

OXFORD Business English

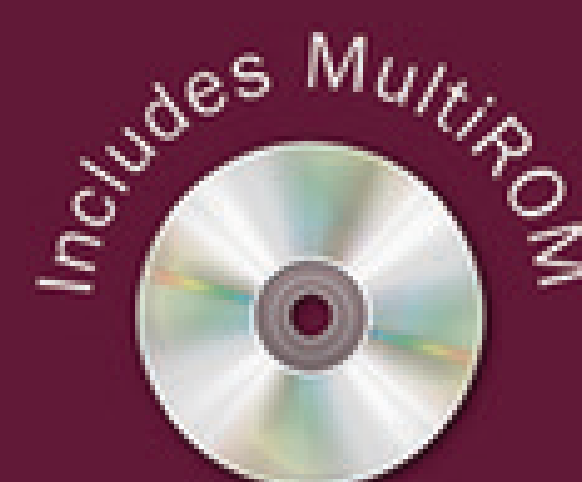
English for Sales and Purchasing

Lothar Gutjahr
Sean Mahoney

EXPRESS SERIES



OXFORD



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1

Jobs and responsibilities

STARTER Look at the following tasks. Which do you do in your job? Which do you do in English? Compare your answers with a partner's.

	often	sometimes	never	English
make phone calls				
write emails				
fill in forms				
do Internet searches				
go on business trips				
take part in meetings				
take clients out for meals				
give presentations				
do market research				
go to trade fairs				
handle customer complaints				

Which of the tasks above are typical for people working in sales? Which are typical for people working in purchasing? Discuss with a partner.



1 Carol Sayers and Kim Dong-Sun both work for Interflights, an air carrier located near Seoul. Listen to them describe their jobs. Who works in sales and who works in purchasing?



Listen again and decide who does the following as part of his/her job.

	Carol	Dong-Sun
1 calls and visits clients		
2 writes emails		
3 collects and compares offers		
4 presents products		
5 liaises with other departments		
6 does market research		
7 makes offers		
8 negotiates contracts		
9 goes to trade fairs		
10 deals with tenders		
11 handles complaints		
12 writes reports		

2 Match the two parts to make phrases used by Carol and Dong-Sun.

- a to negotiate

b to handle

c market

d to fill in

e delivery

f to draw up
- date

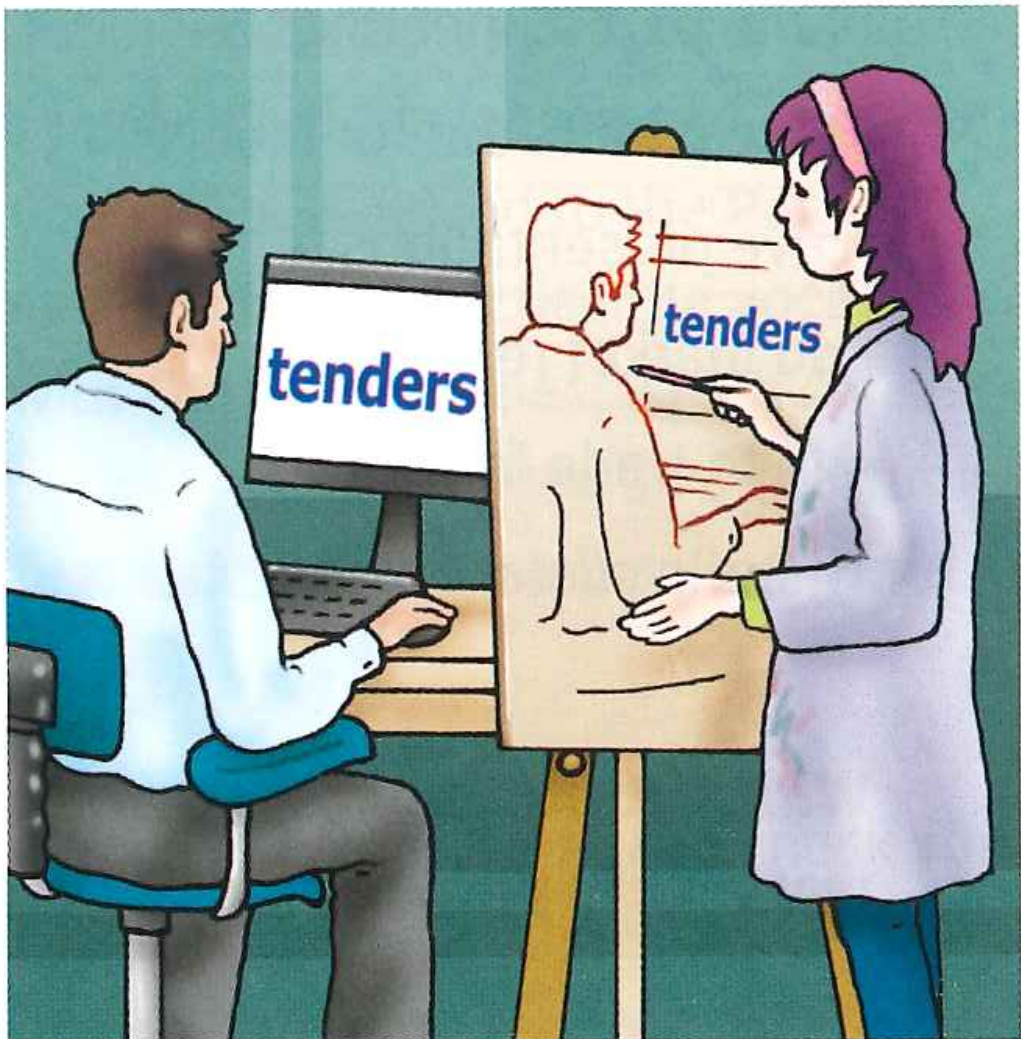
tenders

order forms

contracts

complaints

research



Now match the phrases a–f to the definitions 1–6.

- 1 To write down the information needed to purchase goods or services.

2 Collecting information about what customers buy, and why.

3 To write a formal request to suppliers asking them to present their proposals or offers.

4 To try to reach an agreement about details like price, quantity, discounts, etc.

5 The goods have to be delivered by this time.

6 To take care of customers’ problems.
- d

Match the job ads from a British newspaper on the next page to the job titles below.

- key account manager

senior purchaser
- sales representative

supply chain manager

- 1

The ideal candidate will be responsible for the ordering and sales of the products as well as the identification of new business opportunities. He/She will be required to be flexible and will be able to offer excellent customer service.
- 2

This will be a key position within the production and commercial operations. Reporting to the Production Director, the main responsibility of this position is to manage, control and record the flow of products from our own and third party production sites.
- 3

This is a senior sales role with a strong focus on improving key and strategic accounts. As a senior member of the team, you will be responsible for managing specific global, multinational and national retailers as well as identifying and exploiting new business opportunities.
- 4

The key skills requirements are as follows:

 - A proven record in negotiations and cost savings
 - Knowledge of materials used in the manufacture of furniture
 - Ability to create and develop supplier relationships
 - Skills in sourcing products and services
 - Ability to work within a project team environment

4 Match the following job titles with the descriptions below.

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | key account manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | a | makes sure that clients' needs are met and helps customers when things go wrong |
| 2 | senior purchaser (or buyer) | <input type="checkbox"/> | b | is responsible for specific sales accounts and direct client contact |
| 3 | sales representative | <input type="checkbox"/> | c | is responsible for strategic planning (i.e. making sure a company has everything necessary for production, including machines and new production sites) |
| 4 | supply chain manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | d | negotiates with suppliers about long-term or frame contracts |
| 5 | strategic buyer | <input type="checkbox"/> | e | is in charge of making and maintaining contact with clients within a specific geographical area |
| 6 | regional sales manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | f | is responsible for large clients, especially for clients of strategic interest to the company |
| 7 | sourcing (or procurement) officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | g | is in charge of a team of purchasers |
| 8 | customer service manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | h | is in charge of logistics and of making sure suppliers meet demands |

What is your job title? How would you describe what you do in English?

JOB TITLES

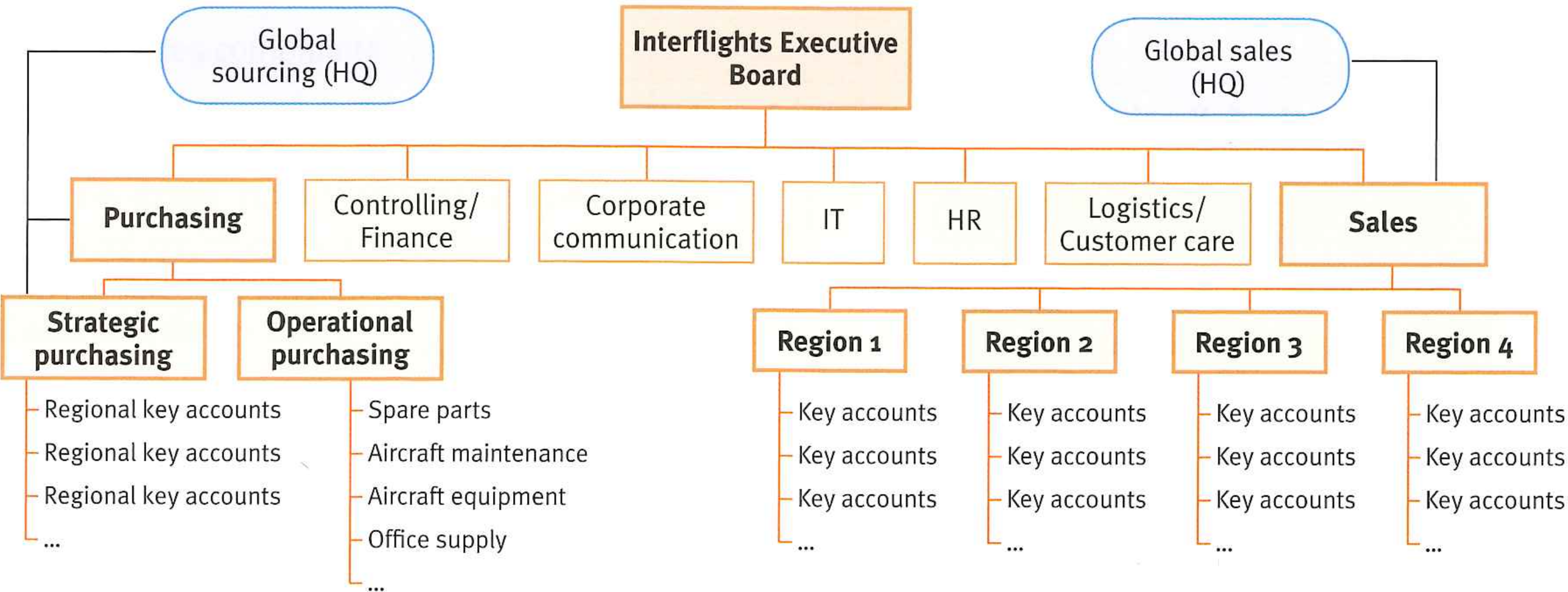
Job titles in most countries are usually determined by the person's position in the hierarchy, their payment, and whether they are legally allowed to represent their company and sign contracts, for example. This is not always the case in the U.S., the U.K. and other English-speaking countries. The job titles there often give you no clear indication of the person's responsibilities because each company has a different structure and operates under different rules. Thus a vice president (V.P.) in one organization may have a very different job description from a V.P. in another company.

5 You are taking part in a seminar with people from other companies. Use language from the box to prepare a short presentation on your company, the department you work in and, especially, your job and responsibilities. Then give the presentation to a partner or the group.

TALKING ABOUT YOUR JOB

Describing the company/department
I work in the sales/purchasing department of a small/medium-sized/ large company called ...
We develop/make/produce/sell/...
Our department is divided into ...
We need to liaise/work closely with ...
We also are more actively involved in ...
My team/group makes sure that ...

Describing responsibilities
My team is responsible for ...
I am in charge of ...
My main responsibility is ...
A lot of our/my work involves ...
We have to/need to ...
I spend a lot of time ...
My job also includes ...



6 A fellow member of the sales department at Interflights is filling Carol Sayers in on a meeting she missed. Listen and decide which topics from the agenda they discuss.

Agenda

Sales Meeting 5 June, 3.00 – 5.00
Room 2.343
Participants: Park Chin-Sun, Daniel Berndt, James Falter, Bob Jameson

1.1 Introduction to ‘Sales!’ client management program – timeline and organization

1.2 Training requirements

2.1 New sales targets (update from Chin-Sun)

2.2 New Asian facilities

2.3 European figures for the last year

2.4 New offers in South America

3.1 Next year’s holiday planning



Listen again to the dialogue. Complete these sentences.

- 1 ... first of all, Chin-Sun has revised our _____.
- 2 She wants to _____ by ten per cent overall.
- 3 There are also some _____ for the various regions.
- 4 It certainly means we will be _____ our new targets, if it all works out.
- 5 Did Chin-Sun present my ideas for _____ there?
- 6 We will also need a _____ specifically for the region.
- 7 I'll _____ that, although I'm afraid it might _____.
- 8 I could also contact the _____ in my area.

TALKING ABOUT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The words *goal*, *objective*, and *target* have similar meanings. *Goals* tend to be long-term and are often used to refer to company plans, for example. The word *objectives* is often used in more formal situations to refer to specific things people want to achieve (objectives of a meeting, for example). In both sales and purchasing, however, or whenever money or figures are involved, the most frequently used word is *target*. Here are some expressions with *target*:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>to set a target</i> | <i>to be above/below target</i> |
| <i>to be on target</i> | <i>to exceed a target</i> |
| <i>to reach a target</i> | <i>to revise a target</i> |

7 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the expressions from the box.

- 1 Management should be satisfied. We _____ right _____ target this year.
- 2 Unfortunately, last year we _____ well _____ target, so we had to cut the number of our sales team.
- 3 The board of directors _____ already _____ our new sales targets for next year.
- 4 After the stock market crash last year, we had to _____ our targets.
- 5 This year has gone very well for us and the way it looks now, we should _____ our targets by at least fifteen per cent.
- 6 We had a couple of big orders, which enabled us to _____ the target by the end of the third quarter. Hopefully, it will continue like this.
- 7 We _____ easily _____ our profitability targets. HQ will be happy to hear that, I'm sure.



- AUDIO

5

REQUISITION FORM Req no TR129835-0701

Description of goods/services:

[Click here to enter details](#)

Date goods/services required:	1 July
Person making the request:	_____
Date:	20 March

[Click here to enter quotes](#)

Listen again and tick ☒ the correct statements. Are the kinds of suggestions Dong-Sun makes typical of purchasers at your company? Why, or why not?

- 1

John is interested in getting company credit cards for the flight crew.

☐
- 2

The flight crew often need to get cash when away on business.

☐
- 3

There are no suppliers on the market for the credit cards Dong-Sun has requested.

☐
- 4

Dong-Sun suggests some solutions that John had not thought of.

☐
- 5

John will make an assessment of the various offers and compare them.

☐
- 6

John is unhappy because Dong-Sun is taking too much time to find a solution.

☐

10 Complete the table with verbs and nouns from the unit so far.

VERB	NOUN
to agree	1
to assess	2
3	comparison
to compete	4
to complain	5
to purchase	6
to request	7
8	solution
to specify	9
to supply	10



11 John is informing his department about the credit card issue discussed in exercise 9. Complete this excerpt with the correct form of words from the table above. Then listen to check your answers.

So I wanted to update you all on the situation with the various offers purchasing has received for credit cards for the international flight crew. Dong-Sun's team is currently ¹ these offers. The ² is very tough at the moment, which is of course good for us. Not all ³ were able to meet our ⁴, so they were able to exclude some offers straight away. They will have to ⁵ the rest very carefully and perhaps put in some ⁶ for more information. But the people in our purchasing department are very thorough, and I'm sure that they will find the best ⁷ for us.

TELEPHONE LANGUAGE

Saying who you are

This is Adam Bedser from XYZ Ltd.
It's David Jones from purchasing.
Hi Sarah. It's Frank here.

Getting through to the right person

Could/Can I speak to John Murphy, please?
I'd like to speak to somebody in your sales/
purchasing department, please.
Is Michelle there at the moment?

12 Work with a partner. Use the information in the Partner Files to practise a telephone dialogue between someone in purchasing (Partner A) and someone in sales (Partner B). Look at the phrases above before starting.



Partner A File 1, p. 60
Partner B File 1, p. 62

OUTPUT

Read these comments that people in sales and purchasing departments have given about working together. Which do you agree with?



Veronica Lu, Head of Sales

When we had to streamline our processes last year, we salespeople had a terrible time with our purchasers. It always takes them too long to do their 'shopping', and therefore it takes our company too long to produce our goods. It really is a disaster!

Marcel Le Maignre, Account Manager

Cooperation between buyers and salespeople within one company? Never heard of it. Whatever would they need to talk to each other about?



Emma Wild, Sales Representative

Buyers buy. And sales reps sell. So buyers and sellers are 'natural enemies'; they are on opposite sides, have opposing interests and quite a different mentality. Of course they deal with each other in separate companies, but in the same company? No. How could they possibly cooperate?

Maria Santos, Senior Purchaser

Sales and purchasing are all part of producing and delivering goods or services to a customer. If the two departments don't cooperate well in the process, the company will lose money. It's as simple as that.



Edward McCoy, Managing Director

In our company, the people in the sales and purchasing departments are experts in various markets and they all try to stay on top of developments. They negotiate about quality, delivery time and, most importantly, about prices. In our company, we learn from each other through regular meetings. It works.

OVER TO YOU

- Describe the cooperation between the sales and purchasing departments in your company.
- How often do you liaise with people in other departments? Which departments do you deal with?
- What could be the benefits of close cooperation between purchasing, sales, production, and other departments in a company?