

Unit 1

SOCIALISING

«Socialising is part of the game in professional communication. Effective Socialising happens when we anticipate people's expectations, fulfil them, and perhaps do more than is expected».

Edward Harvey
Psychologist

All professionals need to talk about their work. But we are not usually happy talking to people if we know nothing about them. Social language is just as much a part of professional communication as the other business communication skills dealt with in this book. Perhaps even more business is conducted outside the boardroom than in it.

Good social communication skills enable people to feel comfortable with each other when making conversation, more confident and more likely to have successful business co-operation.

Study the following dialogue

Andreas Mavromatis, a sales export manager, and other Greek manufacturers have set up several stands presenting their products during a big fair in Thessaloniki. Mr. Alexopoulos of Fournalis, a consultant who met Andreas Mavromatis a few weeks ago, is paying a visit to the Thessaloniki Fair and meets Mr. Mavromatis.

Alexopoulos: Mr. Mavromatis, what a surprise! Good morning.*

Mavromatis: Good morning, Mr. Alexopoulos.

Alexopoulos: I don't think you've met Mr. Melianos. Mr. Melianos is the marketing manager at Petzetakis Hellenic Plastics and Rubber Industry.

Mavromatis: How do you do?
 Melianos: How do you do, Mr. Mavromatis?
 Alexopoulos: Mr. Mavromatis is a marketing expert from Papas P. & Co., the Greek Plastics - Raw Materials giant.
 Melianos: Oh, I see. I've heard many good things about your company, Mr. Mavromatis.
 Mavromatis: Oh, really? I didn't think we were well known over here.
 Melianos: Well, you might not be a household name to the general public yet, but I often go to tradeshows and am familiar with your line of products.
 Mavromatis: That's certainly interesting.
 Alexopoulos: Excuse me, gentlemen, but I've noticed a client of mine from Egypt over there and I'd like to have a word with him. I hope you don't mind?
 Mavromatis: Of course not.
 Alexopoulos: I'll see you later.
 Melianos: Sure.

* *There is often quite a bit of confusion about when to say "Good Morning", "Good afternoon" etc. Generally these expressions are used as follows:
 "Good morning" is used until 12 noon.
 "Good afternoon" is used from 12 noon until about 5 pm.
 "Good evening" is used after 5 o'clock.
 Remember that "Good night" is also used to say goodbye.*

LANGUAGE: USEFUL WORDS, COLLOCATIONS AND LEXICAL CHUNKS

to make
 strike up } a conversation
 have a word with someone vs. "get down to business"
 chat

discuss money
 talk about something
 talk over (a problem, a point, etc.)

Note: discuss *something* (discuss is always followed by an object, not "about" - e.g. discuss politics, discuss a problem, etc.)

to bring up a matter for discussion
 point
 keep up with } (the latest developments)
 abreast of }
 pay a visit to someone
 stay } in touch with someone
 get }
 lose touch with someone

Introducing yourself

When you introduce yourself to someone you often need to give not only your name, but also any other relevant details about yourself or the situation.

Hello, my name is from (company).
 I've got an appointment with Mr at 10.30.
 Hello, I'm I'm here to see Mr
 Hello, let me introduce myself. I'm I'm in charge of
 I don't think we've met. I'm

Greeting phrases for first meetings

How do you do? *
 Pleased to meet you.
 It's a pleasure to meet you

* "*How do you do?*" is only when first meeting somebody and should not be confused with "*How are you?*".

Greeting people formally

It is customary to address people by their surname in formal situations or when meeting for the first time. Using people's surnames is polite and shows respect.

- A: How do you do? I'm George Karalis from Adel Saatchi and Saatchi.
 B: How do you do, Mr. Karalis? Nice to meet you. I'm Yannis Alexandropoulos from Marvel Advertising.

2. A: Good morning, Mr. Vidalis. I don't think we've met. I'm Michalis Maragakis from Spot Thompson.
 B: Good morning, Mr. Maragakis. Nice to meet you.
 Glad to meet you.
 Pleased to meet you.
3. A: Good afternoon, Mrs. Anastassiou. How are you?
 B: Fine thank you. And you Mr. Papafotiou?

In the first two dialogues the two speakers do not know each other. In the third, it is apparent that they have already met as they use "How are you?".

Task One

What would you say to the following people when you meet them? Practise with a partner.

1. It is 11 o'clock in the morning and Mrs. Anthopoulos' secretary has just announced your visit. You now enter Mrs. Anthopoulos' office.
 You:
 Anthopoulos:
 You:
2. You are at a welcome party for Mr. Abdel Aziz, a foreign expert in logistics who has just been posted to Greece by the overseas head office of your firm.
 You:
 Abdel Aziz:
 You:
3. You meet Andreas, an old friend and fellow student you haven't seen for a long time, at a house warming party of another student.
 You:
 Andreas:
 You:

Task Two

Role Play

You are going to an international seminar/trade fair in Birmingham. On the train you notice that the woman sitting next to you is studying a list of participants for the fair.

Address her. Engage her in a conversation.

LANGUAGE: USEFUL WORDS, COLLOCATIONS AND LEXICAL CHUNKS

Introducing people

This is....

I'd like you to meet.....

I'd like to introduce.....(formal)

May I introduce..... (formal)

I don't believe you've met....

Have you met.....? (informal)

Do you know.....?

How do you do?

It's a pleasure to meet you.

Pleased to meet you.

Nice to meet you.

Glad to meet you.

Getting on first- name terms

My name is Alekos Delis. Please call me Alekos.

You can call me Alekos.

A: My name is Thanasis which is Arthur in English.

B: Is it really?

Study these dialogues

A: Mr. Delis, may I introduce Mr. Evangelou, our sales manager.

B: How do you do Mr. Evangelou?

C: How do you do?

A: John, this is Mr. Moraitis. He's the marketing director of Marvel Auditing.

B: How do you do?
A: How do you do?
A: Peter, I don't believe you've met Miss Koutsoumbelis.
She's responsible for quality control.
B: It's a pleasure to meet you.
A: Nice to meet you.
A: Andreas, I want you to meet Katerina. She's over here on business.
B: Hello. Pleased to meet you.
C: Pleased to meet you too.

LANGUAGE: USEFUL WORDS, COLLOCATIONS AND LEXICAL CHUNKS

Getting information about a person's job

A: What do you do?
B: I work for an electronics company.
I work as a project leader.
A: Who do you work for?
B: I work for Kotsovolos.
A: What do they do?
B: They sell electronic equipment.
A: Where is the company based?
B: We are based in the city of Athens and also in a number of other areas.
A: How long have you been there?
B: About two years.

A rapid revision of tenses

Simple Present

- a. The company *supplies* business software.
a general or permanent activity.
- b. Managers *plan, organise, lead and control*.
a truth or current belief.
- c. We always *discuss* major purchases
routines and things we do regularly.

- d. The trading year *starts* on 1st January.
a fixed schedule in the future.
- e. I accept that we *don't want* to create a hierarchy.
a present activity with non-continuous verbs.

Present Continuous

- a. We *are expanding* our operations in the Middle East.
an unfinished activity at or around the moment of speaking.
- b. *I'm working* in Athens at the moment but normally I work in Cairo.
the temporary nature of an activity.
- c. *I'm attending* a meeting tomorrow afternoon. We're flying to Hong Kong next week.
a fixed arrangement in the future.
- d. Vassilis *is always/constantly discussing* this, but he never reaches a decision.
a characteristic habit that annoys the speaker.

Present Perfect

- a. i. Well, we *have discussed* about planning and managing. Now what about improving the organisation?
ii. We've *been talking* about planning and managing and we've had an interesting discussion.
 - i. an activity at some non-specific time in the past with an impact or result in the present or future. The verb is in the simple form because the speaker wants to focus on a particular action which ended at a point of time.
 - ii. the verb is in the continuous form because the speaker wants to focus on the process rather than its result which happened over a period of time.
- b. i. Sales *have increased* this year.
ii. We *have been developing* a number of new products this year.
In both sentences "this year" is not yet finished. In the first sentence the verb is in the simple form because the focus is on the result: an

increase in sales. In the second the verb is in the continuous form because the focus is on the process itself: the development of the new product.

iii. *Have you ever worked* for a multinational?

I have never attended a meeting.
when relating life experiences

Simple Past

i. *I joined* the company last month.

We launched our first laser printer in 1985.

to talk about activities which are clearly in the past and have no connection with the present, it refers to a finished period of time.

ii. Before *I joined* Intracom, *I worked* for a global corporation.

I got my first degree in 1994.

Often the simple past is used instead of the past perfect when the sequence of events is to talk about personal events. It involves the use of specific time phrases and the past tense form of the verbs.

Past Continuous

Is that what those people *were working on* when *I came* in this morning?

it is used to provide a certain time frame for another activity, and refers to an activity which was continuing when something else happened.

Past Perfect

Before *I joined* Germanos *I had been* the Managing Director of Colgate Palmolive Hellas. When the company *joined* the New York stock market, it *had already been* on the London market for five years.

to talk about activities which happened before an activity already mentioned in the past.

Past Perfect Continuous

Before I joined Germanos *I had been working* as the Managing Director of Colgate Palmolive Hellas for about nine years.

Joanna *had been revising* for her exams all day, and in the evening she was tired.

Emphasises the time and duration of a continuous activity which took place before a particular time in the past.

Future Time

The board meeting *starts* at 3.30 p.m.
timetables and schedules

Amalia *is meeting* the Managing Director at 2 p.m.
future plans and arrangements

We *are going to open* a new sales office in the North of Greece.
intention

Maybe the Greek economy *is going to pick up* more quickly.
prediction

Hold on. *I'll get* a pencil.

A: Have you got last year's figures there?

B: Sorry no. *I'll get* them for you now.

(instant decisions)

I am sure *we'll need* a big hotel.

used in combinations with verbs of opinion (think, doubt) for future facts and predictions.

I don't think *we'll be seeing* a real recovery until the second half of the year.
used to position ourselves at a certain stage in the future.

i. *You'll be hearing* from us later in the day.

ii. *I'll be waiting* for you outside.

iii. A: *Will you be using* your car today?

B: I don't think so.

A: Can I borrow it?

When we are sure that something will happen because arrangements have been made.

I'll have made out these documents by 5 o'clock.

to talk about something that will be or won't be completed before a certain time in the future.

The project *is due to* be completed in 2004.

Another 385 people *are about to* lose their jobs.

"be due to" and "be about to" can be used to refer to planned future events that you expect to happen soon.

LANGUAGE: USEFUL WORDS, COLLOCATIONS AND LEXICAL CHUNKS

Talking about yourself - your background

As every business person knows, you don't talk about business all the time. Talking about yourself and your business partner can help to build trust and confidence.

I was born in

I went to school in

My parents come from

After leaving school, I studied

I did a degree in

a course in

an apprenticeship in...../with.....

Of course, I had to do an intership first

Talking about your work experience

After that I

My first job was in

More recently I have been working asin/with

I have been with the company for

I have been in the present job for.....

I mostly deal with

I am responsible for

My job involves a lot of

What I like about my job is

My business number is

Study the sample sentences - words used to express additional information

Apart froming..., also

As well asing ..., also

Besidesing ..., also ...

Apart from being general manager for Spot Thompson, I'm also a consultant for office systems. As well as marketing office supplies, I'm also actively involved with a chain of hotels in Athens. Besides being general manager of Nestlé Hellas, I'm also a partner in an advertising agency.

Concluding a conversation

With people you know

I really must be leaving.

Bye. See you sometime next week.

With people you don't know

Goodbye. I have enjoyed meeting you.

It's been interesting talking to you.

Task Three

Role Play

Work with two other partners. Make up conversations for the following situations.

1. You work for Spot Thompson. Introduce Mr. Stathakis, your manager, and Mr. Anastassiou, a sales representative of Delta Pliroforiki, to each other.

You :

Mr. Stathakis : How do you do?

Mr. Anastassiou:

2. Introduce Mr. Stathakis, your manager, and Mr. Anastassiou, a sales representative of Delta Pliroforiki, to each other.

You :

Mr. Stathakis : How do you do? Nice to meet you.

Mr. Anastassiou:

3. Introduce Mr. Alexopoulos, the director of Castrol Hellas S.A. , and Mr. Batzakos, your business partner, to each other.

You:

4. Introduce Mr. Delis, the marketing manager of Esso Pappas Ltd., and Mr. Malavazos, the auditor at your company, to each other.

You:

Task Four

Example: Mr. Evangelou /marketing manager + consultant on foreign goods

Apart from being }
Besides being } a marketing manager, Mr.Evangelou is also

As well as being a consultant on foreign goods

- a. Mr.Papafotiu/auditor for a large bank + a private tax consultant.
.....
- b. We sell to retail outlets + have good contacts with government agencies.
.....
- c. Vassilis holds a BA in Business Management from the University of Piraeus + attended an MBA programme at the London School of Economics for 2 years.
.....
- d. Elena is on the board of Johnson and Johnson Hellas + consultant on foreign goods.
.....

Making Conversation - Small Talk*

As has already been pointed out, social situations in business are very important for building rapport between individuals and groups. We should make the guest feel easy and comfortable, for instance, while waiting for other persons in your company to join you or when driving him/her from the airport. You can talk about many subjects, depending on the nationality of the guest. Safe topics are for example: the weather, travel, today's news and current affairs, the schedule of the visit, sport, music, art, books, family and so on. Contentious issues are politics and religion. In England the "weather" never fails to stimulate and develop conversation. Remember to follow up on your questions, not just change the subject immediately. Show an interest in whatever he/she has to say by:

- listening attentively
- commenting
- nodding
- asking more questions
- smiling and
- maintaining eye contact

* A conversation about ordinary or unimportant matters usually at a social event.

If you want to show interest in what you are saying the voice rises in pitch. The following sounds or noises may be relevant when no specific answer is required and also show that you are listening to what the speaker is saying.

Oh Mmm Uh Huh Ah

When we are chatting we can encourage people to continue by using a variety of expressions to give positive feedback.

Fine OK good idea sounds interesting I see of course
 me too that would be nice really?
 or

By echoing the speaker

Speaker: Seventy thousand. The largest in Europe.

Echo: Seventy thousand? The largest in Europe?

Starting an informal conversation with a foreign visitor or an English speaking business partner is a major matter of concern for many Greeks. This is partly due to a language problem as Greek people often feel uncomfortable about starting a conversation in English.

What happens when a visitor arrives with an appointment to visit a company? What are the typical stages of the first meeting? What conversation takes place?

Study the dialogue in which Peter Davies arrives for a meeting with Elena Kassavetis and Alexis Delis of the advertising company Alexopoulos S.A.

Peter: My name's Peter Davies from Aips Consulting.
 I've an appointment

Elena: Oh hello, Peter. I'm Elena Kassavetis. We've spoken on the
 phone a couple of times. Nice to meet you.

Peter: It's nice to be here.

Elena: Oh-let me take your coat.

Peter: Thanks.

Elena: Oh,here is Alexis.Alexis this is Peter, he's just arrived.

Alexis: Hello, Peter, pleased to meet you and welcome to Thessalo-
 niki.

Peter: Thanks.

Alexis: Is this your first trip to Greece?

Peter: No, I've been to Athens two or three times but it's my first
 visit to Thessaloniki.

Elena: Peter, let me get you a drink.

Peter: Yes, I'd like a tea, if possible, thanks.

- Alexis: Did you have a good trip?
 Peter: Absolutely no problems.
 Alexis: That's good. You did fly didn't you- to Athens?
 Peter: Yes, that's right, then I drove up to here.
 Alexis: Oh that's good. Thessaloniki can be a little wet at this time of the year... you'll have to come back in the summer.
 Peter: Oh, I'd like that. I always enjoy coming to Greece.
 Alexis: How long are you going to be here for?
 Peter: About a week.
 Elena: Okay, here's some tea.
 Peter: Oh, you're very kind.
 Alexis: Can I explain the programme- I think we sent you an outline for the day-if you agree,we could start with a video which explains some of our services and then we could have a look at a few reports on campaigns.

Greetings vary greatly from culture to culture

What advice would you give a visitor to your country concerning the following aspects of body language.

- eye contact
- physical distance between each other
- facial expression
- physical contact (handshakes, hugs, kisses, etc.)

In Greece:

- say hello
- shake hands
- enquire after each other's health
- what's up

LANGUAGE: USEFUL WORDS, COLLOCATIONS AND LEXICAL CHUNKS

Meeting a Visitor

How to start up a conversation with people you do not know very well and keep conversations moving by asking general questions.

The following are some of the questions commonly asked in the first five minutes of a conversation. Note the use of different verb tenses.

- How was your flight?
- How was your trip?
- Did you have a good flight?
- Is this your first time in Greece?
- Have you been to Thessaloniki before?
- What has the weather been like in England?
- How are things in London?
- Whereabouts in England do you live?
- What is the weather like in your country at this time of the year?
- How long are you staying in Athens? (this refers to future time and shouldn't be confused with "How long have you been staying in..." which refers to the past).
- Are you (here) on business or pleasure?
- Where are you staying?

Offering assistance and hospitality

- Would you like a lift back to your hotel?
- Do you need anything?
a hotel
travel information?
- Can we do anything for you?
- Shall I pick you up at the airport?
- Do you want me to photocopy this for you?

Accepting

- Yes, that's very kind of you.
- Yes please.
- Yes, that would be very nice.

Declining

- Thank you, but it's not necessary.
- No thank you.

Asking for assistance and making requests

- Could you (possibly) recommend a good restaurant?
book me a hotel?
pour me some more wine?

- Do you think you could pick me up at the station? (more polite)
type this for me?
- There is one thing I need
- Can you (more familiar)

Responding to requests:

Positive

- Absolutely (fine).
- Certainly.
- Of course.
- Yes, that's no problem.

Negative

- I'm afraid not.
- I'm sorry I can't.
- Well, yeah, well it's just very wasteful.

Inviting

- Would you like to visit the Greek Museum?
have dinner this evening?
go out for a drink?
- Are you interested in doing some shopping?
- How about going to the theatre?
- What about seeing a film/play?
- Let's.....

} (These are for less formal occasions)

Responding to an invitation

- Thank you. I'd love to.
- That would be very nice.
- That would be a pleasure.
- I'd like that.
- That sounds very nice.
- That sounds fun.

Declining an invitation

- Thank you for inviting me but I'm afraid I've already arranged.
- I'd like to but
- That's very kind of you but
- That would be nice but unfortunately
- Well, actually

Stating preference

- I like Greek cuisine very much.
- I think I'd prefer
- I particularly like classical music.

Thanking people for hospitality

- Thank you very much. I really appreciate your hospitality.
- Thank you very much for organising this evening. The meal was delicious.
- Thanks for asking me out. I enjoyed that.

Responding to thanks

- That's quite all right.
- It was no trouble.
- You're welcome.

After you've talked with someone about their work/job/company it might be an idea to find out about more personal aspects of his/her life such as family, interests, hobbies, etc., if you want to get to know them a little better.

Interests

- A: So, what do you do in your spare time?
B: Oh, I play tennis.
A: Is.....popular in your country?
B: Quite popular.
A: Are you interested in sport?
B: Yes, I like watching sport.
Excuse me the question, but do you.....

Origins and family

- And are you from here originally?
Which part of the country do you come from?
Do you come from a small/large family?
And does your wife work?

General talk

- Do you have to travel a lot in your work?
How is the unemployment situation in your country?
Do you use English in your job?
What sort of government do you have?