **reputation** you have, your **principles** and **professionalism**, your **creativity**, and even the warmth of an initial welcome.

For a company to come across well internationally, it also needs to consider the culture of its client or customer. A Finn might take an instant dislike to **extravagance**, a Ghanaian might prefer **innovation** to **tradition**, a Qatari might put personal **rapport** before anything else.

Images can create a negative impression or a positive feeling in a few seconds. If you get it right, that favourable first impression will help in building a successful business relationship.

2 Read the text again and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What are the 'instruments' that the text mentions? What others could you add?
- 2 What is the meaning of 'intangibles' in a business context? What others could you add to those in the text?
- 3 How important do *you* think it is to consider the culture of your client / customer? Can you think of any examples?
- 4 Discuss an experience you have had of a positive or negative first impression of a company. What factors contributed to this?

3 Match the words in bold in the text in 1 to these definitions.

- 1 something that is expensive or wasteful: _____
- 2 the ability to produce something using imagination or artistic skills: _____
- 3 a high standard of skill and behaviour: _____
- 4 friendly understanding: _____
- 5 new ideas or methods: _____
- 6 the views generally held about somebody or something: _____
- 7 strong beliefs that influence actions: _____
- 8 a way of doing something that's existed for a long time: _____

Exchanging information | Introducing yourself by email | Making a follow-up call | Arranging to meet

1 Read this email from Ivan Formanek, owner of a translation agency in Prague.

- 1 How did he find out about Sean McFee?
- 2 Why is he contacting him?
- 3 What does he ask Sean to do?



To: sean.mcfee@sfdesign.com
From: ivanformanek@sspeaking.cz
Subject: Designer for new website needed

Dear Mr McFee

My name's Ivan Formanek and I have my own translation agency – Simply Speaking. I was given your details by one of your former colleagues, Ursula Vladikova. She recommended you to me as we are planning to renew our website.

If you are interested in discussing this further, could you either call us or send an email in reply and we will arrange a meeting with you?

Best regards
Ivan Formanek

2 02▷ Sean sends an email in reply to Ivan and then calls him. Listen to their conversation and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 What is the purpose of the call?
- 2 What is the outcome?
- 3 Why is there a delay before the meeting can take place?

3 Match 1–7 to a–f to make phrases.

- 1 I'm calling about ... ____
- 2 Yes, I ... ____
- 3 Thanks for ... ____
- 4 I wondered if you'd had time ... ____
- 5 I suggest we meet ... ____
- 6 Fine, whatever's ... ____
- 7 Let's say, provisionally, ... ____

- a the email I sent you regarding ...
- b to look through the portfolio I sent.
- c remember.
- d best for you.
- e responding so quickly.
- f to discuss things further.
- g Tuesday the 13th at 11.00.

4 02▷ Listen again and check your answers.

Tip | *actually* and *currently*

Don't confuse *actually* with *currently*. Use *actually* as an alternative to *in fact* or *as a matter of fact*.

*I'm **actually** going to be in Prague already.*

Use *currently* to express something you are doing at the moment.

*We're **currently** updating our corporate image.*

5 Put the phrases in 3 into these categories.

- a Making a follow-up call: _____
- b Responding to a follow-up call: _____
- c Arranging to meet: _____

6 03▷ Listen to a call Sean receives and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 Who is calling Sean and why?
- 2 How will Sean know how to find Simply Speaking?
- 3 What transport is he going to use?

7 03▷ Listen again.

- 1 What phrase does Sean use to
 - a enquire about transport?
 - b refer to the time of the train?
 - c discuss the possibility of catching the train?
- 2 What phrase does Catherine use to offer help with
 - a directions?
 - b a taxi?

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 1 on page 102.

8 Think of a situation in your own job where you have to introduce yourself to a company or client. Draft an introductory email. Give the email to your partner.

9 Work with your partner. Take turns to make a follow-up call to your email in 8. Say who you are and why you are calling. Arrange to meet and discuss travel arrangements and directions.

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Practically speaking | Exchanging contact details

1 04▷ Listen to three conversations and answer questions 1–2 for each one.

- 1 How does speaker 2 give contact details?
- 2 What means of communication is speaker 1 likely to use to contact speaker 2 again?

2 04▷ Listen again. Put these phrases into categories a–d.

- 1 I have an email address for you but I'm not sure if it's current.
 - 2 Here's my email address.
 - 3 Let me take your name and number.
 - 4 I'll send you her contact details by text.
 - 5 Can I have Suzy's number and email address?
 - 6 The one above is my business email. I check it regularly so please use that one.
 - 7 Here's my card.
- a Asking for details: _____
 - b Giving details: _____
 - c Checking details: _____
 - d Promising details: _____

3 Work in groups of four. Exchange your details with each other. Do this in as many different ways as possible. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.

Key expressions

Introducing self (email)

My name's ... and I (have / work for / represent) ...
I was given your details by ...
(She) recommended you to me as ...

Making a follow-up call

Hello ... This is ...
I'm calling about the email I sent you regarding ...
I wondered if you'd had time to ...?
I wanted to see if you are still interested in ...

Responding to a follow-up call


Yes, I remember.
Thanks for responding so quickly.
Thanks. I wanted to speak to you about ...

Arranging to meet

I suggest we meet to discuss things further.
When would you like to meet?
We can meet ...
Fine, whatever's best for you.
Let's say, provisionally, Tuesday the 13th at 11.00.
I'll get my assistant to call you later today to confirm.
See you (in a couple of weeks).

Discussing travel arrangements

You'll be travelling in from ..., won't you?
Can you tell me how I get to ...?
Is it best by taxi or public transport?
Let me know where you're staying and I'll email you a map and directions from your hotel.
There's a train that leaves at ... Will I have time to catch that one?
It only takes ... to get to ...
Let me know if you need a taxi and I'll book one for you.

 » Interactive Workbook
» Phrasebank



Language at work | Present simple and continuous

1 Read these extracts from audio 02▷ and 03▷.

- a I'm **calling** about the email I sent you ...
- b Yes, I **remember**.
- c We're currently **updating** our corporate image.
- d I **go** to Berlin once a month ...
- e It only **takes** 20 minutes to get to the station.
- f I'm **leaving** the day after tomorrow.
- g There's a train that **leaves** at 3.00.
- h We can meet when I **get** back.
- i I'm **covering** for a colleague who's on maternity leave.

In which extract is the **present simple** used to refer to

- 1 a routine? ____
- 2 something always or permanently true? ____
- 3 a thought / feeling / reaction rather than an action? ____
- 4 an item on a timetable? ____
- 5 the future after a time word? ____

In which extract is the **present continuous** used to refer to

- 6 an action in progress at the moment of speaking? ____
- 7 a current (unfinished) project? ____
- 8 an arrangement in the future? ____
- 9 a temporary situation? ____

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 1** on page 103.

2 You want to find out this information from someone you meet for the first time. What questions would you ask?

- who they work for
- their responsibilities at work
- their daily routine
- how their English studies are going
- the department or area they work in
- a current project they are involved in
- what their schedule is next week
- how regularly they need English at work

3 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 2.

4 Which of these phrases would you normally use with the present simple and which with the present continuous?

*for the moment at the moment generally speaking for the time being
on the whole tomorrow afternoon once a week most of the time
every winter right now once in a while as a rule currently*

5 Work with a partner. Use the phrases in 4 to make true statements about your activities in or out of work.

6 Give a short presentation about your company using these points.

- 1 The industry as a whole
 - how important it is and whether it employs a lot of people
 - any changes taking place at the moment
 - future developments
- 2 Your company
 - where it is based and what it does
 - current projects and future plans
 - what customers like about the company

Making business connections

Background

Business networking with BNI

BNI is a business referral network, which works as a word-of-mouth promotion tool. When companies join BNI, their representatives attend a local / regional group which holds regular breakfast meetings. At the meeting, members are required to give a '60-second speech' – telling the other participants what type of business they are in, what type of business connections they are looking for and any other information that is helpful for generating more business. The meeting agenda is standardized throughout the world. There is time for members to present their company, hear about success stories

within the BNI network, and pass on their contact details. The benefits of this type of 'cross-promotion' are clear. Business people who attend the meeting can refer their business associates to someone they meet at the meeting. Or two members may forge a business relationship – a supplier / client relationship or a synergy.

Example of networking success: A printer joined BNI and got to know a real estate company. This company was dissatisfied with its current printer and decided to switch to the printer it met through the BNI group. As a result, \$100,000-worth of business was handed over to him!

The Expert View

Networking is defined here as a two-way relationship-building process – promoting what we have to offer, and seeking opportunities through what others have to offer us. In an increasingly fast-moving and competitive global environment, we all need to communicate clearly and create opportunities to develop a network of contacts. Information is available from all corners of the world, but in business nothing can replace the value of building personal relationships. This process often takes time, particularly in some cultures. But when it is done well, networking can deliver a real competitive advantage.

Pauline Weight, Chairman of the Cranfield Management Association
Cranfield School of Management

Discussion

- 1 Why might a company join a network like BNI? What are the main advantages of the network?
- 2 What would you say about your company in a 60-second speech?

Task

Work in groups of four. You are going to attend a meeting of a similar networking organization. Each person chooses one of the four companies from File 01 on page 136.

- 1 Read your information. Prepare a 60-second speech to give at the meeting. Make sure you
 - give some general facts about your company
 - speak briefly about current activities
 - say what you hope to gain from being a member of the networking organization.
- 2 Have a networking meeting. Listen to each other's speeches and decide which company it would be useful to forge a business relationship with.
- 3 It is a week after the networking meeting. Call the business acquaintance you chose and arrange to meet.
- 4 Meet with your business acquaintance. Discuss and decide how your two companies can help each other and / or promote each other's business.



Case study