

Recordings

1 Corporate culture

1.1 About business Work culture and placements

1:01

I got my first placement in a PR firm in Paris, which I was pleased about, 'cos I'm really interested in communication and image management. We'd been well prepared, and our teachers had warned us about dress code, being on time, respecting our commitments ... you know, all the usual things. But I had a problem I really wasn't expecting.

The first day, I arrived at 8.30 and I was a bit surprised because I had to wait an hour and a half for my supervisor to turn up. In fact, most people seemed to get in at about 11 o'clock – and by the time they'd had their coffee and read their mail, and so on, they didn't really start work much before twelve. But everybody was very relaxed and very friendly. My supervisor gave me a project to work on and told me to be autonomous and take initiative, you know, which I enjoy. So, I thought, great, I can really do a good job here and, you know, make a really good impression.

Anyway, for the first two weeks I worked from nine in the morning to about seven in the evening. I didn't really talk to other people very much, because when they arrived I was already working, and when I stopped for lunch, they were all busy. My boyfriend wasn't very happy about me getting home late, but, like I said, I wanted to impress the company, and I've never been afraid of hard work. But then, after the first couple of weeks, people seemed to be less friendly than when I started. I couldn't understand why they were giving me these funny looks, especially when I went home in the evening.

Anyway, in the end, I went and asked my supervisor what I'd done wrong. And it turned out that it wasn't the *done* thing to go home until eleven or midnight – and, because I left at about seven, I was breaking the unwritten rules. They all thought I was just some lazy student skiving off work! I mean, I knew I was the first to leave, but I'd been there since 9am, and I was working really hard, you know?! But as far as they were concerned, you couldn't do any work before twelve, so being in the office from nine in the morning didn't count!

1:02

I'm a department manager in the civil service. My office is just a few minutes' walk from the Houses of Parliament. Contrary to what you might think, we're actually very informal and friendly in the department – we're all quite young and everyone's on first name terms. We all have lunch together in the canteen and we'll often go to the pub for a drink together after work. We have one or two interns per year and we try to make them feel at home and part of the team, and usually it's fine.

But, a year or two ago, I had a problem with a student I was supervising. At first, everything was fine. She was very bright and friendly, and immediately got on well with everybody. For example, the whole department was invited to her birthday party. But then, one day we had a bit of a crisis in the office. We'd got behind schedule on one particular project, which Monica, the intern, was working on, and my manager wanted a report for a meeting at 10am. Of course, Monica was the only person who knew where the file was – only that day she didn't arrive at the office until 10.15. In fact, she'd been to the dentist's, but she hadn't told me that she'd be late. Well, as you can imagine, I was pretty stressed out and I made it very clear that this was unacceptable. I suppose I sounded angrier than I really was. And Monica just burst into tears, so I had to tell her that, you know, that was unprofessional too.

Anyway, after that, things were never the same. She became very quiet and reserved and

stopped socializing with the rest of the team. She wouldn't say anything in meetings and she didn't even eat in the canteen with us any more. Obviously, her work suffered and I don't think she enjoyed the placement. I tried to explain that I was her boss and that it was my job to tell her when there was a problem, but that it wasn't personal and it didn't mean we couldn't be friendly. But she didn't seem able to accept that. For her, a boss was a boss, and a friend was a friend, and you couldn't be a boss and a friend.

1.2 Vocabulary Work organization and responsibility

1:03

A: All right, Samantha, welcome to San Antonio. Now, I just want to give you an overview of the company and who does what, so you know who to ask when you need information, OK?

B: OK, Mr Newman.

A: And please call me Bertram, Samantha – we're very informal here in Texas.

B: All right, Mr New-er, Bertram. And, er, everyone calls me Sam.

A: Right, Sam. Now, as you know, my role is to manage Marketing and Sales; you'll be working with Jake, our Art Director, and Saidah, who's our PR Officer, but you're going to report directly to me. I'll introduce you to Saidah and Jake in a few minutes.

B: All right.

A: As I told you, we're a small company, so the organization is simple for the moment, but we're growing fast, so that's going to change as we hire new staff. For example, right now we don't have an HR department as such – Monica Overstreet, our Office Manager, takes care of personnel, so she's the person to see if you have any administrative questions.

B: Yes, I met Ms Overstreet last time I was here.

A: That's right. She also looks after finance, and she has two accountants working under her. Now then, as you probably know, Warndar Technologies was founded by Marilyn Warner, our CEO, and David Darren, who's now COO.

B: COO?

A: Yuh. Chief Operating Officer. Basically, David runs the business on a day-to-day basis. Marilyn deals with strategy, and she's on the board of our parent company, so she's often away in Houston.

B: Uh-huh – and Warndar is a subsidiary of the Irysis group, right?

A: That's right. They took us over a couple of years ago. Anyway, as well as Monica and myself, there are three other department heads who all report to David. The woman we met just now in the corridor is Roxane Pawle. Roxane is in charge of IT and Technical Support. She's new – she joined six months ago when our old IT Manager resigned. He was appointed Head of IT at one of the big consultancy firms up in Washington. Nice job, but too much stress. They fired him after three months. He's working as a bar tender now!

B: Wow!

A: Yeah. Glad you chose marketing, eh? It's dog eat dog in IT. Anyway, Roxane has a web developer and two support engineers reporting to her. OK? Now, the biggest department here is R&D. We have seven research scientists in the lab, plus Doug Pearson who coordinates our development programmes. He liaises with me in Marketing and with our Program Manager, Herb Monroe. Herb manages the Engineering Department, and he's responsible for building our product package – CD-ROMs, user manuals, and so on. Herb has a team of three: two software engineers and a technical writer.

B: OK.

A: All right, I think that's everyone. Unless you have any questions, we'll go and meet Saidah and Jake. Oh, and I think David wants to see

you in his office ... don't look so worried ... he's not going to fire you on your first day!

1.3 Grammar Past tenses and advice structures

1:04

Do you know the one about the CFO and the crocodiles? Well, there was this CEO, who was giving a party for his executive team. Over the years, the boss had done very well for himself, so he was proudly showing the executives around his luxurious country house. Anyway, at the back of the house, he had built the largest swimming pool any of them had ever seen. Absolutely huge, you know? But the pool was full of very hungry crocodiles. So, the CEO said to his executives, 'The most important quality for an executive is courage. Without it, you will never become a CEO like me. So, this is my challenge to each of you: if anyone can dive into the pool, swim through those crocodiles and reach the other side, I will give them anything they want. My job, my money, my house, anything!'

Well, of course, everyone laughed at the challenge and nobody took it very seriously. Anyway, they had just started to follow the CEO towards the barbecue when suddenly there was a loud splash. Everyone turned around and ran back to the pool where the Chief Financial Officer was swimming for his life. The crocodiles had almost caught him when he reached the edge of the pool. He'd just managed to climb out of the pool when he heard the mouth of the biggest crocodile close shut – snap – behind him.

Well, the CEO shook the CFO's hand and said, 'I'm really impressed. Until you dived into that pool, I never imagined you had such courage. You accepted my challenge and now anything I own is yours. Tell me what I can do for you.' The CFO was still recovering from the swim. He looked up at the CEO and said, 'You can start by telling me who the hell pushed me into the pool!'

1.4 Speaking Meetings – one to one

1:05

Version 1

A: Morning, Tiffany. Good weekend?

B: Oh, yes, it was cool. And you?

A: No, not really. Listen, Tiffany, come into my office, I need to talk to you.

B: Oh no, what now?

A: Look, I hear you had a problem with Maureen on Friday.

B: Oh that. Yeah. That idiot refused to help me! Who does she think she is?!

A: You mustn't talk about your colleagues like that. Maureen is a very experienced assistant and a valuable member of the team.

B: Maybe, but she still refused to help me.

A: Yes, but she had a good reason to refuse. Maureen was very busy on Friday and you didn't ask for help: you demanded her immediate attention. As a future manager, you should show respect to all the staff.

B: But I was just trying to finish the job.

A: Well, you won't get results from people like Maureen if you're rude.

B: Look, I was tired. I had a difficult week, OK?

A: Tiffany, everyone gets tired, and I'm getting tired of your attitude. You apologize, or there'll be trouble. Do you understand?

B: Me? Apologize to some stupid little secretary? No way!

1:06

Version 2

A: Morning, Tiffany. Good weekend?

B: Oh yes, it was cool and you?

A: Yeah I had a good weekend too – apart from having to finish off this report. How about you? What did you do?

B: I went to the swimming pool yesterday. Gorgeous weather.

A: Sounds good. Er, Tiffany, have you got a minute?

B: Sure.

- A: Come in. I just wanted to have a quick word. Erm, I hear you had a problem with Maureen on Friday.
- B: Oh that. Yeah. That idiot refused to help me! Who does she think she is?!
- A: Well, Tiffany, I think perhaps you should be more careful about how you talk about your colleagues. Maureen is a very experienced assistant and a valuable member of the team.
- B: OK, but she still refused to help me.
- A: Well, you might want to think about why she couldn't help you. Maureen was very busy on Friday, and I understand you didn't really ask for help so much as demand her immediate attention. We try hard to respect all our staff here. As a future manager, I think you ought to do the same.
- B: But I was just trying to finish the job.
- A: Well, I understand that, and I appreciate that you work hard and that you expect other people to show the same commitment. But, don't you think you might get better results from people like Maureen by being a little more diplomatic?
- B: Yeah. OK. I'm sorry, you're right. I was tired. I didn't mean to be rude.
- A: OK. It can happen to anyone. Why don't you ask Maureen to have a coffee with you, and just clear the air? OK?
- B: OK. Thanks, Simon.

1:07

- 1 I hear you had a problem.
- 2 Perhaps you should be more careful.
- 3 You ought to do the same.
- 4 I appreciate that you work hard.
- 5 I didn't mean to be rude.
- 6 It can happen to anyone.

1.5 Writing A placement report

1:08

- A: Hi, Jason!
- B: Oh hi, Alex.
- A: Do you fancy going out tonight? They're showing the new Will Smith movie at the Astoria.
- B: Oh yeah. Look, I'd love to, but I've got this essay to finish, and then I've got to write my placement report.
- A: Placement? Oh, that's interesting, I didn't know you did a placement. What did you do?
- B: I spent three months near Birmingham at a place called Diftco. They export construction equipment.
- A: Oh yeah, good job was it?
- B: It was all right. They're a bit crazy there. People worked really hard, sometimes from eight in the morning to nine or ten in the evening.
- A: Hm. Sounds like school!
- B: Yeah! Anyway, I was in charge of preparing shipping documents. Good job we did international trade last semester. It really helped me understand what was going on.
- A: Preparing shipping documents, eh? Sounds boring. Didn't like international trade much myself. Did you get on well with your boss?
- B: Oh, she was very strict. But, OK, I suppose. She didn't scream at me or anything when I did something wrong.
- A: Why, did you mess up a lot?
- B: No. Only once when I sent a container to Austria instead of Australia.
- A: You're joking!
- B: Well, it wasn't my fault. This guy on the phone had a really strong accent. I didn't understand half of what he said.
- A: So you sent a container to Austria? What an idiot!
- B: Well, I bet you wouldn't do any better. Anyway, it was interesting, 'cos they had this really sophisticated automatic system, but you can't ever completely eliminate human error.
- A: Yeah, Jason, the guys at IBM didn't expect you to be using their systems, otherwise they would've spent another ten years making it completely idiot-proof!
- B: OK, OK ... Now, if you've finished taking the

mickey, I've got an essay to write.

- A: No, come on. I'm just joking. I'm really interested in Diftco. I need to find a placement for next summer.
- B: Well, it's a good placement for first-years, but I think second-years should have more management responsibility. I was hoping to get some management experience but I mostly worked alone, so it wasn't that great.
- A: You wouldn't recommend it, then?
- B: No. I learned quite a lot in three months, but I certainly wouldn't like to work there.
- A: Mm, I see what you mean.
- B: Listen, now I've told you all about it, you couldn't help me with the report, could you? If we finish by nine, we can still make it in time for the movie. Look, I've already made these notes. You just have to write them up for me ...

1.6 Case study Counselling

1:09

Does that answer your question? Now, before we go on, I'll just summarize the three points we've already discussed. Firstly, the goal of counselling is to help another person manage a personal problem using their own resources. Secondly, counselling is about listening, not about telling. It's about talking to someone and helping, not about persuading or manipulating. And, counselling is about assisting and exploring problems. It's not about reassuring someone or solving their problems for them. Thirdly, the three phases of counselling. Phase one, talk. This is where you encourage the problem holder to talk about the problem, and to start to understand how they feel about the problem and why they feel that way. Phase two, think. This is where you encourage them to think about the problem and reassess it. You help them to see their situation from a new perspective, so that they can consider the different options for dealing with the situation. And phase three, act. This is where you help them to choose their own solution and to establish an action plan to manage the problem. OK, are there any questions? OK, I now want to say a few words about some of the skills that counsellors need. I'm going to pass out another handout. As you can see, there are a number of ...

2 Customer support

2.1 About business Call centres

1:10

Host: Good evening, and welcome back to *Career Choices*. Tonight's programme looks at one of the fastest growing businesses in India today – customer care. Call Delta Airlines, American Express, Citibank or IBM from almost anywhere in the world, and there's a good chance you'll be talking to an Indian. With more than a million English-speaking college graduates entering the job market each year, India is the ideal location for American call centres: low labour costs for highly competent staff mean savings of around 50% over the equivalent operation in the States. Attracted by good money, comfortable working conditions and genuine promotion prospects, Indian graduates are queuing up for jobs in call centres. Only five applicants out of every 100 are accepted. Nevertheless, staff turnover in many call centres is high and critics talk about dead-end jobs in sweatshops where staff are routinely monitored and humiliated. So before you rush out to join the queues for jobs in customer care, *Career Choices* has invited two experts to give us the facts about call centres. With me in the studio are Lavanya Fernandes, who is a customer relationship management expert with a New Delhi consultancy, and Tashar Mahendra, a call centre manager from Mumbai. Lavanya, call centres have had a lot

of bad publicity recently: how much truth is there in the sweatshop stories?

- Lavanya: Well, first of all, I think it's important to say that call centres have now largely been replaced by contact centres. Customers' problems and queries are no longer handled just by telephone, but also by email, SMS, online chat and even browser sharing – this is where the operator actually takes control of the customer's computer and shows them how to resolve their problem. This means that the operator's job has become more complex and, at the same time, more satisfying. Now, it is certainly true that in the past there were cases of abuse, you know, where employees were closely monitored, and so on ...
- H: Yes, only three seconds between each call and being timed when they went to the toilets!
- L: Yes. Of course this kind of intimidation can still happen. But, on the whole, contact centres now realize that forcing operators to deal with customers as quickly as possible is not in their interest. One long conversation which solves the customer's problem is obviously much better than several short calls which leave the customer feeling dissatisfied. So in fact most centres are trying very hard to respect their staff and make their lives more pleasant.
- H: Yes, I see. Tashar, I've heard that you pay for taxis to bring your staff to work.
- Tashar: Yes that's right. More than 60% of our customer care executives are young women between 20 and 35 years old, many of them working part-time. As in Mumbai we are almost 11 hours ahead of New York, most of the work is at night. Taking a taxi to and from work means their husbands or their families don't have to worry about them.
- H: Yes, I see. Tell us about some of the other ways you look after your staff. I believe you also supply drinks and cakes?
- T: Yes, that's right. Our customer care executives spend about 80% of their time communicating with customers. We want them to be energetic and happy because we know that happy staff make satisfied customers. So, for the rest of the time, they can enjoy fresh fruit, drinks, cakes, subsidized meals, on-site massage, air-conditioning, competitions, meetings at the beach ...
- H: At the beach?!
- T: Yes, that's right. We have a meeting area with real sand, deckchairs, parasols and the sounds of the seaside. It feels just like being on the beach!
- H: Wow, that sounds great! Lavanya, we know that salaries are six to ten times the average wage, so it's not surprising that these jobs are so popular. But what sort of profile are the call centres, sorry, the contact centres, looking for?
- L: Well, the most important thing is very good English. And then computer literacy, good typing speed, marketing skills ... these are all a plus. But, basically, good communication and listening skills are essential. You need to be patient, polite, good-natured and reasonably intelligent. In some jobs, persuasion skills are needed when you have to collect debts from customers or encourage them to use your client's products.
- H: And Tashar, I suppose you give your new staff special training?
- T: Yes, that's right. Usually between two weeks and three months, depending on the project. This training includes accent training and neutralization, listening skills, slang training, telephone etiquette, telesales etiquette and customer relationship management skills, and call centre terminology.
- H: And I believe your staff all have American names, Tashar, is that right?
- T: Yes, that's right. For our customers it's easier to talk to Sharon, Julia or Alison than to Jayashree, Suhaila or Kanjiri, and it helps our customer care executives to slip into an American identity.
- H: And what about promotion prospects?

T: Yes, that's r... Oh, yes, after about three or four years, depending on your skills and results, you can become a supervisor, and then eventually a manager. And, if you decide to work in another sector, experience in a contact centre is very valuable, especially in sales, insurance or other customer relations jobs.

2.2 Vocabulary Customer service and telephoning

1:11-1:20

- Operator: Now, don't worry, madam. This is just a minor problem that a few customers experience at first. It will only take a few minutes to resolve.
- ... or if you would like more information about our products, please press four.
Customer: All I want is to speak to a human being, not a stupid, condescending, brainless piece of ... silicon!
- Operator: All right sir. Yes, it is an unusual problem, and it's a little complicated, but you'll be pleased to know there is a solution.
- Customer: Oh, that's wonderful. You're so clever! Thank you so much!
- Customer: It's just so annoying. I thought your product would solve all my problems, but it just seems to be creating new ones!
- Operator: I fully understand your position, sir, and I would feel exactly the same way myself.
- Operator: Alternatively, the simplest solution is to upgrade to the professional version of the software. The extra cost is only around one euro per month. I think you'd agree that that's excellent value, wouldn't you?
- Customer: Oh, thank you so much. You're so patient. I bet nobody else has these problems. I just feel so stupid!
- Operator: A very good morning to you, and thank you for calling the helpline. How I can help you today?
- Customer: Well, that's all very well. You say you've sorted out the problem and it's working now, but how can I be sure it won't break down again tomorrow?

1:21

- Interviewer: Excuse me, madam, I see you've just been to the bank. We're doing a survey about customer service, and ...
- Old Lady: Oh, don't talk to me about service! Now, in the old days, the customer was always right! You could telephone the bank and there was always a pleasant young man or woman, you know, who would listen to your problems, and they used to provide a solution in no time. Nowadays, you're lucky if you even get to speak to a human being, let alone get your problems sorted out.
- I: Yes, now, could I just ask you ...
- OL: And if you want to actually see someone, you can't just walk in, oh no, you have to phone the bank to make an appointment. And they have these machines now, you know, if you want this, please press one, if you want that, please press two, if it's the second Thursday in January, please press three ... dear, oh dear. I just get so annoyed!
- I: Yes, of course, but ...
- OL: So, then you have to wait for ages and when you do finally speak to someone, either they say they'll call you back and then you never hear from them again, or they tell you they'll have to escalate the problem to their supervisor. Huh! 'Escalate the problem!' They're supposed to be so competent and knowledgeable and all that, but really they just don't want to take any responsibility these days.
- I: Yes, but could I ...
- OL: So, then they tell you to hold on again and you get another machine playing the same twenty seconds of Vivaldi again and again, and then finally you go back to the beginning again ... 'If you would like to speak to an adviser, please press four.' What is the world

coming to, I ask you?
I: Well, yes, I see what you ...
OL: And now they want me to use that interweb thingy with all those viruses, as if we didn't have enough trouble already! Anyway, I haven't got time to stand here and talk. I must be getting on. Goodbye!

2.3 Grammar Asking questions and giving instructions

1:22

- A: Welcome back to *Guess the Product*. Our next mystery product is a very clever and very practical piece of technology. Panel, you've just *ten* questions to help you 'guess the product'!
- B: OK. Is it advertised on TV?
A: No, it isn't.
C: Do you use it for work?
A: Yes, you do.
D: Would you find one in every office?
A: Yes, you would.
C: Can you put it in your pocket?
A: Yes, you can.
D: Did it exist ten years ago?
A: No, it didn't.
C: Does it use electricity?
A: Yes, it does.
B: Do you use it to speak to people?
A: No, you don't.
C: Is there a connection with computers?
A: Yes, there is.
B: Does it cost more than \$30?
A: No, it doesn't.
D: Has it replaced the floppy disk?
A: Yes it has. All right, that's ten questions. Now, have you 'guessed the product'?
- D: We think it's a USB memory stick.
A: Yes! Well done! You have correctly 'guessed the product'!

1:23

- Steve: OK, Pete. First of all, you open the printer. No, wait a minute, don't just open it, select 'change cartridge' from the menu.
- Pete: From the menu? Do I have to switch the printer on?
S: Er, yes, of course you have to switch it on, otherwise you can't use the menu!
P: Oh, right. What about the computer?
S: No, that's all right, you needn't switch the PC on, just the printer.
P: All right. So, the printer's on, select 'change cartridge', OK, and open the printer. What now?
S: So now you gently remove the old cartridge. Don't force it. If it's difficult, you might have to pull it back first, then upwards.
P: Backwards, then upwards. All right, I've got it.
S: OK. So now you can install the new cartridge. You'll need to remove the adhesive tape first, but be careful you don't touch the printed circuits - they're very fragile.
P: You needn't worry. I'm being very careful. OK, that's it.
S: Right. It'll ask you if you want to align the new cartridge, but you needn't bother. Usually it's fine as it is.
P: OK. What about the old one? Can I just throw it in the bin?
S: Oh no, don't throw the old cartridge away. You can recycle them.
P: Oh yes, right. Listen, that's great. I really appreciate your help. Is there anything I can do for you?
S: No, that's all right, Pete. You needn't worry. Just buy me a beer some time!

2.4 Speaking Dealing with problems by telephone

1:24

- Helpline: Thank you for calling the Superword helpline. Please hold the line.
Dean: Good morning. Dean speaking. How can I help you?
Customer: Oh, good morning. Yes, I'm afraid your program isn't working properly.
D: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. What exactly seems to be the problem?
C: Well, the thing is, I can't put those automatic table thingies in my documents.
D: I'm sorry, it's not a very good line. Could you speak up a little?
C: Yes, sorry. I'm on my mobile. Is that better?
D: Yes, that's much better, thank you.
C: All right. Anyway, I was just saying, I can't insert those tables.
D: Oh, I see. You're having trouble importing spreadsheets into a Superword document?
C: Yes, that's right.
D: All right, I'll put you through to our spreadsheet specialist.
C: Thank you.
D: Hello?
C: Yes?
D: I'm sorry, the number's busy. Could I ask her to get back to you in a few minutes?
C: Yes, that's fine.
D: OK, then. So, you're on 0680 425232?
C: That's right.
D: And could I have your name please?
C: Wyndham. Delia Wyndham.
D: Is that Wyndham with a 'y'?
C: That's right. W-Y-N-D-H-A-M.
D: Thank you, Ms Wyndham. I'm sure we'll be able to sort it out.
C: Thank you very much.
D: Not at all. Goodbye.

1:25

- Operator: Customer support. May I help you?
Customer: Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect.
O: Well, let me sort that out for you. What exactly seems to be the problem?
C: It doesn't work. It won't accept anything when I type.
O: I see. How long have you been having this problem?
C: Well, about ten minutes.
O: And was it working properly before that?
C: Sure. I was just typing away, and all of a sudden the words went away.
O: You mean they just disappeared?
C: Yes. Just like that.
O: So what does your screen look like now?
C: Nothing.
O: Nothing?
C: It's a blank. Like I said, it won't accept anything when I type.
O: Uh-huh. Have you tried hitting 'Escape'?
C: Yes. Nothing happens.
O: OK. Did you quit WordPerfect?
C: I don't know. How do I tell if I quit?
O: Can you see the toolbar on the screen?
C: What's a toolbar?
O: OK, never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?
C: There isn't any cursor. I told you, I can't type anything.
O: I see. Does your monitor have a power indicator?
C: What's a monitor?
O: It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?
C: I don't know.
O: Well, could you look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it? Can you see that?
C: Yes, I think so.

- O: Great. Now you just have to follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall.
- C: Er, yes, it is.
- O: All right. Now, when you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?
- C: No.
- O: Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.
- C: ... OK, here it is.
- O: Good. Could you tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer?
- C: I can't reach.
- O: Uh-huh. Well, you don't have to touch it. Can you just see if it's plugged in?
- C: No. It's too dark.
- O: So, you mean the lights are off?
- C: Yes.
- O: Well, couldn't you just turn on the light?
- C: I can't.
- O: No? Why not?
- C: Because there's a power outage.
- O: A power ... A power outage? Ah, OK. I can handle this now. Listen, for the power outage, I'll have someone call the electricity company. For your WordPerfect problem, do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?
- C: Well, yes. I keep them in the closet.
- O: Good. I'd like you to go and get them, to unplug your system and to pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then I want you to take it back to the store you bought it from.
- C: Really? Is it that bad?
- O: Yes, I'm afraid it is.
- C: Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?
- O: Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer.

 1:26

- What does your screen look like now?
- What's a toolbar?
- Did you quit WordPerfect?
- Does your monitor have a power indicator?
- Can you see the toolbar on the screen?
- What do I tell them?

2.6 Case study Cybertartan Software

 1:27

- Interviewer: So, Laurie, these recruitment and turnover problems we're having — is it just a question of money?
- Laurie McAllister: Well of course salaries are not terribly attractive these days. They were quite good a few years ago when the centre opened, but they haven't really increased with the cost of living, especially now house prices are so expensive here, so we're finding it more difficult to attract people from outside the area. But, actually, salaries are not the biggest problem. Basically there are two reasons why our turnover is high: working conditions and job satisfaction.
- I: I see. What's the matter with working conditions? We give them free coffee, don't we?
- LM: Well, things are very different now from when we started. In the past, the volume of calls was much lower, so things were more relaxed. Advisers had time to chat or have a cigarette between two calls. Now, the workload is much heavier, and the supervisors have to be very strict about breaks. Two bathroom breaks per day, and twenty minutes for lunch. There's a lot of unhappiness about that. And punctuality, well, the bus service here is totally inadequate. A lot of advisers can't afford a car, so transport is a real problem, especially at night.
- I: Yes, I can see why that's a problem.
- LM: And there are little things, you know, like having your own personal space. When you share your desk with your colleagues on the other shifts, you can't really personalize

anything.

- I: Hm. Maybe there are things that can be improved there. What's the problem with job satisfaction?
- LM: Time, mostly. Our software products have become so complex that customers need more and more help. There are more calls than we can answer, so advisers have to keep them as short as possible. That's frustrating because there isn't time to build a relationship with the customer; sometimes there isn't even time to explain the solution properly. And then of course they say if they can't spend longer on the phone, they would like to send out instructions by email.
- I: Yes, well, the customers would like that too, but we can't charge them for it like we can phone calls!
- LM: Exactly. And we really need to give the advisers more training, especially the new people, but there just isn't time. They often have to read out instructions from the manual; it's not much fun answering questions when you don't really understand the answers yourself!
- I: No. I can see that.
- LM: Of course the thing they really don't like is the shift system. They work one week in the morning, from 6am to 2pm, one week in the afternoon from 2pm to 10pm, and one week nights, 10pm to 6am. I mean, it's OK for young, single people, but it's impossible for women with children, so that's a whole category of the population we have virtually no chance of employing. And some people actually like working nights, so they would happily swap their day shifts with other colleagues who don't want to work nights — but the company won't let them. It's company policy, but it's too rigid, it's just not realistic ... Anyway, perhaps you should talk to the advisers themselves — get it straight from the horse's mouth, as they say.

3 Products and packaging

3.1 About business Packaging

 1:28

- Interviewer: Mr. Wang, you often say that packaging is the manufacturer's last chance to seduce the customer. Why is that?
- Wang: Yes. Today's marketplace is highly competitive; many products are almost identical, at least from the consumer's point of view. Branding is not enough: unless you are the number one brand on the market, you start from the same level as everyone else. That's especially true here in Asia where there may be literally hundreds of competitors making the same product in the same city. In order to persuade the customer to buy your product rather than your competitor's, you have to differentiate, that is to say, to create and, above all, to communicate the difference which makes your product the better choice. In his book *Differentiate or Die*, the American business guru Jack Trout says, 'Every aspect of your communications should reflect your difference. The bottom line is: You can't overcommunicate your difference.'
- I: So, packaging is the best way to communicate your difference?
- W: Exactly. Seventy-five per cent of purchasing decisions are made at the point of sale. Today, nine times out of ten that purchase will be made in a self-service context. Your product is alone on the shelf, surrounded by its competitors. According to Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, your product has to pitch its promise to the customer in three seconds or less, from up to fifteen feet away. If your packaging is not attractive, effective and distinctive, how are you going to communicate its difference? That's why I say that packaging is the last chance to seduce the customer.
- I: Yes, I see. Now, if packaging is so critical, with millions of dollars poured into design, graphics and efficient use of limited shelf space, why is it that there are so many failures?
- W: The principal problem is a lack of communication between the different partners involved in the design and development process. Typically there'll be several different groups of experts, all working in their own specialized field: market research people who know nothing about design, designers who know nothing about manufacturing, and production people who know nothing about consumer needs. Traditionally, the design team has always been kept well away from business and manufacturing constraints so as not to limit their creativity. The result is inevitably a compromise. What starts out as an original, creative idea turns out to be impractical, for reasons of cost or technical limitations. So, it gets watered down, simplified, adapted — until, in the end, you are left with a package which is easy to make, easy to transport and within budget, so production, logistics and finance are happy, but it's no longer what the consumer wanted! So, you get focus groups where consumers don't really like any of the concepts that are presented. That means, in the best case, you go back to the drawing-board and start all over again or, in the worst case, you have to choose the least unpopular option.
- I: So, how do you avoid this problem at New China Packaging?
- W: Well, basically, what we do is to build what we call a 'task force'. This is a cross-functional team with players from all the stakeholders in the project. We literally lock them up in a hotel together, we provide all the tools they need to produce mockups and prototypes, and we don't let them out until they produce something that everybody is enthusiastic about.
- I: And do you include consumers in the task force?
- W: Yes, indeed. We need the end user's input right from the beginning. Everything is consumer-led. And, because we know that what consumers say they need and what they really need are frequently two different things, we also observe them using the product. Frequently, we can detect behaviours and needs that the consumer is not even conscious of.
- I: Really? Uh-huh. So, who else is involved?
- W: Corporate marketing, because we need to work within the constraints of brand strategy, funding and schedules; manufacturing, so that we deal with technical issues as and when they arise; and, of course, our own designers and consultants, who contribute creative ideas, technical know-how and marketing expertise.
- I: And how long does the process take?
- W: Traditionally, months or sometimes years. Today, our task forces can usually deliver an optimal solution in one week, sometimes less. And remember, when they deliver, it means that every aspect of the package is consumer-validated, is realistic and practically feasible, and respects business limitations. So, this extremely short turn-around means that the manufacturer can react very, very quickly to changes in the market, almost in real time.
- I: Yes, I see, and ...

3.2 Vocabulary Specifications and features

1:29–1:34

- 1
A: I want to listen to English while I go jogging. Is that possible?
B: Oh, yeah. Jogging, cycling, skiing ... whatever you like. Nothing can stop it. I even dropped mine down two flights of stairs, and when I picked it up, it was still working.
- 2
C: I hear you bought one of those new robots. What do you think of it?
D: It's fantastic! I used to spend hours cleaning the flat. Now I can just program the robot and sit back and watch it work.
C: That's incredible! I must get one ...
- 3
E: I really like the colour. It's a beautiful car!
F: Yes, and it's an interesting shape too. Quite unusual. Very different from other cars in this category, isn't it?
- 4
G: Mum, what's in this bottle? I can't open it!
H: Give that to me, dear. You mustn't touch that. It's for cleaning the kitchen, and it's dangerous. Fortunately, they put it in a special bottle that children can't open ...
- 5
I: Quick, it's starting to rain and there's a pallet of those electronic toys outside!
J: OK, I'll move it straight away. But don't worry – the boxes are made of special paperboard. A little rain won't do any damage.
- 6
K: Are you sure I'll be able to record TV programmes? I mean, I'm not very good at anything technical.
L: Oh, yes. No worries. My five-year-old can operate this model. It's dead easy.

1:35

Good afternoon everybody. Imagine you're on a fishing trip. It's the middle of the night. It's dark, it's foggy, you can't see a thing, and you're sailing your boat between small islands and dangerous rocks. Are you afraid? Not at all. You are supremely confident, checking and adjusting your route with just a touch of a finger on a screen. How do you do it?

Well, I'm here today to tell you about the Maptech i3, an extraordinary, integrated nautical information system, where a touch-controlled screen enables you to enjoy single finger operation of several different navigation functions.

Let's start with Touch Screen Command. 'Let your finger do the navigation' is our slogan. Just by touching the screen, you can view and change charts, calculate distances, create a route and a lot more. The large colour display screen automatically shows you a bird's-eye view of where you are and where you're heading. Let me show you an example of what I mean. As you can see, it's a little like floating about 1,000 feet above the boat and watching as you progress up the channel.

Moving on to what's below the water, thanks to the radar overlay, you see exactly what the fish are seeing. Some of you here today may think fishing is boring, but I can assure you that it's a lot more exciting when you know where the fish are – and with the Touch Screen 3D Fishfinder, that's exactly what you can do!

Now, can I just turn to communications? The Maptech i3 can send fax, email and voice messages. You can even send a message showing your boat's location on a real chart. You can request and receive weather reports based on your actual GPS position. And you can even automatically monitor vital onboard systems when you're away from your boat.

So, I'll just sum up the Maptech i3's main features. Let's just go back to our midnight fishing trip. First, Touch Screen Command lets you navigate between the rocks with just one finger and a bird's-eye view. Secondly, the

underwater radar and fishfinder shows you where the rocks are, and where the fish are hiding. Finally, the communications functions mean you can receive and send important data on the weather, your location and your boat at any moment.

I'd like to finish by inviting you to try the Maptech i3 for yourself. Our website has an incredibly realistic simulation that you can try out without ever getting your feet wet. Thank you very much.

3.3 Grammar Articles, relative clauses and noun combinations

1:36

- Synth voice: Please record your product review and your rating out of five after the beep. Thank you for your feedback.
Customer: This is easily the best phone I've had so far. It's the perfect phone for the basic user. I have already bumped it and dropped it a few times but it's still going strong. The battery life is incredible. Overall, it's a real workhorse – there are no frills, but it does what a cellphone needs to do. I rate it five out of five.

1:37–1:38

- 1
Synth voice: Please record your product review and your rating out of five after the beep. Thank you for your feedback.
Customer: I hate this phone. It's too small – I can't open the flip cover with one hand. There's no screen on the outside to see the caller identity. The reception is horrible. It drops calls probably 30% of the time. There is a very long key delay, which is incredibly annoying. I am anxiously awaiting the day I can upgrade and get rid of this monstrosity. I rate it zero out of five.
- 2
Synth voice: Please record your product review and your rating out of five after the beep. Thank you for your feedback.
Customer: I've had the phone for about three weeks. I like the size and the design. The features are good too. It's easy enough to use, and it has survived a couple of drops. However, the alarm clock won't work anymore. I'm not too sure about the internal antenna. I hate having a full signal when making a call, only to have a dramatic drop when I put the phone to my head. Everybody says it's the telecom company's fault, not the phone, or maybe I just got a bad one. We'll see. I'm going to try the 9200 next. I would give it a rating of three out of five.

3.4 Speaking Presentations – structure

1:39

Version 1

A: Um, shall I start then? OK, I know, erm, I know you're going to be very excited by the Pingman, like me! So, I'm sure you'll have lots of questions. And, perhaps we'll take questions after the demonstration.

OK, er, we've done lots of tests, which have all been very positive, and, er, there are lots of different markets for the Pingman, children, adults, dogs, businesses, and so on. We think there's an enormous potential for this product. Until now, GPS tracking systems have been too bulky, too heavy and too unreliable indoors to be used as personal tracking devices. Our Pingman weighs only 75g, and, well, we'll show you how it works in a few minutes ... on the, er, the Internet. So, you know, you can connect to the Internet from anywhere in the world, and just ping your user to know exactly where they are. Within one metre ... er. Nobody else has a product like this on the market, so we want you to approve the investment, because there's a huge market.

B: What do you mean by 'ping'?

A: Oh, yes, on the Internet, you tell a satellite to send a signal to the device, and the device answers the signal, and then the satellite can calculate the device's exact location.

Anyway, it only weighs 75g, did I say that already? Yes, er, 75g, it's five centimetres in length and about three point five centimetres wide, so, about half the size of a cellphone, and there are different models for children or adults. Tests were really positive, and our sales forecasts are excellent. There's also a model for animals; it's built in to a collar so, if you lose your dog, for example, you just ping it from the Internet to know where it is.

So, er, unless you want to ask questions, I think we'd better have the demonstration. Um, Oh, I forgot to mention profitability. We think it will, er, will be profitable. Very profitable. OK, are there any questions? No? No questions? Um, OK then, let's have the demonstration. It's, er, at the back of the room. Yes. Er, ...

1:40

Version 2

Good morning everybody.

How would you like to know at all times exactly where your young child or teenager is? How comforting would it be to know that your elderly mother is safely back home from the shops? Did you know that, on average, sales representatives spend less than 20% of their time actually with customers? How much would it be worth to know precisely where your sales reps or technicians were? And how much time would you save if you knew where, to the nearest metre, your dog was hiding?

Well, now you can. I'm here this morning to present the Pingman, a revolutionary new personal GPS tracking device – an eye in the sky which will bring peace of mind to parents, carers, businesses, animal lovers and many, many other potential customers. As you know, the reason I'm here today is to demonstrate our prototype and to ask you, members of the Board, to approve the investment needed to start production.

Now, I know you're going to be very excited by the Pingman, so I'm going to give you a quick overview of the product and the market in about fifteen minutes. After that, there'll be a hands-on demonstration, and I've allowed about forty-five minutes for questions and discussion after that. But if you have questions that can't wait, feel free to interrupt me. OK?

I've divided my presentation into three sections. First of all, I'm going to remind you of the background to this project and the current offer on the market. After that, I'll be talking about the prototype, the specifications and the data we've collected from tests, focus groups and market studies. Finally, I'd like to present a business plan; this will show you why we expect a return on investment that is without precedent for our company. Is everybody happy with that agenda?

OK, so, let's start with the background. Now, GPS tracking systems are not new. We've been able to install them in vehicles and containers for some time, but until now they've been too bulky, too heavy, and too unreliable indoors to be used as a personal tracking device. What's new about the Pingman is that for the first time we can build it into a wrist strap or collar small and light enough to be worn comfortably by a small child or a dog. For the first time, it will be possible to locate the wearer via the Internet, anywhere in the world, indoors or out, 24 hours a day and up to every ten seconds ...

... does that answer your question?

OK, so, I'd like to wrap up the presentation and move on to the demonstration. Let me just summarize what I've already told you. Firstly, I explained why there is a huge market just waiting for this product, and why the competition are still months behind us. Secondly, I presented the different specifications for the child, adult and animal versions we intend to launch, and the overwhelmingly positive reactions we've had

during trials. Last, but not least, I have given you the strongest possible reasons why you should approve this investment: extraordinary sales forecasts, strong cash flow and unprecedented profitability.

So, ladies and gentlemen, these are the reasons why I am asking you to give this project the green light. I believe we cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

Now, if you'd like to move to the back of the room, our R&D staff are ready to start the demonstration and to answer your questions. Thank you very much for your attention.

1:41

I've divided my presentation into three sections. First of all, I'm going to remind you of the background to this project and the current offer on the market. After that, I'll be talking about the prototype, the specifications and the data we've collected from tests, focus groups and market studies. Finally, I'd like to present a business plan; this will show you why we expect a return on investment that is without precedent for our company. Is everybody happy with that agenda?

3.6 Case study Big Jack's Pizza

1:42

Jack Jr: OK, so, we all agree on that then? A completely new range of pizzas for the twenty-first century, featuring fusion cuisine with the best of contemporary Chinese and Western influences? Great. We'll need at least five really new recipes, so see what you can come up with.

Mick: We'll need new names for each new pizza, then, Jack ...

J: Of course, but we can come back to that later. OK, so, can we move on to point two – new promotional ideas? What suggestions do we have? Billie?

Billie: Well, obviously with the new pizza range we should do a relaunch. And what about doing specials at different times in the year? You know, New Year, National Day, Dragon Boat Festival ...

J: Well, Billie, it's been done before, but I guess we could do that. Why not? Mick?

M: What about a BOGOF?

J: I'm sorry?

M: You know, B-O-G-O-F – buy one, get one free. Two pizzas for the price of one. And another idea would be to have a two-pizza box. The pizzas stay hotter when you have two in a box.

J: Hm. I'm not sure that's a direction we really want to go in. The franchisees won't like it, and we want to get away from the idea that Big Jack's is just good for filling your stomach.

M: Well, what about a gourmet club? Customers get special privileges if they become members. Or feature different national cuisines each month – Indian in the first month, Thai in the second, and so on?

B: Yes, that's good, Mick. And don't forget the Internet – what if you could build your own pizza and order your take-out or delivery online?

J: Sounds like it might be expensive, Billie, but yeah, that's more the kind of thing I had in mind. Anyway, let's go on to points three and four on the agenda. I think we can take them together, because the box depends very much on the logo and the colour scheme. Billie, I think you feel strongly about this?

B: Yes, Jack, I do. We've had our current logo ever since your dad started the business. The Big Jack logo was perfect thirty years ago, but a lot of things have changed since Big Jack's time. Apart from anything else, the symbolism is all wrong, and remember, people are very sensitive to that kind of thing here.

J: What do you mean, the symbolism is all wrong? Green and red are the colours of Italy, it's what pizza is all about!

B: Maybe, but the green chequered table-cloth on the round table – it symbolizes old-world values that people in Hong Kong just don't

identify with. And it's well-known that green isn't a good colour for packaging for Chinese people.

M: Oh, really? Why's that?

B: Oh, you know, it's that thing about green hats – it means your wife is, you know, seeing another man ...

J: Billie, this is all very interesting, but ...

M: No, hang on, Jack. I think Billie's right. We have to take this kind of thing into account. And the box; the box is really important. It's easily the best way we have to communicate with our customers. Couldn't we have a more exciting box, as well as new colours and graphics? I mean, every baker in the city sells pizza in the same standard box as us. We need to differentiate! An octagonal box would be good, maybe with a window so you can see the delicious hot pizza you're carrying?

J: Well, as long as it doesn't complicate storage or delivery, I don't see why not. But it seems to me we need to get more advice on this. I trust you'll agree that we need to have some brand-building and packaging consultants work on this ... we'll consider their proposals at our next meeting.

4 Careers

4.1 About business Career choices

2:01

Part 1

Interviewer: Most people sense that choices in business today are different. When it comes to people and careers, what actually has changed?

James Walroop: People in business simply have many more choices today than ever before. Just a decade ago, when you took a job, the company dictated the moves you made. When it came to your career, you had one area that you specialized in. That was all you did, and you more or less did it for your whole work life.

Ten or twenty years ago, you'd join a company, put down roots, and stay put, like a tree. Today the image of the tree has been replaced by a surfer on a surfboard: you're always moving. You can expect to fall into the water any number of times, and you have to get back up to catch that next wave.

But the biggest change is in who is responsible for your career. Ten or fifteen years ago, a social contract went along with a job. Companies accepted certain responsibilities for their people. Today that contract is completely different. You are responsible for creating your own career within an organization – and even more important, between organizations.

I: It's frequently said that careers are over. Instead, you should expect to hold a series of jobs and to participate in a succession of projects. Timothy Butler, how do you see the evolution of the career?

Timothy Butler: There are three words that tend to be used interchangeably – and shouldn't be. They are 'vocation', 'career', and 'job'. Vocation is the most profound of the three, and it has to do with your calling. It's what you're doing in life that makes a difference for you, that builds meaning for you, that you can look back on in your later years to see the impact you've made on the world. A calling is something you have to listen for. You don't hear it once and then immediately recognize it. You've got to attune yourself to the message.

Career is the term you hear most often today. A career is a line of work. You can say that your career is to be a lawyer or a securities analyst – but usually it's not the same as your calling. You can have different careers at different points in your life.

A job is the most specific and immediate of the three terms. It has to do with who's employing you at the moment and what your

job description is for the next six months or so. These days, trying to describe what your job will be beyond 12 to 18 months from now is very dicey.

2:02

Part 2

I: What advice do you have for people facing a tough career choice, one that could permanently change the direction of their work life?

Butler: Everyone tries to do something that seems like the wise thing to do – but that you shouldn't do: compromise. You've got two competing needs or desires – say, independence and security – and you try to find the position that's halfway between them. Typically that doesn't work.

An equally bad approach is to jump radically from one pole to the other, to pretend that you can forget entirely about one need and recognize only the other. When you do that, the genuine need you're trying to deny simply goes underground and becomes stronger.

Walroop: We have exercises where we ask people to choose among 13 different business reward values. An obvious one is financial gain. How important is it to you to make a lot of money? Another one is lifestyle. How important is it to you to work in a way where you're networking all the time? A third is power and influence. How important is it to you to be a player?

It's not uncommon for an individual to have a high score on financial gain, a high score on lifestyle, and a high score on power and influence. You can try to jump from one to the other to the other, but when you choose one, the other two don't go away.

So, what's the answer? To be aware of and live with this tension. It's a dynamic part of your personality. And if you try to come up with an easy solution, you're only going to get into trouble. At different times in your life, you're going to shift more toward one pull than toward the others. But the tension is never going to go away. You can't balance them out, you can't take an average of them, you can't somehow live in the middle. Ultimately, what's required is to live with the tension – and to know that you have to live with it.

I: The biggest decision that people face in the world of work is which career to choose. What advice do you have for people who aren't sure what their career – or their vocation – should be?

Walroop: Good career decisions have to be based not just on your aptitudes, but also on your 'deep' interests. The most common mistake that people make in their career decisions is to do something because they're 'good at it'. It's a story I hear all the time. Someone will say to me, 'I'm an engineer, but I don't like it.' Why did you become an engineer? 'I was good at science and math, so people told me I should be an engineer.' Did you ever like engineering? 'No, but it was easy.'

The real question is: Where are your deep interests? Think of your interests as a deep geothermal pool. Once you tap your interests, you can express them in any number of ways. You may have a particular aptitude – science and math, for instance – but without a deep interest in expressing that aptitude, you'll fail.

Butler: Identifying those deep interests has been the focus of our research for the past ten years. Once you recognize that those deep interests are the best predictor of job satisfaction, the next step is to get in touch with your interest patterns and connect them with the activities that go on in business. Human interests are quite difficult to measure until we reach our early twenties. At that point, they gel – we can measure and describe them. We each develop a unique signature of life interests. And that signature remains

virtually constant over time. The pattern won't change.

Our research tries to tap into this deep structure of interests and translate them into the kinds of work that go on in business. There are eight core business functions – not functions like marketing, sales, and finance, but basic activities such as managing people, enterprise control, and influencing through language and ideas. If you look at your deep interests and think about how your interests can be expressed in specific business behaviours, then you'll have the elements of a good career decision.

4.2 Vocabulary Careers, personal skills and qualities

2:03

- B: All right. So that brings us to Rachel Ratcliff. You've *flagged* her as a high-flier. She's certainly very committed to her work.
- A: Absolutely. Rachel is doing a terrific job for us. She's an excellent team-player, and she really enjoys taking initiative.
- B: Great, so what's the problem?
- A: Well, she's a very talented lady, but she's also very ambitious.
- B: Nothing wrong with being ambitious, is there?
- A: No, except we don't really have any way to satisfy her ambition for the moment. We planned to make her a department manager in a couple of years' time, but there are no openings right now. She's obviously had other offers, perhaps from a headhunter, and she's thinking about resigning.
- B: Hm. It would be a shame to lose her. Solutions?
- A: Well, we could offer her a two-year assignment in Germany. I know there's a vacancy over there for someone with her profile, and she'd certainly be able to make a valuable contribution. But I don't know whether she'd agree. She has a fiancé, so it may be difficult.
- B: Hm. A two-year assignment in Germany? I'm not sure. But go on, I can see you have another idea.
- A: Well, yes. I'd like to put her on the fast track. Send her on an MBA course, and start preparing her for senior management.
- B: You really think she's that good? A potential MBA? Well, let me think about that one. I'll come back to you in a couple of days.
- A: OK.
- B: By the way, how is young Paul Stevens getting on? I believe he had a problem with his manager?
- A: Yes, that's right. He was working to very strict deadlines, and just needed a break. I'm working closely with him now, and everything's fine. He's back on the high-fliers' list. He has strong negotiating skills, and I think he'll be an excellent engineer.
- B: Good. OK, then, let's move on to Michael Diegel. He's a new hire too, isn't he?
- A: Yes. Michael's been with us almost a year now, and we've marked him as a concern because he's not really delivering the goods. He arrived with a fantastic resumé, lots of skills and some good experience. We thought he'd be a real asset, but he's consistently underperformed, he just isn't able to manage the workload.
- B: Hm. Any idea why?
- A: Well, I'm not too sure. There are two views of Michael in the department. Some people feel that it's a problem of motivation; he doesn't like Seattle, and he wants to move east just as soon as he can. On the other hand, some of us feel that perhaps he just doesn't have the strengths that his resumé claimed. He looked good in the interview process, but he isn't taking on ownership of his projects in the way we hoped he would. Maybe he has more weaknesses than strengths.
- B: So, what do we do, give him an official warning? Tell him we'll fire him if he doesn't deliver?

- A: Maybe. But we've already invested too much time and money to just dismiss him. Perhaps we should think about moving him east, if that's what will motivate him.
- B: And pass the problem on to our colleagues in Chicago or Boston? I'm not sure they'll thank us for that.
- A: Hm. How about offering him an easier position in Chicago? Something that won't be so difficult. If he realizes that the job here in Seattle is too much for him, perhaps he'd be more motivated to perform at his real level. Moving to Chicago would be a good way to save face.
- B: Yes, that's not a bad idea. Could you liaise with his manager, and see what's available in Chicago or Boston, then come back to me?
- A: OK.
- B: Good. Now then, we come to our old friend Shane Garney, Mr Wannabe himself. Is he still on the high-fliers list?
- A: Not really. He's more of a concern now. He certainly has the skills, but he's getting greedy. We gave him a big raise six months ago when he was promoted, but now he says it's not enough. He says he's had a much better offer from the competition.
- B: Well, I think it's time we had a serious talk with Mr Garney. He needs to understand that, although we appreciate ambition, our corporate policy is to reward achievement, not potential.
- A: The problem is, of course, that he's very well-connected. You remember that his father's a senator. Wouldn't it be easier to give Shane a small raise to keep him happy?
- B: Yes, I'm fully aware of that, and I'm aware that government contracts are very important to this company. But if Shane is only interested in money, he should join his father in Washington. The answer is 'no'. If he thinks he can get a better deal somewhere else, then fine, he can resign. We have a lot of good people like Rachel Ratcliff who would be happy to take his place.

4.3 Grammar Present tenses

2:04–2:13

- 1
A: Well, the job's yours if you want it.
B: Well, thank you very much, I'm delighted to accept.
- 2
C: Congratulations! Don't forget, the degree ceremony's next Friday!
D: Thank you, sir!
E: Thank you very much!
- 3
F: Nearly finished now.
G: Wow! Seventeen candidates in one day! And it's almost dinner time. What time did you start?
F: Eight o'clock this morning!
- 4
H: Ten kilometres! Phew! When they said 'recruitment tests', I thought they meant IQ and graphology, not an army assault course!
- 5
I: Have you seen the results, Jon?
J: Yeah.
I: Oh. Oh, I'm so sorry.
J: It's all right. It's not the end of the world.
- 6
K: I still think Ms Brown has more relevant experience than the others.
L: Look, we're not getting anywhere like this. Why don't we meet again tomorrow? And, remember, we can always ask all four candidates back for a second interview if we still can't decide.
- 7
M: Nick? Are you coming out for a drink?
N: Nah. Gotta finish my CV.
M: You still working on that CV?! I mean, how long can it take to say you've got no skills, no qualifications, and you've never done an honest day's work in your life?!
- N: Very funny.

8

- O: Hey, Paula, how did the interview go today?
P: Oh, so-so. Pretty much the same as the last 26.
O: Ah. Well, I've got to hand it to you Paula, you certainly don't give up easily.
- 9
Q: Look out!
R: Oops, too late. Oh dear, it's all over your papers. Sorry about that, these cups are very easy to knock over, aren't they?
Q: Never mind.
R: Hope it wasn't anything important. Er, are you here for the interviews, then?
Q: Yes, as a matter of fact I am. I'm conducting the interviews, actually. It's Mr Singh, isn't it?
R: Oops!
- 10
S: ... 98, 99, 100! There we are! Finished!
T: Finished what, Sally? You don't mean ...?
S: Yep. Job applications. Started this morning.
T: One hundred job applications?! You're kidding!

4.4 Speaking Job interviews

2:14–2:18


- A
Interviewer: Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
A: Well, that's a difficult question to answer; let's just say that I see myself as a top performing employee in a leading company, like this one. I plan to gain experience and learn new skills. Hopefully, in five years' time, I would be ready to move up to a position with more responsibility.
- B
Interviewer: How do you cope with people who resent your success?
B: Do you mean how do I manage working with someone who doesn't like me? Well, fortunately that hasn't happened very often. But, yes, I'm able to cope with being unpopular. I remember doing a summer job in a food processing factory. The person I was working with had been there for twenty years, and didn't much like the idea of working with a business student, especially a woman. On the first day, I made the mistake of finishing more pieces than him, and he took it really badly. Of course, I soon realized that he was just feeling insecure, so over the next few days, I made sure I asked him for advice about different aspects of the job; you know, made it clear I wasn't there to teach him any lessons. Well, gradually he came round, and in the end we got on really well.
- C
Interviewer: How do you motivate people to do their best?
C: Well, I think there are two important aspects to this question. The first is to create a positive atmosphere. If people feel happy about what they're doing, they're much more motivated to work towards a common goal. So making sure they understand the objectives and the process, and that the atmosphere is pleasant and relaxed – those are really important. The second thing is to give feedback, especially when somebody does a good job, not just when they get something wrong. When I worked in a restaurant a couple of years ago, I realized that knowing how well you're doing is essential to staying motivated.
- D
Interviewer: What are your weaknesses?
D: Well, of course, I'm aware that there are areas that I can improve on, but I have to say, as far as this job is concerned, I don't feel that I have any significant weaknesses. And if I do identify a problem, I take action to resolve it. Take time management, for instance. A couple of years ago, I realized I wasn't the most organized person in the world, so I followed a time management course. I applied

what I learned, and now I would say that organization is one of my strengths.

E
Interviewer: Can you give an example of a situation you found stressful, and how you coped with the stress?

E: Yes. Last term, for example, I was on a work placement where my supervisor had to go off sick for three weeks, so the company asked me to take over responsibility for the project. It meant a huge workload, which was pretty stressful. Anyway, I sat down and planned out exactly what I had to do each day for those three weeks. I also planned an hour each evening in the gym. That really helped to ease the stress. I managed to finish the project on time, and in much better shape than when I started! Does that answer your question?

4.6 Case study Gap years and career breaks

 2:19-2:24

1
My gap year? Oh yes, it was a fantastic experience. It was between my second and third years at university. I went to Nepal to teach English. I think I learned more in that year than in three years at university. It was incredible. Everybody should do it.

2
I went to live with a family in Dublin for a year before starting my degree course. Of course, it was really good for my English, and interesting from a cultural point of view. But it was pretty boring going back to school for another year, even if it was in English.

3
I've had a great year. I've been around the world, working for two or three weeks, then moving on to the next place. I've just gone back to my job, and now I have a much clearer idea of where I'm going and what I want to achieve. My only regret is not doing something to help people. If I could do it again, I'd definitely volunteer for charity work, probably in Africa.

4
Yeah, I took a gap year before starting business school. I needed to earn some money, so I worked in a car factory. It was hell. I've never been so bored in my life. I suppose I learned some valuable lessons, but now I wish I'd done something more exciting, gone somewhere exotic. I feel I wasted a year of my life.

5
I'd been in the same job for about twenty years, and I decided I needed to step back and think about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. So I took a sabbatical. Fortunately my company was very understanding. I travelled in India for six months, then wrote a book about my experiences. It completely changed my outlook on life. I'd recommend it to anybody.

6
I've just started studying medicine. I wanted to get away from my parents and see the world, so I've just come back from nine months in East Africa. It was really hard. I almost came home after the first week. I'm glad I stayed, because I felt I made a difference to people's lives – a very small difference, but a difference all the same. But if I'd known what it would be like, I'm sure I wouldn't have gone.

5 Making deals

5.1 About business E-tailing

 2:25

Johnny: Now, ladies and gentlemen, tonight we're going to talk to Hermelinda Ray, who is an e-tailing consultant, and who's going to tell us what's new in the world of Internet shopping. Hermelinda, welcome to the show!

Hermelinda: Thank you, Johnny. It's my pleasure to be here.

J: Now, tell me, Hermelinda, what exactly does

an e-tailing consultant do?

H: Well, basically, my job is to help e-tailers to grow their businesses by improving their websites, their products and services, and increasing their sales.

J: I see. I guess a lot of people, like me, do a lot of window-shopping on the Internet, but we don't often buy anything.

H: That's right Johnny. And that's one of the main challenges for e-tailers today, especially because they have to pay to advertise their sites to increase traffic. But only a small percentage of that traffic results in sales, and so when you visit a site without buying anything, your visit is actually costing the e-tailer money!

J: OK, now you're going to tell us about a new way to increase sales: conversational agents?

H: Uh-huh.

J: So, what exactly is a conversational agent?

H: A conversational agent, or virtual host, is what computer specialists call an avatar. It's an animated character that appears on the customer's screen, and can answer questions and chat with the customer, just like you would chat with a sales rep in a store.

J: But it's not a real person, right?

H: No. Having real people to chat with customers online is too expensive for small e-businesses. A conversational agent is a computer program which uses artificial intelligence to interact with customers.

J: OK. But does it work? Do people really want to chat to a machine?

H: Oh, yeah. Of course, some people are happier with the idea than others, but depending on the product and the type of customer, conversational agents can increase sales by as much as 50%.

J: Really! 50%?

H: Yeah. The longer customers spend on the site, hearing and asking questions about a product, the more chance there is they'll buy it. It builds their confidence in the product. And research has shown that people trust what they hear from a conversational agent much more than what they simply read on a website.

J: Well, we thought you should judge for yourselves, so Hermelinda has very kindly brought along a sample for us.


Female Synth voice: Hi, I'm Laurie! I'm here to help you find your way around the site. I'll answer all your questions about our products. Click on a question on the left. Would you like to tell a friend about us? Click on the referral zone so your friends can experience our site for themselves.

J: Well, ladies and gentlemen, would you buy a used car from that lady? All right, let's have a big round of applause for Hermelinda Ray, and for Laurie, the conversational agent!

5.2 Vocabulary Negotiating and e-tailing

 2:26-2:33

- 1 So that's five hundred at 12 euros a box, then. And you need them by Wednesday, you say?
- 2 Considering this would be a regular order, I think two and a half thousand is still a bit expensive.
- 3 How about if we paid cash? Could you give us an extra 2%?
- 4 No, I'm sorry, that's my final offer. I can't go any lower than that.
- 5 And then we'd need you to be available five or six weeks a year. Or maybe a bit less. Anyway, we can talk about it. Nothing's decided yet.
- 6 Yes, we usually ask for 20% now, and the balance on delivery.
- 7 Look, this just isn't good enough! If you don't deliver until tomorrow morning, it'll be too late!
- 8 Well, there's not much between us now. What do you say we split the difference?

 2:34-2:38

- 1 five hundred at 12 euros a box
- 2 two and a half thousand
- 3 an extra 2%
- 4 five or six weeks a year
- 5 We usually ask for 20% now.

 2:39

Ben: OK then, Jacky. Let's get to work. You've pointed out the benefits of your policy, but there are still one or two issues I'm not happy with.

Jacky: All right, then. What exactly are the issues you'd like to discuss?

B: First of all, I'd like you to clarify your remarks about returns.

J: OK. To summarize the situation, our policy insures you against any damage caused during shipping. It does not cover any problems resulting from incorrect assembly or operation by the customer.

B: I see. So, basically, if it's the customer's fault, you don't pay?

J: Right.

B: And are you prepared to extend your cover to include installation difficulties?

J: Well now, Ben. We could certainly make an offer, but there'll be extra costs.

B: Well, considering the size of the contract we're talking about here, I was hoping we could work out a compromise. If not, I might have to consider alternative solutions.

J: I'm sure that won't be necessary, Ben. Why don't we break for lunch, and I'll have my team do a simulation? I'm sure we'll find common ground.

5.3 Grammar Conditionals and recommendations

 2:40

Petra: OK, we have to decide how to divide this list of responsibilities between us. What are your priorities?

Jan: Well, I'd really like to go to the conference in Madagascar. Could I suggest that you go to Siberia? If you agreed, I'd be willing to take my holidays in January and let you take yours in August.

P: I'm sorry, but I'd really like to go to Madagascar too. Um, I couldn't agree to your proposal, unless you were prepared to take your holidays in January and go to the exhibition in Kazakhstan.

J: Hm. Well, I might consider going to Kazakhstan. I've got an uncle who lives there ...

P: Great!

J: ... providing you looked after the foreign customer at the tennis tournament – I know nothing about tennis.

P: OK, we're making progress. So, can I just summarize the position so far? You can go to Madagascar, as long as you also go to Kazakhstan, and you let me take my holidays in August. OK?

J: OK. But only if you do the tennis weekend.

P: All right, no problem, I'll handle the tennis, if you take your holiday in January.

J: And you go to Siberia.

P: Oh, now wait a minute, I never agreed to that! I couldn't possibly go to Siberia unless you were able to ...

5.4 Speaking Negotiations – bargaining

 2:41

Part 1

Ingrid: So, Mr Petersen, you want to set up an e-business to sell music – MP3s and so on?

Harry: Oh, please call me Harry, everybody does. No, not MP3s – sheet music. You know, printed music for musicians to play, like song books, orchestral parts, and so on. At the moment we sell through our network of shops in Denmark, but I'm getting more

and more enquiries from other countries, and I'd like to set up an e-business to reach customers worldwide.

- I: I see. You want to compete in a global market?
- H: Exactly. But the problem is, we don't have the skills, the staff, or the money to do it ourselves.
- I: Well, Harry, that needn't be a problem. My company, Holman Multimedia, is used to working with small businesses, and we have a complete e-tailing package solution. You don't have to worry about anything at all. We will design, build and manage your website, and process your sales. We deal with the payments, and we can even handle the logistics for you if you want. Although I suppose most of the sheet music will be sent electronically as PDF files, right?
- H: That's right – it's much easier for us, and the customer gets immediate delivery.
- I: Exactly. So all you have to do is make sure you have the product in stock, and count your profits!
- H: And pay you a monthly fee, is that right?
- I: That's right, Harry. No capital investment for you, no new staff, and no overheads. And once you start selling music all over the world, that monthly fee is going to look insignificant compared to the money coming in.
- H: OK, Ingrid, er, can I call you Ingrid?
- I: Yes, of course.
- H: All right, I think we're in business. So what's next?
- I: That's terrific, Harry! OK, well, would you mind telling me exactly what you want the site to do? You see, it all depends just what you ...

 2:42

Part 2, Version 1

- H: All right, Ingrid, I think we agree on what we need. Now let's get down to the nitty-gritty – how soon can you deliver, and how much is it going to cost?
- I: OK, look, I'm going to write down a figure per month here, just so it's clear, then you can tell me what you think. There, how do you feel about that?
- H: Wow, as much as that! There's no way I could pay that.
- I: Well, that figure is based on what you say you need, Harry. I might possibly be able to bring it down a little, but only if we had a three-year contract.
- H: A three-year contract! No, I couldn't agree to that.
- I: Well, in that case, I can't bring the monthly fee down, I'm afraid.
- H: Hm. And what about lead time? Could you have the site up and running by next month?
- I: No. I'm afraid development time is around three months.
- H: Isn't there any way you could have the site online in two months?
- I: Well, I don't think there's much point in talking about lead time unless we can agree on the monthly fee. You're sure you won't consider a three-year contract?
- H: No. I can't commit myself to three years.
- I: OK, Harry, you have my phone number. If you change your mind, you know where to find me.

 2:43

Part 2, Version 2

- H: All right, Ingrid, I think we agree on what we need. Now let's get down to the nitty-gritty – how soon can you deliver, and how much is it going to cost?
- I: OK, look, I'm going to write down a figure per month here, just so it's clear, then you can tell me what you think. There, how do you feel about that?
- H: Wow, as much as that! Is there any way we could bring it down a little?
- I: Well, that figure is based on what you say you need, Harry. I might possibly be able to bring

it down a little, but only if we had a three-year contract.

- H: Well, I'd be reluctant to agree to a three-year contract unless you could guarantee a maximum down time of 24 hours per month. Could you do that?
- I: Let me reassure you on that point, Harry. Our sites and servers are very, very stable, and average down time is less than 24 hours per year – and so we're happy to guarantee less than 24 hours per month, as long as you choose our platinum service level – but of course, it's more expensive.
- H: Well, I don't really want to increase the budget. Hm. What about lead time? Can you have the site up and running by next month?
- I: Not unless we hire another developer. I suppose we could do it, providing you paid a year's fees in advance.
- H: Hm.
- I: Normally, development time is around three months.
- H: Look, let's split the difference. I can pay six months in advance on condition that you have the site online in two months. And if you can bring the monthly fee down 5% and include the platinum service, I'll agree to the three-year contract.
- I: You're a tough negotiator, Harry. But, OK, I think we can agree to that.
- H: It's a deal. Oh, but wait a minute, what about penalties – you know, if you can't deliver for any reason, or if the site is offline for more than 48 hours, for example?
- I: Oh, you don't need to worry about that, Harry. It never happens. In fact, nobody in the industry has penalty clauses these days. Now, I just happen to have a bottle of champagne in my bag here – if you can just sign – here, here and here – I'll open the champagne and we can celebrate your new e-business!

 2:44–2:46

- 1 I might possibly be able to bring it down a little, but only if we had a three-year contract.
- 2 I might consider reducing the price, if you increased your order.
- 3 I'd be reluctant to agree to a three-year contract, unless you could guarantee a maximum down time of 24 hours per month.

5.6 Case study St John's Beach Club

 2:47

- Loretta: Oh, Malcolm, there you are. I just wanted a quick word.
- Malcolm: Sure. Shall we use my office?
- L: No, here is fine. I think I'll have a coffee too.
- M: Black, no sugar?
- L: Yes. Thanks, Malcolm. I saw your memo about the incentive trip – it sounds great. I wish I was going!
- M: Well, why don't you? It would be an excellent opportunity to get to know the sales team better.
- L: Yes, it would, wouldn't it? But I just don't have the time, I'm afraid. Anyway, the reason I wanted to catch you was to confirm the budget.
- M: Ah, yes.
- L: Mm. I spoke to Charles. I've asked him to allocate a global budget of \$28,000. That's for everything except travel, which is a separate budget. That's up about 5% on last year. How does that sound?
- M: That sounds great. Thanks, Loretta. I'm going to get one of our best negotiators to talk to a couple of travel agents, see what sort of deal we can get. The hotels usually work with several agents, and some of them are prepared to negotiate better terms than others.
- L: Uh-huh. Try to persuade them to throw in some extra benefits too. After all, if we use the full budget, we're giving them a lot of business. Sometimes you can get a free upgrade to an executive suite, that kind of thing. How many people are you taking?
- M: Well, the top ten sales people, plus myself,

and partners – that makes 22. But if we can negotiate a really good package, I'd like to take one or two more sales reps along. They've all worked fantastically hard this year.

- L: Yes, I agree. It would encourage the reps who almost made it into the top ten. I always think it's hard on number eleven! It'll be about a week, like last year, I suppose?
- M: Well, again, if we can squeeze a couple more nights out of the budget, that would be great. But we'll see.
- L: OK, Malcolm. Let me know what you decide.
- M: Sure. Thanks, Loretta.

6 Company and community

6.1 About business Corporate social responsibility

 2:48–2:50

Part 1

Interviewer: Despite all the scandals of recent years, Mark Gunther thinks that corporate behavior is improving. He's a senior writer at *Fortune* magazine and author of a book contending that companies are becoming more socially responsible. Gunther is tracking companies that treat employees well, look after the environment and avoid exploiting developing countries.

Mark Gunther: If you just think back 15 or 20 years ago, the workforces were much less diverse than they are now; now you see businesses working very closely with environmental groups in a whole lot of areas. Employees have become company owners in a way they never had been before. You have a company like Starbucks that gave away what it calls 'bean stocks' to everyone who works there, including part-timers, and that aligns the interests of the company with its employees.

I: I wonder if part of the question here is which company you focus on, because you just said businesses are getting along better with environmentalists, there are certainly examples of that; there is also an administration in office that has battled with environmentalists over business questions, and there are businesses that are doing things that dismay environmentalists across the country right now.

MG: Right and of course it is hard to generalize, but even on the environment, I mean the Bush administration has not even acknowledged really global warming as a serious man-made problem. If you look at the US utility industry, you have utilities that are out there planting trees to offset their emissions, you have companies like UPS and FedEx which have huge transportation costs looking for ways to drive hybrid vehicles and get off the gasoline powered cars; I'd argue that the big companies in America are much more green than the Bush administration at the moment.

Part 2

- I: What is motivating companies to do that?
- MG: Purely bottom-line considerations, this is not about altruism. It's about, predominantly I think, attracting and engaging the best employees, no one really wants to go to work every day to enhance shareholder value, we really want to go to work and be in a place where we feel aligned with the company's goals, where we feel there's some meaning to what we do, and where we feel we can make the world a little bit of a better place every day.
- I: Somewhere you've written that, er, Southwest Airlines will favour its employees in some cases over its customers?
- MG: Southwest is very explicit about the hierarchy. They put the employee first, the customer second, and then the shareholder

third, and the theory is if you have happy, engaged, motivated employees, they're gonna attract customers and therefore your business is going to work, and shareholders are going to benefit, and by the way, if you go to a Southwest gate, get into an argument with someone there, the presumption when word gets back to Southwest headquarters in Dallas is that you were wrong, the customer was wrong and the employee was right because they hire people very carefully and train them and they trust their people 100%.

Part 5

I: Well, let's talk about a long-term trend that's been tracked by some business writers who will say that in the nineteen-fifties and sixties American corporations believed that they should take care of their employees, believed that they should take care of their customers as well as their shareholders, but that from the seventies, eighties onward, they've been pressured to just take care of the stock price, just take care of the share-holder, and in fact they get sued when they don't do that, or they get taken over when they don't do that.

MG: My argument is we are now correcting back from that. That we are not as short-term driven, that we are starting to think more long-term about building sustainable businesses and this short-term model not only doesn't work for businesses in the long run, it doesn't work for our society in the long run.

6.2 Vocabulary Ethical behaviour and social performance

2:51

Rhonda Abrams: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Every entrepreneur hopes to do well. We'd all like to make a lot of money and have a big, profitable customer base. But over the years, I've realized that most entrepreneurs want to do more. They'd not only like to do well; they'd like to do good. They'd like their business to contribute to their community, respect the environment, play a positive role in the lives of their employees and customers.

I'm not naive or simplistic. I strongly believe that building an honest, responsible business, with a healthy bottom line, in and of itself makes a valuable contribution to our economy and society. Such businesses buy supplies and materials, often employ others, and obviously meet a need of their customers.

Over the years, however, I learned that companies with a sense of integrity and purpose actually have a competitive edge over companies that are solely focused on the bottom line. I want to tell you about four ways they achieve this.

First of all, being socially responsible helps you attract and retain employees. Having a strong corporate culture committed to good corporate citizenship enables employees to feel that they are part of something important. Company programmes allowing employees to use job time to be involved in community causes are viewed as a valuable benefit. Prospective employees look at a company's values and social commitment when comparing job offers.

Secondly, being socially responsible helps you attract and retain customers. People like to do business with companies they respect. Some customers will be attracted by specific company policies, such as looking to buy products that aren't tested on animals or are recycled. But all customers are attracted to companies that consistently deal with them honestly and fairly.

Thirdly, being socially responsible helps you reduce employee misbehaviour. Businesses that act with integrity and honesty toward their employees, customers, and suppliers are more likely to have their employees also act with integrity and honesty toward the company and their fellow workers. An atmosphere of honesty helps keep everyone honest.

And, finally, being socially responsible helps keep you out of trouble. Being a good corporate

citizen – whether in your advertising, employee treatment, or environmental policies – makes it less likely that your company will get in trouble with regulatory agencies, taxing authorities, or face lawsuits or fines.

When your company does good – treats employees, customers, and suppliers fairly, as well as participating in community and social activities – you'll find you also do well. Good companies can become great companies.

6.3 Grammar The passive and reported speech

2:52–2:57

1
Leila Belabed: Mr. Bullard, the mayor is very upset. You've just dismissed 100 people from the factory! Have you forgotten that when your company arrived, you promised to create jobs for our town?

2
Geoffrey Bullard: Well, of course I understand that you are upset, Ms Belabed. Unfortunately, new technologies have revolutionized our industry. You must understand that with new automated machinery, we will no longer need so many operators.

3
LB: I know that it is difficult to remain competitive, but what about these people and their families? It's a disaster for them. What are you intending to do to help them, Mr Bullard?

4
GB: Please call me Geoffrey. Of course we share your concerns. We are setting up an outplacement service to help people find new jobs, and I'm confident that most of them will find work very quickly.

5
LB: But what about those who don't, Mr Bullard? How will they survive? These people don't have a lot of savings, you know! Are you offering them financial help?

6
GB: Yes, of course, Ms Belabed, you don't need to worry about that. Each person has already received a generous redundancy payment. And we're also making interest-free loans and advice available for those who want to start their own businesses.

6.4 Speaking Meetings – teamwork

2:58

Version 1

Anna: Do we all agree on that then? All right. That brings us to the next point on the agenda – company policy on gifts from suppliers. Now, in the past we used to turn a blind eye, but now I tend to think that we need ...

Stan: Well, it's stupid!

A: I'm sorry, Stanislas. Did you want to say something?

S: Yes. It's stupid. Really, really stupid. Well, it is, isn't it, Anna?

A: Well, I'm not quite sure why Stanislas feels so strongly about this issue, but the fact is, we had a major problem with our packaging supplier recently. It seems they had been sending regular 'goodwill packages' to our buyer's home.

S: What?!

Jon: Gifts, Stan. Cases of vodka, I believe.

S: Vodka?! Oh, I see.

A: Yes. Well, apparently, the suppliers thought the contract was guaranteed for life, and unfortunately Mr Vieri, from our purchasing department, 'forgot' to mention our policy of calling for new tenders every three years.

S: So, we should sack Vieri, that's what I think!

J: Stan, I see your point, but you can't just sack someone for making one mistake after twenty years with the company!

S: No, you're wrong, Jon! It's not right, and he has to go.

J: But Stan, don't you think that everyone

should have a second chance? I mean ...

A: Jon, Stan, I think we're getting side-tracked here. The question today is not how we deal with Mr Vieri, but what our company policy should be in future.

S: Yes, but his behaviour was unethical, do you understand? Unethical! So he must be fired!

Magali: Could I just come in here?

A: Yes, Magali, do you have any views on this issue?

M: I'm sorry, Anna. But when you say this issue, do you mean our policy, or Mr Vieri's vodka?

A: Listen, perhaps we should break for coffee. I think we're all getting a bit tired. Could we come back to this later?

2:59

Version 2

Anna: Do we all agree on that, then? All right. That brings us to the next point on the agenda – company policy on gifts from suppliers. Now, in the past we used to turn a blind eye, but now I tend to think that we need ...

Stan: Sorry to interrupt, but ...

A: Yes, Stan. Go on.

S: Well, I must say, I think accepting gifts from suppliers is unwise. Would you agree, Anna?

A: Well, Stanislas, on the whole, yes, I would. Now, recently we had a major problem with our packaging supplier. It seems they had been sending regular 'goodwill packages' to our buyer's home.

S: Sorry, Anna. I don't see what you mean.

Jon: Gifts, Stan. Cases of vodka, I believe.

S: Vodka? Oh, I see.

A: Yes. Well, apparently, the suppliers thought the contract was guaranteed for life, and unfortunately Mr Vieri, from our purchasing department, 'forgot' to mention our policy of calling for new tenders every three years.

S: Well, I feel strongly that we should dismiss Mr Vieri!

J: Stan, I see your point, but you can't just dismiss someone for making one mistake after twenty years with the company!

S: I'm afraid I can't agree, Jon! It's not right, and he should leave the company.

J: But Stan, don't you think that everyone should have a second chance? I mean ...

A: Jon, Stan, I think we're getting side-tracked here. The question today is not how we deal with Mr Vieri, but what our company policy should be in future.

S: Yes, but wouldn't you agree that his behaviour was unethical? So he should be dismissed.

Magali: Could I just come in here?

A: Yes, Magali, do you have any views on this issue?

M: I'm sorry, Anna. When you say this issue, do you mean our policy on gifts, or the wider issue of corporate ethics? You see, it seems to me that we need some kind of global charter or code of conduct which would cover all possible ...

6.5 Writing Reports and minutes

2:60

Jan: All right, then. Let's move on to point two on the agenda: diversity. As you know, our workforce is still 80% male. What's more, we have very few employees from ethnic minorities. The general feeling within the group is that we need to take measures in order to reflect the increasing diversity ...

Ines: Sorry to interrupt, Jan, but when you say 'measures', do you mean positive discrimination? Hiring women in preference to men, for instance? Because that's all very well in sales and admin, but I really, really can't see women doing the heavy jobs in production. And anyway, I'm not sure that positive discrimination is the right way to approach the problem.

Christopher: No, I don't think it is either. It seems to me that we would just go from one extreme to another – you know, all our employees would be middle-aged female

immigrants with disabilities!

- J: Point taken, Christopher. But, seriously, that's what we want to avoid – extremes. In fact, what we need are measures to ensure that we don't discriminate against anyone on whatever criteria, whether it's their age, their race, their gender, their religion, or anything else.
- C: But Jan, don't you think that's just an HR problem? I mean, they're the people who interview the candidates, not us. Nine times out of ten, we only see a short-list of people they've already approved. It's even worse when we recruit from the agencies. And that's another problem, by the way: half of the people they send us are absolutely hopeless. I don't know how they select them, but honestly ...
- J: Yes, Christopher. I know the agencies are a problem, but I think we're getting side-tracked here. Could we agree that we'll talk about the agencies next Monday?
- C: OK.
- J: Good. So, getting back to diversity. Ines, what can we do to attract more applications from women?
- I: Well, for a start, we should offer more part-time positions. Flexible hours, longer holidays when the schools are closed, a four-day week. You know, jobs that women with families can manage. That's really obvious. I've been saying this for years! I mean, why don't we start by allowing our present staff to go part-time if they want to? I can think of at least four women who'd be delighted to work part-time! That would mean we could offer more part-time jobs to new candidates.
- J: Yes, Ines, thank you. That's an excellent idea. Shall we get HR to work on it? Christopher?
- C: That's fine by me.
- J: All right, that's decided then. All right, shall we break for coffee now, or take point three first?

6.6 Case study Phoenix



- Justin: ... so we all agree that we need to keep an eye on that one. All right, that just leaves point six on the agenda: the new site for the South West. Helen, can you bring us up to date?
- Helen: Yes, Justin. There's good news: we've identified three possible sites in a place called Port Katherine.
- Glenn: Never heard of it!
- H: Well, it's a small town about 50 miles south of Perth. It's exactly what we were looking for: close to Perth, but far enough away not to attract too much attention from the environmentalists.
- G: Well, that's good news! We don't want another disaster like Cairns. Those Greens have absolutely no idea what this country would look like if we didn't recycle cars!
- J: Yes, all right, Glenn. Shall we let Helen finish?
- G: Oh, yes. Sorry, mate.
- J: Helen?
- H: Thank you. Port Katherine's population is only about three and half thousand, so Glenn will be happy to know there shouldn't be too much local resistance. And the local authorities are desperate to attract new business and jobs to the area.
- J: Sounds good. You said there were three possible sites?
- H: Yes, that's right. I've put all the details in this handout. There you are, Glenn.
- G: Oh, yeah. Thanks.
- H: Now, Site A is a good one. It's a greenfield site just on the edge of town. There are several plus points. Firstly, it's close to the highway, so access for our trucks is easy. Secondly, the price of land is reasonable. And thirdly, it's a nice flat site to build on.
- J: Any negatives?
- H: Well, just one. It's right next to the local school.

G: Uh-oh!

- H: But I don't think it's going to be a problem. I spoke to someone at the planning department, and they were very enthusiastic. Sites B and C are also possible, but they have other problems. Site B is on a business park, so no problems with residents, but it's a bit expensive and taxes will be higher. Site C is actually in the town centre.
- G: Oh yeah, perfect! Twenty ton trucks in the high street!
- H: Actually, Glenn, it's not that bad. It's on a big old factory site near the harbour. We'd have to demolish the old building, and access would be a bit of a problem, but they could build a new road. It's possible.
- J: OK, thanks, Helen. Excellent work. I'll send somebody out there to start talking to the locals.
- G: 'Operation Charm and Diplomacy', eh?
- J: Yes.
- H: Hm. Better not send Glenn, then!

7 Mergers and acquisitions

7.1 About business Risks and opportunities in M&A



- Interviewer: If mergers are so difficult to do well, why bother with external growth at all? Why not just grow internally?
- Bernard Degoulange: Well, the most common reason, and probably the best reason for a merger, is that your customers are asking you for something you can't deliver. Let's say you sell champagne. If people are satisfied with your champagne, they're going to start asking you for whisky, simply because everybody would like to be able to get the solution to all of life's problems from the same place. Now, if you can't give your customers the whisky they're asking for, you have a problem. Because however satisfied they are with your champagne, they're going to go somewhere else for whisky, and that's when you risk losing those customers.
- I: What advice would you give on finding the right company to acquire?
- BD: Personally, I have five points that I want to examine when looking at a possible acquisition: the five Gs. If I don't get good answers to at least four of them, I don't do the deal. The first of the five Gs is Goals. Are our goals compatible? Are both companies trying to achieve something similar? If not, keep looking.
- Secondly, Gains. I want to know if there will be real gains in terms of economies of scale. And will these gains compensate for perhaps not being able to react as quickly to new trends in the market because of the size of the organization? Being bigger is not always better.
- The third point is Genes. That's genes with a G, not with a J! By genes, I mean company culture. There's no point in trying to merge a traditional, hierarchical family business with a fast-moving start-up with a laid-back management style. It just won't work, the cultural genes are too different. It's not enough to find a partner whose strengths compensate for your weaknesses, and vice versa; there has to be a real synergy in culture and personality.
- I: Yes, if that synergy isn't present, there's a risk that neither company's customers recognize the firm that they used to trust.
- BD: Exactly.
- I: OK, so, Goals, Gains and Genes. What are the other two Gs?
- BD: Geography and Growth. Are the companies based in the same city or geographical area? If not, communication between headquarters is much more difficult, and the Gains are harder to achieve.

I: And Growth?

- BD: Will the merger provide technology or skills that you don't have now, which would take too long to develop yourself, and which will unquestionably allow your company to grow? If the merger will open new markets, which would otherwise be inaccessible, then it makes sense.
- I: When you've identified the right partner, how can you make sure the merger goes smoothly?
- BD: The most important thing is to look after your people: employees, management and of course customers, but especially employees. First of all, you have to keep them focused and productive. A merger is a wonderful opportunity for everybody to take their eye off the ball – and so it's a wonderful opportunity for the competition to jump in and take market share from both companies in the merger.
- Secondly you have to help employees get over their feelings of loss and perhaps anger as quickly as possible, and accept the new situation. Whenever there is a merger, two companies die and a new company is born. It's essential to help people get through that traumatic period, to explain how things will change and what their new roles will be, and to get them to accept the new organization and their new identity. It's essentially about communication, sometimes counselling, and compensating those who leave the company, whether by choice or not.

7.2 Vocabulary Business performance



- Anchor: Oxtex Holdings today confirmed that they have increased their bid for Fraxis Corp. to \$98 per share. Nelson Brown has the details of the New York industrial designer's Wall Street success.
- Nelson Brown: Fraxis Corp. was floated in 1988 at just \$15 per share. After a sudden drop of \$3 in 1989, the stock rose gradually over the next two years to reach \$50 in early 1991, when Fraxis acquired one of their smaller competitors, Nimmco. The market was not enthusiastic about the takeover, and Fraxis fell sharply by over 40%. It then recovered slightly and levelled off around the \$30 dollar mark for the next three years. In 1995, Fraxis CEO Alex Firman announced an alliance with the European market leader Haffmann; the reaction was immediate. The stock price soared to \$65 as institutional investors rushed to share in the profits. The alliance has been a great success; with the exception of temporary dips to \$50 in 2001 and \$59 in 2006, Fraxis has climbed steadily to peak at \$95, shortly after Oxtex's first offer of \$90 a share was rejected last week. Analysts believe that Fraxis are unlikely to accept anything less than \$110, so expect to see the price jump to \$100 plus when trading opens on Monday.

7.3 Grammar Future forms and expressing likelihood



- Ashley: Emma, Happy New Year!
Emma: Happy New Year!
- A: What are you doing all alone over here?
I haven't had a chance to talk to you all evening. Have some more champagne!
- E: No, I shouldn't. I'm going to give up smoking and drinking this year. It's my New Year's resolution.
- A: Really?! Well, you can start tomorrow. Come on, Em, it's New Year!
- E: Oh, all right, just a drop. Thanks. Anyway, what about you, Ashley? What's the New Year going to be like for you? Have you made any resolutions?
- A: No, not really. But I'm definitely going to find a new job. There's no way I'm staying at that company for another year.
- E: Right. Have you got anything in mind?

- A: No, but I'm going to read the job ads until I find something good. I'm bound to find something better than what I do now.
- E: Oh, I'm sure you'll find something easily. Or you could go freelance, with the talent you've got ...
- A: Freelance?! Well, I suppose I could, but I think it's unlikely. It's far too complicated. No, I'm just going to choose about ten or twelve jobs to apply for, go along to the interviews, and we'll see what happens. I'm going to take my time, not rush into anything.
- E: Right. I think that's very sensible.
- A: So, what about you? Are you going to stay at Artip?
- E: I doubt it.
- A: Really?! Are you going to leave, or are they going to throw you out?
- E: Well, both of those are quite likely, actually. The company's being taken over in February, so we don't know what will happen. I mean, they're bound to make redundancies, we just don't know how many. Anyway, I'm starting evening classes next week. I'm going to retrain as a marketing assistant.
- A: Excellent! Well, here's to a successful New Year for both of us!
- E: Yes, cheers! But, um, Ashley, isn't there another New Year's resolution you've forgotten to tell me about? Is that a real diamond? Who's the lucky man, then?

7.4 Speaking Presentations – visuals

3:04–3:08

A
Now, my next slide shows how the number of takeovers is likely to increase over the next decade. This one gives a breakdown by sector. This next slide highlights the probable effect on company performance. And this one, this one and now this third slide show how share prices will fall.

B
Moving on to my next point, which is, er ... yes, management buy-outs. No, sorry, just before that I'm going to show you another slide about corporate raiders. Ah, sorry, I can't seem to find it. Well, there's a hand-out which gives you the main points. I'll, er, make some copies when we finish. So, have a look at this slide which shows the confusion which resulted from ... Ah, no, sorry, those are my holiday photos ...

C
Now, then. Let's look at the next slide which shows some very interesting data. As you can see here – oh, or perhaps you can't see – yes, I'm sorry, the figures are rather small. Anyway, the sales forecasts are particularly good, in contrast to the data for the last three years, which is in the, ah, smaller table, over here on the right. Ah. You can't read that either?

D
If you look at the next slide, you'll see that we intend to collect data for the survey using a Grossman scheduled EMTI questionnaire modified from the standard CDF rapid assessment surveys procedure, and compensated for statistical significance using an unbiased reflex standard deviation algorithm.

E
OK, customer reactions to price and service levels after mergers: 30% of customers noticed an improvement; 49 said things had got worse. Erm, customer satisfaction by sector: almost 9% down in retail; stable in the service and financial sector; and 5% up for manufacturing companies.

3:09

How will our customers react to a merger? My next slide shows two charts which illustrate the problem. Recently, customers of large Spanish companies that had been involved in mergers were asked if they felt that prices and service had improved, remained the same or deteriorated as a result of the merger. As you will notice in the pie-chart, only a third of customers noticed an improvement, compared to almost half who said

that things had got worse.

Let's look at the second chart, which shows customer satisfaction by sector. As you can see, after a merger, customer satisfaction falls by an average of almost 9% in the retail sector, whereas it remains about the same in the service and financial sector, and rises by 5% on average for manufacturing companies.

The figures seem to suggest that, on the whole, customers are always likely to react negatively to mergers. This is due to a perceived drop in levels of service after a merger. The results indicate that retailers, where service is crucial to customer satisfaction, are particularly affected, as opposed to manufacturers, who benefit from mergers. Of course, this is the result of improved product quality and design, which are the most important factors for their customers.

3:10–3:13

- 1 Customers were asked if service had deteriorated as a result of the merger.
- 2 Only a third of customers noticed an improvement.
- 3 Customer satisfaction falls by an average of almost 9%.
- 4 This is essentially due to a drop in levels of service after a merger.

7.5 Writing Presentation slides

3:14

Good morning everyone, and thank you for coming. Two months ago, you asked me to conduct a strategic analysis of the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. I'm here today to present my findings, and to make recommendations on the basis of those findings.

I intend first to give a short summary of the company's position, and then to invite you to ask questions and give your reactions to my proposals. If anything is not clear, please feel free to interrupt me.

First of all, I'd like to remind you of the company's main strengths. As you know, Galway Software has a reputation for innovation and quality in developing highly-specialized customer applications. We are able to provide excellent service thanks to our small team of expert engineers and developers. What's more, our finances have been carefully and cautiously managed: as you can see from the figures on this slide, today the company is in good financial health with practically no debt.

However, although there are many reasons for satisfaction with the company's position, there are also a number of weaknesses which must be considered. The first, small weakness is office space. We just don't have enough. The second, more significant weakness is costs. As this graph shows, our development costs have risen steadily, whereas market prices are falling. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain our profit margins. The principal explanation for these high costs is the high salaries we have to pay to attract experienced developers. A third, associated problem is recruitment: in spite of high salaries, we are finding it increasingly difficult to attract young engineers who prefer to join large international companies. This brings me to perhaps the most significant weakness, and a problem which I want to come back to in a few moments when I talk about threats, and that is our size. As a small company in a very specific niche market, we are vulnerable. If things went wrong with just a few of our big customers, we could have serious difficulties.

But before looking at the threats, let's move on to opportunities. In particular, new technologies and a changing world economy are opening up exciting ways of re-thinking our business activities. For example, the new member states of the European Union in Eastern Europe have excellent schools and universities: their young engineers are talented, well-trained and keen to acquire experience in companies like ours. Another possibility is to do part of our development work offshore, in countries

like India where labour costs are significantly lower than in Europe. Last, but certainly not least, we must look at opportunities in our own industry: competition is fierce, and a process of consolidation is under way. Many firms are forming alliances or launching takeover bids in order to exploit synergies, to make economies of scale and to diversify into new market segments. I believe these are opportunities we should not ignore, and I will be making a specific recommendation in the last part of my presentation.

So, I've talked about our strengths, our weaknesses and our opportunities. I want now to explain why one of the opportunities I have just described is also a serious threat. In the context of the consolidation I referred to earlier, Galway Software, as a small, successful, well-managed company with no debt, is a perfect target for a takeover. It is only a matter of time before a big international firm comes knocking at the door with its cheque book open. ... Unless we move first.

In the last part of this presentation, I am going to recommend that Galway Software should itself launch a takeover bid. There are many good reasons for this. Firstly, external growth with a reasonable amount of debt will make us less vulnerable. Secondly, a takeover will allow us to diversify into new markets, to expand our customer base and spread our risks, and to make economies of scale. And thirdly, the ideal candidate, Oranmore Video Games, which is based just 20 miles away, currently has more developers than it needs, and has a lot of unused office space.

I'm going to give you a handout which gives more details of why I believe we should acquire Oranmore ...

7.6 Case study Calisto

3:15

President: As you know, this year Calisto has lost one point five million dollars. Obviously this situation cannot continue. Unless we take action now, we will go out of business next year. We have several options to consider.

Our first option is to adopt the same strategy as IMM. IMM have reduced their operating expenses by 20% over the last two years. However, they have achieved this by ruthlessly cutting jobs: one fifth of IMM's staff have been made redundant. Here at Calisto we have a long tradition of looking after our staff, and I do not wish to choose this option unless there is no other alternative.

Our second option is to follow the example of our friends at Reysonido, and buy European technology which would reduce our cost of sales by 10–15%. However, we estimate that this investment would increase our operating expenses by half a million dollars a year.

A third option is to cut our prices in order to increase sales. We estimate a price cut of 10% might increase next year's sales to \$16.5 million – assuming, of course, that our competitors do not reduce their prices. However, our cost of sales would increase to just under 9 million dollars.

My friends, there are three more options which I have not yet discussed with you, but which I would like you to consider carefully. Option number four is a merger. IMM have offered us three million dollars, which, in view of our desperate situation, is a very reasonable offer. If we agreed to a merger with IMM, the new company would be the new market leader, and be in a far better position to compete with Dylan. However, there would no doubt be some redundancies in order to make economies of scale.

As I said at the beginning of my presentation, I will take questions at the end. Now, option five. This is a high-risk strategy, but we must consider all possible solutions. In order to compete with Dylan, we need to be bigger; one way to obtain that critical size is by acquisition. Our fifth option is to acquire Reysonido.

Reysonido are likely to accept a takeover bid of around four million dollars. As well as synergy and economies of scale, this acquisition would also give us another bonus: access to the technology which means Reysonido's cost of sales is 10% lower than our own. Of course, we would need to borrow the money, and the repayments would represent around half a million dollars per year over ten years: not so unrealistic with combined sales of 25 million, I believe.

The final option is one which I sincerely hope you will not choose. That is, to close the company, and sell off our assets to pay our debts. I have kept it until last in order to stress that it is a serious option.

All right, I'm sure you are anxious to ask questions. After that, I would like us to consider all the options in detail; everybody's contributions will be valuable. Thank you.

8 International trade

8.1 About business Export sales and payment

3:16

Interviewer: Mr Sullivan, Daryl Vincenti of Eisenhart Games recommends using a credit agency like yours. But can you tell us first what exactly credit agencies do?

James Sullivan: Well, basically, we offer a range of services in two main areas: information and insurance. Some of our clients are interested in information to help them manage credit risk, and others come to us for insurance. But many companies, like Eisenhart, need both information and insurance.

I: What sort of information can you provide?

JS: We have details of over 50 million businesses in countries all over the world. So, for example, we can help Daryl by telling him how businesses and countries in the Middle East are doing financially; we can tell him if his prospective customers pay, and how quickly they pay; and, in particular, we can warn him if one of his customers gets into financial difficulty.

I: And you give each company a rating which indicates how reliable they are?

JS: Yes, companies – and also countries – are given a rating. This gives us a quick guide to how safely you can do business with a particular company or in a particular country. Actually, there's much more than just the rating. Clients like Daryl receive detailed credit reports which help them decide if and how to work with different companies.

I: I see. Now, what about credit insurance? Is that something new?

JS: Well, it's relatively new over here in the States, but not in Europe. European companies have been using it for a long time. Seventy per cent of European companies use credit insurance, whereas in the States the figure is below 5%.

I: Why is that?

JS: Essentially because European firms have to export, because their internal markets are too small. Until now, the majority of American firms have done most of their business in America, so they didn't need credit insurance unless the customer was very risky. Nowadays, companies like Eisenhart need to export, so they're discovering the advantages of credit insurance. For example, it means that in Saudi Arabia, Daryl can trade on open account, with no need for letters of credit, which take a lot of time and are relatively expensive.

I: I see. Talking of expense, what does credit insurance cost?

JS: Well, of course, it depends on the contract. The more risk the insurer takes on, the higher the premium will be. But, on average, I would say, for international credit insurance, between a quarter and 1% of sales.

8.2 Vocabulary International deals and payments

3:17–3:21

1

A: Bruno, have you seen this letter from those people in Slovakia?

B: No, what do they want?

A: Well, they say they're ready to place a large order now if they can pay next year.

B: Well, you'd better do some research on the company. Make sure they can pay! But be discrete. We don't want to upset them.

2

C: I'm still worried about sending these parts by sea. They're quite fragile, you know.

D: Well, don't worry. We're meeting the insurance people tomorrow. If anything goes wrong, we'll be covered.

C: But the insurance premium will be expensive, won't it?

D: Probably. But we have to do it anyway. It's one of the conditions in the contract. No insurance, no deal.

3

E: Francesca, have we received a payment from Kawasaki?

F: No. And I've already sent two reminders.

E: Two? Listen, could you give them a call? If we're not careful, they'll be late every month, and I don't want to have the same problems we had last year.

4

F: So, could you send the payment as soon as possible, Mr Takahashi?

G: Well, it's just that there seems to be a small problem with your invoice. It's more expensive than we expected.

F: I'm sorry, Mr Takahashi, but the invoice is for exactly the same amount as our quotation, which you accepted.

G: Ah, yes. Well, exceptionally, as we are regular customers, could you perhaps wait two or three weeks? We just have a small cash-flow problem at the moment. I'm sure you understand, Ms Trevi. It's nothing to worry about ...

5

H: Well, we'll accept your terms providing you deliver direct to our factory.

I: Hm. Our customers normally collect the goods from the port of entry.

H: But you said yourself these parts are fragile, so surely it would be better for the same forwarder to deliver all the way to the door? That way there's less risk of damage.

I: Well, you have a point there, I suppose.

H: And this will be a regular order, so it means a lot of business for the forwarder. I'm sure you can negotiate good terms with them.

I: Yes. Yes, you're right. OK, then. It's a deal.

8.3 Grammar Prepositions

3:22

Paul: Oh, Jenny, did you pick up my tickets?

Jenny: No, I'm picking them up this evening. I have to be there before six, so I'll be able to drop them off here by 6.30.

P: That's great! What time's the flight?

J: It's at 23.10. But it's OK – check-in doesn't open until 21.15. You've got plenty of time.

P: Hm. I've got the finance committee tonight. That usually goes on until at least half seven. I'll only just have time to go home and pick up my suitcase. I probably won't see the kids for a week now. They'll be in bed by quarter to eight. When do I get back from the States again?

J: On Sunday morning. You've got six meetings between tomorrow morning and Friday. That leaves you a day to visit New York, and you fly back late on Saturday evening.

P: Well, I don't think I'll have much time to visit New York. I've got the Merosom pitch to prepare for next Monday. I'm going to be jet-lagged on Sunday, so I'll have to do it before flying back.

J: Oh, yes, that's right. When do you expect Merosom to announce their decision?

P: Well, they said within three weeks. By the way, have you got the files for the New York meetings?

J: Yes, they're all ready. Do want to look at them now?

P: No, I've got another meeting!

J: Well, you'll have to read them during the flight, then.

P: Hm. I suppose so.

J: OK. Well, I'll get on, then, unless you've got any other questions?

P: Er, yes, just one. When am I going to sleep?

3:23–3:32

1

A: It seems to me that with interest rates so low, property is still a better choice than the stock market.

B: Yes, you're right. I think a small flat in the town centre should give a good return.

2

C: I think you should talk to her. She's still upset.

D: OK, OK. I'll call her and tell her I'm sorry. I didn't mean what I said.

3

E: What state is it in after the accident?

F: Well, it could have been worse. Apart from a broken windscreen and headlights, there are only a few scratches on the paintwork. I was lucky.

4

G: It's amazing. She already speaks seven different languages, and she's picking up Chinese really fast!

H: Yeah, some people just have a gift, I guess.

5

I: You desperately need to get some more contracts. Relying on just one big firm is so dangerous.

J: Yes, I know. But we've always done most of our turnover with them.

6

K: The Americans are much more demanding. The Food and Drug Administration are terribly strict. But if you want to sell in the States, there's no other way.

L: Yes, there's no choice. We'll have to adapt the product to their norms.

7

M: What if we deliver the goods but they don't pay?

N: Well, we have a policy which covers that risk. For a small percentage of the value of the goods, we will guarantee to pay you if the customer defaults.

8

O: Well, sales are up 300%, we've reduced costs, our stock price has almost doubled and shareholders are delighted! Everything's worked out perfectly!

P: Yes. It doesn't get any better than this.

9

Q: Have you had any news from Taiwan?

R: No, not a word. It's strange. Usually they're in touch at least once a week.

10

S: Hey, Terry. Have you changed the passwords? I can't get into the database!

T: No, I'm having the same problem. I've tried everything but the system won't let me in.

8.4 Speaking Negotiations – diplomacy

3:33–3:35

- 1
A: I'm afraid I think we might need more time to explore all the implications, and perhaps to include some of our senior management in the discussions.
B: Look, Mr. Yamada, I've already been here a week, and I have a plane to catch this evening. If you don't want to do this deal, just say so!
I mean, when I get back, I have to tell my boss we have a contract, or explain why I failed to get one!
- 2
C: We feel there are still quite a large number of difficulties to face in this project, and these will take a very considerable amount of time and money to resolve.
D: OK, Amal, let's sit down and work out a schedule.
C: I am not sure that at this stage a schedule is appropriate, in view of the considerable, er, cultural differences between our companies.
D: Well, we need to start work soon if we want to meet the deadlines.
C: Frau Meier, perhaps we should talk again in a few days, by telephone?
D: Are you saying you're quitting the project?!
- 3
C: If you insist on putting it in those terms, then, yes, I think probably that is best.
- 4
E: And you pay the shipping costs.
F: No, as I told you, our prices are ex works. You pay for shipping.
E: So you don't want to sell us your machine tools?
F: No, why do you say that? I never said that!
E: Your terms with Auckland Industries last year included shipping, I believe.
F: Yes, but that was a much larger contract.
E: So our order is not very important for you?

3:36–3:38

- 1
A: I'm afraid I think we might need more time to explore all the implications, and perhaps to include some of our senior management in the discussions.
B: Uh-huh. Yamada-san, correct me if I'm wrong, but you seem to be saying that you're not completely convinced by this deal.
A: I'm afraid there seems to be a slight misunderstanding, Mr Bryson. Let me put it another way. We are as enthusiastic about this deal as ever, but here in Japan, it is very important to take the time to consult everybody, and to be sure there is a consensus.
B: Ah, yes, I understand. It's important for me to keep my board informed too.
- 2
C: I'm afraid we feel there are still quite a large number of difficulties to face in this project, and these will take a very considerable amount of time and money to resolve.
D: OK, Amal, have I got this right? You're saying that you're not sure we have the time or the money to make this project a success?
C: That's right. Especially in view of the considerable, er, cultural differences between our companies.
D: So, would I be right in saying that you are considering withdrawing from the project?
C: No, I'm sorry, Sabine, that isn't quite what I meant. What I was trying to say was, we need to take our different approaches to these problems into account, but I'm sure we can find solutions.
D: Yes, I'm sure we can. Perhaps we should talk again in a few days, by telephone?
C: Yes, that would be fine.
- 3
E: And if I've understood correctly, you will pay the shipping costs.

- F: I'm sorry, perhaps I haven't made myself clear. The price we quoted was ex works. But we can quote including shipping if you like.
E: But didn't you say you would give us the same terms as for Auckland Industries last year?
F: Ah, I see, yes. Well, allow me to rephrase that. What I meant was, we would be very happy to give you the same terms as Auckland, if you were in a position to order the same volume.

8.6 Case study Jeddah Royal Beach Resort

3:39

- Frederick: Good evening, Riaz!
Riaz: Oh, hello Frederick. Everything OK?
F: Yes, fine, thanks. I just wanted to give you these applications, if you've got a moment?
R: Yes, of course. Have a seat.
F: Thanks.
R: OK, so what have we got here?
F: Well, first of all, there's Ms Koepple in room 406. She's with Cool Breeze. It's a record label based in Buenos Aires. Now, I know you don't like record companies, but ...
R: Yes, Frederick, and you know very well why I don't like record companies and those vulgar rock groups they send us, always causing damage and disturbing the other guests: Argentina, you say?
F: Yes. But Ms Koepple says they want to organize a big conference for their executives. There won't be any rock groups or that kind of thing, just corporate executives. So, they're applying for our credit card.
R: Well, it's true we need to develop in the conference market. It's good business, and it often brings in more business by word of mouth. But Argentina ... OK, leave it with me and I'll look into it. How big is Ms Koepple's bill?
F: Well, she's been here for four nights. Leaving on Saturday. She's spending a lot of money – maybe six thousand dollars so far. But she's very nice, very friendly. I'm sure she won't leave without paying.
R: Hm, she's applying for a credit limit of twenty thousand. Let's keep an eye on her, anyway. Let me know if her account goes over ten thousand dollars, OK?
F: Sure.
R: What else have you got there?
F: The next one is Mr Kobayashi from Tokyo. Remember him?
R: Oh, yes. The second-hand car salesman?
F: Yes. He's a really difficult customer. We've had to move him to a different room three times this week because he didn't like the view, or it was too far from the restaurant ...
R: Well, he may be difficult but his credit's good. He seems to have built himself quite an empire over there. Kobayashi Auto Sales is doing very well. We've never had any problem with his people.
F: Well, I wouldn't buy a car from him. He never looks you in the eye, never smiles, never says 'thank you'. He wants us to raise his credit limit, but I don't trust him.
R: Let me see. From fifty up to a hundred thousand, eh? All right, I'll think about it.
F: Right. And this last one is our old friend Mrs Saman and her team from Egypt.
R: Oh, no. Are they still coming here? I thought we stopped their credit last year.
F: No, the company paid up in the end, remember?
R: Yes, I do now. Charming lady, of course, but that company – what's it called? Black Nile, that's it. They invented the concept of the slow payer! I think it took 18 months to get them to pay their last invoice. What does she want now?
F: Well, she wants us to raise their credit limit to a hundred thousand, too.
R: Oh, no way!
F: But there are ten of them this time, and she's such a wonderful little old lady!

- R: I should really suspend their credit and insist on cash in advance. They're on, let's see ... thirty thousand dollars. It's just too big a risk. Have you seen the latest cash-flow figures? Our customers are taking longer and longer to pay, and uncollectibles have gone over 3%! I'm getting a lot of pressure from management to take firm action.
F: Well, be careful: Mrs Saman told me yesterday that her brother is a very senior government official. And remember, we have a lot of guests from Egypt now. We don't want to upset them.
R: Yes, that's true. You never know who Mrs Saman might talk to. She's a very influential old lady. All right, leave it with me, Frederick. I'll let you know what I decide tomorrow.