

Keys. 13. Listening and gap filling

The following listening has been taken from the *Speak - Up* magazine, issue number 120, Year X, page 25.

Title: *Dressed to Shop*. Speak Up went along to Harrods to hear the official side of the story from spokesperson Peter Willasey.

Task: Read, fill in the gaps and check your answers when listening to the interview.

Speak Up presenter (Standard English); Peter Willasey (Standard English).

Speak Up: Some people would say it was rather hypocritical that you are often selling the sort of high fashion garb that you refuse your customers to wear in the store.

Peter Willasey: Indeed, well, ripped jeans we sold five or six years ago when they were deemed to be trendy. We also sell the athletics singlets and athletics shorts which we deem not to be appropriate for shopping in Knightsbridge. And we also sell the rucksacks which we ask people to carry in their hands. I have to add we also sell beds and we don't suggest that people use those in the store, and we also sell cigarettes, but we don't suggest that people smoke them whilst walking around the store. So it's not hypocritical. In a service industry one has to offer the customer the merchandise they require. They did use to require ripped jeans, and they still require athletics clothing. But, of course, athletics clothing is appropriate for running around a track at Crystal Palace, and it's not appropriate for standing in beautiful surroundings here in Knightsbridge, we feel.

S.U.: Do your doormen get lessons in how to ask people to leave nicely?

P.W.: Everybody in the store when they start, regardless of whether or not they're a main board director, a sales assistant or a doorman, undergoes a spell of customer service training. And customer service, of course, is one of our strongest points here. So everybody has it instilled into them that customer service is sacrosanct, and beyond everything else we have to maintain those levels of service. The doormen - of which we have about 100 uninformed security staff who on a rota basis will cover our 14 entrance doors - do have guidelines by which they have to implement the dress code. They're all professionals and they all do it politely. On occasions, unfortunately though, people will not accept that decisions and there have been - I stress, a very limited number of instances - where there has been foul language used by customers, and I think on one occasion actually a little more than that. But these ladies and gentlemen who are our security staff are very polite and they are very polite when they suggest to sir or madam that they might like to carry their rucksack in their hand, or indeed that if madam is wearing a cropped top showing a good deal of midriff she might like to put her sweatshirt back on.