

TELEPHONE DIALOGUES – BUYING TIME

When busy at work, we don't always have time to return calls right away. Many times, too, a colleague or co-worker will ask us to do something and not leave us with enough time. So how can we politely —stall for time (Stall für die Zeit)? How can we say politely that we need more time to complete a job? ***renminbi**: The official currency of the People's Republic of China.

Dialogue 1

Olivier: Allied Systems, this is Olivier speaking.

Janet: Oh, hi, Olivier! This is Janet Wong from Barter-Klein Trading.

Olivier: Yes, hi, Janet. Thanks for getting back to me so quickly.

Janet: My pleasure. So the message I see here says that you need trading prices for some stocks (unternehmensaktien) on the Shanghai stock-market?

Olivier: That's right. I'm doing a forecast (Prognose) for the next two quarters and I'm told you're the person who keeps these historical records.

Janet: I do! OK, well let's start first with the companies you need information about. What are their names?

Olivier: Shanghai Baolian Steel and Jiangsu-Zhejiang Shipping Lines.

Janet: Right. And what trading dates do you need?

Olivier: I need the stock price (Aktienpreise) on both companies from January 2001 and September 2004.

Janet: All right. Well, I can give you those figures (Zahlen) for Shanghai Baolian Steel right now because I have that file on my desk at the moment. In January 2001 the price was 13.24 RMB per share and in September 2004 that price was 21.30 RMB per share.

Olivier: Great. Let me just write that down...

Janet: The prices for the shipping company I will have to look up. I'll check into that and call you back later.

Olivier: I'm afraid I need that information as soon as possible. I'll be going out in about 30 minutes and won't be back until Tuesday. How long will it take you to locate that information?

Janet: At least an hour or so. Can I call you on Tuesday morning with those figures?

Olivier: Well, I really could use that information before then. If I stay here until 4, do you think you could call me back before then? I'm sorry for the short notice!

Janet: That's OK. That should give me enough time. I will go and get that information now. I'll call you before 4.

Olivier: Oh, fantastic! I really do appreciate (schätzen) that, Janet!

CHASING UP PAYMENT ON THE PHONE

Peter Mann is a new collections agent at a coffee supply company. His first task is to chase up two overdue accounts (überfällige Konten) and get a commitment from each shop to catch up with or settle their account balances as soon as possible. Peter calls two customers, both of whom haven't paid their bills (Rechnungen). Peter's aim (Ziel) is clear: get his customers to pay the amount owed (geschuldeter Betrag) as soon as possible.

Dialogue 2

Customer: Good morning, Perky Pastime. This is Marco. How may I help you?

Peter: Good morning. Could I speak to your manager, please?

Customer: Just a moment, sir. Who's calling?

Peter: It's Peter Mann from The Bogota Bean. (pause....)

Manager: Hello, this is Paula Brown. What can I do for you?

Peter: Hello, Ms. Brown. My name is Peter Mann and I'm calling about an overdue account (überfälliges Konto) that your company has with us.

Manager: Oh, just a moment. Let me run back to my office so I can get my files out.

(pause....) OK. Now what was the name of your company again?

Peter: The Bogota Bean.

Manager: Yes, I see your last letter. Well, let me start off by apologising for the delay (verzögern) in responding to this account. I've been out of town for three weeks and only just got back last night. I saw this letter first thing (erste Sache) in the morning and since I usually pay my bills on time, I do take this situation very seriously.

Peter: Well, I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Brown. I can see from your payment history (Zahlungshistorie) that you usually do pay on time.

Manager: And what's the total amount due again?

Peter: It's \$567.33.

Manager: Yes, OK. Well, I'll write out a cheque and mail it to you straight away.

Peter: So, will you be paying the bill in full, sir?

Manager: Yes, I will. You should receive the cheque tomorrow.

Peter: Excellent. I look forward to receiving it.

Dialogue 3

Customer: Barstucks. This is Donna. How may I help you?

Peter: Could I speak to the manager, please?

Customer: This is Donna Reid, the manager.

Peter: Hello, Ms. Reid. My name is Peter Mann and I'm calling from The Bogota Bean. I'm calling about an outstanding account (ausstehendes konto) that your company has with us. I believe I sent a letter three weeks ago to your attention regarding the unpaid balance (ausstehende Zahlung).

Customer: Yes, I can remember seeing that.

Peter: Perhaps you have a moment so that we can discuss your account?

Customer: Well, I guess so. The problem is that we aren't really in a position to send a payment in at the moment. Is there any way you could give us another 90 days?

Peter: I'm afraid that's not really possible at this point. We really do need payment this week.

Customer: Well, as I explained, we can't really pay anything currently (zur Zeit). Perhaps we might be able to next month. But as I said, paying now is out of the question (kommt nicht in Frage).

Peter: That is an alternative. If we extend the terms (verlängern Sie die Bedingungen) by another 30 days, would you be able to pay off the bill in full then?

Customer: We should be able to pay it off, but I can at least promise to make a partial payment (Teilzahlung) in 30 days if not.

Peter: OK. I'll extend (erweitern) your account terms (Kontobedingungen) then and I'll send you a reminder this afternoon to reiterate that in 30 days you'll try your best to pay off the account. Remember that once the account is paid in full, we can extend credit (Kredit ausdehnen) once again.

Customer: Yes, I'm aware of that (Das ist mir bewusst) and we do want to pay this account off as soon as we can. Thank you for your understanding.