
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

English at Work

2: The 'Awesome Apple'



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

LANGUAGE FOCUS: How to prepare someone for a disappointment. *I'm really sorry to let you down, but... Sorry to disappoint you, but... It's not how we planned it, but...* How to reduce blame on yourself *I'm afraid there's nothing I could do about it. Sorry but it's out of my hands.*

Narrator

Welcome back to English at Work. The staff at Tip Top Trading – the leading manufacturer of imitation plastic fruit – are busy trying to meet a huge demand in orders for its new 'Awesome Apple' product. But there's a problem because some of the orders have not been **awesome**, or indeed apple...

Tom

[on the phone] Yeah, yeah calm down mate... what can I do about it? Apples, avocados, they're all the same really. **I'm afraid there's nothing I could do about it.** Hello... hello? He hung up on me!

Anna

Is there a problem Tom?

Tom

Oh that was old Slimey Limey – he says his order for ten thousand 'Awesome Apples' isn't right – he's received ten thousand 'Amazing Avocados' instead. I told him it's not my fault, I didn't send them out. Sorry Anna **it's out of my hands** now.

Denise

Well don't look at me – I haven't had anything to do with Mr Lime since... the incident.

Narrator

[mocking] 'Sorry, but it's out of my hands' – lazy Tom is trying to pass the blame. Why did you marry him Anna?

Anna

Because I...I... find him unusual. Anyway, it sounds like it's down to me to sort this out.
[to the team]

Look, I'm not blaming anyone – yet - but we have to sort this out. Slimey, I mean Mr Lime,

is one of our biggest **clients**. Denise could you see if we have any more Awesome Apples in the warehouse that we can send him?

Denise

OK Anna – I'm onto it now.

Tom

He sounded very angry – a bit like you when I used all the hot water in the bath this morning, Anna.

Anna

Hmmm, I haven't forgotten about that Tom.

Denise

Anna... according to our database, we're completely out of Awesome Apples – and Big Bananas and even Imperial Lemons. [panicking] What are we doing to do Anna?!

Narrator

What *are* you going to do Anna? It's time to do some **grovelling**.

Anna

Grovelling?

Narrator

To show lots of respect for him – and try to please him. Be apologetic and use phrases like...

I'm really sorry to let you down, but...

Sorry to disappoint you, but... and maybe...

It's not how we planned it, but...

Anna

But...?

Narrator

'But'... explain what the problem is and how are you going to fix things? It's over to you Anna.

Tom

Anna, Anna... I can't ring Mr Lime and give him the bad news – I've got my... err... **reputation** to think of.

Denise

Yes you've certainly got a reputation Tom!

Anna

Thank you Denise. Look, it's Tip Top Trading's reputation we've got to think about now. I'm going to have to ring him now...

[dials phone]

Mr Lime

Sid Lime speaking.

Anna

Oh hello Mr Lime. It's Anna from Tip Top Trading here...

Mr Lime

Ah Anna, I did wonder when you would call. I see you're getting Tom to do all your **dirty work** now hmm? I don't know why you ever married...

Anna

It's about the awesome apples... I'm really sorry about the mix up... someone obviously got their apples mixed up with their avocados...

Mr Lime

Obviously! So you'll be sending me a replacement **ASAP**?

Anna

Err...well that's thing... I'm really sorry to let you down but... but... we haven't got any more Awesome Apples in stock to send you.

Mr Lime

Oh! Not so 'awesome'...

Anna

Clearly it's not how we planned it but something has gone wrong – we normally **pride ourselves** on good customer service...

Mr Lime

Clearly!

Anna

Look, we're really sorry to disappoint you but we will be producing some more Awesome Apples in a few weeks' time and we will.... err... we will send you an extra 1,000 apples as **compensation**. How does that sound Mr Lime?

Mr Lime

[thinking it over] Hmmm, an extra 1,000 you say? OK then... and how about having dinner with me sometime as well Anna?

[slams phone down]

Narrator

Well done Anna! She handled the call very well, sounding apologetic, honest and fair. Here are the phrases that helped her...

I'm really sorry to let you down.

Sorry to disappoint you, but...

It's not how we planned it, but...

Tom

So come on, how angry was he?

Anna

Not angry... everything is sorted, I think he'll be...

Denise

[interrupting] Anna, I've just been looking through the paperwork from the warehouse and on the order for Slimey Limey somebody ticked 'avocados' and not 'apples'.

Anna

Let me have a look [paper rustle] ... oh, and look who signed the paperwork... Tom!

Tom

[lost for words] What?

Anna

Tom, you thought I was angry this morning – just wait till I get you home.