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**ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts**

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**GLOSSARY**

**pointer** – a tip; an idea or suggestion for a way to do something

\* He asked the famous author to give him some pointers for improving his own writing.

**this side of the fence** – in a certain position or situation, where “that side of the fence” is the opposite position or situation

\* She has always had a lot of money and has never been on our side of the fence, struggling to pay the bills.

**out of (one’s) comfort zone** – in a situation that one is not familiar or comfortable with, usually because it is new and unknown

\* Meghan was out of her comfort zone when she realized that she was the only female engineering student in the program.

**networking** – the process of speaking with other people in one’s profession, sharing contact information and helping each other

\* The university is hosting a networking event so that students can meet people who can help them find a job after graduation.

**referral** – a recommendation; a statement from person A who tells person B that he or she had a good experience working with person C and recommends that person B work with person C, too

\* We’re looking for a good doctor, so we’re asking our friends and colleagues for referrals.

**track record** – a proven ability to do something; past success that shows that one can do something well

\* Tomasuri has a great track record for selling new homes.

**direct mail** – letters and marketing materials that are sent to individuals, using their names and trying to personalize the materials as much as possible, usually to sell something

\* The organization is using direct mail to tell people about the work that it does and ask for money to help support it.

**cold calling** – the process of calling people whom one has never spoken with before and who might not know anything about oneself or one’s company, usually to try to sell them something

\* The club members are doing cold calling, trying to get donations for their event.



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## ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts

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**connection** – a relationship with another person; knowing another person, usually professionally

\* Francesco wants to get a job at the hospital, so he's asking all his friends and relatives if they have connections there.

**prospect** – a person who might want to do business with oneself; a potential customer or investor

\* Which of these companies do you think are our best prospects for the new product we're selling?

**to woo (someone)** – to try to get someone to do something by being very nice to that person, or by understanding and responding to that person's needs and desires

\* When Yolanda applied for the job, she tried to woo the hiring manager by sending a box of gifts.

**contact** – a person whom one knows, especially professionally

\* Do you have any contacts in the energy industry?

**reception** – an event or party where many people gather, usually to drink or eat, often before or after a larger event or conference

\* The conference began with a morning reception where all the participants were able to drink coffee and speak with each other.

**who's who** – a list or gathering of the most important and active people in a particular profession

\* He knows a lot of important people, so his parties are like a who's who of the wealthiest people in the city.

**to tag along** – to go to an event with someone, often following that person around

\* Why is your sister always tagging along, following us wherever we go?

**quid pro quo** – an exchange of favors; something that one does or gives in order to do or get something else

\* There's a quid pro quo at the office: if you want other people to help you with your projects, you'll have to help them with their projects, too.



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## ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts

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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who might you contact through cold calling?
    - a) Clients.
    - b) Referrals.
    - c) Prospects.
  
  2. What is Montel's track record?
    - a) A record of his professional performance.
    - b) A history of how quickly he ran on the track team.
    - c) A musical record with many tracks.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **prospect**

The word “prospect,” in this podcast, means a potential customer or investor who might want to do business with oneself: “Everyone who visits our website is a prospect for buying the items we sell.” The word is also used to talk about how one feels about something that will happen in the future: “How do you feel about the prospect of retiring?” A “prospect” is also an idea or the possibility of having something happen: “The energy industry has good prospects for future growth.” When talking about work, “prospects” are future opportunities for having a good career: “She graduated with two degrees with honors, so she has a lot of job prospects.” Finally, the phrase “to prospect for (something)” means to look for a mineral, gold, silver, or oil in the earth: “In the 1800s, many people moved to California to prospect for gold.”

#### **reception**

In this podcast, the word “reception” means an event or party where many people gather, usually to drink or eat, often before a larger event or conference: “After the performance, the symphony members had a reception for their biggest financial supporters.” A “wedding reception” is a party that is held after people get married in a church or city hall: “They invited more than 400 people to their wedding reception, which was held at a large hotel.” A “warm/cool reception” is the friendly/unfriendly way that a person is met, welcomed, or reacted to: “They were disappointed by the cool reception when they got off the plane.” Finally, “reception” can be the signal for a radio, cell phone, or a similar device: “We get really poor cell phone reception where we live, so we can hardly understand the people who call us.”



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**ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts**

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**CULTURE NOTE**

When Americans want to network, they have many events to choose from. Many businesses and social organizations create networking opportunities for their employees and members.

For example, many “professional associations” (membership clubs for people doing a certain type of work) “host” (organize and lead) networking events where their members can meet one another and exchange “business cards” (small pieces of paper that have a person’s name, business name, job title, and contact information). People might go there to find new job opportunities or to learn how to do their jobs better.

Small “business bureaus” (organizations for local business owners) also host networking events. Business owners and managers come to network with people from other companies that they might want to “do business with” (work with; buy and sell from). They might also talk about important industry “trends” (things that change in one direction over time) and the local economy.

Many universities host networking events for their students, inviting community leaders and business owners to come and meet with the students. The students might use these events to find “job leads” (information about jobs that they might want to apply for) or simply to get advice about their “career path” (a plan for what one wants to do professionally and which jobs one should try to get).

Now there are many networking websites, too, where people can “stay in touch” (continue to communicate) with their contacts and ask them for help when they need it. Of course, if you ask your contacts for help, someday you will probably be expected to “return the favor” (do something in return for what one has received).

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



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**ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts**

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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 448 – Making Business Contacts.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 448. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode, an 8- to 10-page guide we have for all of our current episodes that contains the vocabulary, definitions, new sample sentences using the vocabulary, additional explanations, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is called "Making Business Contacts." It is a dialogue between Phan and Montel, and they're going to use a lot of vocabulary that would be used in the business world when you are talking about people that you want to work with or do work with. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Phan: Hi, Montel. Thanks for agreeing to meet with me.

Montel: It's my pleasure.

Phan: Since I'm new here, I was hoping you might be willing to give me some pointers on how to get new clients. To be honest, I've never been on this side of the fence before and I'm a little out of my comfort zone.

Montel: Oh, sure, I'm glad to give you as much help as I can. Getting clients is a bit of an art, but the key is building relationships.

Phan: What do you mean?

Montel: Most of my clients come to me through networking. I get referrals from people who know me and know my track record.

Phan: Really? I was thinking that I needed to send out some direct mail or do some cold calling.



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**ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts**

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Montel: You may need to do that to start, but if I were you, I'd also spend time making connections in the business community. Go where you think business prospects may be. To woo new clients, you need to meet them first.

Phan: How do I find out where they'll be?

Montel: Again, you make contacts. You've made the first step today by getting in touch with me. I'm going to a reception tonight and it will be a who's who of the business community. Do you want to go?

Phan: Really? You'd let me tag along?

Montel: Sure, but there's a quid pro quo. In the future, if you get invited to something like this, you invite me to go along.

Phan: That's more than fair. I think I just got my first lesson in making business connections.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Phan saying to Montel, "Hi, Montel. Thanks for agreeing to meet with me." Montel says, "It's my pleasure," which is something that you say when someone thanks you for doing something. You can say, "you're welcome," but here, because both people probably want to meet, Montel says, "It's my pleasure."

Phan says, "Since I'm new here, I was hoping you might be willing to give me some pointers on how to get new clients (or customers)." A "pointer," in this case, means an idea or a suggestion for a way to do something. We might also call it a "tip." "Can you give me some pointers on how to work the television (how to operate the television set)? I don't understand these buttons." Phan says, "To be honest, I've never been on this side of the fence before and I'm a little out of my comfort zone." "This side of the fence" means in a certain position or a situation. "That side of the fence" would be in another or opposing situation. So perhaps Phan was not working in this part of the company, and is now having to do something she didn't have to do before. She says she's a little out of her comfort zone. "To be out of your comfort zone" means that you are in a situation that you are uncomfortable with or are unfamiliar with, usually because it's new to you.

Montel says, "Oh, sure (meaning yes), I'm glad to give you as much help as I can. Getting clients is a bit of an art." To say something is "a bit (bit) of



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## ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts

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something” means it’s a little bit of this thing. In this case, it’s a little bit or somewhat of “an art,” meaning you have to know how to do it; it’s not a science – it’s not scientific, it doesn’t follow certain rules. You have to be creative in order to do it. Montel says, “the key is building relationships.”

Phan says, “What do you mean?” Montel replies, “Most of my clients come to me through networking.” To “network” means to meet and talk to other people, usually in your area of business (your profession). You give each other your telephone number, email address, address perhaps, what we would call your “contact information,” and these are people you can call later and perhaps get business from. So, Montel is recommending that Phan do some networking. Montel says, “I get referrals from people who know me and know my track record.” A “referral” is a recommendation of one person to another. It’s someone saying that this person is good for what you want. For example, if I am going to paint my house – and I really should paint my house – I would, perhaps, ask my neighbor who had his house painted last month what painter or which painting company he used. I would get a referral from him; he would recommend someone to me. “Track record” means your past success, or perhaps failure. If you have a good track record, that means that you’ve had many successes; you’ve been very successful. If you have a poor track record, that means that you haven’t been very successful. Here, Montel means his good track record.

Phan says, “Really? I was thinking that I needed to send out some direct mail or do some cold calling.” “Direct mail” and “cold calling” are two ways that salespeople try to get new customers. “Direct mail” is when you send a letter or a brochure, some sort of information to people, and usually you get their names from a list of people who are in your profession or in your kind of business. This is mail that goes to their office, sometimes even to their home, and you are trying to get people to respond to you. It’s a type of advertisement. “Cold calling” is to call someone up on the telephone who isn’t expecting your call, usually someone you have never talked to before. So you call them and you try to get their business. To do something “cold” means to do it without any preparation. In this case, it means that you don’t know the person before you call them and they’re not expecting you to call. It can be very difficult because most people don’t want to talk to a salesperson, so you have to be very “persistent,” meaning you have to continue calling and calling as many people as possible for it to be successful.

Montel says that “You may need to do that (that is, direct mail and cold calling) to start (at the beginning), but if I were you, I’d also spend time making connections in the business community.” A “connection,” here, means a relationship, getting to know someone else, usually in a business or professional situation. Montel says, “Go where you think business prospects may be.” A “prospect” is a person





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## ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts

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who might be interested in doing business with you, someone who we would call a “potential” client or customer; one of your future customers, you hope. Montel says, “To woo (woo) new clients, you need to meet them first.” To “woo” someone means to try to get someone to do something for you by being very nice to that person, by understanding who that person is and what they want. So, a young man might woo a beautiful young girl: try to get her to go on a date with him.

Phan says, “How do I find out where they’ll be?” meaning how do I know where my prospects will be. By the way, “prospect” has a couple of different meanings in English; just take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations. Montel answers Phan’s question by saying, “Again, you make contacts.” A “contact” is someone that you know in a business or a professional way. Montel says, “You’ve made the first step today by getting in touch with me.” To “get in touch with someone” means to contact someone, to call them or to email them. Montel says, “I’m going to a reception tonight and it will be a who’s who of the business community. Do you want to go?” A “reception” is a small party where people get together to drink, to eat; it’s often something that is done before or after another large event, a speech or a conference for example.

Montel is asking Phan if she wants to go with him to this reception, because it will be a who’s who of the business community. The expression “who’s who” (who’s who) is the group of people who are most important or most active in a particular area. So if you go to a podcasting conference or convention, you would find the who’s who of the podcasting world there, the most important people.

Phan says, “Really? You’d let me tag along?” To “tag along” means to go to an event with someone, not necessarily because you were invited. So, if your brother is going out on a date and you say, “Can I tag along?” he’ll probably say no. To “tag along” means to go with someone even though you weren’t invited yourself.

Montel says, “Sure, but there’s a quid pro quo.” “Quid (quid) pro quo (quo)” is a Latin expression meaning I will do something for you if you do something for me. It’s an exchange of favors, if you will; something you do for something that someone else does for you. Montel says, “In the future, if you get invited to something like this (a reception), you invite me to go along” – so, I will let you come to my reception, but in the future, you have to let me go to one of your receptions. Phan says, “That’s more than fair (meaning that’s very reasonable). I think I just got my first lesson in making business connections.”

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





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**ESL Podcast 448 – Making Business Contacts**

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[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]



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The script for this episode was written by someone who needs no pointers in writing scripts, someone who is never out of their comfort zone, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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