

6 | Participating in a meeting (1)

Starting point

- 1** The words below describe different types of meetings. *Underline* the words which describe the meetings you normally attend. Work in pairs or small groups. Say which words you underlined and compare your answers.

with colleagues (internal) / with clients (external)

formal (with a plan or agenda) / less formal (with a flexible plan or agenda)

the chairperson says the most / everyone participates equally

need lots of preparation / don't usually need much preparation

normally very useful / not always useful

end on time / rarely end on time

Video comprehension

- 2** VIDEO Watch the video. Take notes on what these people say in the meeting.

Maja's input	David's input	Anna's solution
Maja's solution	David's action points	

- 3** VIDEO Marcus is chairing the meeting. Read these questions carefully, then watch again and pay attention to what he does and says.

- 1 How does he start the meeting?
- 2 Does he have an agenda?
- 3 What phrases does he use to encourage these people to speak:

Maja: _____

David: _____

Anna: _____

- 4 What phrase does he use at the end to show it's time to start another discussion?

»» For more exercises on this video, go to the DVD-ROM.

Speaking

- 4** Work in small groups. You are going to have a short meeting. Choose a chairperson. The topic of the meeting is: *The length of the coffee breaks at work*. Here is the agenda:

- 1 How many breaks do the employees need per day?
- 2 How long do these breaks need to be?

- 5** Spend a minute thinking about these questions. The chairperson starts the meeting. During the meeting, tick (✓) a phrase from exercise 3 every time you hear someone use it correctly. Finish the meeting when your group has used all the phrases.

Video script

Quartz Power Group is an energy company based in the UK. Marcus, the Managing Director, wants to discuss the company's sales figures. He is meeting Maja, the Finance Director, David, the Sales and Marketing Director, and Anna, the Customer Services Director.

Marcus: Now you all know why I've called this meeting. Sales figures for our region are down – we need to address this as soon as we can. So I'd like to start by asking Maja to talk us through the figures, OK, Maja?

Maja: Fine.

Marcus: And then we can take a look at the products we're offering and compare them with the competition. So, Maja, over to you.

Maja: Thanks, Marcus. Well, I've prepared some handouts to show you how the figures are looking. If we look at sales year to date ...

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Maja: So in order to meet budget this year we will, in my opinion, have to start some cost-saving measures.

Anna: What do you mean by that? Redundancies?

Maja: That's one possibility.

Anna: I can't agree with you there. We need a strong workforce.

Marcus: OK, thanks, Maja. Look, cost-cutting is something that we need to think about, but we also need to stop the downturn in sales and regain market share. Can I bring you in here, David – any comments?

David: Well it's hard to know what the problem is. Our products are competitive...

Marcus: So they're not getting better offers from the competition?

David: I don't think so. How about I talk you through our offers at the moment? I've prepared some handouts.

Marcus: Yes, go ahead. It'll be good to look at the details.

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Marcus: OK, thanks, David. That was all useful information. So Anna, can we turn to you now? Do you have any ideas why this downturn is happening?

Anna: Well, it's true that we are seeing a decrease in custom in our region. There's also been an increase in customers cancelling new contracts within 14 days. So ...

David: But do you know why? Do the customers say why they don't like our offers? I personally feel that this is vital information. I mean if we can't ...

Anna: If I can finish what I was saying. I'd like to suggest we review our customer account procedures. From first contact to after-sales care. Perhaps it would be a good idea to start with that and see if the sales figures improve.

Marcus: Thanks, Anna. What do you two think of that?

Maja: Can I make another suggestion? I think we need to see the whole picture – from the customers' point of view – a customer survey perhaps.

Anna: That would be a big project. It would need a project team which means taking staff from other departments...

Maja: Actually I was thinking about hiring an external researcher – get a neutral view on our position in the market, and customers' views on us.

Marcus: Oh I like that idea. I think it could be very useful information.

Anna: Which department pays for it though?

Marcus: We can talk about that in a minute. Do you agree, in principle, though, that we need to understand the cause of the problem?

Anna: Yes, I suppose so.

Marcus: Good. David, could you look for a market research company we could work with on this?

David: Sure.

Marcus: Great. Well let's move on then, shall we?

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Worksheet answer key

- 1 Answers will vary.
- 2 Answers will vary, but should include:

Subject of the meeting	
Maja's input	Thinks they will need to start cost-saving measures in order to meet the budget.
David's input	Feels it's vital to find out why the customers don't like their offers.
Anna's solution	To review the customer account procedures. From first contact to after-sales care to see if sales figures improve.
Maja's solution	Suggests hiring an external researcher to conduct a customer survey.
David's action point	To look for a market research company to carry out the survey.

- 3
 - 1 He says 'So let's get down to business', to start the meeting.
 - 2 Although the chairperson doesn't appear to have sent out an agenda, he clearly has an agenda he intends to follow because he explains the procedure of the meeting at the beginning.
 - 3 Maja: I'd like to start by asking Maja...
David: Can I bring you in here, David – any comments?
Anna: So Anna, can we turn to you now?
 - 4 Let's move on then, shall we?