



ESL Podcast 83 – Planning a Business Luncheon

GLOSSARY

to retire – to choose to stop working at one's job, usually because one has reached 65 years of age or over

* Mr. Seawright worked for the company 52 years and retired at the age of 70.

in charge of – responsible for; having the task of planning a project or event

* Janetta was put in charge of raising money to fund the new project.

in (someone's) honor – for someone; for the purpose of respecting or honoring someone

* His friends were all thankful for Jim's help over the years, so they held a party in his honor to show him how much they appreciated him.

to pick up the tab – to pay the cost of something; to pay money owed for the products or services that are used

* After a long night of drinking and celebrating, Reatha picked up the tab and paid for her friends' drinks.

availability – the ability to come to an event; time that one can use to go to an event

* Benjamin needed to check his availability to find out if he could go to the concert or if he already had plans for that night.

to hold – to have; to perform an organized or formal activity

* When the graduation ceremony was over, Loraine's parents held a reception to celebrate her accomplishment.

party – a group of people with a shared purpose; a group of people who eat together at a restaurant

* The restaurant needed to find room for the party of eight people to sit down and eat.

banquet room – a large room in a restaurant or hotel that is used for large groups of people or formal events

* The banquet room inside the restaurant could fit anywhere between 20 and 30 people.

charge – fee; money one must pay for a service

* Marco needed to pay an extra charge to rent the DVD an extra day.



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to guarantee – to promise; to say that an offer or result is certain

* Shae guaranteed her parents that she would get a good grade on her next exam, and she fulfilled her promise by getting a 98% on the test.

guest of honor – the person for whom an event is organized to celebrate

* The guest of honor was late to his own birthday party and none of the other guests could start the party without him.

corkage fee – money one must pay to bring alcohol into a restaurant instead of ordering alcohol from the restaurant

* The restaurant did not serve his wife's favorite wine, so Burt paid a corkage fee and brought in his own bottle.

extension – numbers dialed after a standard phone number that one uses to reach a specific phone or person

* The phone number to the office is 1-555-123-5678, but anyone who wants to talk directly to the boss should also dial the extension 793.

in advance – beforehand; before something happens

* Raquel paid for the cleaning service beforehand and owed the company nothing after the cleaning was done.



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CULTURE NOTE

Getting More Tips

In American restaurants, it is “customary” (typical; normal) to leave a small “tip” (extra money for good service) for the “waiter” or “waitress” (person who takes your order and brings you your food). The tip is usually 10 to 20% of the total cost of your “meal” (food). Most people believe that the tip is related to the service: If the “waiter” (male server) or “waitress” (female server) does a good job, he or she will get a bigger tip.

“Research” (studies; investigations) on tipping tells us, however, that this is only partly true. “Good service” (taking care of the customer) improves the amount of the tip a little, but other “seemingly” (apparently) unrelated “factors” (influences; things) do, such as the following:

- Writing “thank you” on the check. We like people who are polite, and saying “thank you” makes us feel important and appreciated.
- Writing a kind message on the check. This could be anything positive or encouraging, like “Great to see you here!” or “Have a good day!”
- Drawing a “happy face” on the check. This sounds a little stupid, but if the server draws a smiley face on the check, the average customer will give that person more money in his tip. Smiling has a very powerful influence on us, even when we see it on a piece of paper.
- Greeting the customer and introducing himself or herself. Servers in American restaurants often come to your table and give their name: “Hi! I’m Sally and I’ll be your server tonight. How’s your evening going so far?”
- Leaving a small piece of candy with your check. When your bill comes with a small piece of candy, you probably feel like the server has given you a special, extra “gift.” One of the strongest influences on our behavior is “reciprocity,” meaning that when someone does something good for us, we feel the “obligation” (necessity) to do something good for them in return. That one-cent piece of candy can be worth several dollars in tips.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 83: Planning a Business Luncheon.

You're listening to episode 83 of English as a Second Language Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful – for the most part – Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is going to be about planning a business lunch or a business luncheon. Let's eat!

[start of dialogue]

One of my co-workers, Betty, was retiring this month after working for the company 23 years. I was put in charge of planning a retirement lunch in her honor at a restaurant nearby. The company was picking up the tab and it was up to me to set a day and time. After asking the people in the department and finding out their availability, I called the restaurant to make a reservation.

Manager: Bruno's.

Jeff: Hi, I'm calling from Nika Corporation. We would like to hold a business lunch at the restaurant.

Manager: Oh, certainly. I'm Linda, the manager. I can help you with that. How many will there be in your party?

Jeff: There will be about 18 people.

Manager: Okay. For a party that size, we have a separate banquet room in the back.

Jeff: Is there an extra charge to reserve the room?

Manager: No, as long as you can guarantee at least 15 guests, there is no extra charge.

Jeff: That's great. I'd like to go ahead and reserve the room, then, for Friday, December 2, at around noon. This is a retirement party and we'd like to bring a



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cake for the guest of honor and some bottles of champagne. Will that be acceptable?

Manager: The cake is no problem at all, but we do charge a corkage fee of \$15 a bottle for any alcohol not purchased from the restaurant.

Jeff: Oh, that's fine.

Manager: Great. I have the banquet room reserved for a luncheon for Nika Corporation on the 2nd of December. May I have your name and contact information?

Jeff: Sure. I'm Jeff McQuillan and my number is 323-555-6840, extension 42.

Manager: Thanks, Mr. McQuillan. I'll give you a call a week in advance to confirm the arrangements.

Jeff: Sounds good. Thanks for your help.

Manager: Thank you for choosing Bruno's. We look forward to seeing you on the 2nd.

[end of dialogue]

We learn in this podcast about making plans at a restaurant for a business lunch. The expression we use in the title is “luncheon” (luncheon) and “luncheon” is just another word for lunch but it implies something more formal, often for a business reason. The reason for this particular business luncheon is that one of my co-workers, Betty, was retiring this month. “To retire” means that you are leaving your job. Usually, you retire when you are, in the United States, 64 or 65 years old. I was “put in charge” of planning a retirement luncheon. “To be put in charge” means that you are the person who will organize. You are the leader of that particular task, or thing you have to do.

Now, the lunch is in Betty's honor, “in her honor,” which means it's for her. It's something we're doing especially for her. We use that expression, “in your honor” or “in his honor,” to mean that it's a special event that we are doing to honor or to thank this person. The company is going to be “picking up the tab.” “To pick up the tab” means to pay for. It's a somewhat informal expression to pay for. The “tab” (tab) is another word for the bill or the check. So, you can ask, for example, “Who's picking up the tab?” It means, “Who is paying for this?” Not just in a restaurant but for any sort of project. I said that it was “up to me” to set a day and



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time. The expression, “it is up to you” or “it is up to me,” means it’s my decision. I’m the one who has to choose. So, for example, if you were saying to your wife or husband, “Do you want to go to a movie or do you want to go to a play?” and they said to you, “It’s up to you,” or simply, “Up to you,” that would mean they want you to pick. That usually is what happens in my house.

I said that I had to find out what the “availability” was of the people in my department at work. The “availability” means whether they can go on certain time or date. I then called the restaurant to make a “reservation.” A “reservation,” of course, is when you call a restaurant or a hotel or airline and say, “I want to use your service at a certain time.” The woman answered the phone with the name of the restaurant, Bruno’s. I told the woman that we wanted to “hold a business lunch” at the restaurant. “To hold a lunch” just means to have a lunch. We sometimes use that for events or activities. “Where is the reception being held?” means, “Where is the reception going to be? What is the location of the reception or the party?” The woman answering the phone introduced herself as the manager, or the boss, of the restaurant. And she asked me, “How many would be in your party? How many will there be in your party?” “Party” here doesn’t mean a celebration. “Party” just means group or the number of people in your group. So, when someone says, “How many in your party?” -- which is a very common question at a restaurant, they’re asking you how many people are in your group, how big of a table do you need? Now, in my case I needed 18 seats, or 18 places. I had a big “party.” And so the manager told me, “Well, for a party that size,” meaning that big, “we have a separate banquet room in the back.” A “banquet room” in a restaurant is a private room, a separate room where people can have events and parties and not interfere with the rest of the restaurant, those people who are not in the party. It’s a separate room. A “banquet” is just another word for a very formal, very nice meal with lots of different food.

I asked if there was an “extra charge to reserve the room,” meaning is it going to cost more money. “Charge” is – here, really, refers to whether they’re going to charge me more money, whether they’re going to tell me I have to pay more money. The woman said there was no extra charge if I could “guarantee” at least 15 guests. “To guarantee” as a verb means to promise, to say someone, “Yes, that will happen” or, “I will do that.” A “guarantee” as a noun is a promise that you make to someone. We also use that word, “guarantee,” for something that you buy, maybe a computer or a television, and they’ll sometimes say, “This is guaranteed,” meaning if there’s something wrong with it, we will fix it or take it back. I then make a reservation for the 2nd of December and I tell the manager that we want to bring a cake for the “guest of honor.” The “guest of honor” is when you have a dinner, a meal, a lunch and you are thanking someone or you



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are honoring or telling this person that they've done a good job. The person that you are having the lunch for is called the "guest of honor."

I also asked if I can bring some bottles of champagne in the restaurant and the manager says, "Yes, but there's a corkage fee." A "corkage fee" (corkage) – when you have a bottle of wine or champagne, there's a little thing at the top of the bottle that is like the cap or the top that keeps the wine in the bottle. We call that a "cork." "Cork" is a type of material and "corkage fee" means that in this case, they charge you for each bottle of champagne or wine that you bring in that you don't buy at the restaurant. Some restaurants have corkage fees; some restaurants you can't bring in wine or alcohol even by paying an extra amount of money. I say to the woman, "That's fine," meaning that's okay, I agree. And the woman, the manager, repeats back my information. She gives my telephone number with the "area code" first. In the United States, there is – each different region has its own "area code." I live in "area code" 310. There are many "area codes" in Los Angeles depending on where we live. And the regular or local telephone number has 7 digits. I also give my "extension," meaning at my work, if you call that number, you have to dial in or ask for phone number 42, "extension" 42.

The woman tells me that she will call me a week in advance to confirm the arrangements. "In advance" just means before. So, if I say to you, "Let's meet in February of next year. I'll call you a week in advance of our meeting," I mean I'm going to call that person 7 days before we are actually going to have our meeting. "Arrangements" just means the agreement, the information that I gave the manager. The "arrangements for something" are the details, the information that you need in order to do what you're going to do. We often talk about "arrangements at a restaurant" or "arrangements for a meeting" – means the person who's taking or the actual things that you have to do in order to have the meeting or the lunch. I say to the manager, "Sounds good," meaning that is okay with me, that everything is agreeable to me.

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

Be sure to visit our website at www.eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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