

In this unit:

- leading a teleconference
- participating in a teleconference



**6.1 Talking points**

- 1 Consider these questions.  
What are the problems with teleconferences?  
How can you improve communication at teleconferences?
- 2 While you watch other people talking about the questions above, compare their experience with yours.

**6.2 The meeting**

3 Matt Lauder is leading a teleconference between himself and David, who work for QPG, and Sabine and Sanjit, who work for Savell. Savell is currently developing a website and an intranet for QPG and they are meeting to discuss progress. As you watch the video, decide if the statements below are true or false.

- 1 Sabine is in Hong Kong. True / False
- 2 It is midnight in Hong Kong. True / False
- 3 Sanjit is having problems with the line. True / False
- 4 David is the Finance Director. True / False
- 5 Both Sabine and Sanjit have received the agenda. True / False
- 6 The intranet is supposed to go live in three weeks. True / False
- 7 The testers have found a problem with part of the intranet. True / False
- 8 Sanjit will need two weeks to check the intranet. True / False
- 9 David wants to discuss four things with Sabine and Sanjit. True / False
- 10 Sabine wants to discuss her contract with Matt. True / False



**6.3 The expert view**

4 You are going to watch Andrew talk about how to lead and how to participate in a successful teleconference. While you watch, makes notes under each of the headings below.

LEADING A TELECONFERENCE	PARTICIPATING IN A TELECONFERENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the process and the agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saying who you are</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the teleconference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying focussed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing who speaks and when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being clear when speaking</li> </ul>

For a summary of how to take part in teleconferences, read the article on page 55.

**6.4 Analysis**

5 Watch the teleconference again. Analyse the performance of the leader and participants, making notes to support your answers.

The leader	Notes
Does he introduce the participants to each other?	yes / no
Does he explain the agenda clearly?	yes / no
Does he always use participants' names to avoid confusion?	yes / no
Does he make sure that only one person speaks at a time?	yes / no
<b>The participants</b>	
Do they all stay focussed?	yes / no
Do they outline what they are going to say before saying it?	yes / no

**6.5 The expert feedback**

6 Watch Andrew's analysis of the teleconference. How do his comments compare to your views?

## Language focus

## 6.6 Beginning a teleconference

- 1 Watch the beginning of the teleconference. Write the missing words.

Sabine: Hello? Hello? 1 \_\_\_\_\_? It's Sabine here.

Matt: Hello Sabine. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Matt.

Sabine: Oh, hello Matt. How are you? ...

Matt: Sabine, we're waiting for Sanjit.

Sabine: Yes, he's 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Hong Kong. I believe it's about midnight there.

Matt: OK. David is 4 \_\_\_\_\_ as well. Remember you met him over here last time? ...

Matt: Hello Sanjit. This is Matt. Can you hear me? ... Sanjit? ... Oh! He's 5 \_\_\_\_\_.

David: He must be having problems with the line.

Sabine: Hi Matt?

Matt: Sabine. We've 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Sanjit.

Sabine: OK, well let's start and hope he ...

Sanjit: Hello?

Matt: Sanjit?

Sanjit: Yes? Hello? 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Matt?

Matt: Yes. Hi. We lost you.

Sanjit: Yes. I don't know what happened the first time. I was 8 \_\_\_\_\_ or something. And the line was bad.

Matt: Oh, well, it sounds OK now.

- 2 Look back at the dialogue in 1. Underline any useful words and phrases to:

- check if anyone else is there yet
- explain who is coming and who is already there
- check if everyone can hear you properly
- explain that your telephone connection failed

## Dealing with technical problems

- 3 Read the phrases below concerning technical problems. Match them to the categories A-C.

- A There is suddenly no sound on the line or you can't hear one person.  
 B There is sound but the quality isn't very good.  
 C You need one person to speak in a louder voice.

- The line's gone dead.  A
- You're very faint.
- Try speaking up a little.
- There's an echo on the line.
- Can you speak a little louder?
- Sorry, the line's bad - we're having trouble hearing you.
- Her phone cut out when she went through the tunnel.
- He's been cut off.

## Speaking on the telephone

- 4 In the video, the participants at the teleconference use many words and phrases to describe the process of using a telephone.

'He's calling from Hong Kong ... He must be having problems with the line.'

Replace the words in bold in 1-6 with the words below.

contact connect me answering engaged phoned hang up

- The line's **busy** \_\_\_\_\_. He must be on another call.
- It's a bad line. Why don't you **put the phone down** \_\_\_\_\_ and dial me again?
- Have you **called** \_\_\_\_\_ Tom to let him know about the meeting?
- I don't understand why he's not **picking up** \_\_\_\_\_ the phone.
- Hello. Can you **put me through** \_\_\_\_\_ to Rachel?
- I can't seem to **get through to** \_\_\_\_\_ him. Is this the right number?

## Managing who speaks at a teleconference

- 5 The leader of a teleconference needs to use people's names in order to run the meeting effectively. For example, in the video Matt controls the meeting by using names in this way: 'Sorry, you're both talking at once. Sabine, can you speak first and then Sanjit. Sabine ... go ahead.'

Rearrange the words below to form an expression for leading a teleconference.

- David so over to you. \_\_\_\_\_  
So David, over to you. / So, over to you David.
- Helen you can next go? \_\_\_\_\_
- to respond would you like to that Shoko? \_\_\_\_\_
- can speak you Ania first then Tom and? \_\_\_\_\_
- was Max there anything else? \_\_\_\_\_
- you'd is add anything Simone there like to? \_\_\_\_\_

## Outlining what you are going to say

- 6 In teleconferences, it's important to outline what you are going to say before you say it. In the video, David does this:

'There are basically three issues I'd like to discuss with you ...'

Read pairs of sentence where the speaker outlines what he or she is going to say and then starts to say it. Write in the correct verb to match the purpose of the second sentence.

- suggest agree refer summarize ask
- Now I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ Tiuu to comment on this issue. Tiuu, what's your opinion?
  - I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ to the figures on the handout so please look at the table on page one. If you look at the table ...
  - I want to \_\_\_\_\_ what we've agreed so far. So far we've said the initial plans for the prototype still need more work and ...
  - Can I \_\_\_\_\_ two ways that we could solve the problem of delays. Firstly, let's change the supplier? Secondly, ...
  - I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ with your first point. You're absolutely right that we need to put more money into this.

## TIP: USING NAMES

Make sure you use people's names more than you would in a face-to-face meeting.

Over to you David.

Did you receive the agenda Sabine?

Sorry Ayako but can I interrupt you?

Is there anything else José?



## Meetings task: a teleconference

Work in groups of three or four. You are going to have a teleconference. Either use teleconferencing equipment and work in different rooms or, if this isn't available, sit in a circle with your backs to each other. Choose one person to lead the teleconference.

- 1 You have received this email from the leader of the teleconference. Spend a few minutes thinking about your ideas for the agenda.

### Alternative task

Plan an event for your real job. Before the teleconference, discuss the kinds of events you are all involved in and choose one to organize. Make a list of what would need arranging. Then begin your teleconference and discuss and plan each part of the event.

As you know, Tony Jackson, our Managing Director, is retiring at the end of March after twenty-two years with the company. I would like us to plan a suitable leaving event to wish him a happy retirement. I'm aware that you are all very busy and in different parts of the world, so I'd like to suggest a teleconference this Wednesday at 12.30 – 12.45 (central European time). The points we need to decide are:

- What type of leaving event? – What location? Do we want food, music, etc.?
- Who to invite? – All staff in the UK? Managers from across the world? Important clients?
- When to hold the event? – Lunchtime? Evening? During the week? At the weekend?
- What is a suitable leaving present?
- Who will be responsible for organizing what and by when?

Please confirm that you can attend the meeting as soon as possible. Here are the details for the teleconference:

Call the following number: 0042 567 74895

Enter this access code: 08566

- 2 When you are all ready, begin your teleconference. Decide where you are calling from (country? city?) and what time it is.
- 3 If you are the meeting leader, remember to welcome everyone and make some small talk until everyone is there (for example, find out where they are calling from and what the time is). Also check there are no technical problems and that everyone can hear clearly. Then start the meeting and discuss the agenda in the email. Your time limit is 15 minutes.

## Useful phrases

### Getting connected

Hello? Is anyone there?  
Hi ... This is ...  
How are you?  
... is here with me.  
We're still waiting for ...  
He's calling from ...

### Dealing with technical problems

Can you hear me?  
He's gone. / We've lost him. / He's been cut off.  
The line is bad. / There's an echo. / You're breaking up.  
You're very faint. / Can you speak up? /  
Can you slow down a bit?  
That's better. / It's fine now. /  
We can hear you now.

### Leading the teleconference

Let's start. / Let's begin.  
Did you all receive the agenda?  
The first item is ...  
Let's end there. / I'll let you all go now.

### Managing who speaks

Can you speak first Sabine, and then David?  
Over to you David. / Go ahead Sanjit.  
Would you like to respond to that Peter?  
Sanjit, what's your view?  
Sabine, is there anything you'd like to add?  
Matt, was there anything else you wanted to say?

### Outlining what you are going to say

I'd like to discuss ...  
I'm going to talk about / highlight / outline ...  
I want to summarize ...  
I'd like to ask a question ...

## Task assessment

Use this assessment form to analyse the success of your teleconference, noting down examples where appropriate.

- If you used teleconferencing equipment, were there any technical problems?
- At the beginning, was it clear who was at the meeting? Why / why not?
- How well did the leader of the teleconference start the meeting?
- Were there any communication problems? (e.g. two people speaking at once)
- Did the meeting leader clearly manage who spoke and when effectively?
- Did participants outline what they were going to say before speaking?
- Were all the points on the agenda covered? Was it clear who was responsible for organizing what and by when?
- Was there anything you think you and / or the whole group could improve on next time?