

English at Work
Episode 39: A step too far
Disciplining a member of staff



- Narrator:** Hello and welcome back to Tip Top Trading. New recruit Rachel has been making life difficult for Anna; she's been making some bad business decisions. Let's find out how Anna can save the day.
- Tom:** Right, we've definitely got to do something about Rachel... definitely... only, I'm a bit busy at the moment.
- Denise:** Sorting out your dinner date are you Tom?! So Anna, have you spoken to Paul about this?
- Anna:** Yes I have, but he didn't do anything.
- Denise.** Hmm, well he is your boss so I think you've got to speak to him again. Take him some biscuits, that might get his attention.
- Anna:** Well, I'll try
- Denise:** Oh and keep notes so you have a record of your conversation.
- Anna:** Denise, you're amazing. But where have the pens gone to?
- Denise:** That is strange – we all seem to be losing our pens. Here, use this old pencil.
- Anna:** Thanks.
- Narrator:** Anna. Are you happy complaining officially about Rachel?
- Anna:** Not really but what else can I do? She's been spoiling all the work I've been doing.
- Narrator:** Yes she has. OK, well tell Paul the facts and tell him you want action.
- Anna:** OK. Right, here goes. (*KNOCK ON DOOR*)
- Paul:** Come in. (*DOOR OPENS*)
- Anna:** Hi Paul. I really need to speak to you about Rachel. She really is messing things up...Paul?
- Paul:** Sorry, just counting my biscuits. What were you saying? Rachel? Great girl, isn't she?
- Anna:** No she's not.

Paul: Oh.

Anna: (*Getting angry*) Paul, she's already sent out the wrong order and now she's upset our new client. Plus, have you seen the way she dresses? I'm not happy and I think you've got to take some action.

Narrator: Anna, you're on fire! But stick to the facts, don't get personal about Rachel.

Paul: Well I'm sure Mr Socrates would disagree with you. Look, if she is as bad as you say then I'll give you my permission to discipline her – give her a warning.

Anna: What! Me?

Paul: You know what's she done wrong so tell her not to do it again...and besides, I've got an important meeting to go to... and they usually have those delicious shortbread biscuits. So ...I'll leave it with you then? (*DOOR SHUTS*)

Narrator: What a useless boss! Anna are you happy about what to do next?

Anna: Not really. What am I going to say?

Narrator: It's not easy but keep calm and professional and say to Rachel, "you've made some serious mistakes" and "you need to consult me before you contact any of our clients." Give her a verbal warning saying "These mistakes cannot happen again, otherwise I will have to refer the matter to someone higher." This may lead to disciplinary action but it may be for the best.

Anna: Oh it's all very serious but I suppose I've got to do it.

Narrator: Good luck!

Rachel: Anna! Darling! What's wrong? I saw Paul and he said you're in a bit of a mood.

Anna: It's not a mood Rachel. Can we talk please...now?

Rachel: Yeah sure. Let's sit here, shall we – not in that chair – that's my favourite.

Anna: Rachel, I wanted to let you know that you've made some serious mistakes.

Rachel: (*sarcastically*) Oh!

Anna: You have really upset our new client – and you think it's ok to sell second hand plastic oranges.

Rachel: Calm down. It's business, darling.

Anna: It's not good business Rachel. These mistakes cannot happen again. If they do I will have to take matters higher and it could result in disciplinary action.

Rachel: Oh! You're quite scary for a short girl.

Narrator: That was unnecessary! But well done Anna for keeping cool and calm in a difficult situation. Let's hope Rachel has got the message. Here is a reminder of the phrases you could use when giving someone a verbal warning...

*You've made some serious mistakes
You need to consult me before you contact any of our clients
These mistakes cannot happen again otherwise I will have to refer the matter to someone higher.*

Narrator: Let's find out how Rachel is behaving.

Tom: Ah hello, Rachel.

Rachel: Tommy boy. Come and give me a hug. (*SOUND OF PENS FALLING OUT OF HANDBAG*) Opps!

Tom: Our pens! All our pens! You've been stealing them! Rachel!

Paul: (*DOOR OPENS*) What's going on? I say, what are all those pens doing on the floor?

Denise: They're from Rachel's handbag. She's been stealing them!

Paul: What? The company's pens? Right, well, I need to see you in my office please Rachel, now...if you don't mind.

Anna/Tom/Denise: Gasp!

Narrator: So Rachel is the pen thief! What does this mean for her job at Tip Top Trading? Find out next time. Until then, bye!

Listening Challenge

Who stole all the pens?
(Answer: Rachel)