

14.1

LEVEL

Elementary

TOPIC

Business problems

ACTIVITY TYPE

Group simulation

WRITING FOCUS

Memo; using capital letters

TIME

50 minutes

KEY LANGUAGE

aggressive, company, complaint, insurance, to lie, Managing Director, memo/memorandum, to sell (something), telesales

PREPARATION

One photocopy, cut up, for each pair of students

Note: for more information on writing memos visit www.managementhelp.org/writing/memosmpl.htm

Unit 14 The world of work

Trouble with telesales

Warm up

- 1 Write on the board: *What am I doing? What is my job?* Pretend to dial a telephone number and say *'Hello, is that Mrs Smith? You don't know me but my company can help you ...'* Elicit that you are a telephone sales person, and explain that *telephone sales* is normally abbreviated to *telesales*. Ask if any of the students have worked in telesales and elicit why they like or dislike telephone sales people.
- 2 In pairs, give each pair a copy of the Memo. Explain that the telephone sales department at SL Insurance has got problems and the Managing Director is worried.
- 3 Ask the students: *What are the two most important problems for the company?* Feedback as a whole class.

Answer key

Customers have complained about dishonest sales people.
 The company is not selling enough.

Main activity

- 1 In pairs, ask the students to reread the Memo and complete the exercise.

Answer key

a 5 b 3 c 2 d 1 e 4 f 6

- 2 Explain that when Martin Finch wrote the Memo, the shift key on his computer got stuck and so there are no capital letters. Ask the students, in their pairs, to underline every letter that should be a capital. Feedback as a whole class, eliciting how all names, e.g. *Amanda, January* and titles, e.g. *Managing Director* should have a capital letter. Elicit how the prompts, i.e. *to, from, date* and *re* should start with a capital letter but each item on the list should not because they continue the sentence *Customers say:*
- 3 Elicit how a memo does not have the greeting *Dear ...* or the closing formula *Best wishes ...* that you might expect in a letter or e-mail, and how it is concise and to the point.
- 4 Draw a smiley face on the board: ☺. Explain that each pair has its own company. Ask: *What is your company called? What does it make or sell?* Draw a sad face on the board: ☹. Ask: *What are your company's problems?*
- 5 Ask the pairs to write a memo, similar to the model memo, from the Managing Director of their company explaining the problems to an employee and asking for a response. Ask them only to write on alternate lines on their paper.
- 6 When the students have had enough time, ask them to swap their memo with another pair. Ask them to check that they understand the problems and write a question mark by anything they do not understand.
- 7 Ask the pairs to underline any mistakes or anything that should have a capital letter.
- 8 Ask the students to swap back their memos and correct them. Give each pair a copy of the Memo Template to write their final version on. They should continue on the back if they run out of space.

Follow up

- Explain that Amanda has been encouraging her sales people to improve sales. Ask the students to write her reply to the Managing Director. Explain that it must be positive and answer all the Managing Director's points.
- Ask the students to write the memo that they would most like to receive.

Model Memo

| Memorandum | | SL Insurance <i>'We care for you'</i> |
|------------------|--|--|
| to: | ¹ amanda bennett, head of telesales cc personnel department | |
| from: | ² martin finch, managing director | date: 20 september 2004 |
| ³ re: | complaints | |
| ⁴ | we are receiving far too many complaints about our telephone sales people. customers say: | |
| ⁵ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our sales people lie about other insurance companies and try to steal their customers; • our sales people promise good things but do not help if there is a problem; • our sales people are aggressive on the phone. | |
| | it is not surprising that the company is not selling much. ⁶ i want to know before tomorrow what you are going to do about it. | |

Where are these things? Match each lettered item to a number in the memo:

- a a list
- b a word that tells you what the memo is about (an abbreviation of *with regard to*)
- c the person who wrote the memo
- d the person who the memo is to
- e words that explain why the memo was written
- f words that explain what the writer wants



Memo Template

| Memorandum | |
|------------|-------|
| To: | |
| From: | Date: |
| Re: | |