

APPENDIX C

Vision Garment Interview Results

Interviewing: Surasawadee Wongsurapichet – Vision Garment Boss and Owner

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Ms.Surasawadee Wongsurapichet

Sex: Female Age: 42 years

Date of Interview: Feb 23, 2008 Time of Day: 09.00 – 09.50 a.m.

Location of Interview: Meeting Room – Vision Garment

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 – All Skills

The boss is unsatisfied on the merchandisers' performance because she still finds mistakes on grammar and appropriate use of words. Actually she needs her merchandisers to communicate with comprehensible message or make the customers understand what the merchandisers try to convey and also the merchandisers understand what the customers' request. Vision Garment is turning direction from 100% local market about two years ago to 80% export both direct foreign customers and through the agents and 20% local within this year. So she needs to have merchandisers who can communicate well or at least satisfactorily in English. For the old merchandisers who can't communicate in English would be a problem for Vision Garment. She has to give them a chance to learn English and improve themselves to go with the company's new direction because they work with Vision Garment for some years and know regulation of the company. If the merchandisers cannot improve themselves, Vision Garment might leave them behind. She adds that it is not only Vision Garment that is turning to international direction but almost all garment companies are doing so. The new policy is if the staff is not good at English, company will reconsider her/him to continue working or quit the job but if English is good, the staff will get salary increase.

Satisfaction on staff performance - Reading/Writing

The boss is not satisfied with the merchandisers' performance and wants them to improve reading/writing especially e-mail because it is the most important tool to communicate with customers everywhere in the world. BOM - Bill of Material (or production sheet, or tech sheet, or tech pack) - is as important as e-mail as BOM is the key details of garment that the customer wants. The merchandiser who graduated from Textiles still does not perform reading very well though she knows textile vocabulary but she does not know much about grammar or some expression that makes her sometimes misunderstands some information. Another merchandiser who did not study textile before takes time for reading each BOM as lack of technical vocabulary. Both merchandisers do not perform well on writing e-mails especially tense or word order or sentence construction. The boss also wants the merchandisers to learn grammar and expression that is related to textile export business.

Satisfaction on staff performance - Listening/Speaking

Both merchandisers can communicate in English but very poor. The boss noticed that one of her merchandisers can read, can write, but when put her on conversation, she can't speak. Upon speaking, she put words in the wrong order, put words that should be at the back to the front and put the words that should be at the front to the back. Maybe because she never practices speaking and she feels nervous to do so. She can understand if customers speak slowly and only if they are talking about subjects that she knows. If customers speak fast and talk about other subjects that she has no idea, she will get lost and do not understand at all. Another merchandiser can speak English but it takes her some time to reply the customers or put words in a sentence that makes conversation very slow. At the moment the boss does not want the merchandisers to take listening/speaking course but in the near future is needed as Vision Garment is turning to 80% export business as mentioned above.

The most important skill – Reading/Writing

Reading/Writing e-mail is core of the export garment business. Though time spent on e-mails are not much but the comprehension and the process right after is important. Also, e-mail is very efficient communication if both sides are in different places as it is cheaper and last longer than speaking. Yet, e-mail is black and white evidence if there are any issues occur. Nowadays even customers are the agent

companies in Thailand, almost all companies have to write e-mail in English. The e-mail should have key or meaningful words. Correct grammar or correct word order is important but maybe unnecessary as long as both sides understand the content. The boss often communicates with her merchandisers through the e-mails because she wants to have them practice English as much as possible. Good English does not mean that people can work well but English will help people who know their job prosperous in their career.

The least important skill – Listening/Speaking

In her opinion, it is not necessary for merchandisers to take course as very few customers visit about 3- months-time or once a month and whenever customers visit, the boss will always join the meeting.

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

Reading/Writing performance and problem

Both merchandisers understand only very simple words and simple sentences. For example, when a customer said O.K., the merchandisers would understand that it is o.k. But if a customer said nearly O.K., they would not sure about the meaning of nearly O.K. is o.k. or not o.k. The merchandiser who knows textile vocabulary still does not understand some e-mails and need to consult the boss. The merchandiser who has no garment textile background takes time in reading BOM and need to consult the boss or technician. Sometimes merchandisers still interpreted information wrongly and passed wrong information to sample room or production. Sometimes one of the merchandisers cannot translate some words and skip them that mean they skipped some important information. Regarding writing, both merchandisers can write only simple sentences. When the boss sees incorrect grammar or words, she writes separate e-mail and suggests the correct grammar or words to the merchandisers. For example, use 'please advise' instead of 'answer me' or 'please tell me'. Or 'please reply by return' should be used when we want the reply from customers. She further suggests that the merchandiser should copy some words or

sentences and bring to use when they found similar situation In general, she thinks that the merchandisers are o.k. on conveying the meaning as long as they have key words.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

The main problems on listening is that merchandisers understand only when customers speak slowly and they take quite few minutes to make up a sentence both reply or asking questions. Both merchandisers are lack of experience in listening/speaking. The boss advises that the merchandisers should remember some sentence format and expression to use when needed.

Interviewing: Sompatsorn Soontornsirivetch – Vision Garment Merchandiser

Part 1: The garment merchandisers' personal background information.

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Sompatsorn Soontornsirivetch

Date of Interview: Feb 23, 2008 Time of Day: 11.00 – 11.50 a.m.

Location of Interview: Meeting Room – Vision Garment

1. Sex? Female
2. What is your age? 26 years old
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Bachelor Degree
4. What is your major area of study? Textile Engineer (Rajamangala Institute of Technology – Klong Hok)
5. How long do you work in this company? 3 years
6. What is your current position in this company? Senior Merchandiser
7. What were your first entered position and the other position before attending the current position in this company? Merchandiser
8. How long do you have experienced in this position? 3 months
9. How long do you have experienced in this business? 5 years

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

Reading performance and problem

When she studied at the university, she had to read some English textbooks and manuals of spinning and knitting machines. Therefore skills that she was mainly trained are reading and also translation practice (English to Thai) but very few times on speaking practice. Therefore reading is not a big problem for her as a merchandiser, for example, she can read and understand BOM in a short time as it is much less difficult than textbook. BOM is a set of all information about the garments or styles that the customers looking for (for example, size specification, material, color, workmanship and delivery date). The merchandiser work process is to quote the price first from BOM and after the orders are confirmed, BOM will be the guideline to produce the order through shipment. She will get BOM whenever there are new styles to quote. Some customers send few BOM and some send ten BOM or more at a time for quotation. Sometimes the boss gives her few pages of English information leaflet, for example, new fiber information. She does not read all of them but selects only the topic of interest. She was lucky that she got a Philippines boss (who can't speak Thai) on her first job so she gained a lot of garment vocabulary from her. Though reading is quite o.k. in her opinion but she still lack knowledge of vocabulary and some modifiers, for example, adjective and adverb. A problem found when reading e-mails, for example, the contract form of 'instead of' which was 'I/O'. Her habit was fast reading and so she skipped the 'I/O' which affected the opposite interpretation. Anyhow for this issue, she was lucky that it was found out before production started. Another issue was she translated wrongly and affected making samples wrongly and got complaint from the customers that why they did samples with discrepancies. This caused a lot of time and expense on fabric and labor cost. In terms of quotation, she has to know material vocabulary so that she understand and includes all cost that customers want. Anyhow the boss always reviews all details before she replies the customers.

Writing performance and problem

Her writing performance is satisfactorily to poor because she has problem in using two or three verbs - cluster (for example 'I want send samples to you tomorrow'. Or 'I am go buy more sewing machines?') To lessen writing problem, she writes e-mail on words as it will catch her grammar mistakes, for example, if she forgets to put subject at the beginning of the sentence, it will show error marks and she will know right away that she has to correct something in the sentence. In general, she has to response 40 – 50 e-mails per day, spending few hours in the morning and about one hour before leaving the office. Though she has problem on verb cluster, she can communicate the message that she wants in her e-mails as the customers also try to understand her idea.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

Her listening performance is satisfactory but her speaking performance is poor. Conversation with foreign customers is understandable but the customers must not speak too fast. Face to face conversation is better than telephone conversation as there is gesture help conveying the meaning. Sometimes the boss talks with merchandisers in English with clear accent. She has German customers but they speak German English that causes her confusion sometimes as she is not familiar with the German English accent. As mentioned before, she was lucky that she got a Philippines boss who can't speak Thai on her first job so she gained some English speaking practice from that two years period. Regarding price negotiation, she understands when customers communicate with her about price because she likes mathematics and consumption and can communicate right away which help shortening order conclusion and order placement. The problem is she cannot speak exactly what she wants because sometimes she is lack of vocabulary to draw sentences and also she has little knowledge in grammar rules therefore she need time to draw a sentence. In general, the foreign customers understand her Thai English speaking though broken grammar.

The most problematic skill for her English communication during work

Her lack of knowledge in English vocabulary that makes her misunderstanding or making wrong interpretation for example the meaning of ‘instead of’ that mentioned above.

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 wants fluent speaking as now Vision Garment is turning to have more foreign customers and so she has to use English to communicate more with those customers. Sometimes when customers complain about something, she cannot think of words to response the customers in few minutes and once she could think about the right words, the customers have already completed their conversation. She would like to practice on price negotiation with prompt response to the customers. For examples, if the customers want to get the target price, she would like to inform the customers that they have to reduce some accessories or use the cheaper materials which still look as nice as the expensive ones. Also she adds that the fluently speaking person looks more professional and more reliable than the influent one.

The most important skill – Reading/Writing

Reading/writing is the most important at Vision Garment. She uses the skills everyday that she improves a lot of reading/writing skill comparing with 3 years ago. Reading, as a merchandiser, she has to read e-mails and BOM and translate for sample room or production. Writing, she improves from beginner that she writes, only few words or phrases, now becomes being able to write sentences and corresponding e-mails.

Sirirat Tangwataneer – Vision Garment Merchandiser

Part 1: The garment merchandisers’ personal background information.

Interviewer: Yanica Ongwisut Interviewee: Sirirat Tangwataneer

Date of Interview: Feb 23, 2008 Time of Day: 10.00 – 10.50 a.m.

Location of Interview: Meeting Room – Vision Garment

1. Sex? Female
2. What is your age? 42 years old
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Bachelor Degree
4. What is your major area of study? Human Resource and management with accounting background from vocational education
5. How long do you work in this company? 10 years
6. What is your current position in this company? Merchandiser
7. What were your first entered position and the other position before attending the current position in this company? Inventory, Local Brand Marketing, Purchasing, and Financing
8. How long do you have experienced in this position? 3 years
9. 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)

Reading performance and problem

Reading skill is her best performance among the four skills. In her opinion, she can perform satisfactorily on reading. She has to spend time on e-mails about one hour or half an hour per day. She has about few new BOM per month, as mostly orders are repeated with old BOM. She has to understand e-mails and the information on BOM before doing next steps. For example, the customer sending PO and BOM and asks for possible delivery. She has to read the BOM and translate to Thai, for example, size spec, materials to be used, and other related details including some codes, such as DN stands for Double Needle. And then she has to check with production department how to fit the order/PO in and when they can ship the goods. Regarding vocabulary, she has to continue learning technical words about garment construction, for example, sewing procedure, stitching details and specification measurement. She learns those technical words by consulting dictionary and then comparing with original sample or asking pattern maker about those technical terms. She likes to have new BOM because she can learn new vocabulary from that. Her

mainly problem is she takes time in reading and translating BOM as she has to consult dictionary or consult technician for difficult words. Recently she has a new customer in her responsibility with more new BOM to translate, therefore it takes he few days to understand thoroughly all the BOM.

Writing performance and problem

Mostly communication is through writing rather than listening-speaking as there is not much chance to see the customers. All e-mails from the customers to merchandisers are concerning with orders and delivery status. The customers' e-mails about problems and complaints go directly to her boss. She has problem on grammar. She forgot almost all grammar rules she learnt in school, especially tenses. Now she remembers only three tenses: Present Simple, Past Simple and Future Simple which, she complains that it is not enough making nice sentences. Also she wants to know more vocabulary and expression to write e-mails. For example, she use 'tell me' instead of 'please advice'. Her boss suggests her to memorize some patterns, for example, 'please find attachment', 'please keep for your reference', and 'please confirm by return'.

Listening/Speaking performance and problem

Her main customer comes once a month with half day meeting. She understands only the slowly speaking. If the customer speaks too fast and she doesn't get it, she will take chance when the customer turns to do something else and ask her boss the issues she could not catch or understand. She understands 60% of the conversation as those are about work but she doesn't understand the rest 40% of the conversation as those are about the other topics. For example, if the customer is talking about food or travelling, she will understand only simple sentences and meaning but not the complex sentences, difficult vocabulary or tone of the sentences. Regarding English speaking, in general, it takes her quite a few minutes to draw a sentence as she has to retrieve vocabulary from her memory. She feels that she knows quite some vocabulary but she has difficulty in constructing a sentence and how to put the appropriate position of each word. Yet, she cannot put all the words in correct order while she can do it on e-mails. Though she has poor speaking performance, she

is quite satisfied with her listening ability at this moment. Sometimes when she received telephone calls from customers, she cannot catch what customer want, so she has to tell customer, 'slowly please' and concentrate on it. The telephone conversation must be very short and she has to reply by e-mails.

The most problematic skill for her English communication during work

Writing is the most problematic for her because it is the most important for her daily communication and she has difficulty to find appropriate words to write e-mails as mentioned above.

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

Merchandiser's Wants – Writing

In term of working, she wants to improve writing, and so does the boss, to be a better performance especially corresponding with the customers. She thinks that if she can write well, she can speak well. She needs to improve her productive skill of writing and also speaking as it is her weak point. She personally wants to improve her ability in reading. She bought a lot of short stories and outside reading of secondary level to practice but once she started reading, she also started opening dictionary so often that she had to spend a lot of time and finally she gave up reading.

The most important skill - Reading

Reading is the most important skill for work as she has to understand the e-mails and translate all details of BOM before doing next steps. Writing is the second important in her opinion. She adds that now she is satisfied that during this three years, she works as a merchandiser and can relate her English background knowledge with her merchandising work compared to the past when she worked as an accountant, she did not use much English in work. In the next three years, she hopes that she will have better performance as the company policy is turning to 80% export 20% local instead of 100% local as before.