



BETTER BUSINESS ENGLISH

60

Quick Techniques

Better Business English (eBook & audiobook)

60 Quick Techniques

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Feel equal. Speak, meet and present in English with confidence!

Christopher Wright and The English Training Company (TETC) have helped thousands of professionals and managers to develop their confidence and skills when speaking, meeting and presenting in English!

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Technique 1

Simple Structures For Telephone Calls

Greet, identification and offer

Greet, identification and request

When answering a telephone call you can use the following simple structure.

Greeting, identification and offer.

- *Good morning (greeting), this is Sara Lolka from BA Systems (identification). How can I help? (offer)*
- *Hi (greeting) this is Jim from BA Systems (Identification), what can I do for you? (offer)*

When telephoning someone you can use the following simple structure.

Greeting, identification and request.

- *Hi (greeting) this is Sam Eagles from NorthStar (identification). Can I speak to Mr. Yokitu please? (request)*
- *Hi (greeting) Mr. Yokitu, this is Sam Eagles from NorthStar (identification). Can you help me with something urgent? (request)*

Technique 2

Information Should Be Clear

Clear, Simple and Concise

How much time is wasted repeating telephone calls because the information was not communicated clearly the first time?

Approximately 86-87% of people using English for International Business in the world are non-native speakers according to many international sources (Times of India 2011).

So there's no place for local metaphors, slang and expressions.

Information needs to be communicated clearly. Here are three steps to achieve this:

1. **Prepare** - have **clear, simple** and **concise ideas** before you telephone.
2. **Communicate** those ideas **clearly, simply** and **concisely**.
3. **Check and confirm** that the other person has understood key information.

Technique 3

6 Steps - Guide and Control A Telephone Call

Here are 6 simple steps to guide and control a telephone conversation:

1. **Clear Purpose.** E.g. asking for information, resolving a problem, asking for help, asking for someone to do something.
2. **Preparation:** Prepare and order key questions and issues, so you don't have to rely on your memory or telephoning again.
3. **Take notes:** Have a note pad and pen for note-taking during the telephone conversation.
4. **Check and confirm information.** Repeat key information in your own words. *"So we'll meet next month?" "Ok let's meet next Tuesday". "Unrealistic delivery times, is that right?"*
5. **Ask specific questions.** Ask specific questions that have one or two possible answers. This saves you time.
6. **Summarise and confirm actions** that have been agreed during the telephone call.

Technique 4

Confirm What Was Said And What Is To Be Done (Follow-up Actions)

It can be embarrassing and time consuming if you have to telephone someone back because you didn't understand everything they said.

One way to achieve this is before you finish a telephone conversation **confirm the basics of what you discussed.**

That means **confirming...**

- ...**the what** of any action that is required.
- ...**the where** of any action that is required.
- ...**the when** of any action that is required.
- ...**the how** of any action that is required.

Technique 5

6 Steps – Take And Leave Effective Telephone Messages

Here are 6 simple steps for taking effective telephone messages.

1. Use a piece of paper with plenty of space not a post-it with limited space.
2. One message per piece of paper
3. Include key information:
 - I. name and surname of the other person
 - II. company name
 - III. contact information - telephone no or email address
 - IV. date and time of telephone call
 - V. message subject
 - VI. action required (e.g. call back, send information, reply to email sent, etc)
4. Check understanding – check and repeat key information to check your understanding (e.g. check spelling and information)
5. Date and time is essential to know if the message is urgent or not.
6. Where to leave messages? Make sure you put the message some place where it will be found easily and quickly by the recipient. You can also send them an email to confirm you left the message.

For Leaving Effective Telephone Messages Use Steps 1-5.

Technique 6

Have The Right Telephone Attitude

Be prompt and answer the telephone quickly in three to four rings, so the other person knows their call is important.

Smiling when using the telephone helps you to be personal, enthusiastic and to make a connection. It's a well known fact that although people cannot see your smile they can sense it. It is a great way to connect and build rapport with the other person.

Use Positive Language. People respond better and more quickly to positive words than negative ones. Try changing typical negative telephone phrases and responses such as: *"I'll try," "You'll have to," "I don't know" or "I can't."* into positive telephone phrases and responses such as *"I will do", "We will solve this" and "We can do that"*.

Speak slowly and clearly. Be clear, simple and concise when communicating on the phone. Focus only on the telephone call and nothing else.

Be patient and polite. Life is getting faster but it doesn't mean we have to forget our manners, patience and politeness, especially if we want people to respond well to us.

Technique 7

**5 Steps - Dealing With Problems Over
The Telephone**

Here are 5 steps to be effective when dealing with problems over the telephone.

1. **Put the problem in context.** Introduce the problem clearly and simply in one sentence so the other person quickly understands the problem. Also to know quickly if they are the right person to deal with this specific problem.
2. **Give detailed information.** Give detailed information in a clear, simple and concise way. Remember to be polite and firm at the same time.
3. **Make an offer.** To maintain a good professional relationship with the other person show them you can be flexible. (e.g. *“How about we...”, “Perhaps we could...”, “...would that work?”*)
4. **Propose a solution.** (e.g. *“What we will do is...” “We won’t charge...” “How about we email...” “Perhaps we could...”*)
5. **Confirm solution.** Confirm the information and also that the other person is comfortable with the agreed solution. Then thank the other person.

Technique 8

**How To End A Telephone Call Quickly
And Professionally**

Technique

- First, breathe deeply and keep calm.
- Second, wait for a pause and then interrupt them by saying sorry to the person (using their name).
- Third, explain why you can't take their telephone call now.
- Fourth, give a specific time and day when you will call them to help them.

4 examples

1. Pause – **“Sorry Mr.Chen, I can’t talk now, as I have an important meeting right now. Can I call you on Wednesday at 4:00pm?”**
2. Pause – **“I’m sorry Mr.Watson, I can’t talk now, because I have a client waiting for me. Can I call you on Thursday at 09:00am?”**
3. Pause – **“Sorry Ms.Shah, I can’t take your call now, because I have an urgent matter to attend to. Can I call you on Tuesday at 10:00am or 11:00am?”**
4. Pause – **“I’m sorry Ms. Sousa, I can’t take your call now, as I have a client lunch. Can I call you tomorrow at 5:00pm?”**

Technique 9

**How To Make Native Speakers Slow
Down In Conference Calls In English**

Why do native speakers always have to speak so quickly in conference calls?

The answer is simpler than you think. It's because most native English speakers don't have to work in another language, like Chinese or German. So they often don't realise they're the only ones working at "native speed" in English!

Here are some practical tips:

1. Suggest that each speaker says hi and introduces themselves. This will help you identify the speaker and will be easier to take notes during the conference call.

"Hi everybody, I'd like to suggest we all take turns to say hello and introduce ourselves. What does everybody think?"

2. Suggest that you all respect each person's turn when speaking.

"I'd like to suggest that we all respect each other's turn speaking and keep interruptions to a minimum. What does everybody think?"

3. You set the speed of the conference call in the beginning, but don't overuse these phrases.

"Sorry Sarah, the connection is bad, can you repeat that slowly?"

"Alex I didn't catch that, can you explain that again please?"

"Sorry Ryan, I'm not sure I really understood, what exactly do you mean by...?"

Technique 10

**6 Typical Errors When Making
Conference Calls In English**

Here are 6 typical errors when making conference calls in English:

1. Not being clear, simple and concise when communicating in English with people from different countries and cultures
2. Excessive use of company abbreviations and jargon
3. Inappropriate use of humour
4. Lack of knowledge and understanding of cultural differences between countries
5. Lack of preparation for meeting topics
6. Not understanding how the concept of time changes between countries and cultures

Watch this video example to see these 6 typical errors:

Video – www.dailymotion.com Search for “International Conference Calls”

Webpage details: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1voa_international-conference-calls_shortfilms/#.UP0pBWfwC5I