

Working with words

- 1 Complete the phrases in **bold** in the text with a suitable word from the list.

*benefits concept innovative practical
proposition technology*

The Cell Zone™ is an ¹ **idea** from Salemi Industries. The **key** ² _____ behind this sound-resistant cell phone booth is that it lets you make and receive cell phone calls without disturbing anyone. It's a ³ **solution** to the increasing problem of making calls in noisy public spaces where you need somewhere quiet and private to talk.

With its ergonomic cylindrical shape, the Cell Zone™ is a product where **cutting-edge** ⁴ _____ is combined with a stylish design. It's made from two steel cylinders fitted inside each other. The space between is filled with a soft, sound-absorbing material that acts as an additional sound barrier.

One of the **major** ⁵ _____ of the Cell Zone™ is that it can be located almost anywhere – airports, nightclubs, restaurants, libraries, sports stadiums, hotels, shopping malls or even on the street. The exterior of the booth can also be used for advertising, making it a **commercially-viable** ⁶ _____

- 2 Replace the verbs in *italics* in 1–9 with a phrasal verb from the list. Change the tense if necessary.

*get round bring about come up with take forward
pay off carry out bring down take up set up*

- I'm thinking of leaving the company to *start* my own business.
- We're over budget on this project – we need to do something to *reduce* the costs.
- That's a great idea – I knew you would *create* a plan to solve the problem.
- I'm really pleased the company has *responded* to the challenge of recruiting across the EU.
- We *performed* _____ a lot of tests before we launched this product.
- Concern about global warming has *caused* a number of changes to environmental guidelines.
- We put a lot of money into this idea – hopefully the investment will *have a good result* _____
- We *avoided* _____ the problem of relocating extra staff by recruiting locally.
- The first stage of the project went well, and we're now *developing* our plans for the next stage.

Business communication

- 1 Number the extracts from a presentation about a new product in the most appropriate order 1–10.
- First, I'll give you a brief overview of the product. _____
 - Basically, Minute Monitor consolidates a department's time schedules. It ... _____
 - Does that sound OK? _____
 - Now I'd like to move on to some of its features. I'd like to demonstrate this by using the tool itself.
 - Then I'll talk about its benefits. After that I'd like to show you some of its features. _____
 - Good. The greatest benefit of this is that all your staff's appointments are logged in one main diary so everyone can see who's in the office and when. _____
 - What I'd like to do in this presentation is demonstrate a new scheduling tool. 1
 - Have a look at the screen – with your current system you can't link everyone's calendars. However, with Minute Monitor, you'll all be able to access this central one. _____
 - Is everything clear so far? _____
 - OK. We call the product Minute Monitor, and it's a pretty simple concept.

- 2 Complete the rest of the presentation with the words and phrases from the list.

*this means the biggest potential benefit of
in the future the other major advantage whereas
at the moment is another great thing about*

Minute Monitor scheduling tool can be set up with your current system immediately, ¹ _____ similar tools on the market require much higher investment to make them compatible. ² _____ is that the program is very user friendly and doesn't require a lot of previous knowledge or training. A drop down user guide assists you every step of the way, which ³ _____ Minute Monitor.

⁴ _____, your system is able to schedule 25 employees' appointments, but with Minute Monitor you can increase this to 50.

⁵ _____ that project leaders and department heads can have a better overview of the activities taking place.

⁶ _____ Minute Monitor is that physical project scheduling can be delegated to admin staff ⁷ _____, giving the team leader more time on the project.

GRAMMAR REFERENCE

Use *can* or *(be) able to* to talk about ability. *Can* has only two forms: *can* (present) and *could* (past). Use *be able to* when an infinitive is needed.

Present ability

- 1 Use *can* to talk about general or present ability.
I can speak French, but I can't speak German.
Could you speak louder – I can't hear you.
- 2 *Is/are able to* is possible instead of *can* but *can* is more common.
Are you able to hear me at the back of the room?

Past ability

- 1 Use *could* to talk about general ability in the past and with verbs of perception (*feel, see, hear, etc.*).
Anna could speak four languages when she was six.
I could see that she was upset.
- 2 For a single specific action in the past (as opposed to general ability), to mean 'tried and succeeded', use *was able to*.
I was able to run fast enough to catch the bus.
I could run fast when I was young.
However, if the specific action is negative, use *couldn't* or *wasn't able to*.
I called customer services again and again, but I couldn't / wasn't able to get through.
- 3 To talk about a specific action in the past, especially when we succeed in doing something difficult after trying hard, use *managed to*. It can be used in the positive or negative.
They didn't want to give us the discount at first, but we managed to persuade them.
- 4 To refer to past ability with a connection to the present, use the present perfect form of *be able to*.
I have always been able to learn languages quite easily.

Future ability

Since *can* has no infinitive form, use *be able to* to talk about future ability

- 1 after *will* and *going to*
Perhaps Jane will be able to help you.
I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to do anything for you.
- 2 after modals
I may/might be able to help you.
- 3 after verbs like *would like to* and *want to*
I would like to be able to help you.

Language at work

- 1 Complete 1–10 with the correct form of *can* or *be able to*. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

- 1 Do you think you _____ come to the launch party next week?
- 2 We may _____ offer you a slightly better discount – I'll try my best.
- 3 So far I _____ (not) get in touch with her, but I'll keep trying.
- 4 As far as I _____ see, you have a valid complaint.
- 5 Do you know if Amanda _____ speak Spanish?
- 6 Do you think you will _____ finish on time, or will you need a few more days?
- 7 I'm afraid I _____ (not) come to the meeting next week.
- 8 We'll need an interpreter because I _____ (not) speak Chinese.
- 9 _____ (she) finish that report yet?
- 10 I _____ understand your worries, but I think we should take the risk.

- 2 Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 1 A Did the hotel have a good view of the mountains?
B Yes, I *could* / *was able to* see Mont Blanc from my room.
- 2 A When I got to the office, I was locked out.
B How *could you* / *were you able to* get in?
- 3 A So what happened when you missed the plane?
B Luckily I *could* / *was able to* take another flight.
- 4 A Did she complain to you, too?
B Yes she did, but I *couldn't* / *wasn't able to* understand what the problem was.
- 5 A If the safe was locked, how *could you* / *were you able to* get the documents out?
B One of the managers had a spare key.
- 6 A What did you think when you heard Jan had been promoted?
B Well, at first I *couldn't* / *wasn't able to* believe it.
- 7 A Did you renegotiate the contract?
B Yes, we *could* / *were able to* obtain a slightly better deal.
- 8 A *Could you* / *Were you able to* contact Katie?
B No, not yet, but I'll call again later.