

'I'm really impressed. Until you dived into that pool, I never imagined you had such courage. You accepted my challenge and now anything I own is yours. Tell me what I can do for you.' The CFO was still recovering from the swim. He looked up at the CEO and said, 'You can start by telling me who the hell pushed me into the pool!'

1.4 Speaking Meetings one-to-one

1:10

Version 1

- Simon:** Morning, Tiffany. Good weekend?
Tiffany: Oh, yes, it was cool. And you?
S: No, not really. Listen, Tiffany, come into my office, I need to talk to you.
T: Oh no, what now?
S: Look, I hear you had a problem with Maureen on Friday.
T: Oh, that. Yeah. That idiot refused to help me! Who does she think she is?!
S: You mustn't talk about your colleagues like that. Maureen is a very experienced assistant and a valuable member of the team.
T: Maybe, but she still refused to help me.
S: Yes, but she had a good reason to refuse. Maureen was very busy on Friday and you didn't ask for help; you demanded her immediate attention. As a future manager, you should show respect to all the staff.
T: But I was just trying to finish the job.
S: Well, you won't get results from people like Maureen if you're rude.
T: Look, I was tired. I had a difficult week, OK?
S: Tiffany, everyone gets tired, and I'm getting tired of your attitude. You apologize, or there'll be trouble. Do you understand?
T: Me? Apologize to some stupid little secretary? No way!

1:11

Version 2

- Simon:** Morning, Tiffany. Good weekend?
Tiffany: Oh yes, it was cool and you?
S: Yeah I had a good weekend too – apart from having to finish off this report. How about you? What did you do?
T: I went to the swimming pool yesterday. Gorgeous weather.
S: Sounds good. Er, Tiffany, have you got a minute?
T: Sure.
S: Come in. I just wanted to have a quick word. Erm, I hear you had a problem with Maureen on Friday.
T: Oh, that. Yeah. That idiot refused to help me! Who does she think she is?!
S: Well, Tiffany, I think perhaps you should be more careful about how you talk about your colleagues. Maureen is a very experienced assistant and a valuable member of the team.
T: OK, but she still refused to help me.
S: Well, you might want to think about why she couldn't help you. Maureen was very busy on Friday, and I understand you didn't really ask for help so much as demand her immediate attention. We try hard to respect all our staff here. As a future manager, I think you ought to do the same.
T: But I was just trying to finish the job.
S: Well, I understand that, and I appreciate that you work hard and that you expect other people to show the same commitment. But, don't you think you might get better results from people like

Maureen by being a little more diplomatic?

- T:** Yeah, OK. I'm sorry, you're right. I was tired. I didn't mean to be rude.
S: OK. It can happen to anyone. Why don't you ask Maureen to have a coffee with you, and just clear the air? OK?
T: OK. Thanks, Simon.

1.5 Writing A placement report

1:12

Jason: Hi, Jason!

Alex: Oh hi, Alex.

- J:** Do you feel like going out tonight? There's a new Will Smith movie on at nine fifteen!
A: Oh yeah. Look, I'd love to, but I've got this essay to finish, and then I've got to write my placement report.
J: Placement? Oh, that's interesting. I didn't know you did a placement. What did you do?
A: I spent three months near Birmingham at a place called Diftco. They export construction equipment.
J: Oh yeah, good job was it?
A: It was all right. They're a bit crazy there. People worked really hard, sometimes from eight in the morning to nine or ten in the evening.
J: Hmm. Sounds like school!
A: Yeah! Anyway, I was in charge of preparing shipping documents. It was lucky we did international trade last semester. It really helped me understand what was going on.
J: Preparing shipping documents, eh?
A: Sounds boring. Didn't like international trade much myself. Did you get on well with your boss?
A: Oh, she was very strict. But, OK, I suppose. She didn't scream at me or anything when I did something wrong.
J: Why, did you get things wrong a lot?
A: Nah. Only once when I sent a container to Austria instead of Australia.
J: You're joking!
A: Well, it wasn't my fault. This guy on the phone had a really strong accent. I didn't understand half of what he said.
J: So you sent a container to Austria? What an idiot!
A: Well, I bet you wouldn't do any better. Anyway, it was interesting, 'cos they had this really sophisticated automatic system, but you can't ever eliminate human error completely.
J: Yeah, right, the guys at IBM only tested their systems with monkeys, they didn't expect you to be using them!
A: OK, OK ... Now, if you've finished taking the mickey, I've got an essay to write.
J: No, come on. I'm just joking. I'm really interested in Diftco. I need to find a placement for next summer.
A: Well, it's a good placement for first-years, but I think second-years should have more responsibility. I was hoping to get some management experience but I mostly worked alone, so it wasn't that great.
J: You wouldn't recommend it, then?
A: No. I learned quite a lot in three months, but I certainly wouldn't like to work there.
J: Mm, I see what you mean.
A: Listen, now I've told you all about it, you couldn't help me with the report, could you? If we finish by nine, we can still make it in time for the movie. Look, I've already made these notes. You just have to write them up for me ...

1.6 Case study Counselling

1:13

Now, before we go on, I'll just summarize the three points we've already discussed. Firstly, the goal of counselling is to help another person manage a personal problem using their own resources. Secondly, counselling is about listening, not about telling. It's about talking to someone and helping, not about persuading or manipulating. And, counselling is about assisting and exploring problems. It's not about reassuring someone or solving their problems for them. Thirdly, the three phases of counselling:

Phase one, talk. This is where you encourage the problem holder to talk about the problem, and to start to understand how they feel about the problem and why they feel that way. Phase two, think. This is where you encourage them to think about the problem and reassess it. You help them to see their situation from a new perspective, so that they can consider the different options for dealing with the situation. And phase three, act. This is where you help them to choose their own solution and to establish an action plan to manage the problem. OK, are there any questions?

2 Customer support

2.1 About business Call centres

1:14

Interviewer: Groupon is currently the world's fastest growing company, with 35 million registered users all around the world. How do you keep so many customers happy?

Manager: Well, one of the key factors has been cloud computing. We're now in 45 countries around the world, and we got there in about a year and a half. If it wasn't for the cloud architecture we have in place, we could never have done that.

I: Can you give us an example?

M: Well, we've recently adopted Natterbox. Basically, it's software that decides how valuable or how urgent a call is, and then transfers that call to the best person to answer it. If an important client calls and the salesperson is not at their desk, the call is pushed through to their mobile. If they don't pick up, the system records a voicemail that can be accessed online.

I: So if the salesperson is on the road, or in a restaurant ...

M: They still get the call. Yes.

I: And where do your call centre staff work?

M: Well, from our call centre in London we provide customer service for England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Denmark. But we employ agents who come from all those regions, each with their own cultural familiarity and local knowledge. Natterbox recognises the location of the incoming phone numbers and directs the call to a customer service agent from the right region.

I: So if I'm calling from Scotland, the person who answers the phone will be Scottish, and if I'm calling from Denmark ...

M: The agent will be Danish.

I: Excellent!

M: Yes. It also means we answer every call. Before we had Natterbox, our customer service department wasn't handling around 50% of the calls – they were just coming in and getting lost. And people hate it