

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ENGLISH

Working Virtually

**Jackie Black
Jon Dyson**



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International Management English

Working Virtually

Jackie Black and Jon Dyson



York Associates

Communicate professionally anywhere

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Introduction

At York Associates, we always aim to develop the skills which help professionals to do their jobs better. In recent years, we have worked hard to enrich our Business English and professional communication training with intercultural content. More recently, we have included a focus on important interpersonal and management skills for listening, building relationships and trust, influencing, etc.

Our approach is built on the premise that good communication is vital to achieving results at work. Effective international communicators need a blend of language, professional communication, intercultural and management skills to be successful.

Welcome to *International Management English*, a new series published jointly by York Associates and Delta Publishing. The four titles in this series are:

- *Leading People*
- *Managing Projects*
- *Working Virtually*
- *Managing Change*

Each book includes free audios in the Delta Augmented app.

Professional language training with a management focus

Each book consists of eight units of study, containing four sections per unit:

- **Section A: Discussion and listening**
Engaging and relevant content in areas of international management and teamwork
- **Section B: Communication skills**
Opportunities for the practice of key skills in areas such as conflict management, team-building and giving/receiving feedback, as well as more familiar topics such as presentations, meetings, negotiations and writing e-mails
- **Section C: Professional skills**
Authentic texts from leading management writers and thinkers, designed to encourage reflection and debate among readers
- **Section D: Intercultural competence and Case study**
A focus on raising intercultural awareness, followed by an illustrative case study drawn from the authors' experience of the international business world

In addition, each unit offers:

- a strong emphasis on vocabulary learning, with glossaries of key terms at the end of each unit
- practical tips on how to improve performance at work
- the opportunity to use a learning diary, which encourages the setting of realistic goals to implement the learning points from each unit.

At the end of the book, the Word list provides a useful list of key words, referenced to the first occurrence of each word.

Having worked through the book, you will have developed not only your business language skills but also your ability to communicate and manage real challenges in your international working environment.

To the teacher

The four titles in this series represent a new development in ELT. They broaden the scope of teaching to include highly relevant management topics and skills. The materials are not only engaging for teachers, allowing them to introduce and develop new management communication skills in an ELT classroom; students are also motivated as they learn how to manage real professional communication challenges which they face at work on a daily basis.

Each title is designed primarily for work with both small and larger groups, but can also be used in one-to-one situations and has many features which will support self-study.

Across the eight units of each title, there is a strong focus on developing fluency and skills to communicate effectively in real work situations. There are opportunities to practise listening, reading and writing skills. The intercultural case studies in Section D are drawn from real-life examples and provide engaging discussion and problem-solving material for the ELT classroom.

There is online support for trainers (www.delta-publishing.co.uk/resources) in the form of notes for each unit, which provide background information on the management topics and skills presented.

A final word

To both learner and teacher, we would like to express the hope that you find the materials stimulating, and that they help people to communicate more effectively at work.

Learning diary

Accelerate your learning by using this Learning diary. Make eight photocopies of this page, one for each unit. Note down important new words and expressions from the unit as you study. Make notes to help you remember any good advice you get on how to communicate and be effective across cultures. Then decide on some actions you can take to help to consolidate the things you have learned.

Unit number: _____

1 Language

Important (new) words and expressions for me from this unit are:

2 Professional communication skills

Important (new) expressions and communication tips for me from this unit are:

3 Intercultural competence

Important information/tips to be effective across cultures for me from this unit are:

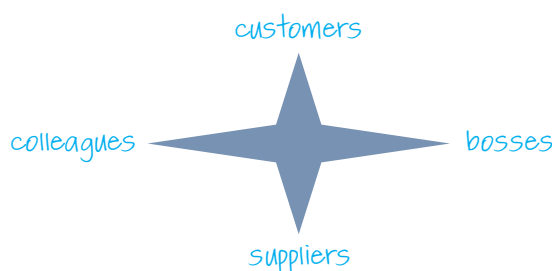
4 Actions

To help me to consolidate all the learning points above, I need to:

Needs analysis

Introduction You can use this Needs analysis to help you think about how to make the most of this course and to maximise your learning.

Managing your communication network Think about who you communicate with in English. Draw a diagram to represent your network of communications, showing the important individuals or groups of people you communicate with. Follow the example and note down the channel of communication you use, e.g. face-to-face, phone, video conference, e-mail, etc.



How effectively do you use your network? Are you connecting with the right people in the best way at the most appropriate time? Are you spending enough time communicating with each individual or group?

Brainstorm some ideas for ways in which you could use your network more effectively.

I should spend more time planning my longer e-mails rather than writing them quickly and sending without considering the message. That way, I would get a more positive response from some colleagues.

Your communication needs What do you have to do in English, and how challenging is it? Build your own communication profile by completing the following tables for virtual communication skills, professional communication skills and interpersonal skills. Tick (✓) the tasks you most commonly do. Then note down how challenging you find it, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very easy, 2 = easy, 3 = occasional problems, 4 = challenging, 5 = very difficult). If you score 3 or more for a task, write down a reason why it is challenging.

Virtual communication skills

skill	✓	scale of challenge
Using the best channel of communication		
Dealing with the technology you use		
Writing correctly and coherently		
Getting your message across in online meetings		
Getting information to complete tasks		
Connecting with people in different parts of the world		
Working in teams where you rarely meeting other members face to face		
Other		

Professional communication skills

skill	✓	scale of challenge
Presenting		
Meeting		
Negotiating		
Writing (reports, e-mails, etc.)		
Socialising		
Decision-making		
Problem-solving		
Other		

Interpersonal skills

skill	✓	scale of challenge
Building and maintaining relationships		
Networking		
Building and maintaining trust		
Influencing people		
Listening actively		
Managing conflict		
Other		

Your language and communication challenges

You work virtually in an international context and you use a foreign language to do so. What are the biggest language and communication challenges that you face?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Your intercultural challenges

What are the biggest intercultural challenges that you face?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Your current learning objectives

What would most help you to improve your ability to communicate effectively in an international virtual context?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Your future learning targets

As part of your learning plan, what targets can you fix for yourself? Start a learning diary (see page 5) and set yourself targets for future learning using this frame:

- In one month's time, I aim to be able to
- In three months' time, I aim to be able to
- In six months' time, I aim to be able to
- In one year's time, I aim to be able to

Understanding virtual communication

AIMS

- A To define virtual communication
- B To adapt your communication style
- C To develop key competences for working virtually
- D To learn how culture affects virtual communication

A Discussion and listening



Think about it 1 Here is one definition of virtual communication.

'All interactions and relationships that occur not in a physical space but on the Internet through technological media'

What does *virtual communication* mean to you? How important is it for your organisation? Exchange ideas with a partner.

2 How many different types of virtual communication can you think of?

Work with a partner to add to this list.

Skype, SMS, Twitter, blogging, ...

3 a How much of your time (both inside and outside work) do you spend communicating virtually?

b Of the types of communication you listed in Exercise 2, which do you use?

Listen to this 4 a 1-3 Listen to three people talking about the different ways they communicate virtually. As you listen, complete the first three columns of this table.

name	job	technology used	opinion/attitude
Bettina		e-mail, instant messaging, ...	
	team leader		• conference calls useful ...
Chantou			

b 1-3 Listen again and complete the fourth column of the table.

5 Exchange ideas with a partner on your own experiences of using virtual communication.

Focus on language 6 a Match the sentence beginnings (1–7) with the endings (a–g) to form examples of tasks mentioned in Exercise 4.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 Report to | a to edit documents together. |
| 2 Attend | b weekly calls. |
| 3 Invest time | c in real time with IM*. |
| 4 Send | d and opinions with global colleagues. |
| 5 Share screens | e files as attachments. |
| 6 Solve problems | f in building virtual relationships. |
| 7 Exchange ideas | g senior managers by phone. |
- * instant messaging

b Which form of communication is each task most commonly used with?

7 Complete each of these sentences using the correct form of a suitable phrase from Exercise 6a.

- a can be a very efficient way to ask colleagues to comment on your documents.
- b It is vital that all stakeholders our in order to keep up to date.
- c Looking back on the virtual project, I realise it was essential to in getting to know the team better.
- d The most secure way to transfer large is to them as encrypted
- e Using messaging apps is the most successful way of in time.
- f As there is never time to meet face to face, I like the fact that I can with our global partners by setting up a conference call at a moment's notice.
- g His busy workload means he has to his by phone.

Let's talk 8 a Think about your daily work and the tasks you need to do. Discuss with a partner which of these you feel you are good at. You can use examples from the previous exercises or add other kinds of tasks.

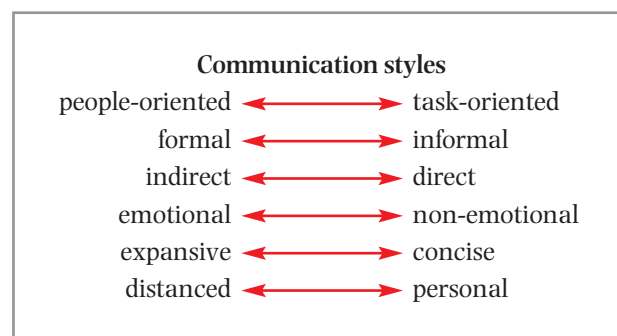
b Now think about the work you do (or will do) virtually. Which skills do you think you need to improve in order to become an effective virtual communicator?

B Communication skills: Adapting your communication style





Think about it 1 Look at the range of communication styles below. Where do you think you are on the scale? Discuss this in your group and compare your results.

Example: *I am more task oriented, probably because I work in production and have to deal with urgent problems on a regular basis. So I don't want to waste too much time with chatting.*




2 How far can you adapt your communication style to different people and situations? Which styles work well when communicating virtually? Why?

Listen to this 3  **4** Listen to Jorma, a university teacher from Finland. How does he adapt his communication style to the virtual environment in his classes?

4  **4** Listen again and decide whether each of these statements is true (T) or false (F).

- a Jorma finds using technology demanding. **F**
- b He pays attention to the volume of his voice.
- c Speaking fast keeps everyone on board.
- d Finns need time to think before they answer a question.
- e Teachers need to check understanding more frequently if they are teaching virtually.



5  **5** Listen to the second part of the interview with Jorma and answer these questions.

- a Which major challenges does he talk about?
- b Which actions does he recommend to deal with these challenges?

6 What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning?

Focus on language **7 a** In the interview, Jorma uses a number of phrases to manage his communication more effectively. Look at these examples, then match each of the expressions in the box below with the correct headings (a–f).

a Reformulate

In other words, ...

b Clarify

So, what you are saying is ...

c Motivate

That's a good idea, Paolo.

d Show understanding

I appreciate your point.

e Indicate agreement

I absolutely agree with what Gemma said.

f Request more detail

Laura, can you expand on that second point, please?

What do you mean exactly by ... ?

Could you say a little more about ... ?

Yes, I see what you mean.

You've made a valuable point.

Exactly!

If I understand you correctly, you want to ...

b Think of more phrases which you could use under these headings.

Let's talk **8 a** Work in groups of three. Appoint a speaker (A), a responder (B) and an observer (C). Using the topic list below or a topic of your choice, Student A speaks to Student B. Student B responds and summarises to Student A. Student C gives feedback on clear communication and successful outcome.

After about two or three minutes, Student C should stop the conversation and give feedback to Students A and B on their communication.

Topic list

- Teleconferences are largely a waste of time.
- E-mailing is the best way to communicate clearly.
- Twitter encourages you to express ideas more concisely.
- Blogging is a good way to build team spirit.

b Now change roles and choose a different topic, making sure that everyone has the chance to be an active listener and to use the new language and expressions.