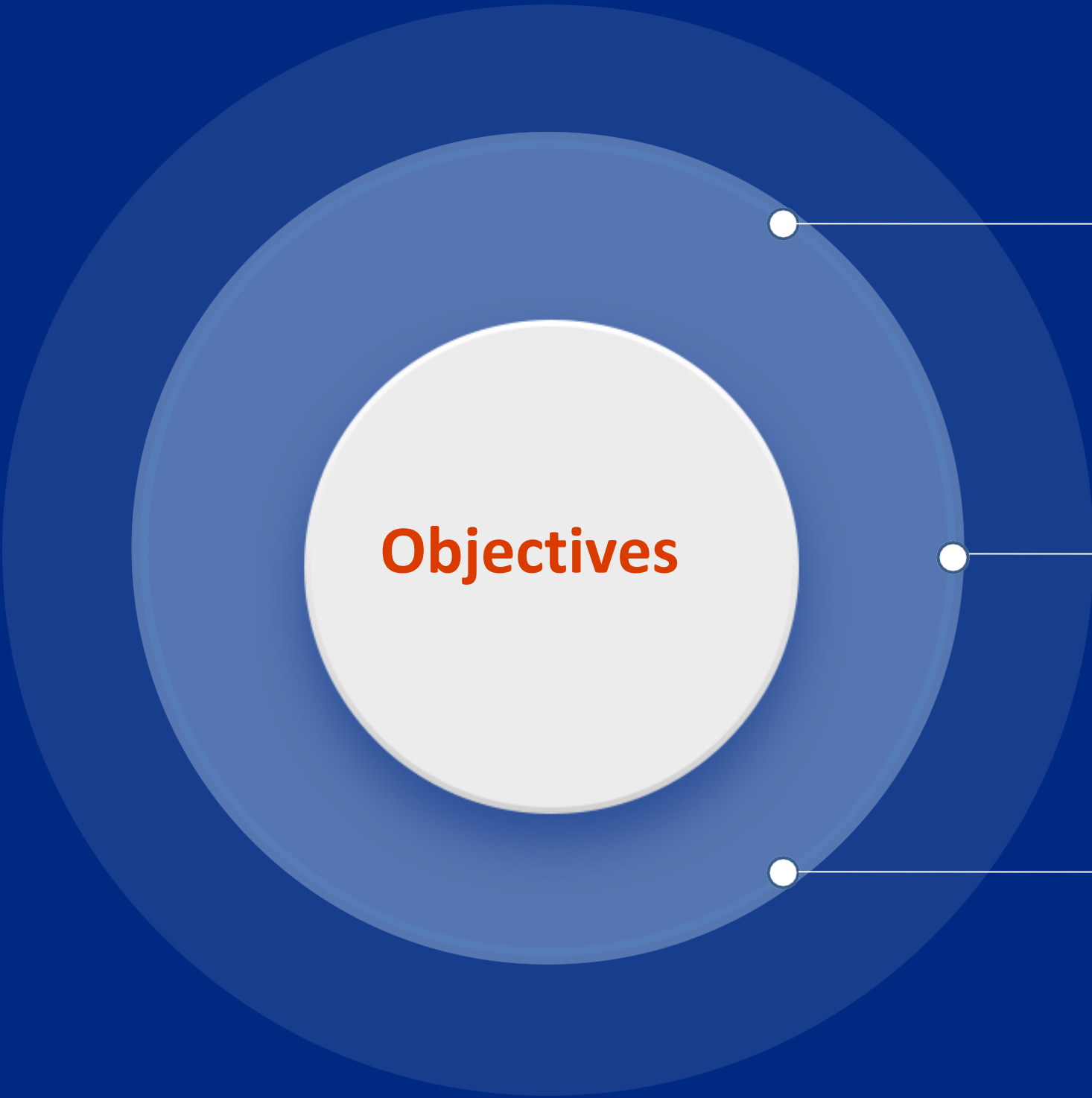


Business Advanced

Unit 1: Connections





Objectives

Talk about cultural differences

Report on research and use tenses correctly

Introduce yourself

Starting Point

1. Can you think of examples where cultural awareness is important in your work?

1. To what extent do you think company culture is influenced by the country the company is based in?



Working with Words | Cross-cultural experiences

1. Do you agree with the following statements about working across cultures?

1. Accepting and embracing ambiguity is essential when working internationally.
2. Consciously developing your cultural skills leads to better business relations.
3. Individual differences can always be attributed to cultural differences.
4. Non-verbal messages carry more weight than verbal ones.
5. Organizations generally have the same way of doing things.
6. The concept of time is universal.

2. Kate Berardo, an intercultural consultant, founded culturocity.com in 2003 to grow clients' cultural awareness skills. Read her advice and compare your answers in 1. Which advice do you find most useful?

3. Complete these phrases to form verb + noun collocations from the text in 2.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. ___ a situation | 4. ___ both ways | 7. ___ your eyes open | 10. ___ the pros and cons |
| 2. ___ an open mind | 5. ___ information | 8. ___ your skills | 11. ___ you an insight |
| 3. ___ an opinion | 6. ___ relationships | 9. ___ your time | 12. ___ unknowns |

4. Match the collocations from (3) to the below definitions.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. can have both positive and negative effects ___ | g. don't rush ___ |
| b. consider the advantages and disadvantages ___ | h. make a judgment ___ |
| c. deal successfully with unfamiliar situations ___ | i. give helpful information for understanding ___ |
| d. develop connections with people ___ | j. stay alert ___ |
| e. develop your ability in a certain area ___ | k. think about and understand things that you find out ___ |
| f. don't judge people/things too quickly ___ | l. understand what is going on ___ |

5. What advice would you give newcomers to your culture/company? Use collocations from 3.

WORKING ACROSS CULTURES | Kate Berardo

1. Do your Homework

- Essential for building relationships when dealing with businesses across cultures.
- Each organization will have its own culture, personality and way of doing things.

2. Keep your eyes open

- Your mind is processing a lot of information in new environments, so observation skills may be clouded or unfocused.
- Notice how people act, dress and treat each other. Look for non-verbal messages. Being able to read a situation will greatly improve your ability to have a successful meeting..

3. Take your time

- Appreciate the need for more time. Communication may be slower and logistics may be different. You may be working in a culture with a different concept of time.
- Also, give yourself more time to process all the information before making decisions.

4. Take individuals into account

- Individuals may vary greatly from the stereotype of their native culture. Values and behaviour are also influenced by background, experience and personality.
- Keep an open mind: be careful not to form an opinion too early or to attribute too much of what you see to a cultural difference.

5. Tolerate Uncertainty

- This can be extremely difficult for people from some cultures where directness and precision are valued.
- Business is about managing unknowns. When working with a culture with a high tolerance for uncertainty, you may not get concrete answers. This, of course, can work both ways

6. Build your intercultural skills

- When working with people from different cultures, you need a solid understanding of the norms of that culture.
- Greater cultural awareness will help you weigh up the pros and cons of your way of doing things and will give you a better insight into working across cultures.

6. Listen to three people discuss working abroad. Was their overall impression positive or negative, and why?



7. Are the following adjectives used to describe people (P), places (PL) or experiences (E)? Listen again and compare your answers.

Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3
1. Open-minded ____	5. Up-and-coming ____	9. Down to earth ____
2. Out of the way ____	6. Self-assured ____	10. Easy going ____
3. Time-consuming ____	7. Outspoken ____	11. Low-key ____
4. Tedious ____	8. Run of the mill ____	12. Unexpected ____

8. Match definitions (a-f) to six adjectives from 7. Then write your own definitions for the other six adjectives.

- a. boring

b. saying exactly what you think

c. ordinary
- d. sensible / practical

e. not intended to attract attention

f. relaxed

9. Use adjectives from 7 to describe:

- how you think you are looked at work
- your workplace
- your experience of working at your present company

10. Think about a situation where you have:

- been host to a business visitor
- worked with a new colleague
- worked in another country / city
- started a new job in a new company

11. Talk about your experiences. Discuss and answer the below questions (1-4).

1. How did you feel to begin with?
2. Where did your first impressions come from?
3. Did your impressions change with time?
4. Were your first impressions right?



Business Communication I

Reporting back

1. Read the *Context*. What type of information do you think Johanna will be expecting from Peter?

Context

Peter works under Johanna, who manages one of the offices for an international company that finds locations for clients. One client, a hotel chain, has tasked them with finding a new site in Poland for a hotel intended primarily as a business or conference center. Peter has recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Poland. Upon his return, he meets Johanna over coffee to share his findings.



2. Listen to Part 1 from the meeting between Johanna and Peter.



Audio 1.2

PREMIUM PREMISES

Poland – research

1. Probable location = _____

2. General impression = up-and-coming place

Peter’s feedback

First site = city centre

Pros = 3. _____

4. the area is being invested in for development

Cons = 5. _____

Conclusions / action points

6. Several interesting sites worth considering outside Krakow

7. Action = _____

3. Listen again.

1. Where does the information in 2 come from? Put points 1-7 into the correct column of the table and make a note of any expressions you hear which help you decide.

What Peter has seen	What someone else has told Peter/ Johanna

2. Why is it important whether Johanna and Peter saw or heard something, or whether they were told? Work with a partner. Look at the expressions you made a note of and discuss their use in the context.

Example: ... they've told us that they definitely want the site to be somewhere in that area.' (Johanna may want to emphasize that this is not her decision.)

Key Expressions

Reporting a personal Observation

- *It all sounds very promising.*
- *I found it to be ...*
- *From what I could see, ...*
- *I found it to be more of a ... than a ...*
- *What's your impression of ... ?*

Reporting from another source

- *I understand you ...*
- *According to ...*
- *I gathered from ...*

Expressing doubt

- *I have my doubts.*
- *I can't help feeling that ...*
- *I'm just not 100% convinced.*
- *... which makes me a bit wary.*
- *I'm a bit reluctant to ...*

Avoiding commitment

- *It's hard to say.*
- *I can't promise anything.*
- *I wouldn't go so far as to say...*

Being persuasive

- *I've got / have to say (that) ...*
- *We can't go wrong.*
- *I'm (totally) convinced.*
- *I'm sure you'll agree ...*
- *I'm (fully) confident ...*
- *The pros (definitely) outweigh the cons.*

Avoiding being negative

- *To be fair, ...*
- *I'm not saying ... , it's just that ...*

4. Listen to Part 2 and Part 3 from the meeting between Johanna and Peter and make some further notes about the pros and cons of each site.

Fill in the following table.

	1 Mountain site	2 City outskirts site
Pros		
Cons		
Concerns		

 Audio 1.3

 Audio 1.4

5. How does Peter feel about the two sites? Listen to four extracts from Parts 2 and 3 of the meeting. In which extract (a-d) is he ... ?

 Audio 1.5

1. avoiding commitment _____
2. being persuasive _____, _____
3. expressing doubts _____

6. Role-Play: Your company has identified a potential new market, and you are tasked with initial research. Student A reads the newspaper extract; Student B reads their role.

1. Report back to each other on your findings, using the *Key Expressions*.
2. Discuss any differences in your information.

Student A

Although lots of new investment is coming into the local market, the airport is insufficient for the volume of traffic expected. This will have a serious impact on the local economy. If a solution is not found, business will go elsewhere.

Student B

Contrary to expectations, this country is being surprisingly slow to awaken investors' interest. The cost of production in this country is lower than in a lot of other states, and the number of skilled workers is high and constantly improving. The infrastructure is adequate to deal with the predicted volume of traffic, but if some serious action is not taken soon in terms of offering incentives for investment, then the potential.

7. Role-Play. Pick one of the following situations and report back to your colleague. When your colleague is reporting to you, ask questions and decide how convinced you are.

1. You have just returned from a market research trip overseas. Report back to your team on:

- what you learnt about the local market
- how well the market is doing generally
- how your new product line is being received
- the presence of the competition

2. You are behind schedule on a project. Your boss has just called you into his/her office. Fill him/her in on:

- the status quo (current situation)
- the reasons for the delay
- how you are going to catch up in the future
- whose fault the delay is (current situation)

8. Discuss the impression you got from your partner in 7. What did your partner do to ... ?

- express doubt
- be persuasive
- avoid commitment
- avoid being negative



1. Read sentences (1-7) and match them to meanings (a-g).

1. I had been looking around Krakow for a couple of days. ____
2. I had planned to spend an extra day in Krakow itself. ____
3. I'll be writing everything up later this week. ____
4. It was made clear that I should go exploring. ____
5. It's going to be a bit more complicated than we anticipated. ____
6. The client has told us that the site is likely to be around the Krakow area. ____
7. They're really pushing the area for development. ____

- a. a prediction made with some certainty
- b. a recent event affecting the present
- c. a recommendation
- d. an activity in progress at a particular time in the future
- e. an activity in progress up to a certain point in the past
- f. something decided in the past, which did not happen
- g. something happening around the time of speaking

2. Compare the pairs of sentences in (a-g) below. Is the meaning different? If so, how?

a. The client **has been telling** us that the site is likely to be around the Krakow area.
The client **has told** us that the site is likely to be around the Krakow area.

b. They **have really been pushing** the area for development.
They're **really pushing** the area for development.

c. I **was looking around** Krakow for a couple of days.
I **had been looking around** Krakow for a couple of days.

d. I **planned** to spend an extra day in Krakow itself.
I **had planned** to spend an extra day in Krakow itself.

e. It was made clear that I **should go** exploring.
It was made clear that I **should have gone** exploring.

f. It **could be** a bit more complicated than we anticipated.
It's going to be a bit more complicated than we anticipated.

g. I'll **have written** everything up later this week.
I'll **be writing** everything up later this week.



3. Read the following email and correct any tense mistakes you can find. Circle any verbs where you could use an alternative verb form. How would this change the tone?

In response to your enquiry about the feasibility of bringing forward the completion date, I had been skimming through the initial proposal and was gathering from talking to members of the team that unfortunately it won 't be as straightforward as we had hoped.

I should have pointed out that the suppliers are being expected to deliver the raw materials required by the end of next week, but so far we had heard nothing from them. We try to get in touch with them and have been insisting that we'll need to know by the end of the week. However, if we haven't heard by then, we need to take legal action to resolve the matter. I'll have got back to you at the beginning of next week - by then I know what will be happening.

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, indent, outdent, undo, redo, and other formatting options.

Send Discard icons for attachments, images, emojis, and a dropdown menu.

Draft saved at 9:01 AM

4. Talk about the following topics in relation to your work. What do you learn about each other? What do you have in common?

- your responsibilities
- your regrets and hopes
- an ongoing project
- a major change
- your predictions
- your career history

extra vocabulary

Key word I point

Match the use of point in (1-5) to definitions (a-e).

1. I'd like to point out that over the years, I have been continually improving procedures.
2. The point is, we're finding it really tough to keep on top of demand.
3. There's no point me rambling on if you can't understand what I'm saying.
4. To get to the point, we want to help out all the sites around the world.
5. What's the point of me being here today?
 - a. it isn't worth
 - b. make you aware of the fact that
 - c. stop digressing
 - d. what's important is
 - e. what's the reason for

Practically Speaking I Introducing yourself to a group

1. Discuss the following questions (1-3)

1. In what situations do you have to introduce yourself to a group in your own language/in English? How do you feel?
2. How much information do you provide about yourself?
3. What impression do you think you give?

2. A multinational company is hosting a training session in Chicago. Listen to three participants introducing themselves. Would you present yourself similarly? What did they do well or poorly? How would you do it differently?



Audio 1.6

3. The speakers from the previous audio include information about the topics below. Put them in a logical order.

- aspirations
- role
- who they are
- reason for being there
- achievements/activities

4. Listen again and complete phrases (1-13). Then match the phrases to the topics in 3.



Audio 1.6

1. Hi, _____ Holly Cheng. _____ the Singapore office ...
2. _____ everything that goes on in Production Planning.
3. ... _____ get on top of things and can see ways of ...
4. _____ local production ...
5. I guess _____ take on board anything I can about how to ...
6. Hello. For _____, Elke Seifried from Graz in Austria.
7. _____ optimizing the quality assurance procedures ...
8. _____ jettison any sub-standard products and _____ working out what went wrong.
9. _____ over the years, _____ procedures ...
10. ... _____ share some of my ideas with you here.
11. Hi, there. _____, I'm Harvey Benson from Atlanta.
12. _____ coordinate what happens between departments ...



Culture Question

5. Introduce yourself to the class. Compare styles / use of language.

- ⦿ What criteria do you use to judge somebody when they introduce themselves?
- ⦿ When introducing yourself, is it appropriate to use humour, to be formal or informal, to list your achievements, to downplay the importance of your work?
- ⦿ What else is important? Do you know what is appropriate in other cultures?



Talking Point

Working in multinational teams

Multinational teams are now a common reality for an increasing number of businesses. This is because they bring numerous benefits, such as enhanced collaboration with colleagues and clients across global markets, which play a key role in international success. However, there are also challenges. These are intensified by the fact that multinational teams may all work remotely, or have some colleagues together in one location while others are spread globally.

What can create difficulties in this way of working are the practical and operational challenges. For instance, varying attitudes to taking part in teleconferences, or when colleagues have different styles of communication and work habits. It can sometimes be hard to determine what the issue is in a chain of emails that seem completely clear, but someone misunderstands what you've written or doesn't respond at all. Misunderstandings at work are often a result of cultural differences and physical distance. It's vital to keep communication open, avoid quick judgments, discuss issues, and aim to find a resolution for future situations.

We often take for granted many things in our own culture, such as using the correct level of formality, balancing professional and social life, or approaches to time. What's expected in these areas may differ greatly in other cultures. Without face-to-face contact, identifying what's really going on can become much harder.

Hi Namrata,



1

I'm getting my presentation ready for the Regional Conference next month. I need your department's figures by the end of next week. Can you do that for me?

Regards,
Jack

Hi Namrata,



3

OK, when is Anni back from vacation?

Regards,
Jack

Dear Jack,



2

Did you have a nice weekend? How did your daughter's hockey competition go? You were telling me all about her preparations last time we spoke. The Regional Conference will be very interesting. I'm looking forward to seeing you there. Regarding the figures, I will ask Anni when she is back from vacation.

Have a great week.
Best regards,
Namrata

Dear Jack,



4

Regarding Anni's vacation, I am not totally sure. She has gone to Bali, did you know? Her brother is getting married there. I'll check, though I think she is back on Wednesday next week.

Best regards,
Namrata

OK, as long as I have those figures by Friday. It's really important.



5

'I am not going to answer that. Of course, he will get his figures by next Friday. Does he think I'm stupid?'

6

Discussion

- 1. Have you experienced any issues that make working in a multinational or dispersed team challenging?
- 2. What might be the problem in the email exchange between Matheus and Adrian? With your partner, decide what Matheus and Adrian are thinking and what they expect to happen.
- 3. What could Matheus and Adrian do to avoid problems when communicating in the future?



Task

- 1. Look at these complaints about working in multinational teams. Discuss the problem and suggest solutions.

The complaint	The problem	Your solution
She constantly asks for permission. Can't she just complete the task and show me when it's done?		
I've achieved a lot, but because I don't constantly talk about it, no one seems to notice. It doesn't matter anyway, as promotions don't appear to be based on merit.		
Everyone insists on going out together in the evening. I've got kids to feed and put to bed, and my partner is often away.		
My boss keeps piling on work from various projects. I end up doing a bit of everything but feel like I've accomplished nothing by the end of the day.		
All our meetings are overly factual and logical. Sometimes I just want to shake everyone and get them to share their feelings.		
Whenever I say something she disagrees with, she starts yelling and tells me I'm wrong. It's become pointless to say anything at all.		

- 2. Think of examples from your own experience. What was the problem and what did you do about it?