



GLOSSARY

may I speak to – a phrase used when talking on the phone to ask to speak with a specific person

* Hi, this is Rhawid. May I please speak with Jefferson?

speaking – a word used to show that one is the person whom a caller has asked to speak with

* Speaking. What can I do for you, Rhawid?

contact person – a person who should be called or written to if one wants more information

* Who is the contact person if I think of questions later about the conference?

Am I calling at a bad time? – a polite phrase used on the telephone to show that one realizes that the other person may not have time to speak at that moment, giving him or her an opportunity to say that it would be better to call back at another time

* - Am I calling at a bad time?

- Actually, yes, because I'm late for a meeting. Could you please call me again in two hours?

administrative assistant – secretary; a person who does administrative work in an office to help other employees by answering phones and emails, writing letters, making photocopies, and more

* As an administrative assistant for a large office, Ahmed spends most of his day typing emails and letters for his supervisor.

to field calls – to answer phone calls for another person, deciding which calls are important enough for him or her to listen to and taking care of the less important calls

* How many people do you think field calls for the president of the United States?

to hire – to identify, evaluate, and select a person to work in a new job

* Did you hear that Vision Corporation is hiring a new office manager?

job description – a short written document that has information about a job that is open, including what the new employee will need to do and what qualifications he or she should have

* The job description for the translator position says that the company is looking for someone who speaks at least three languages and can travel often.



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a good fit – a match; a job or opportunity that meets one's needs and for which one is well qualified, being able to do everything that is necessary

* Fiona is a good fit for the translator position because she speaks English, Russian, and German and loves to travel.

qualification – able to do something that is needed for a job or another opportunity; meeting the requirements of a job or another opportunity

* To meet the qualifications for that graduate school, you must have a test score of at least 600.

to spell out – to provide detailed information; to include all the details

* The sales agent told us that a good advertisement should spell out all the details of the house that is for sale, including how old it is and how many bedrooms and bathrooms it has.

cover letter – a one page letter sent when one applies for a job, explaining why one wants the job

* In his cover letter, he wrote that he had excellent computer skills and was good at working on teams.

staff – employees; a group of employees who work together, often reporting to the same supervisor

* She manages a staff of seven teachers and two secretaries.

to emphasize – to say or write something in a way that makes it seem more important; to say or write something strongly

* The tour leader emphasized the importance of having the group stay together while walking through the city.

resume – curriculum vitae; a one- or two-page document that lists one's education, work experience, skills, leadership experience, honors, and other qualifications for a job

* The company received 34 resumes, but chose only four people for interviews.

initiative – willingness and ability to do something without being asked to do it

* Thanks for taking the initiative to clean the garage before I asked you to do it.

vote of confidence – support; a belief that one can do something; a belief that one will be able to do something well

* Kaisha is a great worker and she has my vote of confidence to lead the new project.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the job description for?
 - a) An assistant manager.
 - b) A contact person.
 - c) An administrative assistant.

 2. Why does Mehdi say that he appreciates the vote of confidence?
 - a) Because he wants to work with confidential information.
 - b) Because he wants the staff to vote for him.
 - c) Because he heard Candace say that he'll do well.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to field calls

The phrase “to field calls,” in this podcast, means to answer phone calls for another person, deciding which calls are important enough for him or her to listen to and taking care of the less important calls: “Geraldine gets more than 100 calls each day, so she had to hire someone to field calls for her.” The phrase “to field questions” means to answer questions, especially when there are a lot of difficult questions: “After the presentation, the speaker will field questions from the reporters.” Finally, the phrase “to field a team” means to organize a sports team, selecting people who will play on the team against other teams: “The school is going to field a hockey team for the first time next year.”

to spell out

In this podcast, the phrase “to spell out” means to provide detailed information: “Please spell out the plan to make sure that everyone understands it.” The phrase “to spell out” also means to say each of the letters in a word, showing how it should be written: “Please leave a message with your first and last name, spelling out your last name slowly.” Sometimes the phrase “to spell out” means to write the full text of a word or phrase instead of an abbreviation: “When you write down an address, you don't need to spell out 'street.' Use the 'St.' abbreviation instead.” Finally, a “spell” is a kind of weather that lasts for a short period of time: “The cold spell we had in April was very bad for the orange trees.”



CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, people often have to make a good “first impression” (the way that another person thinks about oneself after meeting for the first time) “over the phone” (while one is talking on the phone). There are many things you can do to make a better first impression.

Begin with a “warm” (friendly) “greeting,” like “hello” or “good morning.” Speak slowly, helping the listener “get used to” (become familiar with) your accent. Next, identify yourself by saying, “This is [name]” before asking to speak with a specific person. Be sure to “enunciate” (speak very clearly).

Try to “match” (use the same thing) the way that the other person is speaking. Match the “tone” (how high or low a voice is), “volume” (how loud or quiet a voice is), and “rate” (speed) of the other person’s voice. When you speak the same way that another person speaks, it is called “mirroring.”

Try not to make “background noises” (noises that are heard but are not part of the conversation). Turn off the TV or radio before you get on the phone. Don’t type or make other loud noises while you are on the phone. These kinds of background noises will “distract” the listener, taking his or her attention away from the conversation. The background noise might also make him or her think that you aren’t really interested in the conversation because you are too busy doing something else at the same time.

Finally, be careful not to “interrupt” the other person, speaking before he or she has finished a sentence. Interrupting someone is very “rude” (impolite) in U.S. culture, whether you are “face to face” (speaking to someone in the same room) or talking over the phone.”

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 408: Calling Someone You Haven't Met About a Job.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 408. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide is an 8 to 10 page guide we produce for all of our current episodes that includes the complete transcript of everything we say on this episode, as well as vocabulary, definitions, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and additional definitions that we don't discuss on the episode.

This episode is called "Calling Someone You Haven't Met About a Job." It's a telephone conversation between someone who is looking for a job and someone who works at the company where this person wants to work. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Candace: Hello.

Mehdi: Hello, may I speak to Candace Cho, please?

Candace: Speaking.

Mehdi: Oh, hello Ms. Cho. My name is Mehdi and I'm interested in applying for the job as assistant manager. Your name was listed as the contact person. Am I calling at a bad time?

Candace: No, not at all. I'm the administrative assistant and I'm fielding calls for the person doing the hiring. What can I do for you?

Mehdi: Well, I read the job description and I think I would be a good fit, but I was wondering if there are any special qualifications not mentioned in the description.

Candace: Well, requirements are spelled out in the description, and I don't have much to add, really. But I do know that the person doing the hiring is looking for someone to start immediately. Can you do that?



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Mehdi: Sure, that's no problem. I'll be sure to mention that in my cover letter. Thanks.

Candace: If you've had experience managing a large staff, be sure to emphasize that in your résumé. Any other questions?

Mehdi: No, no other questions. Thank you very much for your time. You've been very helpful.

Candace: Your questions show a lot of initiative. I'm sure you'll do fine.

Mehdi: Thanks, I really appreciate the vote of confidence.

[end of dialogue]

The telephone conversation begins with Candace picking up the phone and saying, "Hello." Mehdi says, "Hello, may I speak to Candace Cho, please?" The expression "may I speak to..." is a polite way of asking someone on the telephone to speak to a specific person: "Hello. May I speak to the manager, please?"

Candace responds, "Speaking." If you answer the phone and someone asks for you but doesn't know that it is you who is talking on the phone, you say "speaking." In other words, the person you are asking for is speaking: "I am that person." That's another way of saying "speaking" – yes, this is me.

Mehdi says, "Oh, hello Ms. Cho." Notice that in business, "Ms." is the most common way of addressing a woman. "My name is Mehdi and I'm interested in applying for the job as assistant manager. Your name was listed as the contact person." So, Mehdi is saying that he wants to apply for the job; he wants to fill out an application and be interviewed. Candace Cho was listed as the contact person. "Listed," here, just means her name appeared in the advertisement. The "contact person" is the person who you call or write to if you want more information about something.

Mehdi says, "Am I calling at a bad time?" This is a polite phrase we use to make sure that the person that we are calling, who may not be expecting our call – who didn't know we were going to call – is not busy, that they don't have something else they need to do instead of talking to you on the telephone. It also gives them an opportunity to say, "Well, yes, this is a busy time. Can you call me back tomorrow at 10 o'clock?" for example.



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Candace says, “No, not at all,” meaning no, this is not a bad time, which is another way of saying yes, this is a good time, I can talk now. She says, “I’m the administrative assistant and I’m fielding calls for the person doing the hiring.” An “administrative assistant” is another word or term for a secretary, or someone who does work in an office to help other employees, such as answering phones and emails, writing letters, making photocopies, and so forth. We used to just call these people secretaries, but now we call the administrative assistants; it sounds more important.

Candace says she’s “fielding calls.” To “field (field) calls” means to answer phone calls for someone else – for another person, usually a more important person, someone that you are working for who doesn’t want to answer his or her own phone calls. So, to “field calls” also means to decide which phone calls are important enough to give to the person you work for. This verb, “to field,” has a couple of interesting different meanings in English: take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations. You’ll also find in our Learning Guide a discussion of “phone etiquette,” that is, common practices in talking on the telephone in the United States. That’s also in our Learning Guide.

Candace says that she’s “fielding calls (or fielding phone calls) for the person doing the hiring.” Someone who “hires” is someone who selects the person to work in a new job. So, you apply to a company for a job, someone in the company has to make the final decision to hire you – to employ you, to give you the job.

“What can I do for you?” Candace asks. Mehdi says, “Well, I read the job description and I think I would be a good fit.” The “job description” is usually a short written document that has information – specific information about the job, including what you will have to do and what the qualifications are. That is, what you need in terms of education and experience in order to get the job. That’s the job description. The job description for my job as host of ESL Podcast would be to be very good looking and to be a good singer – fortunately I am very qualified for that! Mehdi says he thinks he’ll be a “good fit” for the job, meaning that the job will be similar to his own experience and his own education; he will be able to do everything the job needs him to do. So, it’s a good match – it’s a good fit between the job and Mehdi.

Mehdi says, “I was wondering if there are any special qualifications (thing that he will need to be able to do) not mentioned in the job description.” Candace says, “Well, requirements are spelled out in the description.” Here, to “spell out” means to provide detailed information, to include all of the details. The job description spells out all the things that you need to do in order to get paid. To



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“spell out” means to give details. It actually has a couple of different meanings; take a look, once again, at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of this expression, to “spell out.”

Candace says, “I don’t have much to add (meaning I don’t have any additional information I can give you about this). But I do know that the person doing the hiring is looking for someone to start immediately.” In other words, they want someone who can begin work immediately, who doesn’t need a week or two weeks before they can begin working. “Can you do that?” Candace asks, and Mehdi says, “Sure, that’s no problem. I’ll be sure to mention that in my cover letter” – I will talk about that in my cover letter. A “cover letter” is a, usually, one page letter that you send along with, perhaps, your résumé or CV, the listing of all your jobs, experience, and education. It’s something you send when you are applying for a job. So, it’s a letter that gives a summary of your qualifications; it gives the person a chance to get to know you a little better. That’s a cover letter.

Candace said, “If you’ve had experience managing a large staff, be sure to emphasize that in your résumé.” A “staff” is a group of employees; your employees can be called your “staff.” To “emphasize” means to say or write something in a way that makes it seem important, or more important. Your résumé, or your CV (or curriculum vitae), is usually a one or two – but could be much longer – page document that describes all of your education, your work experience, your skills, perhaps any honors or awards that you’ve received; all this would be part of your résumé or CV.

Mehdi says he doesn’t have any other questions, and thanks Candace for her time. Candace says, “Your questions show a lot of initiative. I’m sure you’ll do fine.” “Initiative” is the willingness and ability to do something without someone else asking you to do it first. So, you see something that needs to be done at your job, you just go do it. You don’t wait until someone tells you or asks you to do something; you do it on your own initiative. So, “showing initiative” is to demonstrate that you are willing to go and do something without being asked first.

Mehdi thanks Candace and says, “I really appreciate the vote of confidence.” Here, “vote of confidence” means support, the belief that you can do something – the belief that you are able to do something well. Someone says to you, “I’m sure that you will do this job very well,” they are giving you a vote of confidence; they are saying yes, I support you.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.



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[start of dialogue]

Candace: Hello.

Mehdi: Hello, may I speak to Candace Cho, please?

Candace: Speaking.

Mehdi: Oh, hello Ms. Cho. My name is Mehdi and I'm interested in applying for the job as assistant manager. Your name was listed as the contact person. Am I calling at a bad time?

Candace: No, not at all. I'm the administrative assistant and I'm fielding calls for the person doing the hiring. What can I do for you?

Mehdi: Well, I read the job description and I think I would be a good fit, but I was wondering if there are any special qualifications not mentioned in the description.

Candace: Well, requirements are spelled out in the description, and I don't have much to add, really. But I do know that the person doing the hiring is looking for someone to start immediately. Can you do that?

Mehdi: Sure, that's no problem. I'll be sure to mention that in my cover letter. Thanks.

Candace: If you've had experience managing a large staff, be sure to emphasize that in your résumé. Any other questions?

Mehdi: No, no other questions. Thank you very much for your time. You've been very helpful.

Candace: Your questions show a lot of initiative. I'm sure you'll do fine.

Mehdi: Thanks, I really appreciate the vote of confidence.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone with a lot of qualifications, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.



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