

APPENDIX B

William Connor Interview Results

Interviewing: Sapatra Tantisathaporn – William Connor Merchandise Manager (Boss)

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Mrs. Supatra
Tantisathaporn
Sex: Female Age: 47 years
Date of Interview: April 11, 2008 Time of Day: 04.00 – 04.40 p.m.
Location of Interview: Meeting Room – William Connor

Part 2: The garment merchandisers' knowledge and skills required concerning English Communication at workplace in view of management people. (needs: boss interview)

Satisfaction on staff performance - Reading/Writing

She is both satisfied and unsatisfied with the staff performance, depending on the situation. For general communication, such as following up order status, she is satisfied as all merchandisers can perform well on daily basis. On the contrary, if there are some problems occurred and need to use technical terms to explain, she feels unsatisfied because the merchandisers cannot reply by themselves and need her helps. She has to read nearly a hundred e-mails a day and she expects that all merchandisers can work independently and come to see her only serious issues. Yet, she has to response some e-mails that keep pending for quite a while ago and are not settled yet by merchandisers, the customers will send those e-mails directly to her and need her action or decision. For the issues that the merchandisers know the content to write but do not know how to translate in English; or how to explain on the e-mails; or do not write straight to the point; or write a long e-mail without conclusion, all of these need her to rewrite the whole e-mails. One of the merchandisers always puts '-ing' after every verbs, for example, using 'please reviewing' instead of 'please review' or 'thanking for your help' instead of 'thanks for your help'. She is not so strict with the correct or incorrect grammar but the content or meaning must be comprehensible to the customers. Usually, the customers do not complain the e-mails with full of '-ing',

instead, they try to understand the e-mails and reply back what they get but several times they misunderstand what the merchandiser try to convey.

Satisfaction on staff performance - Listening/Speaking

She is unsatisfied with the staff performance because all merchandisers cannot work independently as sometimes she has to be away and when she is back there are always some issues that she has to solve, for example, late delivery issue that customers asked William and manufacturer to pay the air freight but actually the delay caused by the customers because they delayed color and sample approval. The reason of these issues is the merchandisers are not good at listening that they are not able to note down all discussions. Also they are not good at speaking that when they come across with the questions or issues that they want to discuss, they do not know how to ask or discuss.

The most important skill needed at William Connor

The most important skill is reading/writing e-mails as it is daily communication to update both sides information. William Connor has to report the production and delivery status to the customers and the customers have to supply information for new development including any further request, for example, specification or color change.

Part 3: The garment merchandisers' problems concerning English communication at workplace. (problems: boss interview and merchandiser interview)

Reading/Writing performance and problem

The merchandisers' skill on reading/writing performance is moderate and they are the most problem among four skills in English communication as follows:

1. The problems occurred with one of he merchandisers at the stage of translation from Thai to English and presenting in the e-mails, though she knows the content to write, she does not know how to put in the e-mails. The boss makes a remark that maybe the foundation English knowledge is not strong enough that no matter how hard the merchandiser try to improve but it is failure. The boss suggests

one way to improve is to read a lot especially the customers' e-mails and notify the verbs, vocabulary, words, clauses or even the whole sentences that often applied in e-mails. The merchandiser should grab those words or sentences, note down somewhere and bring in use when needed because all customers are American and they are native speakers.

2. Straight to the points is the second issue and need improvement. Occasionally, that the customers do not understand what one of the merchandisers tries to explain in the long e-mails because they could not catch where is the main message to convey. The boss always suggests the merchandiser to start the first sentence with topic idea or reply to customers' questions and let the rest sentences to support the topic sentence.

3. Understanding and interpreting the customers' e-mails are the third problem. For example, from the whole paragraph, the customers have three requests but one of the merchandisers realizes only one request or maybe she even does not know what the customers' requirement is. She suggests that the merchandiser should read sentence by sentence and try to get idea on each, note it down and consider how many different idea she gets.

4. There is also problem on the merchandiser who has not much experience in garment but good in English as it is her major while studied in the university. There was once that the merchandiser thought that the issue was just simple to reply but actually she did not know the procedure of William Connor and advised wrong information to the customers. This is because the boss tries to encourage the merchandisers to work independently and discuss with her only the problematic issue. What if it is serious issue but the merchandisers think it is simple one? The boss has to take the risk. Finally she comments that experience in garment textile and English skills are equally important.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

The merchandisers' skill on listening/speaking performance is poor and they are also the problem area in English communication as follows:

All merchandisers cannot work independently upon customers visit as she found some problems especially price negotiation. For example, there was once she could not join

the meeting and there was price issue after the customers' visit. The customer claimed that price was dealt lower than mentioned in the e-mail. The boss found that her merchandisers did not have the record while customer had it. And of course, since the customers said dealt price was lower so the manufacturer said they have no record either because they were under the disadvantage circumstance. Regarding other issues which are not about pricing, the merchandisers perform poor listening either. When the boss was away another time, the merchandisers missed some important discussion during meeting about defects, claim, and penalty on late delivery. And so the boss had to clear up these issues after she was back. She does not blame on the merchandisers but she thinks that because William Connor has variety of products and merchandisers have to update new items or technology with new technical words all the time. Though she got merchandisers who graduated from Garment or Textile area, those merchandisers still have to update themselves with new textile technology otherwise they could not understand the customers' requirement.

Interviewing: Nantaga Matrakid - William Conner Merchandiser

Part 1: The garment merchandisers' personal background information.

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Ms. Nantaga Matrakid
 Date of Interview: April 11, 2008 Time of Day: 02.00 – 02.40 p.m.
 Location of Interview: Meeting Room – William Connor

1. Sex? Female
2. What is your age? 30 years old
1. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Bachelor Degree
2. What is your major area of study? English (Mahasarakarm University)
3. How long do you work in this company? 10 months
4. What is your current position in this company? Merchandiser
5. What were your first entered position and the other position before attending the current position in this company? Merchandiser

6. How long do you have experienced in this position? 10 months

7. How long do you have experienced in this business? 6 years

Part 3: The garment merchandisers' problems concerning English communication at workplace. (problems: boss interview and merchandiser interview)

Writing performance and problem

Among all four skills, she emphasized that she can perform well in writing because she writes e-mails in workplace everyday. All e-mails are concerning following up order and delivery status, discussion in order details and dealing with problems. The written communication is with both customers and garment manufacturers. Her maximum e-mail per day is about forty and the minimum per day is ten. She spent a few hours per day for reading and writing e-mails. She adds that she is quite satisfied with her grammar knowledge and usage at William Connor because the sentence structure that the customers use in e-mails is rather semi-spoken forms and it is not 100% correct grammar compared to written forms that she studied from school and university therefore it is not difficult for her to write e-mail in simple format. The only problem in writing is when she first entered William Connor, she got few comments from the boss that her e-mails were too short and need more explanation or reasons to support or cover the answers. She adds that the art of persuasion is needed in writing e-mails especially price negotiation and late delivery acceptance without penalty. The merchandisers have to find sensible reasons to support why they cannot keep the price same as last year or late delivery is due to delay from customers' sample approval.

Reading performance and problem

Reading is the second best among four skills that she can perform moderately. Apart from reading e-mails, she has to read and translate all details in BOM and Spec Pack. As she does not have repeat orders, all BOM and Spec Pack are for new orders so she has to spend some time in reading and translating. She always does cross-check her understanding and translating with the manufacturers if they get the same idea. When she comes across with difficult vocabulary, she consults dictionary or discusses

with her boss if she interprets that e-mail or sentence correctly. In her opinion, mostly difficulty came from translating the sewing procedure as she knows very little vocabulary about that and all sample or order development starts from that point. There was once that she misinterpreted the sewing details but it was saved by the sewing technician that it did not put in process yet. Sometimes the BOM and Spec Pack sent with samples that helps her much to understand the garment construction and the customers' requirement. Sometimes the confusion came from the customer, for example, the customer mentioned a color name in an e-mail different from written in his BOM but actually they are exactly the same color so she learned that there are more than one word to call a color. It is not always the vocabulary that affects wrong interpretation, sometimes the word use in context causes her misunderstood. She did not remember the example but whenever she faces difficulty, she always consults her boss.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

She is unsatisfied with her listening/speaking. She has problem with stress and intonation both listening and speaking. On listening, as she is not familiar with American accent, word stress, and some textile or technical vocabulary related to knitting and spinning that she cannot imagine as she has only garment, not textile, experience. Sometimes she does not understand what the customers are conveying about and so the customers have to repeat the sentences again. Regarding speaking, it often happens that she has to repeat her sentences twice due to wrong word stress and sentence intonation as she can only speak Thai-English accent. This is also because she meets each customer twice a year and she has three accounts in total so she has meeting with customers about six times a year. And also her boss is Thai so she has very little chance to practice her listening/speaking. She mentioned that talking with customers is more difficult than friends and further commented that Thai people, in general, can write better than speak and know some grammar rules but cannot put in sentence in real speaking.

The most problematic skill for her English communication during work

Reading skill is the most problematic for her during work. As mentioned above that she has a problem when facing unknown vocabulary about sewing procedure which she thinks it is very important to perform correctly because it is the beginning of the development and orders.

Part 4: The garment merchandisers' view of knowledge and skill required concerning English communication at workplace. (wants: merchandiser interview)

Merchandiser's Wants - Listening/Speaking

She preferred to take course of listening/speaking especially the American accent so that she can apply with her job upon customers' visit. She believes that if she gets familiar with the American speaking, she will imitate the pronunciation and intonation, and improve her listening/speaking to be sounded like native speaker.

The most important skill - Reading/Writing

Reading/Writing is the most important for her at workplace because e-mail is the only key of communication and makes customers know the production and delivery status when customers are staying away from Thailand.

She points out an interesting idea that even though a merchandiser is very good at English but she has no experience or do not know in detail about garments, it will be difficult for her to communicate with the foreign customers as she encountered the situation by herself when she first entered in garment business, she had to take some time to read and reply an e-mail. Therefore English skill and garment knowledge are supported to each other for merchandiser career.

Interviewing: Chanoknan Perngrasamee – William Connor Merchandiser

Part 1: The garment merchandisers' personal background information.

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Ms. Chanoknan Perngrasamee

Date of Interview: April 11, 2008 Time of Day: 02.40 – 03.20 p.m.

Location of Interview: Meeting Room – William Connor

1. Sex? Female
2. What is your age? 35 years old
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Bachelor Degree
1. What is your major area of study? Textile Engineer (Rajamangala University of Technology – Klonghok Campus). In addition, her background regarding Textile Engineer is spinning, knitting, weaving, dyeing, and printing.
2. How long do you work in this company? 7 months
3. What is your current position in this company? Merchandiser
4. What were your first entered position and the other position before attending the current position in this company? Merchandiser
5. How long do you have experienced in this position? 7 months
6. How long do you have experienced in this business? 10 years

Part 3: The garment merchandisers' problems concerning English communication at workplace. (problems: boss interview and merchandiser interview)

Writing performance and problem

Writing is her best skills among the four skills with moderate performance. Maximum e-mail per day is seventy and minimum is twenty. So it is forty to fifty e-mails in average. Time spent on reading and writing e-mails is more than three hours a day. She spends not much time for e-mails to garment manufacturer because the people from the manufacturers may call up and ask for more information if e-mails are not clear. On the contrary, she spends a lot of time for customers' e-mails because she has to write e-mails as clear as possible and sometimes she has to consult the boss for appropriate vocabulary when needed. In some cases, she intends to explain long e-mails so that customer will understand clearly at one time but she gets a response from customers that they do not understand what she is trying to convey. She learned that she has to start with main idea, and follow by explanation but not too much in detail. At the beginning of working at William, she used inappropriate word and her boss said she should not have used that word as it made customer feel bad. She could not remember those issues but gave an example of similar situation. She quoted prices

to a customer and he said the price was far too high. She would like to reply that this price came from a manufacturer who is one of the most difficult manufacturers to deal with but she could not as it would make the customer feel bad with the manufacturer. Her job as a merchandiser in an agent company is to compromise and keep good relationship with both foreign customers and Thai manufacturer. If she gets complaint from customers, she has to calm down and reply politely.

Reading performance and problem

In her opinion, she perform moderately in reading. On translation, if she is not sure in meaning both vocabulary and the whole context, she will have a cross-check with her boss or the manufacturers. For example, a customer explained about packaging which she and her boss understood differently. So they asked for an idea from the Big Boss (Office Manager) who is Philippines and he interpreted another meaning. Finally the Big Boss' interpretation was correct. This is because she and her boss are Thai where English is only foreign language while English for Philippines is the second language and so they get closer to native speaker in term of interpretation rather than Thai speaker. Sometimes the customers write e-mails too short that can be interpreted in several meanings, maybe because their laziness or habits. In this case if the boss or the office manager is not around, she will clarify the meaning of ambiguous words by herself, even though ten sentences, she has to do so to protect future problem. She has to do further clarification if it is not clear until the customer said you understood it correctly.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

She performs listening/speaking unsatisfactorily, in her opinion. Upon the foreign customers' visit, they try to understand her Thai English accent and she also has to try to understand the American accent. She had to repeat words or sentences when first met with customers but later on, after they met the second or third time, both sides understand each other more because they get familiar to each other accent. Sometimes when two old customers who get used to her Thai English come with a new comer, the two old customers help repeating to the new one. Regarding telephone conversation, she could understand better than face to face communication because

she can concentrate on only the topic she prepared and no need to concentrate on the facial expression. Comparing to face to face communication, the customers may come up with the topics that she does not think about it yet or does not prepare in advance. She gets about nine visits a year round from three teams of customers and sometimes she has to help working with the other customers if requested by the boss.

The most problematic skill for her English communication during work

Her outstanding weakness is that she doesn't know how to write appropriate length of e-mail with clearly mentioning main idea. She spent a lot of time trying to explain as much as possible but get customers' confusion in return. Her boss already made a suggestion to improve and she hope she will write better in the near future.

Part 4: The garment merchandisers' view of knowledge and skill required concerning English communication at workplace. (wants: merchandiser interview)

Merchandiser's Wants - Listening/Speaking

She preferred to take course of listening/speaking because she wants to improve her listening to the native speaker so that she can understand right after the first speaking without any repeat and also improve her speaking about word stress and intonation so that customers can understand her since first meeting.

The most important skill - Reading/Writing

In general, she does not have difficulty in reading because she got technical vocabulary while studying Textiles Engineer in University. Regarding writing, as stated earlier that she replied an average of forty to fifty e-mails a day, she has a chance to practice much writing each day. Anyhow, if there is a course of training, she is willing to join it.

Interviewing: Nongnutch Palasert – William Connor Asst. Merchandiser

Part 1: The garment merchandisers' personal background information.

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Mrs. Nongnutch Palasert
 Date of Interview: April 11, 2008 Time of Day: 03.20 – 04.00 p.m.
 Location of Interview: Meeting Room – William Connor

1. Sex? Female
2. What is your age? 40 years old
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Diploma
4. What is your major area of study? Garment Textile (Rajamangala University – Udon Thani Campus)
5. How long do you work in this company? 11 yearss
6. What is your current position in this company? Asst. Merchandiser
7. What were your first entered position and the other position before attending the current position in this company? Asst. Merchandiser
8. How long do you have experienced in this position? 11 years
9. How long do you have experienced in this business? 20 years

Part 3: The garment merchandisers' problems concerning English communication at workplace. (problems: boss interview and merchandiser interview)

Reading performance and problem

She can perform well in reading so reading is her best performance among four skills as she studied about garment textile and garment construction including technical vocabulary from the university. If she has problem about some vocabulary in reading BOM and Spec Pack, she will consult dictionary or discuss with the boss. The maximum e-mail per day is thirty and the minimum is ten e-mails. Time spent in reading and writing e-mails are about three to four hours a day. Personally, she thinks she improves a lot in reading that nowadays she understand some articles or columns in English newspaper or magazines while in the past, she understood only English lesson from school or university.

Writing performance and problem

She can perform writing poorly. She has weakness in grammar but the customers try to understand her poor English unless her explanation is not straight to the point. It is both response to customers' e-mails and request for customers' comment that she could not explain clearly what she wants. Her grammar problem is on tense, she has confusion in using past tense, present tense, and future tense. For example, she informed customers that she already had production meeting with the factory but actually she will have the meeting on the next day (using past simple tense instead of future simple tense). Another example, she informed customers that the fabric is under cutting process on that day but actually the fabric was already 100% finished cutting (using present continuous tense instead of past simple tense). On the next day the boss informed the correct information that the fabric was already 100% cut. In this case, the customers were serious and confused that why information got yesterday was under cutting process but it was already finished on the following day. She tries to improve her grammar by concentrate on TV English Program or asks the boss or colleague if they were customers, they will understand her e-mails or not before she send them out.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

Though she has poor English, when she explained something and the customers did not understand, they never complained. Instead, after the customers got it, they helped suggesting the correct way to explain next time. Regarding listening, she got a tip from a teacher that she has no need to understand the whole speech, just only 10% or especially the stress words. And if she does not understand, she can get back and ask the customers if her understanding is correct or incorrect.

The most problematic skill for her English communication during work

Grammar especially tenses for writing e-mails is the most problematic knowledge for her in writing e-mail and for customers' understanding. Now she has more confidence to disclose that she knows very little about tenses and is open to get comment or consultation from boss and other merchandisers to improve her tense knowledge.

Part 4: The garment merchandisers' view of knowledge and skill required concerning English communication at workplace. (wants: merchandiser interview)

Merchandiser's Wants and the most important skill - Writing

She preferred to take grammar courses especially tenses because she is so confused to use it correctly. If she understands more in tenses, it will help her a lot in e-mail communication with customers and lessen customers misunderstanding and confusion. Writing is also the most important skill at William Connor as it is the daily and main communication with foreign customers.

Listening/Speaking

Speaking is the second skill that she wants to take course especially the intonation so that she can improve her explanation and communication with customers. She personally tries to improve herself in listening/speaking all the time, for example, listening to the soundtrack of some movies with reading subtitle under. Sometimes when she met foreigners walking on the footpath, she walked straight to them and asked if they need any help. She adds that Thai people are very shy, though we learn a lot of conversation but we still keep it to ourselves and do not practice or bring to use of what we have learnt.