Being positive in meetings

Lead-in



1 In pairs, read the blog post and discuss the questions.

What makes a great team? The answer is surprisingly simple. It's the feeling among team members that it's safe to ask questions, share ideas and even make mistakes without the risk of getting negative reactions from the rest of the team. So, the message is clear. If you want to build a great team, first make it a safe place to be great in.

1 What makes a great team? Do you agree?
2 What's your best team experience? Why was it so positive?
3 What can a team leader do to make a team 'a safe place to be great in'?

Listening

2 6.01 **Anatol is head of HR of a large insurance company. Listen to part of a meeting with his two senior recruiters and answer the questions.**

1 What recruitment problem is the company currently having?
2 What has happened as a result?
3 What do the team think is causing the problem? Tick (✓) the correct boxes.

a	the company's reputation ☐	d	insurance as a career ☐
b	the salaries ☐	e	employee benefits ☐
c	the size of the company ☐	f	the work culture ☐

3A 6.02 **Listen to the end of the meeting and match the suggestions (1–5) with the responses (a–e).**

1	Attend more careers fairs.	a	No, there's no point.
2	Give talks at universities.	b	We don't have the budget for that!
3	Produce a video promotion.	c	Yeah, but we're already doing that.
4	Offer training.	d	No, that's a complete waste of time.
5	Sponsor MBA studies.	e	We tried that before and it didn't work.

B **What suggestion does Anatol make at the end of the meeting? Why?**

4 **Anatol decided to text his team with some 'rules' for their next meeting. Read his text on the left. Can you work out what the missing words are?**

1 When someone shares an idea, can we please say at least one pos_____ thing about it before we say anything else?

2 Can we try to build on other people's ideas by considering the poss_____ – what else can we do to make the idea even better?

3 If we can see a pro_____ with an idea, let's not be negative. Let's ask how we could solve it.

5A 6.03 **Listen to part of the next meeting and number the suggestions in the correct order.**

a	Introduce mobile advertising. ☐	d	Offer 12-month internships. ☐
b	Put trainees into smaller project teams. ☐	e	Provide personal coaching. ☐
c	Create more of a fun work culture. ☐	f	Make job offers a lot faster. ☐

B **Compare the second meeting with the first. How have the 'rules' helped?**

C **Why is each suggestion in Exercise 5A a good idea? Listen again and take brief notes.**

a	_____	d	_____
b	_____	e	_____
c	_____	f	_____

D **What two possible problems are raised in the meeting? What solutions are suggested?**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Supporting, building on and questioning ideas

6A **Complete the following comments from the second meeting using the pairs of words in the box.**

do + can	doing + could	like + idea	might + idea	problem + about
subject + don't	think + idea	what + idea	wondering + manage	

1 I really ___*like*___ that ___*idea*___ !
2 And while we're on the _____ of learning the business, why _____ we provide personal coaching as well?
3 Of course, there *is* the _____ of cost. What can we do _____ that?
4 You know, that _____ not be such a bad _____ .
5 _____ a good _____ !
6 And _____ that means we _____ also make job offers a lot faster.
7 Actually, I _____ that's a great _____ !
8 And if we _____ that, perhaps we _____ also create a bit of friendly competition between teams.
9 I'm just _____ about the amount of reorganisation it'll need. How can we _____ that?

B **In pairs, label the expressions in Exercise 6A according to their function, using the following icons.**

Supporting an idea ✔ Building on an idea ↔ Questioning an idea ?

TASK

A **Work in groups of 3–6. You all work in the creative department of an advertising agency in Los Angeles. Today you received the following email from your Creative Director. Read the email.**

✉ <

Hi team,

As you know, this year is the agency's 50th anniversary and we in the creative department are organising the celebrations. Now, we have a budget of around $150,000, but, no, we won't be spending it all on one big staff party! In fact, I see this as an opportunity to build stronger relationships throughout the year with our key clients, suppliers, possible clients and, of course, each other!

The company has grown so much in the last 50 years, so we want to do something really special. I'd like to hold a discussion meeting at 2 p.m. on Thursday 3rd. Bring your best ideas!

Marc



B **Take a few minutes to prepare. Then hold the meeting.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Student C

Share as many ideas as you can in the meeting and remember to comment on other people's ideas, too. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Organise a quiz about the history of the company for staff and/or clients. Give prizes.
- Create a 30-minute reality TV show about a day in the life of the agency.
- Put an interactive timeline on the company website showing the company's history.

Student B

You're the note-taker at the meeting. Put all the ideas on a flipchart or a large piece a paper. You also have some ideas yourself:

- Create a special 50th anniversary company logo to put on our website and business cards.
- Organise a 'retro party' for our clients and staff – everyone wears clothes that were popular fifty years ago!
- Provide fifty $1,000 scholarships for students at the local art and design school.

Student A

Unfortunately, Marc can't attend the meeting, so you're the chair! But don't worry. All you have to do is:

1 Open the meeting:

'Good morning/afternoon, everyone. Thanks a lot for coming. Unfortunately, Marc can't be here, so I'm chairing the meeting today. As you know, we're here to discuss how we celebrate our 50th anniversary. So I'd like to hear all your ideas. This is a great publicity opportunity for us. Let's make the most of it'.

2 Explain the rules of the meeting:

Rules of the meeting

- Let's have lots of ideas – keep them coming!
- Please let everybody speak.
- Stay positive – don't be negative!
- If you make a negative comment, you'll have to put money in the negative comment box! 😊
- Try to build on other people's ideas.
- If you can see a problem with someone's idea, don't criticise it – ask a question.

3 You also have a few ideas yourself to share with the team:

- Set up a special 50th anniversary website linked to our home page.
- Organise some kind of creative event – perhaps a video exhibition of our best commercials.
- Give our clients personalised 'retro gifts' – gifts which were popular 50 years ago!

4 Close the meeting:

'OK, thanks a lot, everybody. Some great ideas there. Let's stop for today and meet again in a couple of weeks.'

Student E

Share as many ideas as you can in the meeting and remember to comment on other people's ideas, too. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Create a wall display in the office telling the story of the agency in words and pictures.
- Ask our design department to create a comic book with staff members as characters in the story.
- Give money to a charity that helps young people interested in the arts.

Student F

Share as many ideas as you can in the meeting and remember to comment on other people's ideas, too. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Organise sports events for staff, clients and suppliers.
- Ask our writers to create a sixty-second commercial for the agency.
- Create a history of the company video with the person who started the agency.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Making requests

Lead-in 1 Complete the email with one preposition in each gap. Then compare in pairs.

From: Jason Sparks, Team Leader
To: Product launch team
Re: Next steps for launch

Hi team,

Following the exciting news of our new products, I'm just writing [1]_____ let you know the next steps [2]_____ the product launch [3]_____ two months' time.

Unfortunately, the venue manager emailed yesterday, saying that one [4]_____ the rooms isn't available now. He suggested another room, but first we need to check it has everything we need. If possible, I'd like Ana [5]_____ meet him immediately and see it. Then, if we like it, we'll book it. If we are unhappy [6]_____ it, we will have to find another venue.

Only about 55 percent of guests have replied [7]_____ our invitation. Sarah, would you mind checking the guest list? Please contact everyone who has not replied and remind them. After that, we can inform the catering company of the final numbers.

Finally, we'll need a press release. Gemma and Franz are responsible [8]_____ that. Do you think I could have a copy [9]_____ my desk by the end [10]_____ the week?

Thank you for your hard work. The new schedule is attached.

Best,

Jason

2A Complete the phrases in the first column of the table using words and phrases from the email.

Making requests	Alternative wording
If [1]_____ Ana to meet ...	[5]_____ Ana meet ... ?
Sarah, [2]_____ checking the guest list?	Sarah, [6]_____ check the guest list?
[3]_____ contact everyone who hasn't replied.	[7]_____ contact everyone who hasn't replied ... ?
Do you [4]_____ have a copy ... ?	I'd be grateful [8]_____ a copy by the end of the week.

B Complete the alternative in the second column using the phrases in the box.

could can you if I could have would you

We use ***First***, ***Then/Next***, ***After that*** and ***Finally*** to introduce **instructions in order**.

First, *I'd like Ana to meet him immediately.*

Then/Next, *if we like it, we'll book it.*

After that, *we can inform the catering company of the final numbers.*

Finally, *we'll need a press release.*

We use ***First***, ***Then***, ***After that*** and ***In the end*** to introduce **past events in order**.

First, *we had a meeting and made our decision.*

Then *we informed all our staff.*

After that, *we invited staff to another meeting.*

In the end, *everything was agreed.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Making requests

Saying what you want done	Kate, could you (check the dates)? Could Liam (meet the client at the airport)? If possible, I'd like (to see the plans). Would you (contact the team)? Please (send me a copy of the report).
Saying when you want the action completed	I'd be grateful if you could send me (the data) by (Friday). Do you think I could have (a reply) by (Monday)?

Exercise 4. Complete the polite requests with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

1. Would you mind _____ me a coffee? (bring)
2. Could you _____ me your pen? (give)
3. Would you mind _____ a taxi for me? (call)
4. Could you _____ the door? (close)
5. Would you mind _____ me a glass of water? (get)
6. Could you _____ these bags for me? (carry)
7. Would you mind _____ your phones on silent? (put)
8. Would you mind _____ me with my homework? (help)

Exercise 5. Match each polite request to a suitable response.

1. Could you tell me when the train leaves?	a. Of course, do you take sugar?
2. Would you mind closing the window?	b. Not at all. They look heavy.
3. Could you bring me a coffee?	c. Sure, it leaves at 9:00 a.m.
4. Would you mind helping me with my bags?	d. Yes, I would. I'm hot.
5. Could you help me?	e. No problem. I'll slow down.
6. Would you mind speaking slowly?	f. Yes, what do you need?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A. Read the two dialogues and fill in the gaps with the words in the box.

chance	think	can	giving	sure	mind	sorry	not	could	like	problem	course

Dialogue 1

Nicole: Mark, would you (1) ..... sending those email attachments again?

Mark: Of (2) ..... not. I'll go and do it now.



Nicole: Thank you. See you later.

Mark: Oh no! Ben, are you busy?

Ben: No, not at the moment.

Mark: (3) ..... you help me?

Ben: Sure, no (4) ..... How can I help?

Mark: Nicole wants me to send those email attachments again and I can't find them anywhere.

Ben: I still have them. I'll email them to you now.

Mark: Thanks.



Dialogue 2

Nicole: Do you have a moment?

Mark: Yes, what can I do for you?

Nicole: Is there any (5) ..... you could work late tonight?

Mark: I'm (6) ..... I can't. I have a doctor's appointment after work.

Nicole: OK. What about on Friday? (7) ..... you work late then? I really need your help.

Mark: Yes, (8) ..... That's fine.

Nicole: Thanks very much. Oh, one more thing. Do you mind (9) ..... these keys to Jason?

Mark: No, (10) ..... at all. Actually Nicole, I also have a request.

Nicole: Really! What is it?

Mark: Do you (11) ..... you could give me a raise?

Nicole: I'd (12) ..... to, but you've only been working here a month. Ask me again in three months.

Mark: OK. Thanks.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C. Identify the phrases used to make requests in the two dialogues and write them in the table below. Then, write in the phrases used to accept or decline each request.

Making requests	Accepting requests	Declining requests

D. Use the phrases from the table to write a request for each prompt below.

Example:

Ask someone to write down their name and address.

Could you write down your name and address, please?

1. Ask someone to open the door for you.

.....

2. Ask someone to drive you to the airport.

.....

3. Ask someone to make you a cup of coffee.

.....

4. Ask someone to change the TV channel for you.

.....

5. Ask someone to tell you the time.

.....

6. Ask someone to lend you something.

.....

Now, write a reply to each request.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

These are your situations. Ask a partner to help you with the following situations.

1. I need to go to the bank, but I don't have a car.
2. I have to clean my room, but I'm tired.
3. I have to wash my car.
4. I need to pass math exam, but I'm not good at math.
5. I have to pick up my friend from the airport, but I have an emergency so I can't go.
6. I feel sick and I need to go to the hospital.
7. I am going to the grocery store, do you need anything?
8. I am going to the convenience store, do you need anything?
9. I forgot my wallet and I don't have any money for lunch.
10. I have to walk my dog, but I don't have time.

E. Write four requests of your own and practice making, accepting and declining the requests with a partner.

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....

F. The following short dialogues are impolite. Rewrite the requests and responses to make them more polite.

1. A: Lend me 20 dollars until tomorrow. A: .....
   B: No. B: .....
2. A: Tell me the way to the bus station. A: .....
   B: No. B: .....
3. A: Meet me tomorrow at 10 a.m. A: .....
   B: Alright. B: .....
4. A: Drive me to the train station. A: .....
   B: No. B: .....
5. A: Bring me the bill. A: .....
   B: OK. B: .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

LIVEWORKSHEETS