**Linguaskill Business Lesson Plans**

**Speaking Lesson 2**

**Description**

The topic of this lesson is sales conferences. Practice of vocabulary related to sales and conferences is used to give guidance on completing the first stage of a Part 2 task in the Linguaskill Business Speaking Test.

**Teacher’s Notes**

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| **Aims of the lesson** | * to present and practise vocabulary for talking about sales and conferences * to raise awareness of the requirements of the Part 2 (stage 1) Speaking tasks * to develop techniques and strategies for this task type based on practice of a sample task. |
| **Time required** | 45 minutes |
| **Level** | Suitable for B1-C2 |
| **Materials required** | * Student’s Worksheet 1: Speaking Part 2.1 – identifying the main topic and extra information * Student’s Worksheet 2: Linguaskill Business Speaking 2.1 sample task |

**Procedure**

1. Tell learners that the focus of this lesson will be on Part 2.1 of the Linguaskill Business Speaking test. Tell them that you are going to explain the task type to them, and they should take notes. Read out a description of the task which includes comments and details which are in addition to the main information. For example:

*The first stage of Part 2 of the Linguaskill Business Speaking test focuses on your ability to process spoken text and use the information you hear to speak for an extended period of time. You hear an audio extract, in natural spoken English, of a business meeting in which a manager is giving important information to a group of colleagues, such as a briefing or a presentation. Before the manager starts speaking, you hear what the main focus of the meeting is, for example a sales meeting or a meeting about introducing a new policy. There will be four key points which the manager wants the colleagues to take away from the meeting, but there will also be some information and comments which will not be part of the main message, so you’ll need to pay close attention. The recording will last around 90 seconds, which is about 250-300 words. You can take notes while you are listening. Your job is to tell a colleague who was unable to attend the meeting what they missed. You have 40 seconds to speak, and you need to include the four key points to score well on this part of the test, or a minimum of two points. You also need to organise your response clearly and use a suitable register.*

1. Give learners two or three minutes to compare their notes with a partner. Monitor to check whether the key points have been identified. In whole-group feedback, nominate one or two learners to read out their notes and check that all learners have recorded the key information: there are four main points to identify; they can take notes; they have 40 seconds to speak; they should include at least 2 of the four main points; what they say needs to be organised clearly and in a suitable register for speaking to a colleague. Invite questions from learners if they are unclear about the task requirements.
2. Discuss the process learners have just been through (i.e. identifying the main points in a longer speech) to elicit the word *summary* or *summarise*, which is the focus of Part 2.1 of the Linguaskill Business Speaking test. Explain that they will practise summarising information with a sample Linguaskill Business Speaking 2.1 task.
3. Write on the board: *All businesses want to …* and give learners 1 minute to write down as many ways as they can think of to finish that statement. Elicit responses from learners. If they don’t suggest it, ask questions to elicit *sell* as one of the answers. Ask learners to suggest ways that companies might try to increase sales. Elicit *sales conference* and ask learners what a sales conference is and why companies may choose to hold one.
4. Give learners a copy of **Student’s Worksheet 1** and ask them to focus on **Exercise** **1**. Tell them that it has an extract from a business meeting. Ask them to have a quick look at the text and identify the main topic [**KEY:** the background to the decision to hold a sales conference] and underline the words which mention this in the text. Now ask learners to read again and find information to add to the table below the text. They are looking for additional information in the text. This may be an example or reason connected to the main topic, or it may be something else. Learners check with a partner and then check with the whole class. In feedback, discuss what would happen if the extra information was removed, i.e. the main message would still be communicated, but with fewer words and in less time.
5. Now ask learners to look at the remainder of the text in **Exercise** **2** of **Student’s Worksheet 1** and work with a partner to identify the main and additional information for each of the three sections. In feedback, discuss how the extra information may be useful for the listener to know (i.e. the reasons for inviting potential clients to the conference) or it may just be small talk or asides (i.e. the comment at the end about the lack of details).
6. Tell learners to look at their notes in the left-hand column of the tables on **Student’s Worksheet 1** and nominate one learner to read out the notes. Tell learners that in the test they will start speaking after they hear the prompt question: *So, what was said in the meeting that I need to know?* Rather than just listing the key points, they should imagine they are talking to a colleague who missed the meeting, so the points need to be connected for natural speech, for example by using linking words and cohesive devices. Mentioning some of the additional information will also help to produce a more rounded summary, but learners need to be conscious of time. Too much detail on one point could mean they run out of time to cover all the points. Learners working at higher levels can demonstrate their understanding and language range by including more references to the additional information, including some of the asides.
7. Learners now have the opportunity to practise the task. Ask them to turn over their worksheets and listen to you. You read out the full task on **Student’s Worksheet 2** and learners all respond at the same time, using quiet voices. At the end of 40 seconds, tell learners to stop. Ask learners to reflect on their performance: What went well? What could you do better?

**Student’s Worksheet 1**

**Speaking Part 2.1 – identifying the main topic and extra information**

**Exercise 1**

**Look at the text below. It is part of a business meeting. What is the main topic of the text?**

OK everyone - so, to begin with I’d like to explain something of the background for the decision to hold this sales conference. The reality is that our sales so far this year have been disappointing. We have failed to meet targets for the last 2 quarters and things are not looking good. So, instead of accepting this situation, we have decided to do something about it. The (sales) conference will be a great opportunity to turn this around.

**Read the text again to find extra information about the main topic. Add all the information to the table below.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main topic** | **Extra information** |
|  |  |

**Exercise 2**

**The text below is from the same business meeting as above. For each section, underline the main topic, then add the main topic and the extra information to the table.**

It should go without saying that of course we’ll invite all our existing customers but also, we have a focus team devoted to identifying the very best potential new clients who will be given priority status at the conference – we’ll make them feel special, treat them to a nice meal, and see how many we can get on board!

With regards to timing, I know it will be very short notice and that puts you all under pressure but there is an opportunity that’s too good to miss – we are planning to hold the conference at the same time as our previously scheduled new product launch, that way there’ll be lots of goodies to give away – and new products to sell!

Also, while we’re at it, there’ll be an internal focus of the conference – for our sales teams. We are going to revise sales targets for the remainder of the year, and we’ll be announcing a whole new incentives package to motivate our colleagues in that department – Now, I must say that at this stage we are rather short on details so it’s very much a case of watch this space and all will be revealed – yea, as usual, I hear you mutter...

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main topic** | **Extra information** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**KEY**

**Exercise 1**

OK everyone - so, to begin with I’d like to explain something of the background for the decision to hold this sales conference. The reality is that our sales so far this year have been disappointing. We have failed to meet targets for the last 2 quarters and things are not looking good. So, instead of accepting this situation, we have decided to do something about it. The (sales) conference will be a great opportunity to turn this around.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main topic** | **Extra information** |
| Why the company has decided to hold a sales conference | Disappointing sales. / Things are not looking good. / The sales conference is an opportunity to improve this situation. (reasons)  We have failed to meet targets for the last 2 quarters. (example) |

**Exercise 2**

It should go without saying that of course we’ll invite all our existing customers but also, we have a focus team devoted to identifying the very best potential new clients who will be given priority status at the conference – we’ll make them feel special, treat them to a nice meal, and see how many we can get on board!

With regards to timing, I know it will be very short notice and that puts you all under pressure but there is an opportunity that’s too good to miss – we are planning to hold the conference at the same time as our previously scheduled new product launch, that way there’ll be lots of goodies to give away – and new products to sell!

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| --- | --- |
| **Main topic** | **Extra information** |
| Invitations to the conference | Existing customers / potential new clients (examples)  Priority status for potential new clients to try to get them on board (reason)  Focus team to identify potential new clients / Make potential clients feel special i.e. with a nice meal (other information) |
| Conference timing – at the same time as the product launch | More free gifts and more products to sell (reason)  It’s short notice (other information) |
| Internal focus of conference: incentives package for sales | Revised sales targets for the remainder of the year (reason)  Not many details at the moment (extra information) |

**Student’s Worksheet 2**

**Linguaskill Business Speaking Part 2.1**

**You will hear part of a meeting with a manager. Listen and then you will have 40 seconds to summarise the key points for a colleague who can’t attend today.**

**You can take notes while you listen. Please speak for all the time you have.**

**In the meeting, the manager is explaining the aims of a conference which you and your colleagues are going to organise.**

**Manager:** OK everyone - so, to begin with I’d like to explain something of the background for the decision to hold this sales conference. The reality is that our sales so far this year have been disappointing. We have failed to meet targets for the last 2 quarters and things are not looking good. So, instead of accepting this situation, we have decided to do something about it. The conference will be a great opportunity to turn this around. It should go without saying that of course we’ll invite all our existing customers but also, we have a focus team devoted to identifying the very best potential new clients who will be given priority status at the conference – we’ll make them feel special, treat them to a nice meal, and see how many we can get on board! With regards to timing, I know it will be very short notice and that puts you all under pressure but there is an opportunity that’s too good to miss – we are planning to hold the conference at the same time as our previously scheduled new product launch, that way there’ll be lots of goodies to give away – and new products to sell! Also, while we’re at it, there’ll be an internal focus of the conference – for our sales teams. We are going to revise sales targets for the remainder of the year, and we’ll be announcing a whole new incentives package to motivate our colleagues in that department – Now, I must say that at this stage we are rather short on details so it’s very much a case of watch this space and all will be revealed – yea, as usual, I hear you mutter...

**So, what was said in the meeting that I need to know?**