



ESL Podcast 146 – Suggestions at Work

GLOSSARY

to accommodate – to find space or room for someone; to find an area where someone can work, live, or stay

* The guests wanted to stay for a few days, so Quentin needed to find extra rooms to accommodate them.

What do you think about...? – What is your opinion of...?; a question one asks when wanting someone else’s opinion or advice

* What do you think about visiting the mountains instead of the beach?

It seems to me that... – I think that...; a phrase one says when giving someone else one’s opinion

* Ashley was tired, so her mother said, “It seems to me that you need to go to sleep early tonight.”

Have you considered...? – Have you thought about...?; a question one asks to find out if someone else has thought about the option or possible answer that one says or suggests

* Have you considered lowering your monthly costs by moving to a cheaper apartment?

I’m not sure – I do not know; I am uncertain

* I’m not sure if I like apples more than I like oranges.

What are your thoughts on...? – What is your opinion of...?; What do you think about...?; a question one asks when wanting someone else’s opinion or advice

* Raoul trusted Claire, so he asked her, “What are your thoughts on the new school rules?”

cubicle – a small area with three low walls and no ceiling, where an individual works; a small working space that only has items needed for an individual to do a job, like a desk and a computer

* Nadine had a cubicle near the printer, so she did not have to walk across the office to get the document she printed from her computer.

in (one’s) opinion – what someone thinks or believes to be true

* Her friends may not agree with her, but in Penelope’s opinion, pizza is the best tasting food in the world.



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the way (one) sees it – the way one thinks about something; the belief or judgment one has after thinking about other possible options

* My brother may not agree with me, but the way I see it, cats are easier to care for than dogs.

Do you have any other suggestions? – Do you have any other ideas?; Can you think of any other options?; a question one says when asking someone else for other options or answers to a problem

* Gerald did not think that Hannah’s idea would fix the broken door, so Hannah asked, “Do you have any other suggestions?”

executive – belonging to the bosses or leaders of a company; concerning the people who control the company

* The company’s most important employees showed up at the executive meeting and talked about the company’s future.

I can use all the help I can get. – I need as much help as possible.; a statement one makes when one has a very difficult problem and needs help solving it

* When Annabelle saw how dirty the room was, she told her friends, “I can use all the help I can get cleaning this.”



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CULTURE NOTE

A Nap Can Be Good for Business

Many of us go to work feeling tired. It may be because we are simply not “morning people” (people who like and is at their best in the morning). Other times, it is because we did not get a “good night’s sleep” (sleep well during the night).

Sleeping at work in the U.S. has traditionally been “taboo” (socially unacceptable). However, that’s changing in the American workplace. In a 2008 report, “one-third” (about 33%) of the people surveyed said that their workplace allowed “naps” (short periods of sleep during the day).

Scientists who study sleep say that people who take naps, especially if they didn’t have enough sleep the night before, are more “alert” (quick to notice and respond to situations), more “creative” (able to think of new ideas and use their imagination), and have better “memory” (able to remember things better).

Napping may be good for your health, too. In one study, researchers found that taking naps at least three days per week helped reduce the chance of dying from “coronary” (heart) problems.

The experts say that the “ideal” (best; most suitable) length of a nap is 20 minutes. Sleeping more than 30 minutes puts you in a deeper sleep and you will wake up “groggy” (weak and tired) and not “refreshed” (with new strength and energy).

Some large companies are “taking note” (paying attention). They have “designated” (assigned for a special purpose) sleep areas in their buildings.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 146 – Suggestions at Work.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 146. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this podcast, we're going to talk about giving our ideas or suggestions in a business environment. Let's get started.

[start of dialog]

Our company has been growing very quickly and I was put in charge of reorganizing our office space to accommodate several new employees. I asked my co-worker, Petra, for her advice.

Fernando: I was thinking of dividing up two of the larger offices into four smaller offices. What do you think about that?

Petra: Well, it seems to me that doing that would only solve part of the problem. Have you considered converting the conference room into offices?

Fernando: I'm not sure that will work. We don't have another meeting space if we do that. What are your thoughts on turning the coffee room into one large office with cubicles?

Petra: In my opinion, that's not going to be a very popular solution.

Fernando: The way I see it, there are no easy solutions and that may be the best one. Do you have any other suggestions?

Petra: No, none that would really work. In my opinion, the only solution is to divide up the executive offices. But, I know, I know. That's not going to happen. My suggestion is to ask a few more of the old employees. Maybe they'll think of something.

Fernando: I think you're right. It's not going to be an easy decision and I can use all the help I can get.

[end of dialog]



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Our story begins with Fernando saying that our “company has been growing very quickly and I was put in charge of reorganizing our office space to accommodate several new employees.” So the company has been growing. It’s been getting bigger. They have been hiring or bringing in new employees and Fernando was put in charge of reorganizing the office space. “To be put in charge of something” means to be made the person responsible for a certain task or activity. If you are put in charge of a celebration, or of a meeting, or of any sort of activity, you are the boss. You are the person who needs to be responsible. You are the person who is supposed to get it done.

Fernando is supposed to reorganize the office space. “To reorganize” means to organize again. That prefix “re” means to do again. In this case, it means probably to move some desks from one location to another, to somehow change the way the office is set up, that is, the way the office looks so that more people can work in that same space. We use the term “office space” to refer to the area where the offices are for a business.

Fernando is supposed to accommodate several new employees. “To accommodate” (accommodate) means, in this case, to make room for, to make space for. I have to accommodate some new people in my company. I have to find a place for them. I have to arrange things so that they are able to come and work here.

“Employees” are, of course, workers, people who work for a company. Fernando asks his coworker, another person who works at the company, by the name of Petra, to get her advice. Fernando says, “I was thinking of dividing up two of the larger offices into four smaller offices.” Fernando wants to divide up the office. “To divide up” means to take something and make it into smaller pieces. It really means the same here as “to divide.” “I’m going to divide this into four pieces.” You could say that. Or you could say “I’m going to divide this up into four pieces.” “Up” is just used for emphasis.

Fernando wants to take two large offices and divide them up, or split them in half so that you have four smaller offices. Each office would be divided into two, in other words. He asked Petra what she thinks about that idea. Petra says, “Well, it seems to me” – in my opinion – “doing that would only solve part of the problem.” “To solve a problem” is to find the answer to some question or some difficulty that you have. In this case, the problem is accommodating new employees.

Petra says, “Have you considered” – have you thought about – “converting the conference room into offices?” “To convert” means to change something from



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one use to another use. Petra is recommending converting, or changing, the conference room into offices. The conference room is a large room in an office building where you have meetings of five, ten, maybe 20 people, depending on how big the room is.

Fernando says, "I'm not sure that will work." "Work" here means – will be a successful solution to the problem. "The reason why," Fernando says, "is that we don't have another meeting space if we do that." A "meeting space" is just a place where you would have a meeting. If they take the conference room and convert it into offices, then they won't have a place for their meetings.

Fernando says, "What are your thoughts on turning the coffee room into one large office with cubicles?" "What are your thoughts on" is a way of asking someone for their opinion. That, of course, is what this whole dialog is about – expressions that we use in giving and asking for suggestions in a work environment. This is a very common expression – "What are your thoughts on?" "What are your thoughts on?" means what is your opinion about something.

In this case, Fernando wants to know Petra's opinion, or her thoughts, on turning or converting the coffee room into one large office. The "coffee room," which may also be called the "break room," is a place where employees can go on their break or during their lunchtime. If it's a big room, they can sit down and eat their lunch there if they brought their lunch to work.

What Fernando is suggesting is that they convert the coffee room into one large office with "cubicles." "Cubicles" (cubicles) are like small offices, but the walls are not as high as a normal wall. The wall of the cubicle doesn't go all the way up to the top of the room, to the ceiling. "Cubicles" are usually made by taking a big room and using these small portable walls – walls that can be moved back and forth – in order to make a square space for someone to sit and work in.

Petra says, "In my opinion, that's not going to be a very popular solution." "In my opinion" – once again, she's giving her ideas – "that's not going to be a very popular solution." People aren't going to like that solution. Fernando responds by using another expression that is common in giving your opinion about something. He says, "The way I see it." "The way I see it" means here is my opinion. Here's the way I view this situation. Fernando says, "There are no easy solutions." There are no answers that are going to be easy, that aren't going to cause some other problems.

"That may be the best one," Fernando says, meaning his solution may be the best one. "Do you have any other suggestions?" This is a question that you use



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to ask someone for additional ideas. “Do you have any other suggestions (or recommendations)?”

Petra says, “No, none that would really work” – none that would be successful. “In my opinion, the only solution is to divide up the executive offices.” “In my opinion,” again, is a phrase we could use when we are going to give our own ideas about a situation. “The only solution,” Petra says, “is to divide up the executive offices.” “Executive offices” are offices for the leaders of the company: the president, the vice president, and so forth.

Petra says, “But I know, I know. That’s not going to happen.” She says, “I know, I know,” meaning she understands that that solution won’t work. She says, “That’s not going to happen. My suggestion is to ask a few more of the old employees.” Petra is telling Fernando to get the opinion of other employees who have been at the company for a long time.

“Maybe they’ll think of something.” “To think of something” means to have an idea, a solution to a problem. Fernando says, “I think you’re right. It’s not going to be an easy decision and I can use all the help I can get.” That last expression, “I can use all the help I can get,” means I’m going to need a lot of help. There can’t be too much help. The more I get, the better my situation will be.

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

[start of dialog]

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[end of dialog]

In my opinion, the world's best scriptwriter is right here on ESL Podcast. That's our own, wonderful, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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