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Building relationships

Situation

PSF is an international company operating worldwide. It has recently started a new project which will introduce a single standardised software package across its organisation, replacing the different softwares used by countries at the moment. Rachel is the project leader with Lucas and Gabriella in her team, supported by Eric, who is an external consultant.

Lucas is the most recent member to join the project team. He's come to headquarters directly from the airport. He's going to meet Rachel, the project leader, and the two other members of the team, Gabriella and Eric, for the first time.



Rachel



Lucas



Gabriella



Eric

A Introduction

DISCUSS

FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT!

First impressions are extremely important. Whether they are in your business or social life, it's vital to know how to create a good first impression when you meet someone for the first time. Here are some tips and tricks to help you come across as polite and professional.

- Be on time.
- Make eye contact and smile.
- Show interest by asking a few polite questions.

Read the short text 'First impressions count'.

- 1 How far do you agree with the idea that first impressions 'are very important'? Why?
- 2 What do *you* typically say and do when meeting someone for the first time to come across as 'polite and professional'? Brainstorm some ideas.

THINGS I SAY

THINGS I DO

VIEW (0.40–2.05)

Watch Bob talking about meeting people for the first time.

- 1 How important does he think it is to handle first meetings well? Why?
- 2 Bob says that people ‘think about relationships at work very differently’, due to their culture and personality. How can this make it more difficult to appear polite to others?
- 3 Why does he say it might be impolite to ask personal questions in a first meeting?

REFLECT

- 1 How far do you agree with Bob about first meetings? Why?
- 2 Bob says that when meeting people from different cultures, ‘first meetings don’t always go as well as we would like’. What do *you* think can help to make first meetings with people from a different culture a success?

B Lucas and Rachel meet

VIEW (2.06–3.10)

Now take a look at the first meeting between Lucas and Rachel. Write down your thoughts and feelings about Rachel and Lucas, about what they say and do, as you watch.

Lucas	Rachel

REFLECT

Look closely at the kinds of things which you noted down. What kind of comments are they? Why do you think you noted down the points you did?

C What happened?

VIEW (3.11–5.00)

Listen to Bob’s comments about this first meeting.

- 1 What opinion does he suggest people might form of Rachel and Lucas after seeing this first meeting?
- 2 How does he recommend that people should form opinions on first meetings?

VIEW AGAIN (5.01–5.44)

Watch the meeting again and practise open and positive thinking. This time note down as many positives in the behaviour of each person as you can.

REFLECT

Compare your notes on Rachel and Lucas with the ones you made when you viewed the first time. Have you changed your opinion? How useful is it to view people positively on first meetings?

D What did you see this time?

VIEW (5.44–7.34)

Watch Bob summarising possible positive points about this first meeting. Does he mention anything you missed out? Did you list anything *he* missed?

REFLECT

Do you see any risks to thinking positively in this way? Why / Why not?

E Later, in the team meeting

DISCUSS

How could Lucas make a better impression on Rachel?

1 Look at the different approaches he might use below, and tick those which you think Lucas should use when he presents to Rachel and the team.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep it short | <input type="checkbox"/> Be direct | <input type="checkbox"/> Be funny and make jokes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Show conviction | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the audience questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on results and efficiency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be structured | <input type="checkbox"/> Show flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell anecdotes |

2 What other recommendations could you give Lucas for communicating with Rachel effectively?

VIEW (7.35–9.29)

Let's see how things go after Lucas meets the rest of the team. He is finishing off a short presentation.

- 1 Which of the ideas above does Lucas use?
- 2 What rather direct comment does Rachel make to Lucas during the presentation? How does he handle this situation?
- 3 Overall, how successful do you think Lucas has been with his presentation?

REFLECT

Lucas was flexible, but people can think very differently about flexibility. Look at these two statements which show different attitudes about being flexible. Which do you agree with more? Why?

I am happy to adapt my behaviour and communication style significantly to others to make sure that they feel comfortable.

I don't like to adapt too much because then I feel superficial. I prefer to just be myself. I think this is more honest.