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29

CONTROLLING STRATEGIES AND OUT-GOING CALLS

*K*eeing control over conversation is an important skill. This is required to ensure effective communication and message taking and giving. You will learn some such strategies in this lesson.



OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- keep control over the conversation;
- use expressions appropriately; and
- identify stages in out-going calls.

29.1 CONTROLLING STRATEGIES

Often callers tend to chat, talk irrelevantly and keep the telephone lines needlessly engaged. It is, therefore, very important that you keep control of the conversation. It is important to know what you want and how to say it briefly and directly without giving offence. There are difficult situations that you may face. Some of the common problems are listed below. You also have tips on how to deal with them.



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A. Problem –1 Message Not Clear

Often there are disturbing sounds and noises in the background that do not allow you to hear the message. Some times people give long or difficult answers, so you have to check whether you have really understood the important details.

Example – I

- Mariam : Well, when do people start work in Japan?
- Nakatane : Most Japanese companies are open from nine to five. Some open earlier and some open later, but they don't usually close later than six.
- Mariam : So the normal hours of business are nine to five?
- Nakatane : Yes, that's right.
- Mariam : I see, thanks.

Example – II

- Receptionist : Hard Rock Café. May I help you?
- Carl : Yes, can I make a reservation for two for Saturday, the 16th, please?
- Receptionist : Certainly, for what time?
- Carl : Well, five or half past five is still early. Six might be all right.
- Receptionist : Shall I put it down as six then? And could I have your name and telephone number?
- Carl : Sure. My name is Carl Maro and the telephone number is 590-3442.
- Receptionist : Sorry, I didn't catch that.
- Carl : It's 590-3442.
- Receptionist : OK, Mr. Maro, a table for two at 6 on Saturday, the 16th will be reserved for you.
- Carl : Thank you. Goodbye.
- Receptionist : Good bye.

You will notice that in a situation where the message is not clearly stated or heard, you have to ask again; and repeat the message or use ways to indicate that you have the right message. Correct them and give the right information again, if necessary.



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B. Problem –2, Multiple Enquiries

Receptionists at reservation and cancellation counters, newspaper offices, hospitals, etc. often need exact details on several heads. Noting down while attending to other tasks (for e.g., collecting gate-passes, handing over brochures etc.) is difficult. Often callers are not aware of the problems involved. For example, one may speak too quickly or too softly.

To keep control of the conversation, you may have to do the following:

Ask the other person to slow down.

— Could you speak a little more slowly, please?

Ask the other person to repeat key facts.

— Could you repeat the dates, please?

— Can I have you name again, please?

Ask for information in the order you need it.

— Can I have your flight number first, please?

Ask the other person to spell his/her name or place names in addresses.

— Could you spell that, please?

Make a check – list of points you want to ask before you make your call.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 29.1

I. Study the following dialogues and indicate the controlling strategies used in them. Please Note: More than one strategy may be used in each.

- A. Mariam : What’s the average cost of a hotel in Tokyo?
- Nakatane : I’m not sure, as I don’t live in Tokyo. I suppose about 15,000 to 30,000 (yens), but I never stay in hotels so I can’t be sure about it.
- Mariam : So that’s 15,000 yens for a good hotel?
- Nakatane : No, that’s not quite right. For a good hotel you pay about 30,000 yens.
- Mariam : I see. Thanks.



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- B.** Journalist : I see. What about sales outside Europe?
 Industrialist : Twenty million. OK.
 Journalist : I've got one final question. Is it true that M.F. Hussain designed your wrappers?
 Industrialist : Absolutely. It was in the late 70's (Seventies).
- II. Write the dialogue you will have with the caller in each of the following situation:
 A client calls your office and asks to speak to a colleague who isn't in the office.

29.2 OUT-GOING CALLS

Dialogue Practice

I.

- Ist Operator : Switch board, can I help you?
 Manager : Good morning, Deepak Sharma here. Could I have an out-side line, please?
 Ist Operator : Sure. What's the number, sir? (notes the number in a pad) Please hold on, sir. I'll find out if Mr. Yadav is available. (dials) 507822. (engaged tone) Sorry sir the Cooper line is engaged I'll call you back later when Mr. Yadav is on the line.
 Manager : That suits me. I'm in my office for the next half an hour (rings off).
 Ist Operator : Is it 507822?
 2nd Operator : Wrong number. This is 50 87 22.
 Ist Operator : Oh sorry (dial Again) Is this 50 78 22, Coopers Ltd.?
 3rd Operator : Yes, may I help you?
 Ist Operator : Mr. Deepak Sharma from Escort Ltd. wishes to speak to Mr. Vikram Yadav, Assistant Manager, Production.
 3rd Operator : Please hold on. I'll check if he's in (through Extn.) Mr. Deepak Sharma from Escorts wishes to speak to you, sir. Shall I send the call in.
 Yadav : Yes, put him on.

3rd Operator : Please hold the line. The call will be through in a moment. (to Deepak) Mr. Yadav is on the line.

Manager : Mr. Sharma, Mr. Yadav from Coopers is on the line for you. Please speak to your party.

(Through Extn,) (Connects the two).

II.

Deepa : Good morning, Operator, What can I do for you?

Director : Good morning. This is the Director. I would like you to ring Air Travel and book me a ticket by the morning flight to Bombay tomorrow.

Deepa : Yes, sir, I'll ring back after I've heard from them.

Director : That should be fine, thank you.

Deepa : (Refers to directory or personal list for the no.) Is this 619434, Air Travels, please?

Operator : Yes, what can I do for you?

Deepa : I would like to book an air ticket to Bombay by tomorrow's morning flight. Could you connect me to the concerned person?

Operator : Mr. Kukreti, Booking In-charge handles this. I'll call him on the line. Please hold on.

Deepa : Thank you (pause).

Operator : Mr. Kukreti is on the line.

Kukreti : Good morning what can I do for you?

Deepa : I'm speaking from Escorts Ltd. Mr. Malhotra the Director would like to book an air ticket to Bombay by Indian Airlines early morning flight tomorrow. Would it be available?

Kukreti : Well, I'll be with you in a moment. I'll check the reservation chart to see if there have been any cancellations. I think we are full up. (After some delay).

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- Well, your director is lucky. There's only a single seat available. Who should I book it for?
- Deepa : Mr. D. V. Malhotra. M-A-L-H-O-T-R-A. Managing Director, Escorts Ltd. Did you get the name please or shall I repeat?
- Kukreti : No thanks. I got it – D.V. Malhotra.
- Deepa : How much would that cost?
- Kukreti : Rs. 9550/-
- Deepa : Do you accept cheques?
- Kukreti : Yes, till 3 o'clock only.
- Deepa : Thank you very much Mr. Kukreti. I'll have a man sent for the ticket by noon. Please hand it over to him.
- Kukreti : You're most welcome.

29.3 DIALOGUE ANALYSIS

Largely similar expressions are used in out-going and in-coming calls. But you will notice a few differences as indicated below:

Giving Identity: Good morning, Operator here. Can I help you?

Switch board, what can I do for you?

Reception, Operator speaking.

Since you are beginning the conversation with someone inside your own factory or office, it is not necessary to give your complete identity as in the case of in-coming calls. However, you must give your identity to let the caller know that he has got the right extension.

Caller giving identity: Sharma here.

That is the director speaking.

Hello, there's work for you.

The caller need not give his full name or designation. An operator who has worked in a place for sometime will recognise persons from their voices.



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Caller excuses himself: — Please hold the line while I find out.

And gives reasons before — Would you mind holding on while I look into the...

Leaving a call hanging:

You must have noticed that in dealing with out-going calls, the operator may be asked to perform a particular task – find out a particular number, get information and then pass on the message. Here it will be useful for you to have a list of the most frequently needed numbers for easy reference in front of you:

| Name | Place/Designation | Number |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Air Travels | Mr. Kukreti, Reserv. In-ch. | 619434 |
| Bombay Decorators | Miss Krishnan, Int-dec. | 5422 |

Lastly, you have also to decide on your priority list-when you are busy and the board is full, whose work do you do first? Usually the Director’s and Manager’s work get priority over other staff members, and official calls are handled before personal ones.



OVERALL QUESTIONS

1. You are the operator in Sasson Hospital, Pune. The head of Plastic Surgery Department asks you to put a call through to a friend who is getting married. At the same time there’s call from the Emergency. Which one will you attend first? Decide and prepare the conversation.
2. You are the operator in a University. The Head of the Physics Deptt. has asked you to find out where some books (give names, authors, publishers) are available with the local book sellers.
3. The Personnel Manager wants you to find out all necessary details and make arrangements so that he will be able to reach Delhi from Hyderabad by 1st Jan. 99, 10.30 a.m. for a labour Union Meeting.



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**CHECK YOUR ANSWERS**

- I. A.** i) Asks Nakatane to repeat key facts.
 ii) Indicates his understanding of message.
 iii) Seeks correct information.
- B.** i) Asks the Industrialist to repeat key facts.
 ii) Has made a check-list of points to be covered before the call.
- II.** I'd like to speak to Neena Gupta, please.
 You : I'm sorry, she isn't in the office.

OVERALL QUESTIONS**OPEN ENDED**

1. The emergency call should be taken first. Dialogue to be written accordingly.
2. A list of book with authors' names and addresses of publishers to be prepared.
3. Necessary details about flights from Hyderabad to Delhi to be found out - specially about the morning flight on 1st jan.