# B2–C1

**upper-intermediate to advanced**

# Business Impact 2.2

Modules A, B and C

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## Business Impact

This innovative modular business English course covers two levels B1-B2 (intermediate to upper-intermediate) and B2-C1 (upper-intermediate to advanced) in six books (print + digital). Each of the six books comprises three modules, A, B and C. All modules are also available as stand-alone digital modules.

All **A Modules** have a strong focus on **personal encounters,** all **B Modules** focus primarily on **day-to-day business** and all **C Modules** focus on **business results.**

Modules can be chosen individually to suit the level, interests and requirements of classes, allowing full flexibility and control in terms of content and progress.

## Welcome to **Business Impact 2.2**
## **Module A: Praise & criticism**

**Business Impact 2.2.A** is the A Module from *Business Impact 2.2.*
This module focuses on **personal encounters in the business world** and will enable you to give and accept praise and criticism with confidence in differing cultural settings.

The page numbers on this page refer to the printed edition of Business Impact 2.2.

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## Welcome to **Business Impact 2.2**
## **Module B: Project management**

**Business Impact 2.2.B** is the B Module from *Business Impact 2.2.*
This module focuses on **day-to-day business** and will enable you to manage and discuss projects with confidence and impact from beginning to end.

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# Welcome to **Business Impact 2.2**
# **Module C: Risk analysis & management**

**Business Impact 2.2.C** is the C Module from *Business Impact 2.2.* This module focuses on **business results** and will enable you to analyse and talk about risks and risk management with confidence and impact.

The page numbers on this page refer to the printed edition of Business Impact 2.2.

# *Cultural fluency &* feedback

"How many Germans does it take to change a light bulb?"

"Just one. They simply get on with the job and don't really like jokes."

## › Small talk

**Start the session by chatting with a partner about the place (town, city, village or region) where you currently live or have lived in the past. Your conversation can, of course, move on to other topics that come up naturally. Use the following phrases in your conversation.**

It's / It was in the back of beyond / in the middle of nowhere / off the beaten track.

It's definitely worth / not really worth a visit.

## Tip
A quick chat at the beginning of every English class is a great opportunity to practise and improve your small talk skills.

## › Down to business

**1  Discuss the following questions in class.**

**1.** What aspects of the photos suggest cultural diversity or inclusion among the meeting participants? How can this diversity contribute to the meeting's success?

**2.** What is your personal experience of working in a multi-national and multi-cultural environment? To what extent do cultural differences in behaviour and communication play a role?

**3.** What is your reaction to the cultural stereotype expressed in the cartoon? How do you think challenging stereotypes can help achieve a better understanding of other cultures?

**2a** Have you come across the terms high-context and low-context cultures before? What do you know about these terms, or what do you think they could mean?

**2b** Read the article below and find the answers to the questions.

1. How do people from low-context cultures typically give feedback?
2. What strategies do people from high-context cultures use to deliver praise or criticism?
3. How is international communication being affected by globalisation?

# LOW-CONTEXT & HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURES

High-context and low-context cultures, concepts introduced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in *The Silent Language* (1959), explain how communication styles vary across cultures.

In low-context cultures, such as in the USA or Germany, communication is explicit, direct and task-focused. Feedback often emphasises specific actions and is clear and detailed, such as, "Your response to the client's complaint was professional and empathetic." Low-context communication assumes the listener does not rely on shared context or subtle cues to understand the message.

In contrast, high-context cultures, such as we find in Japan and India, rely heavily on tone, non-verbal gestures and relationships to convey meaning. Feedback and praise are more nuanced and indirect, prioritising group harmony and interpersonal respect. For example, praise might be expressed subtly, such as saying, "That was a very thoughtful approach," with an approving tone.

However, cultures rarely fit neatly into either category. Most exist somewhere along the spectrum, combining characteristics of both high and low-context cultural communication.

Especially in today's globalised world, cultural interactions are complex and shaped by relative, not absolute, positions on the scale. Recognising the interplay of these styles and adapting to the context is key to effective communication.

**2c** In pairs. Think about a cultural context you are familiar with (your home country, workplace or a group you belong to). Where would you place it on the spectrum of low-context to high-context communication? Why?

**2d** Class discussion: How might people from low-context cultures misinterpret high-context feedback and vice versa? What kind of problems might occur if cultural styles are not recognised sufficiently? Can you share an example from your own experience or observations?

*ENERGIZER*

Enjoy watching this video clip.

▶ A.1

# Module A . Session 1

🎧 **A.01**　**3a**　**You are going to hear a conversation between two colleagues. Read questions (1–4), then listen and note down the answers.**

1. What caused the initial tension between the two colleagues?
2. How might each person have acted differently to prevent the problem?
3. What cultural difference is mentioned?
4. In what ways does the situation between the colleagues reflect the differences between low-context and high-context cultures?

🎧 **A.01**　**3b**　**What phrases did the speakers use to express the following? Listen again if necessary.**

1. to ask (diplomatically) why an agreed deadline hasn't been met

**Emma:** _____

2. to take responsibility for the lack of clarity

**Emma:** _____　　**Luis:** _____

_____　　_____

3. to express apology

**Luis:** _____　　**Emma:** _____

4. to express mutual understanding as a result of the conversation

**Emma:** _____

**4a**　**Consider the following situation and the responses, which might typically be given in each of the broad cultural regions: North America, the UK, Central Europe and Asia. Match each response to the cultural region you think it is most likely to come from.**

**Situation:** A colleague asked for feedback on a recent report. The first part, outlining the problem, was excellent. However, the second section with the suggestions for solutions lacked structure and a recognisable conclusion.

**Responses:**
1. "The first part was good, but the second part completely lacks structure, so there isn't a clear conclusion."
2. "It wasn't too bad. I would consider taking another look at the structure of the second section. But that's just my opinion."
3. "You did a particularly great job outlining the problem in the first section."
4. "As a team, we might benefit from learning the best way to structure a report."

**4b**　**Discuss in class. What do the responses tell you about how each of these cultures provide feedback? How would you consider adapting your communication style when dealing with people from these different cultures?**

**5a**  You're going to hear a podcast about the challenges of working across different cultures in which three core principles will be mentioned. What do you expect these to be? Share ideas in class.

🎧 A.02  **5b**  Listen to the podcast. What three core principles does the intercultural communications expert share in the podcast?

_____

**5c**  In pairs. Come up with two more 'core principles' for improving intercultural communication.

_____

_____

**5d**  Share your principles in class and discuss whether and why you agree or disagree with them.

**6a**  In pairs or small groups. Choose a country that you travel to, or that you could potentially travel to, for work. Note down cultural norms and business etiquette that you are aware of and carry out online research to find out more. Focus on:

- Communication styles (direct vs. indirect, verbal vs. non-verbal, etc.)
- Common 'dos and don'ts' in business contexts.
- Accepted styles for offering praise and criticism in your chosen country.

"You're from Europe, aren't you?
I'll bet this is metric."

**6b**  With the same partner. Prepare a short (maximum two minute) presentation of your findings, indicating how you would adapt your communication style when dealing with clients or colleagues from the other country. Make sure you both have equal amounts of information to present.

**6c**  Together, present your findings to the class. After your presentation, be prepared to answer questions from your listeners.

## › Review and AOB

Review what you have learned in this session:

1. Explain briefly how communication differs in low-context and high-context cultures.
2. Suggest two phrases you could use to handle a misunderstanding.
3. Suggest two key skills for effective intercultural communication.

## › Final feedback

What did you find most useful in this session? Tell the class. Any questions?

# THE SOUND
## *of silence*

In the symphony of workplace communication, silence can be more than just the absence of sound – it can carry meaning as profound as words themselves. While silence might signal disengagement in one culture, in another it could reflect respect or thoughtful reflection.

When Peter, a project manager from Germany, led his first meeting with his new team in India, he was feeling confident. He had carefully prepared a detailed project outline, complete with specific goals, timelines and milestones. In the meeting, Peter gave his presentation with his usual precision, laying out each step of the process and explaining the rationale behind his decisions.

At the end of the presentation, he looked around the room, expecting an enthusiastic reaction or at least a few interesting questions. Instead, there was silence. His colleagues were smiling politely, but no one spoke. Was there something wrong with the plan? Did they disagree but didn't feel comfortable saying so?

Peter asked whether anyone had a question. There was no response. A few team members exchanged glances but remained silent. Feeling frustrated, Peter wrapped up the meeting, unsure of what had gone wrong.

Later that day, Peter brought up the issue with his colleague, Ramesh. "I don't understand," Peter said. "I expected feedback, but no one said anything. Don't they care about the project?"

Ramesh smiled. "It's not that. Here, people tend to wait for the manager to explicitly invite their input. Speaking up right away might come across as disrespectful, especially when the boss has just presented a plan."

Peter was hit by a moment of clarity. In Germany, meetings were often highly interactive, with everyone chiming in freely. But in India, a hierarchical approach meant that deference to authority shaped how people communicated.

At the next meeting, Peter changed his approach. This time, after presenting, he paused and said, "I'd really like to hear your thoughts on this plan. What do you think about the timeline? Are there any adjustments we should make?"

To his relief, the room came alive with thoughtful suggestions and ideas. By explicitly inviting feedback, Peter had signalled that his team's input was not only welcome but valued.

Looking back, Peter reflected, "I realised that I couldn't expect my team to adapt to me – I had to adapt to them. Once I had, we unlocked a level of collaboration that wouldn't have been possible otherwise." The silence that had once knocked his confidence became a bridge to deeper understanding and better collaboration.

**Magazine**

**1** **Read the article and answer the questions.**

**a)** Why might employees from some cultures remain silent during a meeting?

_____

**b)** Which phrases can be used to invite feedback from a team?

_____

_____

**c)** Why is it important to adapt communication styles to the cultural norms of a team?

_____

**2** **Focus on words: phrasal verbs. Complete the sentences below (a–f) with the correct form of the following phrasal verbs from the article.**

> to bring s.th. up | to chime in | to lay out s.th. | to look back on s.th. | to speak up | to wrap up s.th. <

**a)** It's important to _____ when you have a different opinion, so that everyone understands your perspective.

**b)** Feel free to _____ during the discussion if you have something relevant to add.

**c)** The presenter took her time to clearly _____ the project objectives.

**d)** If you have any concerns, don't hesitate _____ during the meeting.

**e)** The team leader asked for final questions before _____ the session.

**f)** It's valuable _____ lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

**3** **Focus on grammar: modal verbs. Find examples of the modals *can, could, should, might* and *had to* in the article. Then answer the questions.**

**a)** Which of the modals are used to express:

   **1.** a possibility
   **2.** an advisable action
   **3.** an obligatory action

**b)** Complete the sentences with a suitable modal verb. When more than one option is possible, consider the difference in meanings.

   **1.** Failing to clarify expectations _____ lead to missed deadlines or incomplete tasks.

   **2.** You _____ adapt communication styles to suit the cultural norms of your team.

   **3.** We _____ change our approach in order to avoid misunderstandings.

**4** **Optional extra: You have to introduce a new colleague from a different cultural background (you choose) to your project group. What advice would you give them about communication styles in formal as well as informal meetings in your company or organisation? Make notes and be prepared to share your suggestions in the next session.**