

**OFFERING ADVICE
WARNING ABOUT CONSEQUENCES
USING HAD BETTER**

The example below offers advice.

Example:

They **should offer** more training to their employees.

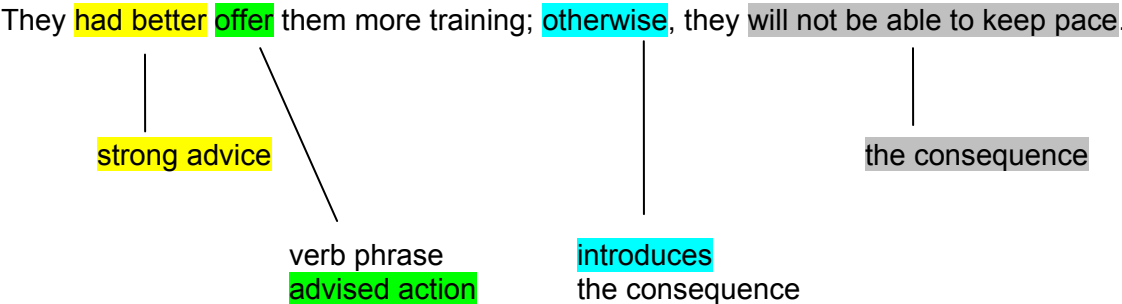
In the above sentence the modal auxiliary **should** is used to introduce **advice**. The simple verb **offer** is the **advised action**.

In the example below, it is the **advice**, not the advised action, that has changed.

Example:

They **had better offer** more training to their employees; otherwise, they will not be able to keep pace with the competition.

- The modal auxiliary **had better**¹ introduces the **strong advice**.
- The simple verb **offer** is the advised action.
- **Had better** is typically followed by the **consequence** that will occur if the advised action is not taken.
- **Otherwise** introduces the consequence.



NOTE: A synonym for **otherwise** is **or else**.

Example:

They had better offer more training to their employees; or else, they will not be able to keep pace.

¹ **Note:** The modal auxiliary **had better** is a fixed expression. This is not the past tense of the verb *have*.

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Exercises

Directions: Express the actions and consequences in each sentence using:
(a) **should** (advice only)
(b) **had better** and **otherwise/or else** (advised action and inevitable consequence)

Example:

They won't be successful unless they alter their image.

- a. They should alter their image.
- b. They'd better² alter their image; otherwise, they won't be successful.

1. He won't be promoted unless he works harder.

- a.
- b.

2. My client won't go for such a risky deal unless the other parties agree to binding arbitration.

- a.
- b.

3. You can't cash a check in most states in the United States unless you have a driver's license.

- a.
- b.

4. We'll never make it³ unless we leave now.

² In the spoken language, we often use the short form as shown. In the written language, we prefer "had better." In general, we use short forms when speaking, and full forms when writing.

a.

b.

5. You can't practice patent law without a background in science or engineering.

a.

b.

6. She can't go back to school unless she has the money.

a.

b.

7. You can't be successful at that company unless you have an M.B.A.

a.

b.

8. A company can't be successful in my country unless it works closely with the government.

a.

b.

³ Idiomatic expression (make it) meaning "arrive on time."

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Answers to Exercises

Directions: Express the actions and consequences in each sentence using:
(a) **should** (advice only)
(b) **had better** and **otherwise/or else** (advised action and inevitable consequence)

Example:

They won't be successful unless they alter their image.

- a. **They should alter their image.**
- b. **They'd better alter their image; otherwise, they won't be successful.**

1. He won't be promoted unless he works harder.

- a. **He should work harder.**
- b. **He'd better work harder, or else he won't be promoted.**

2. My client won't go for such a risky deal if the other parties don't agree to binding arbitration.

- a. **The other parties should agree to arbitration.**
- b. **The other parties had better agree to binding arbitration; otherwise, my client won't sign (my client won't go for such a risky deal).**

3. You can't cash a check in most states in the United States unless you have a driver's license.

- a. **You should have (get) a driver's license.**
- b. **You'd better have a driver's license; otherwise, you can't cash a check (in most states in the United States).**

4. We'll never make it unless we leave now.

- a. **We should leave now.**
 - b. **We'd better leave now, or else we'll never make it.**
5. You can't practice patent law without a background in science or engineering.
- a. **You should study science or engineering before going to law school.**
 - b. **You'd better study science or engineering before going to law school; otherwise, you can't practice patent law.**
6. She can't go back to school unless she has the money.
- a. **She should have the money.**
 - b. **She'd better have the money; otherwise, she can't go back to school.**
7. You can't be successful at that company unless you have an M.B.A.
- a. **You should have (get) an M.B.A.**
 - b. **You'd better have (get) an M.B.A.; otherwise, you can't be successful at that company. - or -**
- You'd better get an M.B.A. if you hope to work at that company. Otherwise, you'll never be successful there.**
8. A company can't be successful in my country unless it works closely with the government.
- a. **Foreign companies should work closely with our government.**
 - b. **Foreign companies had better work closely with our government; otherwise, they can't be successful here.**