

ESL WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION WORKSHEET

Topic: Navigating Delays, Client Accountability & Managing Expectations

Target Level: B1 (Intermediate) | Grammar: *Be Supposed To* | Vocab: Workplace Idioms

PART 1: READING CONTEXT & DIALOGUE — THE GRAND GALA EMERGENCY

Context: Chloe (Senior Event Planner) and Liam (Catering Manager) are organizing the grand opening gala for a luxury hotel. Read their dialogue below and pay attention to the highlighted target expressions and the grammar structure *be supposed to*.

Chloe: Hey Liam, do you have two minutes? I wanted to **touch base** about tonight's banquet menu. Weren't the printed menus **supposed to arrive** from the printer by 10:00 AM?

Liam: Oh no, Chloe. I completely **dropped the ball** on confirming the delivery driver. I spent my whole morning **putting out fires** in the main kitchen because the head chef was missing key ingredients, and it completely slipped my mind!

Chloe: Okay, let's take a breath. The VIP guests **are supposed to arrive** at 6:00 PM, so we still have a little room to fix this. Are the final dietary restrictions uploaded to the system?

Liam: The server list is ready, but I don't have the **bandwidth** to re-check all the allergen requests before my 1:00 PM staff briefing.

Chloe: Alright, we need to **buy some time** with the printing company. I'll give their manager a quick **heads up** right now to see if they can rush an express delivery.

Liam: That would be amazing. Thanks for helping me **smooth things over** with management. I definitely **was supposed to double-check** the delivery order yesterday afternoon!



Comprehension Questions: Answer in complete sentences based on the text.

1. What was supposed to happen at 10:00 AM according to Chloe?

2. Why did Liam *drop the ball* on confirming the menu delivery order?

3. Why can't Liam double-check the allergen requests before 1:00 PM?

4. How does Chloe plan to *buy some time* and resolve the menu issue?

PART 2: TARGET VOCABULARY & WORKPLACE EXPRESSIONS

WORD BANK: Target Workplace Expressions

- **drop the ball** (make a mistake / fail a task)
- **putting out fires** (handling urgent unexpected problems)
- **buy some time** (delay to gain more time)
- **heads up** (advance warning / alert)
- **smooth things over** (minimize a problem / restore good relations)
- **touch base** (briefly check in)
- **bandwidth** (mental / time capacity to do work)

Fill-in-the-Blank Exercise: Complete each sentence using the correct idiom from the Word Bank.

1. I don't have the mental _____ to start a new project until I finish this monthly audit.
2. Please give the client a quick _____ that the shipment will arrive 20 minutes late.
3. We need to _____ with the team before the presentation tomorrow morning.
4. The manager had to step in and _____ after the customer received the wrong order.
5. I'm sorry I _____ on emailing you the venue contract; it was a crazy week.
6. Instead of working on my planned tasks, I spent all day _____ with urgent customer complaints.
7. We can ask for a two-day extension on the draft to _____ while we finalize the figures.

