

Business Communication: Diplomatic Language



Warm up

- What are some of the most important communication skills that you need in your job?
- Have you ever had to navigate a difficult conversation with a colleague or manager? How did you approach it?
- In what ways do you think technology has changed the way we communicate in a professional setting?
- What are some common communication challenges that you have experienced in a business setting?
- How do you approach communication with colleagues or clients from different cultures or backgrounds?
- What strategies do you use to make sure that everyone in a meeting or discussion is on the same page?



1. Read the email and answer the following.

To: ali.martinez@tekup.com

Subject: RE: *Tekup* offer

Dear Ali,

Thank you for sending over the offer. I appreciate the effort you put into it, however, I have some concerns regarding the terms of the offer. I was hoping for a more flexible pricing structure and a quicker timeline for implementation.

I'm open to discussing different options and finding a mutually beneficial agreement that meets the needs of both our companies. It would be great to meet face-to-face to discuss different pricing structures and timeline improvements. Are you available Monday 18th after 2pm?

I look forward to finding a solution that works for everyone.

Best regards,

Ms. Lee

- What is the purpose of this email?
- How do you find the tone of the email?



2. Read the dialogue and answer the following questions.

Ali: Good morning, Ms. Lee. Thank you for meeting with me today.

Ms. Lee: Good morning, Ali. It's my pleasure.

Ali: So, let's jump right in. I brought you here to follow up on your email regarding the offer I sent you. As you know, our company, *Tekup*, is the market leader in offering software solutions to companies like yours. I understand you would like to see some changes to my initial offer. So, we've made some revisions based on your feedback, and we believe we've come up with a solution that will meet both of our needs.



Ms. Lee: I appreciate your efforts to address our concerns. Could you give me a brief overview of the changes you've made?

Ali: As you can see here we have adjusted the price. We have also included some additional services, such as on-site training and technical support, that we believe will add value and ensure a smooth and quick implementation process. Additionally, we have extended the warranty and maintenance coverage to provide you with peace of mind and a level of service that is unmatched in the industry.

Ms. Lee: I see. While I appreciate your willingness to make changes, I'm still not convinced that this proposal is the best fit for us. The pricing is still higher than we were hoping for.

Ali: I understand your position, and I think we can find a compromise. Perhaps we could offer a 10% discount for a longer-term contract. What do you think?

Ms. Lee: That's an interesting suggestion. I'll need to discuss it with my team before making a decision. Can you give me a few days to get back to you?

Ali: Of course, Ms. Lee. I understand that this is an important decision for your company, and I want to make sure that we're meeting your needs as best we can.

1. What changes were made to the revised contract proposal?
2. What concern does Ms. Lee have about the proposal?
3. How does Ali suggest as a compromise?
4. Identify examples of diplomatic language used in the dialogue.

Diplomatic language useful phrases

Diplomatic language aims to maintain positive relationships in sensitive situations through polite, respectful, and clear communication. This is critical in business to avoid misunderstandings and ensure productive communication.

<p>Agreeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I agree with you up to a point, but... • I see what you're saying, and I think we can find common ground. • That's a good point, and I think we should consider it. 	<p>Disagreeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I appreciate your input, but I'm afraid I don't agree. • I can see where you're coming from, but I think there are some issues with that approach. • I respect your opinion, but I have a different perspective.
<p>Offering Alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of that, perhaps we could try... • Have you considered the possibility of...? • What if we approached it from a different angle? 	<p>Negotiating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand your position, but I think we need to find a compromise. • Let's see if we can find a solution that works for both of us. • I'm open to discussing different options and finding a mutually beneficial agreement.
<p>Seeking Clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not sure I understand what you mean by... • Could you elaborate on that point? • Can you give me an example of what you're suggesting? 	<p>Apologizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I apologize for any confusion/misunderstanding. • I'm sorry if I gave the wrong impression. • Please forgive me if I offended you.
<p>Showing appreciation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I appreciate your input and value your opinion. • Thanks for bringing that to my attention. • Your insight has been helpful. 	<p>Making Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May I suggest that we... • How about we consider... • Perhaps we could try...



3. Read the scenarios below and give diplomatic responses.

Example: Customer: *I don't like this product. It's too expensive for what it is.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to respond to the customer's feedback.

I appreciate your input and understand your concerns about the price. We want to provide high-quality products and services, and the price reflects this. However, I would be happy to discuss possible discounts or promotions with you. Is there anything specific that you're looking for in terms of features or functionality?

1. Boss: *I need you to finish this report by tomorrow at the latest.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to ask for an extension or to suggest a new deadline.

2. Colleague: *I think your idea is unrealistic and won't work.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to respectfully disagree and offer an alternative.

3. Boss: *I don't think you're working as efficiently as you could be. Can you work on getting more done in less time?*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to respond to your boss's feedback.

4. Customer: *I need this order delivered by Friday. Can you make that happen?*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to clarify the delivery deadline and offer alternatives if necessary.

5. Colleague: *I'm concerned that the project won't be finished on time.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to address your colleague's concern and offer reassurance.

6. Manager: *I'm sorry, but we won't be able to give you a raise this year due to budget cuts.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to respond to the news and ask for clarification or alternative compensation.

7. Customer: *I'm really unhappy with the service I received. I'd like to speak to your supervisor.*

- Use a diplomatic phrase to acknowledge the customer's frustration and offer a solution.





4. Read the case study and answer the following questions.

A misunderstanding at the office

It was a typical Friday afternoon at *Global Widgets Inc.* when an email arrived in the inbox of one of the sales team members, Tom. It was from his colleague, Anna, who was in charge of marketing.

"Hey Tom, just wanted to remind you that we need the finalized numbers for the Q3 report by the end of the day," the email read.

Tom was taken aback. He had already sent Anna the figures a few days earlier, and he was sure he had made that clear. He hit "reply" and typed out his response.

"Hi Anna, I already sent those numbers to you on Tuesday. Did you not receive them? Let me know if you need me to resend it."

Anna's response came back almost immediately.

"Tom, I did not receive any numbers from you. Please send them over ASAP so we can finish the report."

Now Tom was getting frustrated. He was sure he had sent the numbers already, and he didn't appreciate the implication that he wasn't doing his job properly. He typed out another response, this time with a bit more edge.

"Anna, I don't appreciate the implication that I'm not doing my job. I sent you those numbers three days ago. Please check your inbox and let me know if you need me to resend them, but I expect an apology for the accusation."

Anna's response was brief and to the point.

"Tom, I assure you that I did not receive any numbers from you. But it doesn't matter now, because I just found out that we need to include some additional data in the report that I was not aware of earlier. So just forget about it."

Tom was left feeling angry and insulted, and Anna was frustrated that Tom wasn't taking responsibility for the missing numbers. The tension between them lingered for days, and it was clear that their working relationship had been damaged.






Comprehension and analysis.

1. What was the original purpose of Anna's email to Tom?
2. Why did Tom get frustrated with Anna's email?
3. How did Tom's tone change in his second email to Anna?
4. How did Anna respond to Tom's second email?
5. What was the outcome of the miscommunication between Tom and Anna?
6. What were some of the key communication issues that arose in the email exchange between Tom and Anna?
7. How could Tom have used diplomatic language to avoid the tension that arose between him and Anna?
8. How could Anna have responded differently to Tom's initial email to avoid the escalation of tension?
9. What are some possible ways for Tom and Anna to repair their damaged working relationship after this incident?



5. Read the cards below and role-play with a partner using diplomatic language.

A Late delivery

<p><i>Customer's Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-end restaurant owner is complaining about a late seafood delivery. The customer is worried that the seafood will not be fresh enough for their customers. 	<p><i>Possible Requests by the customer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for an explanation for the delay and an apology • Request a refund or a discount for the late delivery and potential impact on the restaurant's reputation • Request a guarantee of on-time delivery for future orders or events
<p><i>Business Representative's Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address customer's concerns and find a solution that meets both parties' needs 	<p><i>Possible Solutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a refund or a discount for the late delivery • Assure the customer that the seafood is still fresh and provide evidence to support it • Offer to replace the seafood with a new delivery at no additional cost • Offer a new delivery time and ensure that it is met

A difficult client

<p><i>Customer's Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-profile fashion designer who hired <i>Fabrix</i> to produce a line of clothing for their upcoming fashion show • Not satisfied with the samples. The fabric seems cheap. • Threatening to cancel the contract and take their business elsewhere. 	<p><i>Possible Requests by the customer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for an explanation for why the samples are not good enough. • Request a complete overhaul of the fabric to meet her high standards • Ask for a significant discount or compensation for the subpar samples
<p><i>Business Representative's Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a positive relationship with the client while also standing firm on the company's capabilities and limitations. The company has a reputation for producing high-quality fabric. • The company has a supply chain problem and cannot make major changes to quality of the fabric without increasing the price significantly. 	<p><i>Possible Solutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an alternative option, such as silk, which is more expensive. • Offer a discount on a future order, to help address the client's concerns and maintain the business relationship.



Salary Negotiations

<p><i>Employer's Background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small marketing agency looking to hire a new marketing coordinator. • Has a limited budget for the position and is looking for a qualified, motivated, and budget-conscious candidate. • Offered a salary of €1200 per month. 	<p><i>Possible Requests by the customer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, or paid time off. • Opportunities for growth and advancement within the company. • Flexible work arrangements such as working from home or a compressed workweek. • Maximum salary increase of €1500 per month.
<p><i>Potential employee's background:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent college graduate with a degree in marketing, eager to start their career in marketing. • Has some experience with internships and is confident in their ability to bring value to the company. 	<p><i>Possible Solutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A salary increase. • Additional perks such as a company car, phone, or professional development opportunities.





6. Write a reply to the email below as the customer service manager.

Subject: Unhappy with recent service

Dear [Your name],

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the recent service I received from your company. On 15th March, I placed an order for 100 G4 vacuums and was promised a delivery date of 20th March. However, I did not receive my order until 3rd April, which was much later than expected.

To make matters worse, when I received my order, it was not in the condition I had expected. Some of the boxes were damaged. I have attached photos of the damaged boxes for your reference.

I understand that mistakes can happen, but I am disappointed with the lack of response I have received from your company. I have made several attempts to contact customer service, but I never receive a satisfactory response.

As a valued customer, I expect better service from your company. I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter and provide me with a resolution as soon as possible. I would like a refund for the damaged boxes or a replacement.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ben Smith