

Topic 3. Problem-solving meeting: Part 1

Highlight any of the language that is not very clear to you and ask your teachers questions.)

Step 1. Skim through the conversation identifying or confirming the parts that might have posed some challenge or confusion during the initial listening.

Step 2. Listen to the conversation again following the script in order to clarify all the details. Do it several times and even try to shadow (say together with our speakers) for clarity, fluency or internalization.

Step 3. Listen to the conversation further for more and more complete familiarization. **Make sure to get back to it from time to time even when you work on other tasks or topics.**

Step 4. Select some of the language items from the **Language tool file** to personalize if needed (If you don't feel confident about some of the language items on the list, try to personalize them; feel free to share with the rest of the group and your teachers.)

Conversation transcript

Greetings and small talk:

Client (Alex): Hi Gary, **how are you? It's not like you to** be late.

Pharmaron (Gary): Yeah, **I'm very sorry about that.** It's raining really heavily today. The rush hour traffic was much worse than usual.

Client (Alex): Oh, I see. I've been to Beijing a few times. **I don't think I ever remember it** raining.

Pharmaron (Gary): Yeah, Beijing **is normally** very dry most of the year, **but** we do have the occasional big downpour at this time of year. The traffic's always atrocious when it rains in Beijing. I hope the weather's nicer where you are.

Client (Alex): Yes, we've been blessed with very good weather so far this year. Fingers crossed it remains that way. Unfortunately, the traffic is always awful, though, **whether it** rains **or not.**

Pharmaron (Gary): **I guess we** can't have everything.

Client (Alex): **Indeed.**

Introductions:

Pharmaron (Gary): **Just before we get going, I'd like to** introduce you to Beverly. **I don't believe you two have** met her yet. She's our technical specialist.

Pharmaron (Beverly): Hi, nice to meet you both.

Client (Alex): Hi Beverly. **It's great to meet you at last. We've heard nothing but good things. Your counterpart on this side is, Stephanie.**

Client (Stephie): Hi Beverly. **After emailing back and forth for so long it's great to finally be able to put a face to the name.**

Pharmaron (Beverly): **Likewise.**

Outlining the agenda:

Pharmaron (Gary): **Right, so now that's out of the way, let's go through the agenda.**

There're two main items. First of all, we'll give you the regular update on the current status of the project and the progress we've made since our last meeting. Then, after that, we'd like to discuss and get your input on potential solutions to the supply issue I brought up in the email I sent the other day. **Today, we can explain the situation in more detail and hopefully reach a consensus on how best to move forward.**

Client (Alex): **Sounds good.**

Updating:

Pharmaron (Gary): **So, first, the good news. We've been able to stay on track with our production quotas up until now, and **we're happy to say that** we're even slightly ahead of the projected timeline for this month's delivery.**

Client (Alex): **That's great. When will the latest batch be delivered?**

Pharmaron (Gary): **As it happens, it's going to be dispatched from our Tianjin facility today so it should be with you by the 13th, as long as there's no problem clearing customs.**

Client (Alex): **We had a close call with** customs last time. **Are you confident** that's all been resolved now?

Pharmaron (Gary): Our operations team has been in contact with them regarding this issue. **As far as we can tell, there shouldn't be** any issues this time. **Unfortunately, other than making** sure all of the forms are filled in correctly, **there's not much else we can do.**

Client (Alex): I understand. I'll see if we can do anything on this end to ensure a smoother process, **but it might be out of our hands too.**

Pharmaron (Gary): Exactly. So, **we don't expect there to be** an issue with the next batch, but we are trying to send it as soon as possible, **so that even if** there are delays, **it won't** cause you a problem. **That's where the good news ends, I'm afraid.**

Client (Alex): I see. What issues have you run into?

Outlining and discussing issues:

Pharmaron (Gary): As I mentioned in the email, the main one is the supply issue. **As you're probably already aware,** our main supplier is unable to provide such a large amount of the main intermediate at the moment. Each batch requires about double the amount they can provide. **I'll pass it across to Beverly to explain the exact nature of the problem.**

Pharmaron (Beverly): Thanks, Gary. **So, the good news is that** we've managed to source an alternative supplier, **but due to** the shortage, the price is quite a bit higher than usual. **On top of that,** while they believe that the material is at the required purity, they can't guarantee it. **So, we're a bit concerned that it might** require additional purification once it arrives, **which could** be quite a large undertaking.

Client (Stephie): Yeah, **that could be a real problem.** There are a number of steps that require very precise conditions and even small changes could result in all kinds of unwanted impurities popping up. The process **would have to** go through extensive testing before we can be sure it'll meet the specifications.

Client (Alex): Oh, **I didn't realize it'd** be such a large issue. **How are you planning to** resolve this?

Pharmaron (Beverly): If we opt to use the alternative vendor, **my team are confident that** we'd be able to handle it. **But as** Stephie **pointed out, it would** require extensive testing because we don't know the quality of the new material, **which means** there will be an additional cost. **If all goes well, there's a chance** we'll still be able to get everything done according to the original timeline, **but to be safe, I think it's best to** factor in an additional buffer in case we run into difficulties getting the starting materials up to the required standard. **The biggest unknown is...**

Pharmaron (Gary): **Can I jump in there for a second, Beverly?** I don't think we need to get bogged down in the details at this stage. **Let's keep it simple for the time-being and lay out the two options.**

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