

Example 1:

Content:	Customs in other cultures/ Communication examples
Word length:	250
Readership:	Customer Service staff
Culture:	Russian customer culture

Russian hierarchy

Hierarchy plays an important part in Russian culture. This means that relationships between people are influenced by where the person stands in society. Inequality in relationships is easily accepted and people expect to be treated differently, depending on their position. This is not necessarily a bad thing, it is just different to what we expect in Australia.

In Australia we are used to more or less equal relationships. We like to be treated equally, regardless of whether we are a man or a woman, young or old, working or unemployed. Regardless of where we go or what we do, we want to receive the same service, the same importance as the person next to us. Most Russians living in Australia have adapted to this principle. But sometimes you might still encounter hierarchical behaviour in some clients.

For example, customers might say that women are not capable of doing certain jobs, show you disrespect because you are younger than them or don't believe your word if you are not the manager. Try not to take offence - in Russian culture this behaviour is perfectly normal and most people would accept and in fact expect it. Every culture has its own mechanisms to manage relationships and the inequality in Russian culture is made up for in other customs and traditions that we as outsiders don't necessarily see.

When encountering 'hierarchy-problems' with a customer, adjust your communication style to increase your status or call in support from 'higher status' colleagues. In the long-run, explaining Australia's egalitarian mindset will work best.

Example 2:

Content:	How to's & Activity
Word length:	540
Readership:	Government Aged Care workers (field staff)
Culture:	non-specific in the article but the organisation services Greek, Polish, Italian, Russian clients

Easy English

Most clients have been living in Australia for years and speak English quite well. Often, English is their second or third foreign language after for example Ukrainian, Latvian, Yiddish or Hebrew.

But, as they get older, people forget or mix up the languages they have used throughout their life and only remember their first language.

In addition to this, the Russian, Greek, Italian and Polish languages are quite different to English, which makes it harder to recognise similarities to their mother languages.

Because of this, you need to make sure your English language is clear, precise and simple when speaking to clients from another language background.

In most cases, clients understand English better than they can speak it. You don't need to speak louder or extremely slow but there are a few simple rules that will help you with your communication.



When speaking:

1. Slow down but still speak naturally
2. Do not fill silence with your own speech
3. Pause often
4. Don't use vague language such as *"should"*, *"would"*, *"ought"* etc. instead use direct, short sentences such as *"Give me the paper, please"*

Words to use

1. Don't use proverbs
2. Don't use humour as it often is misunderstood in translation
3. When describing things use one word, not several
4. Don't use acronyms such as HACC unless your client knows what it means
5. Don't use buzzwords and jargon

Sentences to use

1. Use several short sentences instead of one long sentence
2. Don't use negative questions such as *"You agree, don't you?"* instead say:
"Do you agree?"
3. Repeat dates, deadlines and times
4. Repeat difficult messages in other words
5. Write information down and show it to your clients

“ ... ” Example

Have a look at the example below for simplifying your English.

1.

Instead of saying: *I have been learning English for three years.*

You can say: ***I started learning English three years ago.***

2.

Instead of saying: *You might have left it on the bus.*

(To a client who can't find her purse)

You can say: ***Perhaps you left it on the bus.***

3.

Instead of saying: *He was supposed to be here by now.*

You can say: ***He's late!***

4.

Instead of saying: *The car was unavailable because it was being used for another client.*

You can say: ***We can't use the car, another client it.***

 Activity

Try to simplify the sentences! You can use less or different words or turn questions into statements. Find suggestions for answers at the bottom of the page.

1. You would rather me use this product, would you?

.....

2. Are you having to go to the shops by yourself?

.....

3. Do you think he would be able to help you?

.....

4. Now, when do you think would be a good time to come in for me?

.....

5. Do you remember where you put the vacuum cleaner last time you used it?

.....

6. We've done a good job today, haven't we?

.....

7. Would you mind telling me about your medicine use, please?

.....

Answers: 1.Should I use this or that product? 2.Do you go shopping alone? 3.Can he help you? 4.When can I come next? 5.Where is your vacuum cleaner? 6.Good job. 7.Which medicine do you take?