

CASE

4

Can the new program proposal be accepted?



Case briefing

Mary has received a new program proposal for a science and technology show from Monument Mass Media Enterprises. She is going to hold a meeting to discuss whether the new program proposal can be accepted. Chen Ming is asked to participate in the meeting and reply to Monument Mass Media Enterprises thereafter.

In this case, Chen Ming should get a thorough understanding of the new program proposal, express his opinions in the meeting and give feedback. Suppose you are Chen Ming. You probably should:

- express opinions in the meeting
- give feedback on the new program proposal

Here is a video clip showing the scene of the case. In the video, Mary is explaining the case and the requirements.



Video clip

- 1** Watch the video clip and complete Chen Ming's work plan by filling in the blanks with the information in the box.

Work plan	
A opinions and reasons	Task 1: Read the new program proposal. Need to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1) _____• 2) _____• 3) _____
B proposed cost	Task 2: Discuss and give feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share 4) _____ during the discussion.• Give Monument Mass Media Enterprises feedback by 5) _____.
C an email	
D format	
E originality and uniqueness	

- 2** The following is a sample structure of a proposal. Work in pairs and discuss the purpose of each part.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| • Summary | • Budget |
| • Introduction | • Key personnel |
| • Needs/Problems | • Evaluation |
| • Objectives | • Next steps |
| • Procedures/Scope of work | • Appendix |
| • Schedule | |



UNIT 7

Express opinions in the meeting

Starting up

It is very common to express opinions on a project, a plan, a proposal, etc. in business meetings. In this case, Mary will hold a meeting to discuss whether the newly-received program proposal can be accepted or not. Chen Ming is asked to participate in the meeting and express his opinions on the new program proposal. Suppose you are Chen Ming. What do you need to prepare before the meeting? How would you express your opinions?

After learning this unit, you will be able to:

- get specific information and evaluate information from various sources
- get familiar with the structure of expressing opinions
- express opinions and give evidence
- avoid vague language in expressing opinions
- express clear and well-supported opinions in the meeting

Reading

Before forming and expressing his opinions, Chen Ming needs to get a thorough understanding of what the new program proposal is about. The following is an excerpt of the new program proposal by Monument Mass Media Enterprises. It presents detailed information about the new program. Read the proposal and get useful information before the meeting.

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following question.

What kind of information do you expect to get from a program proposal?

2 Read the excerpt of the new program proposal by Monument Mass Media Enterprises.



Program proposal

Title Science Non-Fiction

General view “Science Non-Fiction” will be an original six-episode studio production featuring guests visiting the most advanced labs in the world and discussing the new discoveries or achievements in science and technology and how they will affect people’s lives in the near future.

Objectives

- To introduce various topical concepts about science and technology
- To inspire a change of attitudes toward the understanding of future science and technology
- To bring in financial benefits and promote the company image of GTV

Format Documentary television program

Subject Science and technology

Program values Informative and inspirational

Production length Six episodes (60 min/episode)

VOCABULARY

documentary /ˌdɒkjʊ'ment(ə)ri/
n. [C] 纪录片; 纪实性电视节目

spontaneously /spɒn'teɪniəsli/
ad. 自然地

Mode of production Recorded

Viewer's profile People interested in science and technology

- Episodes**
- Face-recognition technology
 - AI
 - Big data and privacy
 - Understanding unconsciousness
 - The generation game
 - Prospects of space science

- Parts**
- Opening show: Host-and-guest acting and introducing the science concept – 5 min
 - Lab tour and illustration – 18 min
 - Topical discussion – 12 min
 - Musical break – 1 min
 - Hands-on recreational experiment – 15 min
 - Host-and-guest comments – 9 min

Requirements for the host and guests

A host: Male. Be familiar with the science concepts and be able to explain them to the target audience in a concise, clear, comprehensive and lively manner.

Six guests: Actors and actresses. Have experience of filming scientific movies before. Be curious and know how to ask questions spontaneously.

Project timelines

Date	Activity	Staff	Location
April, 7-21	Pre-program script writing and revision	Director and scriptwriter	Monument Mass Media Enterprises
April, 22-30	Lab tours recording (Part one)	Director, cameramen, host and guests	Labs (TBC)
May, 1-3	Break		
May, 4-23	Lab tours recording (Part two)	Director, cameramen, host and guests	Labs (TBC)
May, 24-June, 5	Discussion recording	Director, cameramen, host and guests	Monument Mass Media Enterprises
June, 6-20	Editing and post-production updates	Director, scriptwriter and editor	Monument Mass Media Enterprises

Proposed Total amount: RMB 3,000,000

budget	Budget distribution	Manpower	Materials and equipment	Operation fees	Other expenses
	Percentage (%)	50	10	30	10

Main production staff Executive producer: Yang Junjie
 Director: Lin Yisong
 Assistant director: Peng Yue
 Scriptwriter: Zhang Xinyi
 Researchers: Zhou Ling, Sun Tingting, Liu Jiawen
 Host: Gao Shan
 Editor: Zhou Jiaxiang

3 Complete the program profile by filling in the blanks.

Program profile

Objectives

- To introduce various topical concepts about 1) _____
- To inspire 2) _____ toward the understanding of future science and technology
- To bring in financial benefits and 3) _____ of GTV

Format

4) _____

Subject

Science and technology

Program values

5) _____

Mode of production

6) _____

Proposed budget

Total amount: RMB 3,000,000

4 Work in pairs and discuss what other information from the program proposal needs to be evaluated. Share your ideas in the class.

Viewing



Video clip

After reading the new program proposal, Chen Ming wants to talk to Mary about the basic information about the proposal before the meeting. The following video clip is a conversation between Chen Ming and Mary. Watch the conversation and pay attention to the further explanations about the new program proposal.

VOCABULARY

preliminary /pri'limɪn(ə)ri/ *a.* [only before noun] 初步的

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following question.

What do you think Chen Ming should report to Mary about the new program proposal?

2 Watch the conversation between Chen Ming and Mary and complete the program information by filling in the blanks.

About the program

Title

Science Non-Fiction

Format

It's a documentary series about the hottest issues of

- 1) _____, but it also brings in some
2) _____. To be more specific, there would
be 3) _____ for the whole series, while
different guests will be invited for 4) _____.

Originality

The program shows great originality.

Host

The program group has already reached a preliminary agreement on Gao Shan, who is famous enough, 5) _____ but humorous. But he might also be quite expensive.

Budget

The proposed budget is three million RMB, which is right within the 6) _____. However, it is doubtful whether the expenses of 7) _____ are taken into account.

3 Work in pairs and summarize the program information briefly based on what you've got in Activity 2.

Preparing for the structure

After talking with Mary, Chen Ming is going to participate in the meeting and express his opinions on the new program proposal. The following is a sample of opinions by Chen Ming's colleague. Do the following activities to get familiar with the structure of expressing opinions.

Structure of expressing opinions

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following question.

How would you organize your thoughts when you express opinions in the meeting?

2 The following audio clip is Chen Ming's colleague's opinions on the proposal. Listen to the audio clip and fill in the blanks with the information in the box.



Audio clip

- A The budget seems to be another problem.
- B In a word, this proposal doesn't seem so practical.
- C I'm afraid I would turn down this proposal.
- D Two or three points of the production timelines are not so clearly and accurately stated.

Chen Ming's colleague's opinions

Expressing opinions

1) _____

Giving evidence

Evidence 1: Inviting too many actors and actresses will make the program appear too entertaining and less professional.

Evidence 2: 2) _____

Evidence 3: 3) _____

Restating opinions

4) _____



Sharpening the skills

Chen Ming has learned the basic structure of expressing opinions. However, to make his opinions clear and well-supported, it is also important to learn the language of expressing opinions and giving evidence. Do the following activities to learn the language patterns of expressing opinions and giving evidence.

Expressing opinions and giving evidence

- 1 Work in pairs and underline the language of expressing opinions and giving evidence from the sample opinions below.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm afraid I would turn down this proposal. First of all, we must bear in mind that we are here to pick a new program of science and technology, which mainly aims to educate and inspire, while in this proposal, the fact is that there are too many actors and actresses. They are bound to steal the scenes of the scientists and experts, and also make the program appear too entertaining and less professional. Secondly, from my point of view, the budget seems to be another problem. Apparently, the proposed budget is about three million RMB, and it's right within our planned budget. However, it may not include the expenses of inviting the host and guests. If too much money is spent on the famous actors and actresses, what is left for the other aspects will be cut down, which will definitely result in a big sacrifice of the quality of the production, and I do not want to see that happen. Besides, I also notice that two or three points of the production timelines are not so clearly and accurately stated. Therefore I have doubts about the timing of the production. It will be a tragedy if the program cannot be completed before our deadline. In a word, this proposal doesn't seem so practical to me.

- 2 Work in pairs. Choose one aspect from the program proposal in "Reading" and express your opinions and give evidence.

SKILLS

An opinion is a view, judgment or attitude formed in your mind about a particular issue. Without being familiar with the language of expressing opinions, you can hardly express yourself clearly in meetings.

At the same time, an unsupported opinion would be fragile. Therefore, evidence is often given to make the opinion more convincing.

The following are some useful expressions for reference:

Expressing opinions

- It's my considered opinion that ...
- As far as I am concerned ...
- From my point of view ...
- It seems to me that ...
- I cannot deny that ...
- That is why I think ...

Giving evidence

- The fact is that ...
- This proves that ...
- What it comes down to is that ...
- It is obvious/certain/clear that ...

Developing the strategies

Chen Ming has learned the expressions that can be used to express well-supported opinions. It is also important to know that effective communication is valued in business meetings. One way to be effective is to avoid vague language. Do the following activities to find out the strategy.

Avoiding vague language

- 1** Work in pairs and brainstorm the strategies for effective communication in a business meeting.
- 2** Work in pairs. Read the following pairs of statements and choose the clearer one. Then discuss the techniques of avoiding vague language in business communication.
 - 1 A** As Mr. Smith requested, I phoned an agent who had not been informed about the project.
B As Mr. Smith requested, I phoned Peter who had not been informed about the project.
 - 2 A** One particular experience taught me the value of physical health.
B My years' traveling with the circus taught me the value of physical health.
 - 3 A** This paper will explain my opposition to the program project.
B This paper will explain my views on the program project.
 - 4 A** The speaker has presented his favorable view on the budget.
B The speaker has presented his view on the budget.

STRATEGIES

The context of business meetings stresses logical clarity and avoidance of ambiguity and vague expressions. You should present your ideas explicitly and to the point.

The following techniques may help you avoid vague expressions and produce concrete statements:

1 Defining terms or concrete words are usually better than descriptive or metaphorical expressions.

Vague Does wholesale *have a positive impact*?

Concrete Does wholesale *increase our profit*?

2 Pronouns should be used precisely.

Vague Sarah Palin was picked as *his* work mate.

Concrete John McCain picked Sarah Palin as *his* work mate.

3 Necessary figures and specific information should be provided.

Vague The project is due *very soon*.

Concrete The project is due *by April 30th*.

Carrying out

Biz practice

PREPARE FOR THE DISCUSSION: EXPRESS OPINIONS ON THE NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL

In “Taking in”, Chen Ming has got a thorough understanding of the new program proposal. In “Building up”, Chen Ming has learned the structure of expressing opinions, how to express well-supported opinions, and how to avoid vague language.

Suppose you are Chen Ming. You are going to prepare your opinions on the new program proposal for the meeting. The following steps may help you with the project.

Step 1 Get information

In order to express your own opinions during the meeting, the first thing you need to do is to get information about the new program proposal. The headings in the proposal can be seen as guidance when you pick up important information.

Step 2 Think of your opinions and evidence

After getting information, you should think of your own views on the proposal. You can list your opinions and evidence in the corresponding columns below.

Opinions	Evidence

Step 3 Structure your opinions

When you express opinions during the meeting, you need to express yourself in a clear and logical way. The next step is to organize your opinions and evidence. You may refer to “Preparing for the structure” for reference.

Step 4 Revise and reflect

Before expressing your opinions during the meeting, you need to put the outline into a complete speech. You can use the following questions to check whether you have accomplished the task.

- 1 Have you got enough information from the program proposal?
- 2 Have you clearly expressed your opinions?
- 3 Have you given enough evidence to fully support your opinions?
- 4 Have you used concrete expressions to make your views explicit and to the point?

Looking beyond

One episode in the program proposal is about AI. For a better understanding of this topic, Chen Ming tries to find some information about AI. The following passage is about what AI can do to benefit our commuting. Read the passage and find out the everyday use of AI.

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following question.

How does AI benefit people's commuting?

VOCABULARY

commute /kə'mju:t/ *vi.* 通勤

hype /haɪp/ *n.* [U] 大肆宣传

anonymize /ə'nɒnɪmaɪz/ *v.* 匿名

crowdsource /'kraʊd,sɔ:s/ *v.* 众包
(从广泛的在线群体获取所需信息或服务)

surge pricing 溢价 (如果乘客预约车辆需求较高, 峰时溢价会逐步增加车费)

2 Read the passage about everyday examples of AI.

EVERYDAY EXAMPLES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: COMMUTING



¹ With all the excitement and hype about AI — self-driving cars, instant machine translation, etc. — it can be difficult to see how AI is affecting the lives of common people from moment to moment. What are the examples of artificial intelligence that you’re already using right now? Let’s take a look at the ways we commute.

² According to a 2015 report by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University, commuting times in the US have been steadily climbing, resulting in 42 hours of rush-hour traffic delay per commuter in 2014 — more than a full working week per year, with an estimated \$160 billion in lost productivity. Clearly, there’s massive opportunity here for AI to create a tangible and visible impact in every person’s life.

³ Reducing commuting times is not a simple problem to solve. A single trip may involve multiple modes of transportation, not to mention the expected and the unexpected: Construction, accidents, road or track maintenance and weather conditions can constrict traffic flow with little or no notice. Here’s how AI is already helping to tackle the complexities of transportation.

1 Google’s AI-powered predictions

⁴ Using anonymized location data from smartphones, Google Maps (Maps) can analyze the speed of movement of traffic at any given time. And, with its acquisition of crowdsourced traffic app Waze in 2013, Maps can more easily incorporate user-reported traffic incidents like

construction and accidents. As a result, Maps can reduce commutes by suggesting the fastest routes to and from work.

2 Ride sharing apps like Uber

⁵ Engineering Lead for Uber ATC Jeff Schneider discussed in an interview how the company uses machine learning to predict rider demand to ensure that “surge pricing” will soon no longer be necessary. Uber’s Head of Machine Learning Danny Lange confirmed Uber’s use of machine learning for rides, estimating meal delivery times, computing optimal pickup locations as well as for fraud detection.

Glimpse into the future

⁶ In the future, AI will shorten your commute even further via self-driving cars that result in up to 90% fewer accidents, more efficient ride sharing to reduce the number of cars on the road by up to 75%, and smart traffic lights that reduce wait times by 40% in a pilot study.

⁷ The timeline for some of these changes is unclear, as predictions vary about when self-driving cars will become a reality: *BI Intelligence* predicts fully-autonomous vehicles will debut in 2019. Andrew Ng, Chief Scientist at Baidu and Stanford faculty member, predicted in early 2016 that self-driving cars will be mass produced by 2021. On the other hand, *The Wall Street Journal* interviewed several experts, who say fully autonomous vehicles are decades away.

3 Complete the table by filling in the blanks.

Existing examples of AI affecting commuting	Ways that AI will affect commuting in the future
<p>AI-powered predictions Access to vast amounts of data enables Maps to reduce commutes by suggesting the 1) _____.</p> <p>Ride sharing apps Ride sharing companies can use machine learning for rides, 2) _____, computing optimal pickup locations as well as for 3) _____.</p>	<p>AI will shorten your commute even further via 4) _____, more efficient ride sharing, and 5) _____.</p>

ELTRP