

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*.

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.