

# Unit Three

## Handling Clients

### *Note on the topic*

你们都遇到过这样的问题：那就是让你如同生活在地狱里的客户们！他们总是心急火燎地让你交作品，怀疑你的一切合理化建议。他们一来电话，一进你的办公室，一给你发邮件，你就感觉头痛，因为你知道麻烦又来了！这一章里就让我们一起来探讨一下如何跟客户保持良好的合作关系，如何正确对待和处理客户麻烦的要求，如何让外包双方都能愉快地完成各自的工作！

### Part One Reading

#### I . Before you read

##### **A. Class Activity:** “*Let me tell you what I can do !*”

- Purpose: To illustrate the importance of telling people what you can do but not what you can't.
- Goal: To help participants think creatively about how they can avoid saying no.
- Direction: The whole class could be divided into group of 6. Each group please makes the members stand in a circle. Tell each of them that they will ask another member of the class for something that he or she cannot say yes to. That person must then come up with an appropriate response. When that round is complete, the responder then makes a request of someone else.

For example:

*Member 1 to member 2: “I want rolled Sushi (寿司) for lunch.”*

*Member 2 to member 1: “The cafeteria has a variety of options. But I've never found Sushi on the menu. They do have wonderful fried rice with seafood. How about that?”*

*Member 1: “Okay, that sounds nice ! ”*

Member 2 to member 3: “...”

- Remember: Try to make your request wired and funny. When you respond to a request, try to be creative and have fun!

**B. Discuss within small groups about The Important Factors that will make a good relationship between the outsourcer and the contractor. Make a list of your points.**

e. g. be professional, good communication...

**C. Skim the text and answer or discuss the following questions:**

1) How many suggestions are provided by the writer in order to make clients happy? What are they?

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2) Without looking at the detailed explanation of each suggestion, please briefly state your understanding of each suggestion.

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## II. Text Reading

### Keys To Successful Outsourcing: How To Make Your Clients Happy

Ever feel like your outsourcing partner just doesn't “get” you, your product or your business? Having worked with many different outsourcers across a few different industries, I have developed a good sense of what makes a good partner. Here are a few things I wish all outsourcers understood about how to make clients happy.

#### 1. Do Your Homework

While your client wants you to respond quickly, nothing is more frustrating than receiving work that wasn't wanted in the first place. Take some time to understand the product and the services your client wants from you. Investing a day up front will save days of grief later. Go through the package of work and ask good questions, especially if there is anything that wasn't expected. Hold a kick-off meeting with your client. Find out what is important to your client and the product. Ask for and analyze previous examples and share what you learned, just to make sure you are on the same page. If there are no previous examples, create one from the work you have been asked to do and establish that as the benchmark.

#### 2. Check Your Assumptions

This is particularly important during contract negotiation because no one likes hearing “it's not in the contract” after it has been signed. Even throughout the project, communicate often and check your assumptions as you go. It's better to spend a few minutes checking in than having to redo a bunch of work because the assumption was wrong. Work with your client to set up a schedule for regular communications to make sure you talk more than just when “things come up”.

### 3. Help Us Help You

Good customer service practices tell you to adapt to whatever your customer wants. While it is important to be flexible and adapt, there naturally has to be a limit to still be able to work effectively. As an outsourcing partner, you have the benefit of working with many different clients and learning what works or doesn't work for your team. Understand what are your best practices and don't be afraid to suggest them to your clients. As long as you use templates and practices as a starting point, rather than a required form of bureaucracy, there is a good chance we may appreciate the suggestion. If you need anything from your client to work better, ask for it. Do not assume that we know what you need.

### 4. Be Transparent And Ask For The Same

While you never want your clients to know about all your dirty laundry, you are kidding yourself if you think that your client can't see when something is wrong. We can tell if you are balancing multiple projects, having problems with the work or experiencing staffing problems. May as well be professional, let your client know about your challenges, what you are doing about it and if there is anything you need from your client to help you succeed. On the same token, you also know when your client is stressed, unhappy or less responsive than usual. Ask if they can share what is going on and find out if there is anything you can do to help. Knowing what is happening on your client's side will also help you adapt your services to their needs.

### 5. Learn The Language

Every company, every industry uses particular words, acronyms and phrases. Sometimes one word or phrase means different things to different people. Learn your client's lingo and be sure to explain any particular words or phrases you use. If you are working with clients in other countries, it is best to use plain, simple English (or your common working language). Avoid slang and colloquialisms. Otherwise you will spend all your time, just trying to figure out what everyone is talking about.

(638 Words)

## III. Words to Note

invest	<i>v.</i>	投资, 花费
kick-off	<i>n.</i>	开始, 启动
analyze	<i>v.</i>	分析
previous	<i>a.</i>	之前的
benchmark	<i>n.</i>	基准点
negotiation	<i>n.</i>	协商
assumption	<i>n.</i>	假设, 设想
flexible	<i>a.</i>	灵活的, 可协调的

续表

template	<i>n.</i>	模式, 模版
bureaucracy	<i>n.</i>	官僚机构
acronym	<i>n.</i>	首字母缩略词
lingo	<i>n.</i>	术语
plain	<i>a.</i>	清晰的, 明白的
slang	<i>n.</i>	俚语
colloquialism	<i>n.</i>	俗语, 口语

#### IV. Text Understanding

*Read the text and answer the following questions.*

1) How to “do your homework” before starting the project?

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2) Is it necessary to adapt to whatever your client wants? Why or why not?

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3) What does “be transparent” mean?

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4) What shall we pay special attention to when communicating with clients from another country?

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5) Which of the suggestions do you think is the most important one? Why?

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#### V. Vocabulary Building

*A. Choose an appropriate word in the box to complete the sentences below. Change the form when necessary.*

negotiation	assumption	lingo	previous
invest	analyze	flexible	template

1) Most companies offer \_\_\_\_\_ working so that employees can choose from a variety of methods that fit them best.

2) Economics is easy after you learn the \_\_\_\_\_.

3) Do you have any \_\_\_\_\_ experience of this type of work?

4) The \_\_\_\_\_ with the company had reached a crucial stage.

5) Her childhood became a \_\_\_\_\_ for how she brought up her own children.

6) Oliver made a fortune by \_\_\_\_\_ in antique furniture.

- 7) My calculations were based on the \_\_\_\_\_ that house prices would remain steady.  
 8) You need to sit down and \_\_\_\_\_ why you feel so upset.

**B. Understand the idioms—Please write down your explanations of the following idiomatic expressions in the text.**

- 1) Kick-off meeting: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2) on the same page: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3) dirty laundry: \_\_\_\_\_  
 4) on the same token: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Learn more idioms—Try this fun quiz to check your understanding of English idioms.**

- 1) A jack of all trades.

For which job would a jack of all trades be best suited?

- a) A dealer in a casino.  
 b) A caretaker in a school.  
 c) A teller in a bank.

- 2) Back to the drawing board.

We started an online business, but after a while it was back to the drawing board because

- a) we couldn't make a profit.  
 b) we made a lot of money.  
 c) we wanted to improve our drawing.

- 3) Dig up dirt.

A journalist is digging up dirt on a politician in order to

- a) help the politician's campaign.  
 b) damage the politician's image.  
 c) increase the politician's popularity.

- 4) Fly off the handle.

We were having dinner in a restaurant last night when this guy at the next table flew off the handle because

- a) the food was so delicious.  
 b) the waiter was so handsome.  
 c) the waiter brought the wrong thing.

- 5) Have a soft spot for.

You can see that Mike's got a soft spot for dogs. Whenever he sees one, he

- a) kicks it.  
 b) pats it on the head.  
 c) keeps away from it.

- 6) Leave no stone unturned.

Henry said he'd leave no stone unturned in his search for a woman to marry. He will

- a) look for women under stones.
  - b) try everything to find a wife.
  - c) marry any woman who accepts him.
- 7) Ring a bell.

When I heard the poem, some of the lines rang a bell and

- a) some of them beat a drum.
  - b) sounded very beautiful.
  - c) I thought I'd heard it somewhere before.
- 8) Take the plunge.

Monique has decided to take the plunge and

- a) keep her job for a while.
  - b) start up her own business.
  - c) put all her money in the bank.
- 9) Up in the air.

We'll have to leave the list of guests we're inviting to our wedding up in the air until we know

- a) how many we can invite.
  - b) what the weather will be like.
  - c) if any are of them are afraid of heights.
- 10) You could have knocked me over with a feather.

You could have knocked me over with a feather when I heard that

- a) we were having sandwiches for lunch.
- b) the electricity bill had arrived.
- c) I had won a million dollars in the lottery.

**D. Please translate the following paragraph into Chinese.**

Good customer service practices tell you to adapt to whatever your customer wants. While it is important to be flexible and adapt, there naturally has to be a limit to still be able to work effectively. As an outsourcing partner, you have the benefit of working with many different clients and learning what works or doesn't work for your team. Understand what are your best practices and don't be afraid to suggest them to your clients. As long as you use templates and practices as a starting point, rather than a required form of bureaucracy, there is a good chance we may appreciate the suggestion. If you need anything from your client to work better, ask for it. Do not assume that we know what you need.

## VI. Further Reading

### Four Brilliant Ways to Handle Client Changes You Don't Want to Make

Let's say you've spent hours on designing a website mockup for a new client, only to have a huge list of changes sent back that will for sure ruin your work. Have you ever dealt with a client situation like this? It could be a simple color change that doesn't go well together, or they may want to have you add an audio clip that automatically plays over their website. I've dealt with some situations like that... it was not fun!



**Here's a specific situation I remember having with a past client:**

"Can you move the website's navigation from the top and put it vertically on the right side? I spent a great deal of time investigating website design and did an informal presentation of this. Everyone liked the buttons on the right."

They spent a great deal of time *investigating* website design?!

This was a real "client from hell" situation where every email from them made me cringe. They had no real training in graphic design, and I'm guessing they "investigated" in all the wrong places due to the revisions they would ask for. Unfortunately you might find yourself in one of these sticky client situations, and you'll need to know how to handle it. The solutions below can give you an idea of how to handle a situation like this, but may be easier read than done—seeing that every situation is unique.

#### 1. Explain your solution and educate the client

Stay calm, stay positive and don't take their feedback personally. Use this as a chance to educate the client. Explain to the client why their changes might not be best, and what your solution (as the professional) is for the situation. Always try to respond with confidence and show them that you're reliable.

If there's a problem that arises, be sure that your response is always solution-oriented (and not defensive). You don't want to complicate the situation and client relationship. It's more than likely that the client will understand, value your professional input and go with what you think is best. BUT what happens when you're dealing with a stubborn client? In this case, you'll need to take your input a bit further...

#### 2. Give factual data that proves your solution is best

If your client is a hardheaded person then it might be best to backup your input with some proof that shows your solution is best. The easiest way to do this would be to mock it up. Actually show the client why your solution is best.

Another way to sway their thoughts would be to provide reputable sources, i. e. other websites with a usable layout, a print design with proper white space, etc. Tell them to spend a few minutes using/reading those sources. This might help educate them in your solution.

Again, whatever you do, try not to argue or respond defensively if the client still stands by their decision. Remember that it's ultimately their project, and you want them to be happy with the final result.

### **3. Do your best to work with the changes**

Not every project you take on will be portfolio worthy (it's the honest truth), and sometimes you just have to work with the client's ideas to please them. If they're happy—you're happy.

**Due to the client's stubbornness, if the final result is completely horrifying, you might want to do a couple of things:**

As with every client project, keep a copy of all dialog exchanged between you and them. This way, if the client gets any complaints about how terrible their website's usability is or how hard it is to read their copy, you have something to use as a backstop.

The second thing that you might want to do is pull your name or brand from the project (like a website footer). If you don't enjoy the project, then you can choose not to take credit for it.

Again, I can't stress how important it is that you keep your communication with the client professional. You don't want to burn any bridges, even if you don't plan on working with them in the future.

### **4. Let go or pass on the project**

This solution is a bit drastic, but if you are completely against the client's changes, then you have every right to back out.

Be completely honest when discussing this with the client. Whether you don't believe in the work they're having you produce or if you can't seem to be apart of a project that goes against everything, you're trying to make better in your field of work.

Again, try to respond in a solution-oriented manner. Give them your best input and they can move forward with their project taking your advice or not.

**Or...**

Recommend the project to someone else willing to take it on. (It might be smart to give that person a heads up before they waste any time as you might have.)

(836 Words)

#### ***A. Please fill in the blanks with an appropriate word or expression from the text.***

Sometimes, when the client wants to change the colors that don't \_\_\_\_\_ together or add an \_\_\_\_\_ plays over the website, you might feel that your design has been \_\_\_\_\_. Whenever you find yourself in a \_\_\_\_\_ client situation, you need to \_\_\_\_\_ it. First, you need to stay \_\_\_\_\_ and always try to respond with \_\_\_\_\_. Try



to explain to your client that your solution is more \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_ attitude but not defensive. If the client is too \_\_\_\_\_, keep a copy of \_\_\_\_\_ between you, pull your name or \_\_\_\_\_ from the project, and keep \_\_\_\_\_ professionally. If you are completely against the changes, be \_\_\_\_\_ with your client or you could recommend the project to someone else who wants to \_\_\_\_\_ the job.

**B. Match the following English expressions with the Chinese Explanations.**

Column A	Column B
1. Website mockup	a. 平面设计
2. Audio clip	b. 提醒
3. Graphic design	c. 音频
4. Solution-oriented	d. 反对
5. Hardheaded	e. 邀功
6. Backstop	f. 网站模型
7. Take credit	g. 推出
8. Back out	h. 为了解决问题的
9. Go against	i. 支撑
10. Heads up	j. 顽固的

## Cultural Notes

### WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS?

There are definitely effective and ineffective communication methods for dealing with complaints. A base level rule is that “personal is better”. If it is at all possible, you are better to resolve a complaint by talking to the person face to face. The worst complaint resolution processes are the dehumanising, take a number, “we will get to you when we have time” approach.

It should be clear that workers must be able to demonstrate some essential skills before being given any role in a complaint resolution process.

Those essential skills should include the ability to:

- let the customer know they have your full attention.
- listen and develop a clear understanding of what the complaint is about.
- acknowledge the problem and be empathetic and calm to help alleviate the customer's stress.
- take notes without filtering or interpreting the information.
- ask questions to clarify or expand knowledge of the complaint.

- give the customer opportunities to ask questions. Tell the customer you want to help improve the situation. Ask how they would like to proceed.
- explain how the complaint procedure works.
- ensure the customer is comfortable with the process. Decide what can be done to fix the problem and tell them.
- contact the customer within an agreed time-frame to ensure the problem was resolved.
- maintain a courteous and professional approach.

## Part Two Writing

### Writing Skills: How to write a complaint letter?

Writing a letter of complaint is something most people have to do at some point in their lives. Whether you're dissatisfied with a company's product or service, it is usually possible to resolve the issue in a mutually beneficial way through a firm but polite letter of complaint. Writing a complaint letter should not be complicated or scary—all you need to do is clearly state the facts and politely request a resolution.

#### *How to Write a Complaint Letter?*

- Include your name, address, and home and work phone numbers.
- Type your letter if possible. If it is handwritten, make sure it is neat and easy to read.
- Make your letter brief and to the point. Include all important facts about your purchase, including the date and place where you made the purchase and any information you can give about the product or service such as serial or model numbers or specific type of service.
- State exactly what you want done about the problem and how long you are willing to wait to get it resolved. Be reasonable.
- Include all documents regarding your problem. Be sure to send COPIES, not originals.
- Avoid writing an angry, sarcastic, or threatening letter. The person reading your letter probably was not responsible for your problem but may be very helpful in resolving it.
- Keep a copy of the letter for your records.

### I . Template of Complaint Letter

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Contact Person ( if available)

\_\_\_\_\_ Title ( if available)

\_\_\_\_\_ Company Name

Consumer Complaint Division ( if you have no contact person)

\_\_\_\_\_ Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ( Contact Person ) :

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ ( account number, if applicable )

On \_\_\_\_\_ ( date ), I \_\_\_\_\_ ( bought, leased, rented, or had repaired ) a  
\_\_\_\_\_ ( name of the product, with serial or model number or service performed ) at  
\_\_\_\_\_ ( location and other important details of the transaction ).

Unfortunately, your product ( or service ) has not performed well ( or the service was inadequate ) because \_\_\_\_\_ ( state the problem ). I am disappointed because \_\_\_\_\_ ( explain the problem: for example, the product does not work properly, the service was not performed correctly, I was billed the wrong amount, something was not disclosed clearly or was misrepresented, etc. ).

To resolve the problem, I would appreciate it if you could \_\_\_\_\_ ( state the specific action you want—money back, charge card credit, repair, exchange, etc. ). Enclosed are copies of my records ( include copies of receipts, guarantees, warranties, canceled checks, contracts, model and serial numbers, and any other documents ).

I look forward to your reply and a resolution to my problem, and will wait until \_\_\_\_\_ ( set a time limit ) before seeking help from a consumer protection agency or the Better Business Bureau. Please contact me at the above address or by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ ( home and/or office numbers with area code ).

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ Your name ? Enclosure( s )

cc: ( reference to whom you are sending a copy of this letter , if anyone )

## II. Sample Letter

56 Disgruntled Street  
Somewhere Unhappy  
1AM MAD

Customer Service Manager  
That Awful Company Somewhere Awful UR BAD  
June 15, 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing today to complain of the poor service I received from your company on June 12, 2008. I was visited by a representative of That Awful Company, Mr. Madman, at my home on that day.

Mr. Madman was one hour late for his appointment and offered nothing by way of apology when he arrived at noon. Your representative did not remove his muddy shoes upon entering my house, and consequently left a trail of dirt in the hallway. Mr. Madman then proceeded to present a range of products to me that I had specifically told his assistant by telephone I was not interested in. I repeatedly tried to ask your representative about the products that were of interest to me, but he refused to deal with my questions. We ended our meeting after 25 minutes without either of us having accomplished anything.

I am most annoyed that I wasted a morning (and half a day's vacation) waiting for Mr. Madman to show up. My impression of That Awful Company has been tarnished, and I am now concerned about how my existing business is being managed by your firm. Furthermore, Mr. Madman's inability to remove his muddy shoes has meant that I have had to engage the services, and incur the expense, of a professional carpet cleaner.

I trust this is not the way That Awful Company wishes to conduct business with valued customers—I have been with you since the company was founded and have never encountered such treatment before. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss matters further and to learn of how you propose to prevent a similar situation from recurring. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

*V. Angry*

V. Angry

### III. Writing Task

You have bought a new mobile phone and in a few days after purchasing it has stopped working. You spoke to the company representative one week ago but the phone has still not been repaired.

Write a letter to the company. In your letter:

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain the situation.
- Say what action you would like to company to take.

## Part Three Case Study

### Internet Service Provider Issues

When something goes wrong with an Internet service provider, it can be a tricky business to rectify however determined you are, as this case study demonstrates.

### **1. Setting Up Broadband Internet**

The only downside of Sheila's new flat was that there was no broadband internet connection. As a translator working from home, it was imperative that this was installed set up as soon as possible.

She promptly set up a contract with a local internet service provider. After duly filling in the online form, she was requested to send payment details and a signed confirmation by fax. Once this had been received Sheila was told she could expect to receive her internet within five working days. She waited with great anticipation.

However, instead of receiving the equipment to set up the broadband internet, she received an email informing her that a connection was unavailable at her place of residence.

### **2. No Account To Cancel**

Why hadn't she been told this to begin with? Infuriated, not least by the impersonal template email she received after all the time and effort wasted, she wasted no further time in responding to confirm cancellation of the contract.

Once this was confirmed, she could then look for a new provider. However, the response to this was mystifying—she was told she had no account to cancel. Refusing to accept this perplexing response, she phoned up the company only to be met with the same answer—there was no record of her holding an account.

### **3. Erroneous Payments**

It was tempting to accept the scenario that none of this debacle had actually happened but she was unconvinced. Her suspicions were vindicated when checking her bank account a couple of weeks later, she discovered that the internet service provider had taken payment out of her bank for the supposedly non-existent account.

In response, she immediately phoned up the company to demand an explanation. Frustratingly, she was unable to speak to the company representative from the previous call and had to relate the whole situation to a new call centre operator.

The response she was given was that they couldn't do anything without proof of the erroneous account debit. So Sheila sent a fax confirming the transfer, but unfortunately then failed to receive a response in return, and was forced once again to chase up the complaint.

### **4. Address Error**

This time, after relating the case to another new call centre representative, she was told that the transfer was correct because their records showed that not only had the internet equipment been sent out to Sheila several weeks prior, but it had been received and the broadband duly connected up. Incensed, Sheila insisted that she had never received any equipment and was therefore far from connected.

However, when she asked to confirm the address, to her horror, she discovered that it was a completely different location. It would seem the company had got her payment account details confused with a completely different address, the occupants of which would now be receiving

broadband internet at her expense.

The hard work in confirming this administrative error was left to Sheila, who was forced to send a further fax detailing how her home address was different to that receiving an internet connection. Her determined efforts finally paid off when the internet company conceded their error and finally confirmed the cancellation of her account, before refunding the money taken from her bank account in error.

Through her persistent efforts, Sheila had solved the problem. But this case highlights how, even if you're as dogged as she was, it can still be very difficult to resolve certain problems. As the company was found to be entirely in the wrong, Sheila had every right to seek compensation for her time, effort and inconvenience, but, exhausted from her battle for resolution, she decided to let the matter rest.

## Group Discussion

Read Sheila's case carefully and discuss the following questions with your group members:

- 1) What is the biggest frustration Sheila's facing in her campaign? Why?
- 2) If you were Sheila, how would you deal with this problem?
- 3) If you were the manager of the help center, what would you do to improve the efficiency of handling clients' problems?
- 4) In Culture Notes part, you've got some skills of processing customer's complains. If you were one of the call centre representatives who received Sheila's call, what actions should you take to practice those skills? Fill in the table below to describe your action for each of the skills:

Skills	Your Actions/Responses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Let the customer know they have your full attention.</li> <li>2) Listen and develop a clear understanding of what the complaint is about.</li> <li>3) Acknowledge the problem and be empathetic and calm to help alleviate the customer's stress.</li> <li>4) Take notes without filtering or interpreting the information.</li> <li>5) Ask questions to clarify or expand knowledge of the complaint.</li> <li>6) Give the customer opportunities to ask questions. Tell the customer you want to help improve the situation.</li> <li>7) Ask how they would like to proceed.</li> <li>8) Explain how the complaint procedure works.</li> <li>9) Ensure the customer is comfortable with the process. Decide what can be done to fix the problem and tell them.</li> <li>10) Contact the customer within an agreed time-frame to ensure the problem was resolved.</li> <li>11) Maintain a courteous and professional approach.</li> </ol>	

# Unit Four

## Working Together

### *Note on the topic*

团队合作是指一群有能力、有信念的人在特定的团队中,为了一个共同的目标相互支持合作奋斗的过程。它可以调动团队成员的所有资源和才智,并且会自动地驱除所有不和谐和不公正现象,同时会给予那些诚心、大公无私的奉献者适当的回报。自觉自愿的团队合作会产生一股强大而且持久的力量。

所谓团队精神,简单来说就是大局意识、协作精神和服务精神的集中体现。团队精神的基础是尊重个人的兴趣和成就。核心是协同合作,最高境界是全体成员的向心力、凝聚力,反映的是个体利益和整体利益的统一,并进而保证组织的高效率运转。团队精神的形成并不要求团队成员牺牲自我,相反,挥洒个性、表现特长保证了成员共同完成任务目标,而明确的协作意愿和协作方式则产生了真正的内心动力。团队精神是组织文化的一部分,良好的管理可以通过合适的组织形态将每个人安排至合适的岗位,充分发挥集体的潜能。如果没有正确的管理文化,没有良好的从业心态和奉献精神,就不会有团队精神。

## Part One Reading

### I. Before you read

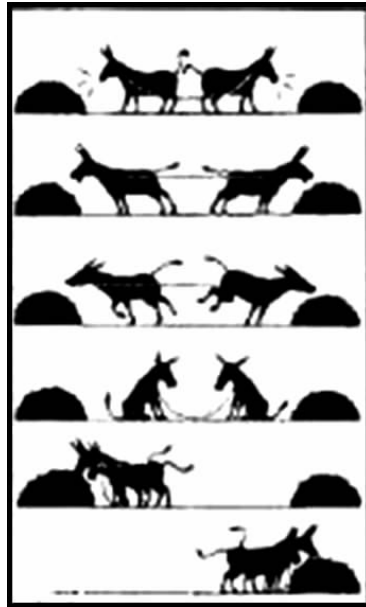
#### **A. Discuss the following questions in a group.**

- 1) What is the common theme among those pictures?
- 2) True or false.

Some people say “If you want go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”. Do you agree with the saying? And give your reasons.

#### **B. Skim the text and answer the following questions:**

- 1) Why is it hard to find work places exemplifying team work?
- 2) What are the powerful actions that can make teamwork happen?
- 3) How can we put team building into every single day?



## II . Text Reading

### How to Build a Teamwork Culture

**Fostering** teamwork is creating a work culture that values **collaboration**. In a teamwork environment, people understand and believe that thinking, planning, decisions and actions are better when done cooperatively. People recognize, and even assimilate, the belief that “none of us is as good as all of us.”

It's hard to find work places that **exemplify** teamwork. In America, our institutions such as schools, our family structures, and our pastimes emphasize winning, being the best, and coming out on top. Workers are rarely raised in environments that emphasize true teamwork and collaboration.

Organizations are working on valuing diverse people, ideas, backgrounds, and experiences. We have miles to go before valuing teams and teamwork will be the norm.

You can, however, create a teamwork culture by doing just a few things right. Admittedly, they're hard things, but with commitment and appreciation for the value, you can create an overall sense of teamwork in your organization.



To make teamwork happen, these powerful actions must occur.

Executive leaders communicate the clear expectation that teamwork and collaboration are expected. No one completely owns a work area or process all by himself. People who own work processes and positions are open and receptive to ideas and input from others on the team.

Executives model teamwork in their interaction with each other and the rest of the organization. They maintain teamwork even when things are going wrong and the temptation is to slip back into former team unfriendly behavior.

The organization members talk about and identify the value of a teamwork culture. If values are formally written and shared, teamwork is one of the key five or six.

Teamwork is rewarded and recognized. The lone ranger, even if she is an excellent producer, is valued less than the person who achieves results with others in teamwork. Compensation, bonuses, and rewards depend on collaborative practices as much as individual contribution and achievement.

Important stories and **folklore** that people discuss within the company emphasize teamwork. People who “do well” and are promoted within the company are team players.

The performance management system places emphasis and value on teamwork. Often 360 degree feedback is integrated within the system.

Do you immediately picture your group off at a **resort** playing games or hanging from ropes when you think of team building? Traditionally, many organizations approached team building this way. Then, they wondered why that wonderful sense of teamwork, experienced at the **retreat** or seminar, failed to impact long term beliefs and actions back at work.

I'm not averse to retreats, planning sessions, seminars and team building activities—in fact I lead them—but they have to be part of a larger teamwork effort. You will not build teamwork by “retreating” as a group for a couple of days each year. Think of team building as something you do every single day.

Form teams to solve real work issues and to improve real work processes. Provide training in systematic methods so the team expends its energy on the project, not on figuring out how to work together as a team to approach it.

Hold department meetings to review projects and progress, to obtain broad input, and to coordinate shared work processes. If team members are not getting along, examine the work processes they mutually own. The problem is not usually the personalities of the team members. It's the fact that the team members often haven't agreed on how they will deliver a product or a service or the steps required to get something done.

Build fun and shared occasions into the organization's agenda. Hold pot luck lunches; take the team to a sporting event. Sponsor dinners at a local restaurant. Go hiking or to an **amusement** park. Hold a monthly company meeting. Sponsor sports teams and encourage cheering team fans.

Use ice breakers and teamwork exercises at meetings. I worked with an organization that

held a weekly staff meeting. Participants took turns bringing a “fun” ice breaker to the meeting. These activities were limited to ten minutes, but they helped participants laugh together and get to know each other—a small investment in a big time sense of team.

Celebrate team successes publicly. Buy everyone the same t-shirt or hat. Put team member names in a drawing for company **merchandise** and gift certificates. You are limited in teamwork only by your imagination.

Take care of the hard issues above and do the types of teamwork activities listed here. You'll be amazed at the progress you will make in creating a teamwork culture, a culture that enables individuals to contribute more than they ever thought possible—together.

(784 words)

### III. Words to Note

foster	<i>v.</i>	培养
collaboration	<i>n.</i>	合作
exemplify	<i>v.</i>	举例说明
folklore	<i>n.</i>	民间传说, 民俗
resort	<i>n.</i>	旅游胜地
retreat	<i>n.</i>	休息寓所
amusement	<i>n.</i>	娱乐
merchandise	<i>n.</i>	商品, 货物

### IV. Text Understanding

*Read the text and answer the following questions.*

1) What do people understand and believe in a team work environment?

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2) Why it is hard to find a place that exemplifies teamwork?

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3) What are organizations working on valuing?

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4) What is the traditional approach to team building for many organizations?

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5) How can you put team building into every single day?

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6) What is a teamwork culture?

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## V. Vocabulary Building

### A. Match the words with their definitions.

1. foster	a. a place used for relaxation or recreation, attracting visitors for vacations and/or tourism
2. collaboration	b. a place affording peace and quiet
3. exemplify	c. a feeling of delight at being entertained
4. folklore	d. commodities offered for sale
5. resort	e. promote the growth of
6. retreat	f. act of working jointly
7. amusement	g. clarify by giving an example of
8. merchandise	h. the unwritten literature ( stories and proverbs and riddles and songs ) of a culture

### B. Complete sentence with the words given.

foster	collaboration	exemplify	merchandise
executive	interaction	seminar	coordinate

1) The operation of an \_\_\_\_\_ team is different because employees watch the executive team closely, trying to discern the direction of the firm, particularly during tough economic periods.

2) The \_\_\_\_\_ of team members among themselves demands teamwork competence; the \_\_\_\_\_ of the executive team members with other members of the firm depends on leadership competence while the \_\_\_\_\_ of the members of the team with persons or organizations outside the firm refers to network competence.

3) Medical, nursing, and allied health students who were rated as providing more-comprehensive care had enhanced productivity after participating in a weekly team work \_\_\_\_\_ series and practicing in two-or-three person student teams.

4) In order to \_\_\_\_\_ actions, it is important that team members understand and predict each other's behavior, and explanations can help to improve insight in other team members' behavior.

5) Fair, flexible contract can \_\_\_\_\_ cooperative relationship, so be sure the contract specifies what will happen when the scope changes, the portfolio changes, specifications change, legislative requirements change or other unknown pressures arise.

6) Leaders want to get people to think as one company. But managers in different functions or different business units seem surprisingly reluctant to work together. Jealousies, misunderstandings and enmity seem more common than \_\_\_\_\_.

7) Groups of people bring a project to closure on time. Within budget, and in alignment

with required performance standards. They \_\_\_\_\_ what great teamwork can achieve.

8) In addition to supplying replacement \_\_\_\_\_ in a timely fashion, The Limited's EPOS system can be used to monitor marketing. It can track fashion design performance, pinpointing age groups, income level, and geographic locations.

**C. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.**

1) Executive leaders communicate the clear expectation that teamwork and collaboration are expected. No one completely owns a work area or process all by himself. People who own work processes and positions are open and receptive to ideas and input from others on the team.

2) The organization members talk about and identify the value of a teamwork culture. If values are formally written and shared, teamwork is one of the key five or six.

3) Important stories and folklore that people discuss within the company emphasize teamwork. People who "do well" and are promoted within the company are team players.

4) Provide training in systematic methods so the team expends its energy on the project, not on figuring out how to work together as a team to approach it.

**D. Read the following passage about the team building process. Choose the best heading for each of the paragraphs.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_. Meet with the team leader (maybe even the full team) to determine why they think team building is necessary and what they hope to achieve. You should also clarify your role, the data collection proves, and what they can expect from team building.

2) \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose is to collect information that will help you and the team understand the issues and identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the team. Typical methods include interviews, focus groups, surveys, and observation.

3) \_\_\_\_\_. Use the data to clarify the issues faced by the team and determine both the goals and methods of the team building intervention.

4) \_\_\_\_\_. Usually a one-or-two-day meeting designed to increase the effectiveness of the team and the members. The meeting will provide feedbacks on the data collected as well as appropriate exercises, activities, surveys, discussions, and the creation of plans to improve the functioning of the team.

5) \_\_\_\_\_. There should be some method of assessing the extent to which the goals of the team were achieved. Methods may include comparing the data collected prior to the intervention with a similar data set collected at selected intervals following the intervention.

- a. Data Collection
- b. Contracting
- c. Evaluation
- d. Diagnosis
- e. Team Building Intervention