

Unit 1

1.1

Presenter So is most of your work to do with translating websites from English?

Zhifu No, not really, although we do get a lot of Western companies who want to break into Asian markets. The problem is ... they think they can just come along and translate their website, just like that ... But really that's a very expensive and ineffective way of doing things.

Presenter There's more to it than that?

Zhifu Yes. And to be honest, it's quite arrogant to think you can create a favourable impression and attract a lot of customers without really trying. To start with, customers are still wary ...

Presenter What ... of newcomers? Or of the technology?

Zhifu Both. You have to work hard to show that you are trustworthy and to make customers feel confident in your company.

Presenter Yes, but that's not a particularly Asian phenomenon, is it? I mean, if you have a website with spelling mistakes, people are bound to be suspicious, aren't they?

Zhifu That's right, but just like in traditional advertising, some things are more effective in some cultures than others.

Presenter So you're saying a localized website would need to be genuinely different in some way?

Zhifu Yes. In the West, the websites have a lot of words – lots of facts and figures, they're often quite complex. But here, the websites that work best are simple and functional ... in the same way that many Asian cultures prefer offices that are modest rather than ostentatious.

Presenter A case of less is more?

Zhifu Yes, exactly. And you have to understand the local culture. For example, here in China, when people go shopping online, they like sites where they can bargain and make a deal, because that's what they like to do in real life.

Presenter So a website like that would need a lot more than just translating. You might have to rebuild the whole site.

Zhifu That's right. For really successful website localization, you have to start the process from the beginning, taking all these cultural things into account ... not just translate the words and hope for the best.

1.2

Ivan Ivan Formanek. How can I help you?

Sean Hello, Ivan. This is Sean McFee. I'm calling about the email I sent you regarding your new website.

Ivan Oh, hello. Yes, I remember. Thanks for responding so quickly.

Sean No problem. I wondered if you'd had time to look through the portfolio I sent.

Ivan Yes, I have. Your work looks very interesting.

Sean What exactly do you want to do? Do you want to change the whole site or just update parts of it?

Ivan Well, we're currently updating our corporate image, which means redesigning the logo, the brochures and the website. We've already done some of this in-house, but we need help with the website in particular.

Sean Well, I could certainly help you with that.

Ivan Great. I suggest we meet to discuss things further. I have to be honest, though. You aren't the only designer we're talking to.

Sean I understand. When would you like to meet?

Ivan Well ... I go to Berlin once a month to interpret for a client of ours – I'm covering for a colleague who's on maternity leave. In fact, I'm leaving the day after tomorrow, but we can meet when I get back.

Sean Fine, whatever's best for you.

Ivan Let's say, provisionally, Tuesday the 13th at eleven o'clock and I'll get my assistant to call you later today to confirm. You'll be travelling in from Krakow, won't you?

Sean That's right.

Ivan It might be best to discuss travel arrangements with my assistant then. Her name is Catherine, by the way.

Sean Fine. Well, thanks for your time.

Ivan You're welcome. See you in a couple of weeks.

1.3

Sean Hello, Sean McFee.

Catherine Hello, this is Catherine, Ivan Formanek's assistant. I'm calling about the meeting on Tuesday the 13th.

Sean Oh, right. Thanks. I wanted to speak to you about that. I'm actually going to be in Prague already as I've arranged to meet some other clients on the Monday.

Catherine OK.

Sean Can you tell me how I get to Simply Speaking? Is it best by taxi or public transport?

Catherine Public transport's fine. Let me know where you're staying and I'll email you a map and directions from your hotel.

Sean Thanks. Another thing I wanted to check ... How long are you scheduling the meeting for? There's a train that leaves at three o'clock. Will I have time to catch that one or should I take a later one?

Catherine We'll be finished by 2.00 at the latest ... It only takes 20 minutes to get to the station, so you'll have plenty of time.

Sean Thanks. I'll probably take a taxi to the station to be sure.

Catherine OK. When you arrive at the company, give your name to Reception and they'll send you up to us on the fifth floor. And let me know if you need a taxi and I'll book one for you.

Sean That's very kind. Thanks a lot.

1.4

1

A Let me take your name and number and I'll let you know when we're having another exhibition.

B That's great. Thanks. Here's my card.

2

A Can I have Suzy's number and email address? I want to invite her to the next training day.

B Sure. They're in my phone, so I'll send you her contact details by text. Is that OK?

A Yeah, fine. That way I'll have your new mobile number, too.

3

A It was great meeting you again. Let's get together again next month. I have an email address for you but I'm not sure if it's current.

B No, you've probably got my old one. But I've got yours so it's probably easiest if I email you when I get back to the office.

A OK, great.

Unit 2

2.1

1

Claudia My job involves visiting different hotels to sell various ranges of soap, shampoo and other toiletries for their guests. My sales territory covers the whole of Germany and Austria. I love my job. I get a lot of fulfilment from meeting new people, and from the travel – I can't imagine being stuck in the same place all the time. I also value the autonomy the job gives me – I have to report to my manager once a week, but apart from that, I'm responsible for all day-to-day decisions and organization. Because I'm on the road so much of the time, I'm provided with the essential benefits like a BlackBerry® and a laptop, and a company car, of course. I get quite a good basic salary, but what is also very important for me is the amount I can earn in commission – I get 15% of everything I sell and there's no upper limit – and that's a big incentive for me because I'm one of the top-selling sales people. My company are very generous with rewards, too ... you know, merchandise, vouchers, social events. I do think these help me to do my job better – it's nice to be acknowledged and recognized for my achievements.

2

Peter Every month, we have a sales competition with lots of prizes, and each dealership has to send in figures for the month to Head Office – you know, to show them how well we’re doing – and then, if you’ve met your targets, you get reward vouchers for things like ... I don’t know, a hot-air balloon trip or a spa treatment, or something ... and I usually give these to someone on my sales team, whoever deserves them. I think it works well – it motivates them – but the real value of prizes is that it helps to make people feel appreciated. Positive feedback and praise are very important, they do a lot for job satisfaction. Managers like myself don’t get monthly prizes. The real incentive for us is that, if we make the grade, we get invited on a special trip once a year. It really makes you feel positive about working for the company, you feel valued ... like an important member of the team. Last year, it was a week in Africa and a chance to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, and that’s something I’ll never forget. The company also thinks that development is important for staff morale, so there are lots of opportunities for training, not just staff development but non-professional training like horticulture or painting. That’s a popular benefit of the job, but one of the biggest perks is the very generous staff discount we get on all our models – and when you’re talking about a new car, you’re talking about a lot of money.

3

Macie There are a lot of popular misconceptions about this job ... you know? I mean, people seem to think you get to travel all over the place and see different countries every week. But that’s only true on long-haul flights ... most of the time it’s a fast turnaround, and back to checking seat belts and serving drinks. So, on a regular basis, the travel really isn’t that exciting. But one of the main benefits is the staff discount. Me, my husband, my kids ... even my parents ... we get hugely reduced fares when we use the airline – and that’s when we can really travel and ... see the world. The salary’s OK, a little below average maybe, but the compensation plan is good. Let’s see ... it includes a profit-sharing scheme, a non-contributory pension plan ... we have private medical insurance and there are incentives like attendance rewards and on-time bonuses – so, in all, yeah, it’s a pretty good deal. One of the good things about the company is that we do get appreciation when we do our jobs well. Senior management actually comes round and thanks us personally when we’ve met our targets ... and that certainly gives me a sense of achievement.

2.2

Conversation 1

Harry Hello, I saw you sitting on my table at dinner, but I didn’t have a chance to speak to you. I’m Harry.

Alessandro Hi. I’m Alessandro.

Harry Who did you come with? Is this your first company event?

Alessandro Yes.

Harry Well, I’m sure you’ll have a great weekend. Have you seen the programme?

Alessandro No, not yet.

Harry Oh. Well, it looks very entertaining. I think there are some left at the information desk. Are you, um, here with colleagues?

Alessandro No.

Harry Well, you’ll soon get to know people. So, um, would you like another drink?

Alessandro No, I’m fine, thanks.

Harry Well, it’s been nice talking to you ... erm ... Alessandro. You don’t mind if I go and get myself a coffee? See you later.

Conversation 2

Paolo Hi, I don’t think we’ve met. I’m Paolo from Napoli – I work for one of the company’s suppliers.

Sonia Hi, nice to meet you. I’m Sonia ... from France.

Paolo Nice to meet you.

Sonia So ... I’ve heard that Naples is becoming very popular for foreign investors – is that true?

Paolo Well, Sonia, it’s interesting that you say that because ...

Conversation 3

Sumitra Hi, I’m Sumitra, based in the UK.

Krishnan Hello, I’m Krishnan. Sorry, where are you from originally?

Sumitra Well, my parents live in Calcutta. I was born there, but I’ve moved around a lot.

Krishnan You are from Calcutta? No! That’s amazing! My parents are from India – in fact, they are there now visiting relatives.

Sumitra What a coincidence! Where do they come from?

Krishnan From Bhiwandi – near Mumbai.

Sumitra Bhiwandi ... Isn’t it famous for its textile industry?

Krishnan That’s right, yes ... So have you spent much time in India recently ...?

Conversation 4

Adam Good evening, Adriana. I thought I might see you. Back for another company event?

Adriana Oh, Adam – how lovely to see you here. I heard you weren’t coming.

Adam Really? Who told you?

Adriana Um, I can’t remember – but anyway, how are things?

Adam Oh, Adriana – where should I begin? I injured my leg in January in a skiing accident. The doctor told me to take it easy. But how could I rest, with my job? Then I got flu, but we were organizing a huge trade fair at the time so I had to keep going ...

Adriana Oh, oh dear ...

Adam ... then I had problems at home with my daughter, she’s fifteen, you know, and ...

Adriana Oh, I’m so sorry to hear that. Look, I have to go, Adam. Catch you later.

2.3

Harry Hello. It’s Adriana, isn’t it? We met before dinner.

Adriana That’s right. You’re Harry. Dinner was fantastic, wasn’t it?

Harry Yeah, it was, yeah.

Adriana How are you enjoying the event?

Harry Very much. It, you know, it’s good to meet people from different parts of the group. Have you been before?

Adriana Yes, I have. About three years ago, in Egypt. Were you there?

Harry No, I wasn’t, unfortunately. I heard it was good fun. Where are you from, by the way?

Adriana I’m from Spain originally, but I’m working in Switzerland. I have a two-year posting in Head Office in Geneva.

Harry I see. Who are you working with?

Adriana With the European HR team. I work with Ulrika Thomson.

Harry No! What a coincidence! I know her very well. We joined the company on the same day. It’s a shame she couldn’t be here. Say hello to her for me, won’t you?

Adriana Of course I will.

Harry So ... um ... what are you working on?

Adriana Er ... right now, we’re trying to harmonize remuneration packages across the group. I’m working on pension plans and other savings schemes. What about you? Don’t you live in Italy?

Harry Yes, I do. In Milan. I work in R&D, but I’m thinking of moving.

Adriana Really? Can I ask where?

Harry Well, I’d like to stay in Italy but maybe move within the group. I’m thinking of talking to HR, actually. Apparently they’re interested in people who’ve worked in different divisions ...

Adriana That sounds interesting. In fact, I’m coming to Milan in a couple of weeks. Would you like to meet up and talk some more?

Harry Yes, I would. Thanks very much. Do you know Milan?

Adriana No, not really. I’ve just been there for meetings.

Harry Well, I’d be delighted to show you around.

Adriana Thank you. That would be very nice.

Harry Good. So do you actually live in Geneva ...?

2.4

1

Oh, no! Is that the time? My parking ticket runs out in five minutes. Can we continue talking later?

2

Sorry, but I promised to meet someone in ten minutes. But I'll come back when I've seen them. Catch you later.

3

I'm going to get some food. I missed lunch because of a conference call. So see you later.

4

Is that James over there? Excuse me, I really must go and speak to him.

5

Look, I have a meeting now. But it ends at five, so perhaps we can continue our conversation then?

Ian I don't think that would help us meet our current deadlines. We could keep the same battery but not mention its lifespan.

Sarah That's possible, but our reputation is at stake here.

Michelle Yes, and if the project fails we have no chance of becoming market leader!

Ian OK. Why don't we wait and see what the technicians suggest and in the meantime move the launch date?

Michelle That's not an ideal solution. It means cancelling the printers, the caterers, the advertising ...

Sarah Do we have any other options?

Ian Well, using a different phone for the launch would be my proposal. We could use the VP20: it's new, cheap, but not as hi-tech.

Michelle I'm not convinced. The whole idea of this project was to offer a hi-tech phone and services at an attractive price.

Sarah Yes. If you ask me, we should look at what we can reschedule.

Michelle Oh, I suppose so.

Unit 3

3.1

Part 1

Sarah ... OK, I sent you a proposed agenda yesterday. Have you had a chance to look at it?

Ian Yes, it looks fine.

Sarah So, the purpose of today is to update each other on progress and consider anything that might affect our schedule.

Ian OK.

Sarah So, Michelle, why don't you start? How are things with the marketing department?

Michelle Up to now, the launch date has been set for the 15th of November, to capture the Christmas trade – this means we must meet our deadlines.

Sarah Good point. So how's the advertising campaign coming along?

Michelle That's fine. We've set a realistic schedule and planned in a bit of extra time in case the printing takes longer than expected.

Sarah Great. And how far are you with preparations for the launch party?

Michelle Our events manager says we're on track. He booked the venue two weeks ago and I've already received offers from various catering companies. I haven't made a final choice yet, but most of them are well within our budget.

Sarah That sounds good, Michelle, thanks. So, how does your side of things look, Ian?

Ian Well, actually, things aren't running as smoothly as I'd hoped. We've hit a problem with the handset battery life.

Sarah OK ... so what do you mean exactly?

Ian Well, in some cases, the battery can run out in six hours if its key features are in permanent use.

Michelle So what you're saying is we're about to launch a new revolutionary low cost mobile phone and its battery only lasts six hours!?

Ian Well, obviously, that's an extreme case, but the engineers *have* identified that there is a basic design problem with the battery.

Sarah So the *real* problem lies with the battery manufacturers?

Ian Yes.

Michelle But, Ian, what about our deadlines? Can this problem be resolved?

Ian Well, our engineers are looking into it and if it's fixable, they'll do it, but they'll need time. We may have to reschedule.

Michelle But we can't postpone the launch at this stage! There must be something you can do.

Sarah Are there any alternatives?

Ian Well, I've got some suggestions, but you may not like them.

Sarah Ian, you've put us in a difficult position – why don't we get another coffee and then we'll look at our options?

3.2

Part 2

Sarah The battery problem has to be resolved; otherwise the whole project is in trouble – that's how I see it.

Michelle Is that really the case? How about finding another battery supplier?

3.3

1

A And I think you'll need one more person on your team as it's quite a big job. I think we can divide Peter's time between his current work on the Lansdown contract and working with you. And when Lansdown finishes, he can work with you full-time.

B Are you sure that's the best way forward? They still have another three months left on that project. To meet these deadlines I'll need someone who is 100% dedicated from now on.

2

A Well, we are about a month behind, but we've been unlucky for various reasons. I'm sure we can make up the time with a bit of overtime here and there.

B Is that really the case? According to these dates you are more like six weeks behind. And we're already paying a lot of overtime on this project.

3

A So you can see from these forecasts that the final costs would in fact be lower than we previously predicted.

B Sorry, but I'm not sure I agree. The previous figures allowed for changes in the exchange rate. Given that we're buying the steel from China we need to be realistic.

Unit 4

4.1

Bridges to Prosperity is an organization which works on projects in regions of the developing world where walking is the main form of transportation. Surprisingly, many people in these parts of the world don't have access to healthcare, education and markets simply because they can't get across rivers. So Bridges to Prosperity has come up with the practical solution of not only building bridges, but also setting up educational programmes that teach people how to build their own footbridges. The key concept behind every new project is that it doesn't require cutting-edge technology with a large carbon footprint, but instead it only uses low cost locally-sourced materials. Projects like this bring about real improvements for everyone. The bridges mean people can buy and sell locally-produced goods, children can go to school, and doctors and nurses can travel to every part of the region – on foot.

Many of us take lighting for granted, but in some parts of the world lighting is a luxury. So a few years ago, Greenlight Planet came up with the innovative idea of bringing affordable and safe lighting to developing countries. It got round the problem of no access to electricity by developing a solar-powered lamp which was safe and reliable. Since then it has sold 5 million lighting products across 54 countries and provided electric light to millions of people for the first time. As well as revolutionizing access to lighting, Greenlight Planet has also taken an innovative approach to selling the lamp. On the one hand, it has to be a commercially-viable proposition, but on the other, the lamps must be affordable. In order to achieve this, the company has brought the cost down as low as possible and also allows local communities to pay off the cost in small monthly instalments.

4.2

Part 1

Shireen First of all, I'd like to thank you for inviting me here today. We really appreciate this opportunity to work with you. What I'd like to do in this presentation is three things. First, I'll give you a brief overview of the new DiScan product. Then I'll talk about some of the advantages for your company. After that, I'd like to show you a short video so that you can see the system in operation. And after that, you can ask me any questions. Does that sound OK?

... OK. We call this new system the DiScan2. Basically, DiScan2 is a state-of-the-art security system based on iris recognition. Iris recognition is part of the next generation in security and is already used in government security. Now Securkey is able to make this technology available to commercial businesses and organizations.

How does it work? Well, it's a pretty simple concept. Employees are identified by the unique patterns in the iris of their eye. So that when you look at a camera, the system scans your iris and matches it to a central database ...

4.3

Part 2

Shireen OK, let's look at what DiScan2 has to offer. There are two main benefits of using DiScan2 – enhanced security, and increased flexibility.

Why enhanced security? Well, the biggest potential benefit of iris recognition is that no two people have the same iris – everyone is unique.

This means that DiScan2 is extremely secure in comparison to your current system where a code is needed. You can find out someone else's code, whereas you can't copy the patterns of their iris. Currently, if someone gets hold of a security code, they can go anywhere they want in your company. However, with the DiScan2 iris recognition system they won't be able to do that.

The other major advantage of DiScan2 is its flexibility. Although it may sound radical, it's up to you how far reaching you want the security to be. You can decide exactly which employees have access to which parts of the building – so you have complete control over who goes where. And here is another great thing about the DiScan2 – you can not only control entry to all parts of the building, but also control access to your computer system.

Now I'd like to move on to the question of personal safety, because the most common question I'm asked is about how it scans your eye ...

4.4

Audience member 1 Thanks for your presentation. I think this is a very interesting area. I've also heard of retinal scanning. Can you say something about the difference?

Shireen Sure. Thanks for the question. With retinal scanning you use the back of the eye to check a person's identity. So it's the same idea as iris recognition and they are both reliable. However, for a retinal scan, you need to put your eye very close to the camera, whereas with an iris scan, the camera can read your eye at a distance of about twenty centimetres. And academic studies show that we feel more comfortable with iris scans than retinal scans. Does that answer your question?

Audience member 1 Yes, thank you.

Shireen Yes, another question?

Audience member 2 Hi. I know you said it's safe, but over time is it really? Surely if the scanner looks in your eye every time you enter the building or log onto your computer, isn't it bad for you?

Shireen I understand your point, but the technology was first invented in 1994 and since then all the medical evidence suggests that it's safe for the human eye. As I say, iris recognition is already being used in government security, which demonstrates how effective it is.

4.5

Richard So to sum up, Boatnet is a specialist Internet service provider that provides wireless Internet access at all the major marinas in the country. From the start, I could see that there was definitely a market. Boat owners want to be able to access the Internet to get information about the weather and sea conditions, as well as sending and receiving email. In the past, they could only do this on land because the technology wasn't in place. At the moment, in most parts of the world, you still can't access the Internet from your boat without the right technology. From now on, our subscribers will be able to access the Internet from their boats for a basic monthly fee. We set up a very successful pilot project in three marinas last year, so we were able to test the system extensively and we know it works. We've done a lot of research and we can offer the service for £25 a month – that's less than €40. We'd like to be able to increase this in the future.

Jason My name's Jason Black. It's an interesting idea. Have you been able to get any sort of protection for it?

Richard Well, of course, we couldn't get a patent or anything like that because it's not new technology, but we have been able to get exclusive contracts in all the major marinas in the country.

Jason And how long are these contracts?

Richard Seven years.

Jason So other companies won't be able to compete with you for the next seven years?

Richard That's right.

Unit 5

5.1

Interviewer ... and now on to business. And we have with us in the studio Shamsul Aziz from Carno Oil and Gas Exploration who will be telling us about their latest initiatives in social responsibility. Mr Aziz, isn't it dishonest to pretend that you're anything other than a big multinational, motivated by greed, with a reputation for ruining the environment and exploiting local people?

Shamsul Not at all. We take corporate social responsibility very seriously, because as a leading gas and oil exploration company, we know that we can have a dramatic effect on people's lives ...

Interviewer Not necessarily a good one.

Shamsul If I may answer the question ... We are proud of our business ethics. Looking after our staff isn't just something we have suddenly discovered – it's one of our core values. We've always had a strong commitment to our workforce and an ethical approach to the environment ... and the communities we work in. We have a reputation for fairness, we work hard to combat discrimination and prejudice within our organization, and we are constantly improving working conditions for our staff. Safety has always been at the top of our agenda, but we have schemes in place for education, health and training. We do take care of our people.

Interviewer Leaving that aside for a minute ... How can an oil company have any credibility when it claims to be environmentally friendly? Surely that's deception ... Your industry is probably the greatest contributor to pollution that there is.

Shamsul No. Not at all. As regards the environment, we can't say how people should or shouldn't use oil, but what we can do – and what we have done – is to reduce our own methane and hydrocarbon emissions ... and we've made good progress. We also support a range of local projects – to take just one example, we provide financial support for turtle conservation in Bangladesh, and have done for several years.

Interviewer Apart from a few turtles, what do you actually do to help the people who are affected by your operations?

Shamsul One of our guiding principles is to give back to the communities where we are carrying out our operations. So, in Sangu, for example, we have established a community project to provide skills training for unemployed youths, and in Rajasthan we have undertaken health initiatives and other schemes to encourage sustainable livelihoods.

Interviewer Some people might see that as a form of bribery rather than generosity.

Shamsul I don't agree. It could be seen as corruption if all the money went to just one individual. But the support we provide, the health clinics, assistance to the air ambulance and so on, now these are things that benefit everyone, not just the people who work for us directly.

Interviewer OK, well, if I can now turn to the question of ...

5.2

Part 1

Reporter 1 ... Will we get our itinerary in writing after this meeting or should we take notes?

Clare We'll email you the final itinerary once you've decided what you'd like to see. And if you have any other questions, you can ask our Travel Coordinator, Janet Lawson – she's coming in later on this morning to speak with you.

Reporter 1 Thanks.

Clare So, we're planning to show you how Hummingbird's operation works in China and some of the projects it's involved in.

Reporter 2 That sounds good.

Clare The idea is to spend four days at one of the sites where the tea is grown. This will give you the opportunity to talk to the locals who supply the company.

Reporter 2 So, can we interview them?

Clare Yes, but we advise you to set this up directly with them and ask their permission first. And of course, do be discreet and respect their privacy.

Reporter 2 Of course.

Clare While you're there, you'll get the opportunity to accompany the workers in their daily work. This will give you a real insight into their lives and how Hummingbird's teas are produced.

Reporter 1 That sounds really interesting.

Clare OK, now, the schedules. We've looked at all the options, and we're going to arrange two dates – one in February and one in May. The February flight leaves on the 15th so we need fixed bookings from you by January the 10th.

Reporter 3 Can I just ask – are we returning on the 19th or 20th of February?

Clare The 20th. The trip will involve a lot of road travel and one internal flight ...

5.3

Part 2

Clare ... So that was the timetable. Now, I'd like to tell you a bit about your stay. Feel free to ask any questions you may have. We'd like to invite you to watch the tea being prepared and spend a day sampling the local specialities which are produced by the cooperative in the village.

Reporter 1 That would be great. Er ... Does anyone there speak English?

Clare On the whole, English isn't spoken so we strongly recommend you stay with our guide who can interpret for you.

Reporter 1 Good idea.

Clare On the subject of language – you're also welcome to visit a project set up to help build a new school.

Reporter 2 That sounds really interesting. I'd like to take you up on that.

Clare Good ... but I should warn you it's quite a long trip. Let me know how many of you would like to do this as it would be a good idea to travel with our interpreter.

Reporter 2 That makes sense. We'll speak to our colleagues and let you know.

Reporter 3 What about environmental projects?

Clare The company is supporting a charity called Tree 2000 Foundation and there's a reforestation scheme in one of the regions where it does business. As Hummingbird Teas is just a financial backer, it doesn't actively work in this field, but a visit to the site is highly recommended.

Reporter 3 What will we see?

Clare The project managers who work on site are all professional environmentalists. They'll explain what's happening to the area and show you what the charity is doing to improve the management of the forests. I was there for the first time last month and found it fascinating. It's well worth a visit.

Reporter 2 Mmm ... That's not really what I'm looking for. The feature I want to write should focus more on the people.

Clare Well, alternatively, we'd be delighted to introduce you to the team who work for Hummingbird in China. They aren't tea makers – they're employed to coordinate the business. I'm sure they have some interesting experiences they'd like to share.

Reporter 2 That would be great – it's just the kind of thing I need.

Clare OK, so let's just run through ...

5.4

1

A How about joining us for a coffee after work?

B That would be nice, but can I let you know later?

2

A Do you feel like coming to the cinema with us?

B Sorry – I'm heading straight home tonight – it's my partner's birthday.

3

A Would you like to go to that new pizza place for lunch?

B Why not? Sounds good.

4

A I've got two tickets for the theatre next Thursday evening and was wondering if you'd like to come with me.

B That's very nice of you, but I'm fairly sure I've got something on that night. I'll have to check my calendar.

5

A Some of us are playing golf this weekend. Are you interested in coming along?

B Thanks for the invitation, but I'm not sure I can. I'm waiting to see if I have to work this weekend. I'm meeting my boss at three today to find out what's happening.

Unit 6

6.1

1

The most important factor in making and implementing decisions is listening. I like to ask everybody I know to give me an opinion. I get different perspectives – and I listen to them. I also listen to my own intuition. I really do believe that using your intuition is the best way of processing and weighing up information. If I have to make a big decision, I'm never impulsive. I think about it, and I listen to what other people think. But ultimately, I listen to my intuition. I delay my decision until I wake up one morning and know what I'm going to do.

2

I used to think that decision-making was something you could do logically ... but for me, this didn't always work and I made some bad decisions. So I thought I'd try a new approach – one that takes feelings more into account. So now ... particularly for the big decisions in life – what job to take, where to live – I let my inner wisdom emerge and trust my instincts. We don't always make strictly logical deductions. Instead, we rely on patterns – and on feelings associated with those patterns. So for those big decisions, you need to let patterns develop in your mind. Once you realize that your intuition is reliable, making a decision is quite easy.

3

If you have to make a decision, don't listen to your intuition. Intuition is for people who don't want to think. OK ... it's fine for the small decisions in life, like what kind of ice cream to buy. But for the big decisions, you need a more systematic way of thinking. Let's say you have to decide between two things – two applicants for a key position, two properties you're thinking about buying. You check the facts, check the figures, and your analysis says to pick A over B. But your intuition says to choose B. What do you do? Most people stick with their intuition – which is wrong. You need to delay your decision until you can work out why your intuition is telling you something different. That's the whole point of analysis: to make you consider all the options – so you don't make the wrong decision.

4

To make good decisions, you need to have confidence in your own judgement. We all make bad decisions, but the important thing is not to worry about them. As a judge, I often have to decide between the evidence of two people standing in front of me. I don't know which one is being honest, but I know one of them is lying. That's when making decisions becomes very difficult. Even so, I never base my courtroom decisions on my feelings or my instinct. I do it by the evidence, and by what the law tells me.

6.2

Sinead Today, I'd like to establish where we think we can cut costs. We can discuss actual figures when we've considered what's possible. Jens, could you start us off, please?

Jens Yes, well, if we look at the facts, we'll see that our costs for personnel are very high ...

Anna Yes, but we've discussed lay-offs before.

Sinead Hang on, let's hear what Jens has to say about personnel before we reject the topic.

Jens You're right, Anna, but I'm not talking about reducing the number of employees. Look at the overtime figures. They're here in black and white, and they're costing us a lot of money. The fact is we need to keep these to a minimum to save money.

Sinead Matt, what's your position on this?

Matt What Jens says is right. The thing is, we need to look at why we have so much overtime and if it's realistic to try to reduce it.

Anna If we do reduce it, it'll mean dramatic savings. We could set up a programme ...

Sinead ... That all sounds pretty positive. Let's look into it at a country level and discuss it again at our next meeting. Can we move on to office resources? Anna, this was your point. Could you give us some detail, please?

Anna Yes, what I mean is paper, office supplies, that sort of thing. I think if we look closely at what we actually use, we'll find there's a lot of waste. A classic example is printing emails out on expensive copy paper.

Matt So what you're getting at is monitoring the office supplies and making sure we're not using too many or wasting too much?

Anna Exactly.

Jens I'm not convinced. As far as I'm concerned, we'd make hardly any savings compared to the personnel costs.

Matt The drawback is, it's quite labour intensive to keep a check on this. ... But it could be a project for one of our work experience students.

Anna Yes, we're actually in a position ...

Sinead ... I don't want to spend too long on this point. We should set up the project Matt mentioned with the student – and see how it goes. There are plenty of other areas we could consider. Let's turn to the next item, customer expenditure.

Matt If you ask me, we should look carefully at client travel expenses and entertainment costs.

Jens Absolutely. We spend far too much money on clients. The expense accounts aren't taken seriously enough ... that's my view.

Sinead Anna, you've been very quiet.

Anna Yes, I was just doing some calculations ... Matt is right. But I think it would be crazy to cut expense accounts. In my opinion, we should introduce tighter guidelines.

Sinead Good, we seem to be getting somewhere. Let's draw up some action points on what we've discussed so far.

6.3

1

A What've you got on this weekend, Alex?

B Well, I'm supposed to be helping a friend move house.

A Oh, poor you.

2

A What are you up to tonight?

B We'll probably catch a movie.

A Sounds good.

3

A Are you taking any time off in the summer?

B Mmm – it depends on my colleagues and their vacations.

A I see.

4

A What are you doing this weekend?

B We're off to Paris!

A Lucky you!

5

A Anything nice planned for the weekend?

B Nothing special. What about you?

Unit 7

7.1

1

Paula Every day, EU companies are outsourcing business process tasks to emerging economies where labour costs are lower – in areas like call centres, airlines, legal processing, finance, and IT of course. The UK jobs are going to India, French jobs to North Africa, Spanish jobs are going to Latin America. Germany is outsourcing to Central European countries like Poland and Hungary, and Scandinavia is outsourcing to the Baltic States and India. Of course outsourcing benefits these countries – by injecting money into their economies and driving the development of a modern communications infrastructure. But it also leads to significant job losses in the home countries. I believe that member states of the EU need to do much more to respond to such losses, which can have a big impact on communities. This is not about protectionism. But we need to develop strategies to cope with serious job losses, and to create more high-quality jobs in the EU.

2

Christian I work for a Swiss financial services company. We first started outsourcing some of our back-office work to India a couple of years ago – at a time when we were considering what cost-cutting measures we could take. Labour costs out there were actually 70% lower than in Switzerland. It's been very successful. We've been able to streamline our operation and free up resources for our core activities. We've now moved two thirds of our IT work to India. We have an IP-based VPN, a Virtual Private Network, which simplifies the operation and improves efficiency. But it's not just about savings, or gaining a competitive edge. If you look at countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China – they're obviously very important for outsourcing, but they are also important potential markets in their own right. They're growing very very fast, and with hundreds of millions of customers, you can't afford to ignore them.

3

Chitra I am working in Bangalore as a customer adviser for a UK company. There are many companies coming over here nowadays, and it's not just because they can achieve lower overheads. There are a lot of advantages for the companies – they have 24/7 productivity, and with the extra staff, they can be much more flexible and responsive, and they can get through a higher volume of work. Personally, there are a lot of benefits for me. It's a dream job and it has certainly improved my quality of life. In the past, it was really difficult to get a well-paid job here in southern India, especially for a woman. It's not a rich part of the world. But the pay I get now is absolutely fantastic. Call centres are a growth industry in India – and working for a western company is a high-status job for Indian people. So if you perform well, you stand to make a lot of money, about the same as a junior doctor.

7.2

Part 1

Director Thank you all for coming this morning. As you know, we are looking into the possibility of outsourcing our IT department overseas. This is being done in order to cut costs and improve efficiency. I'd like to introduce you to Sanjit Kundu, from Business Initiatives Bangalore, who is here to tell us about Bangalore as a possible location for outsourcing. Sanjit ...

Sanjit Good morning, and thank you for inviting me to your headquarters. Today, I'd like to give you an overview of the business potential and possibilities of Bangalore as a location for outsourcing. As you probably know, Bangalore is situated in central southern India – it's the capital of the state of Karnataka. So, to begin with, let's look at some general facts about the area. What does Bangalore have to offer in business terms? Well, statistics show that 10,000 companies are based in the region, and a population of nearly seven million people ensures that there is a buoyant labour market. How well qualified is the workforce? Recent data illustrates the fact that Bangalore's educational institutions have been awarded international recognition as a result of the quality of graduates being produced – from the Indian Institute of Science, for example. In fact, due to the dominance of a highly-educated workforce, Bangalore is becoming the fastest growing city in Asia and has earned the nickname 'India's Silicon Valley' ...

7.3

Part 2

Sanjit ... I've briefly looked at the background, so let's move on to some business facts. You will notice on this chart the breakdown of traditional industries, such as engineering, in relation to the emergence of IT companies. Bangalore has a strong tradition of attracting engineering companies to the region as a result of its engineering colleges. A knock-on effect of this has been the establishment not only of government-run companies such as Hindustan Machine Tools, but also companies from the private sector. A subsidiary of the German Robert Bosch group has been present in this region for several years. What's more important and exciting for our potential investors is the new emerging economy focusing on IT. As I mentioned earlier, this has earned us the name 'India's Silicon Valley' and it is easy to see why. IT is booming. Let's turn our attention to some specific facts on the IT sector. Looking at this slide, we can see it is expected that Indian IT services will continue to grow by 25–28% annually, and Bangalore accounts for about one-third of India's software exports. And have a look at these figures: more than 1,500 software and outsourcing companies – 512 of them multinationals – have offices in Bangalore, employing over 170,000 workers. In the first four months of this year alone, 64 new offices were opened in the city. Subsequently, nearly 1,000 new staff are being taken on every month. The job market is being fuelled by the tens of thousands of students in the area, many of them graduating from the Institute of Science, which I referred to earlier – and many of them specializing in IT-related subjects. A further point to mention is that a new sector of the job market is being opened up, offering opportunities for women employees – 25% of the workforce in software companies here is now female. The effect of this is more financial independence and greater freedom for them to pursue a career ... Before I go today, I'd like to leave you with some ... er ... some food for thought. Investment in Bangalore has resulted in dramatic, positive lifestyle changes for its people. Their futures are being secured and their quality of life has been improved threefold. By investing in our region, you will not only have the advantage of obtaining highly-skilled employees with a strong work ethic, but you will also ensure that our skilled workforce remains within India. Surely a win-win situation for us all.

7.4

1
I'd like to pick up on a point you made about the language skills of your employees. How do you test their level of ...?

2
First of all, I'd like to thank you for giving us such an interesting presentation. I think everyone found it useful. One question I have is this: How long do you estimate it takes to transfer ...?

3
Can I ask you to show us the slide again with the overhead estimates, and could you talk us through them in a bit more detail?

4
I'd like to make a comment, if that's OK. Clearly there are lots of benefits to what you're proposing, but the time scales involved are very long. And the forecasts don't seem to take into account the costs at our end. I was wondering if you'd like to comment on that?

Unit 8

8.1

1
I left school at 16 without any qualifications so my career prospects weren't particularly good, but I got on an apprenticeship scheme with the local car factory. I learnt a lot at first, but after a while it was a bit monotonous. But after I completed the apprenticeship I got full-time employment, so I had job security and a decent wage. I'd worked there for almost 30 years when I was suddenly made redundant – the company got taken over, and just like that they decided to downsize and shut our factory down. You can imagine, in a small town like ours, when you get that many people laid off all at once, there are no job opportunities. I'd lived there all my life so relocation was out of the question. I had some redundancy money, and I went for retraining; first on a short computer course to update my skills and increase my employability, then a two-year course in programming, and because of my background, I ended up as an IT consultant to manufacturing companies – so it was a complete change of direction, but I don't regret a minute of it, and it was a lot better than being unemployed or just taking early retirement.

2
I had worked for the recruitment company in Lausanne for six or seven years. The salary was good, but after a while I started to feel there wasn't a lot of opportunity for advancement. I started to look for a change of direction, but then they announced their plans to open a new office in Geneva, so I thought about making a sideways move and relocating. I put in my request to move there, and to my surprise they replied by saying they wanted to redeploy me to the new office as its operational manager. Well, of course I said 'yes'. And to think I'd been considering changing jobs! Since then the office has grown, and based on my experience and working with clients, I think I've come to understand what motivates employees to either stay with their employer or to change jobs – and it's hardly ever about money. Often it's just about ambition and job satisfaction. Sometimes they leave because of some sort of issue with their boss. And we also work with very successful women who feel there's a glass ceiling at their company, and they know they can only get on if they move elsewhere. For others, it's all about growth opportunities – they're looking for training and personal development, but it's just not on offer in their company.

8.2

Johanna Right, Dermot, this is quite a challenge! What we need to decide on today is how to put together this new team.

Dermot Yeah – it's not going to be easy. The areas we need to discuss are: the makeup of the new team, who would be most suitable for it, and how our current teams can manage without them.

Johanna OK. So, let's look at what our options are. What I propose is we simply identify who our most capable workers are and send them.

Dermot Yeah ... If we did that, we'd end up with two weaker teams back here doing all the work, and I'm not sure they'd cope.

Johanna It wouldn't be for very long, but maybe you're right. We can't send all our best people in case we need them here.

Dermot How about we look at our team members' individual strengths and then each select three people based on this?

Johanna You mean we build a team from the good workers who have other skills we need as well?

Dermot Exactly. They're going to be working together for six months so they've got to be team players.

Johanna Right. I can see we'd at least have a strong team if we did that. But I've got another idea. Supposing we stretch the budget a little, why don't we take on two contract workers and use just four internals? That'll solve the problem – if we only have four experienced staff in the new team, we won't lose our best workers.

Dermot No way! It just wouldn't work if we took on contract workers. We all know they get paid more, and that would be bad for team spirit. No. Let's try my idea of choosing our team from our existing staff – based on their strengths.

Johanna OK, I'm happy with that ...

8.3

Dermot ... So let's just summarize the situation. Taking on contract workers is a no-no. And if we chose our best workers and sent them, it would be damaging to our departments because the knowledge base would be gone. So, what we've decided to do is propose staff based on their personal strengths as well as their professional capabilities.

Johanna Exactly.

Dermot Now I've identified four possible candidates from your team who look ideal.

Johanna Wait a minute, four from my team? We can't do that. If I transferred four people, I'd only have three left! I could offer you three, but I'd expect three from your team, too.

Dermot Well, yeah, I suppose that's only fair. If you guaranteed Brett, I'd let you have Jamie, Pascale and Timo from my team.

Johanna But both Jamie and Timo are straight out of school! You can't expect Brett to work with two trainees on something as important as this. He'd end up doing the work of three people.

Dermot But it'd be a great experience for them.

Johanna I don't care. It's not fair. I'll be happy for Brett to be on the team, provided you replace one of the trainees with someone experienced.

Dermot OK. I didn't think you'd agree. I'll send Sabrina instead of Timo. She's had international experience and she's good with people, too.

Johanna Good. So who have we got so far? Brett, Sabrina, Jamie and Pascale. That just leaves two more from my team. How long do I have?

Dermot Unless we get this list to HR before Friday, we won't be sending anyone – it all needs discussing again with them before contracts are drawn up.

Johanna Right. Let's get this done now. I need to find two more people.

Dermot Provided one of them has got some experience, the other one could be a trainee.

Johanna Well, in that case, I'd like to send Lena and Marlon.

Dermot Great. I know them both – good choice!

Johanna So, a quick recap: if I send Brett, Lena and Marlon, you'll send Sabrina, Jamie and Pascale.

Dermot Yeah, I can live with that.

Johanna Great. That sounds like a plan!

8.4

1

A Do you have a minute? I'm doing a survey about the use of our Intranet.

B Yeah, sure ... I never use it!

A Oh ... thanks a lot.

2

A Could you just have a quick look at my computer? The screen's gone blank.

B Sorry, I'm a bit busy right now.

A Oh, well, never mind.

3

A Would you mind checking my English in this email before I send it?

B Sorry, I'm just on my way to a client's. I'll be back around three.

A OK, it's not that urgent.

4

A Excuse me, am I disturbing you? I need some help with the photocopier.

B Give me two minutes and I'll be right with you.

A Thanks.

5

A Excuse me, could you spare a few minutes?

B Certainly. Take a seat.

A Thanks. Er, I'm not sure about these figures and I was hoping you could tell me ...

6

A Can you give me a hand with the holiday roster?

B Sorry, no time! Email it to me and I'll look at it later.

A OK.

8.5

1

I'll work over the weekend, provided you pay me overtime.

2

Unless you fix this fault by the end of today, we won't pay the balance.

3

Supposing we included a five-year lease instead of two, would you sign the agreement today?

4

I'll need some kind of money-back guarantee this time in case the response rate to the advert is as low as this again.

Unit 9

9.1

James I run Glasses Direct. We sell glasses and contact lenses online, at a fraction of the price you pay if you go to a high street optician. I got the idea when I discovered the size of the mark-up on glasses. Did you know that a pair of glasses that cost, say, 15 euros to make can sell for as much as 150 euros? It's completely outrageous.

So, I researched the optical market – good market research is very important when you're starting out. I learnt about optometric testing, how the frames are made and the lenses are cut, and it was clear there was a gap in the market. I worked out a business plan for selling discounted glasses online; it seemed like a viable idea that I could turn into a profitable business.

My parents were absolutely fantastic – they gave me a loan to get started, which meant I didn't have to raise finance by getting a bank loan or bringing in an outside investor who would want a share of the profits. The other people who were extremely helpful were some of my fellow students, who designed and set up the website for me – I couldn't have done it without them.

The only real problem we had was getting the manufacturers to work with us – they didn't want to damage their relationship with the big retailers. It was incredibly difficult to persuade them, but in the end we managed to get them on board.

The other challenge was marketing. We're an online business so it's really hard to compete with everyone else out there. One way to reach new customers was to hold some pop-up events in cities around the country. We looked at renting empty shops on high streets, but the rents in most places were totally ridiculous. So we set up stalls in markets and those worked well. You can't underestimate the amount of time you need to spend on this kind of marketing, but it generated interest and an initial client list.

Anyway, my advice to anyone starting out would be, if you've got a sound business model and you see a gap in the market, go for it.

9.2

1

Did you know that a pair of glasses that cost, say, 15 euros to make can sell for as much as 150 euros? It's completely outrageous.

2

I researched the optical market – good market research is very important when you're starting out.

3

My parents were absolutely fantastic – they gave me a loan to get started.

4

The other people who were extremely helpful were some of my fellow students, who designed and set up the website for me.

5

It was incredibly difficult to persuade them, but in the end we managed to get them on board.

6

We looked at renting empty shops on high streets, but the rents in most places were totally ridiculous.

9.3

Conversation 1

Erik ... Hello.

Nicole Is that Erik Lundberg?

Erik Yes, speaking.

Nicole Erik, this is Nicole Dupont from GBF Electronics – I'm not sure if you remember me.

Erik Nicole! Hello – of course I remember you. I haven't seen you for ages, though.

Nicole That's right – about three years, I think. Since you left GBF, life's been extremely hectic.

Erik So ... What have you been doing? How's work? It's good to hear from you.

Nicole Well, GBF have been keeping me very busy – I was promoted shortly after you left and for the last three months I've been commuting between France and Belgium.

Erik Congratulations – that sounds a bit tough, though.

Nicole Yes, it is and, er, that's actually the reason why I'm calling. The thing is, I'm looking for someone to work with us in our business in Belgium – someone local so I don't have to commute. Have you made any contacts in that region?

Erik Well, no names come immediately to mind, but I'll certainly think about it. Ah, just a minute. What about Natalie Hemery? She's lived in Brussels for years – I'm sure she'd be able to help ...

Conversation 2

Xavier José? Hey, what are you doing here?

José Xavier! I don't believe it! Are you getting the flight to Lisbon, too?

Xavier Yeah, I've got a meeting there. What about you?

José I live there now – with my wife and kids.

Xavier I didn't know you were married! When was the last time we saw each other?

José I'm not sure ... it must have been at that college reunion ... but that was seven years ago.

Xavier Really? Yes, I suppose so ... Anyway, what have you been up to? Are you still working in the car industry?

José Where should I start!? So much has happened. After the exchange programme at Birmingham University, I stayed another year and worked for Nissan, in their finance department. That job took me all over Europe and on one of my trips I met my wife, Isabella, in Lisbon. After that, I got a transfer and, well, I've never looked back since! What about you?

Xavier Nothing much has changed for me, but I've worked my way up in my present company. Things are going well, but I'm looking to ... you know, branch out, maybe move on. Actually, I've been doing some freelance consulting recently, which is partly why I'm going to Lisbon.

José That sounds interesting ...

Xavier Well, it's all about making contacts. Hey, by the way, could you do me a favour? Could you put me in touch with a reputable consultancy, since you live in Lisbon now? I'm looking to collaborate with an established firm.

José Let's chat about that over dinner. How long are you staying?

Conversation 3

Stanislav Good morning, Nadia. Thank you for finding the time to meet.

Nadia No problem. It's been a long time since we've been in contact, Stanislav. How's life treating you?

Stanislav Well, there have been a lot of changes in the company since we last met, but I'm fine. How's business with you?

Nadia Well, pretty good, actually. Our company has secured a huge contract with Mobelitec. We've also been talking to Strauz & Co. They've just gone public, so there should be money in that one. Anyway, you mentioned changes. What's been happening?

Stanislav Oh, things have been tough in the insurance field. We've been directing our attention to the online market recently ... they've taken a serious number of our customers.

Nadia Oh, dear, I'm afraid that's the way things are going.

Stanislav Exactly. And with that in mind, maybe I could ask you for a favour. We are looking for a collaboration with some direct insurers – you have a lot of contacts and I wondered if ...

Nadia Oh ... I'm not sure.

Stanislav I'd really appreciate your help.

Nadia Well, it sounds an interesting proposal. Send me the details – here's my card – and I'll see who I know in the field. I can't promise anything, though!

Stanislav No, I understand that, but thank you anyway.

9.4

1

A Oh, I'm glad I saw you before you left. Could you do the on-call shift this weekend?

B Err, I'd love to help, but I think I'm away visiting family. Any other weekend would have been OK, but this one ...

2

A I know you're busy, but can I ask a favour? There's a customer with a complaint about ...

B Sorry. You know I'd normally help, but at the moment I'm so busy. Can you ask someone else?

3

A I was wondering if you'd be interested in coming in on a consultancy basis to oversee a new project we have starting next month. I realize it's short notice, but a full-time member of staff has just handed in his notice.

B Well, you know I never like to say 'no' when it comes to work, but I'm afraid I don't have any spare time at present. Maybe, try me again in a few months' time ...

9.5

So take a look at this next slide. It shows a business model called 'The Long Tail', which was an idea created by Chris Anderson in his book of the same name. So this end of the chart shows the 'head' and it represents mass-market products – you know, the kind of profitable brands you see on the shelves of a bricks-and-mortar shop that sell in high volumes over short periods of time. Most business entrepreneurs dream of producing something that will sell like this. However, with the arrival of the Internet and the online business model, there's an alternative approach, and that's the 'long tail' shown here on this side. The idea is that you can offer a much wider range of products over long periods of time to a niche market. Take online movies for example. You might sell the latest movies on DVD from a supermarket, but online movie sites like Netflix can offer films made years ago to many individual customers. Similarly, a company like Amazon allows customers to find specialist products that wouldn't normally be stored at a high street shop. As the demand grows for online businesses selling niche and individualized products, it's even likely that the turnover from the long tail could overtake the 'head'.

Unit 10

10.1

The Internet and mobile technology have been integrated into every part of the modern workplace and digital technology has brought about huge change. It's had a huge impact on the most sophisticated scientific enterprise to the smallest corner shop; life on the job means you have to have access to the Internet. In recent surveys focussing on adult Internet users and the role of digital technology on their work lives, 94% of workers now use the Internet. Key findings include the fact that email remains the number one form of communication when it comes to communicating with clients on a daily basis. That's despite predictions in the past that social media and texting might take over from email as the main form of communication. Video communication tools such as Skype have also increased in popularity because they allow us to collaborate with colleagues in other parts of the world on shared projects. Furthermore, the belief that being online provides too many workplace distractions and can have a negative effect on productivity was not supported by the survey. 46% of workers felt more productive and only 7% felt that their productivity had fallen. Attitudes also seem to be changing with regard to workplace policies on Internet use. Well below 50% of the respondents said their bosses put limits on Internet usage, such as blocking access to certain websites or controlling what employees can say or post online. That figure seems to be lower than previous results in similar surveys.

10.2

Conversation 1

Boris Hello, Procurement, Boris speaking.

Paola Hi, Boris. This is Paola, from Sales in the Milan office. I have a question about an order we placed.

Boris What seems to be the problem?

Paola It's the approval for our training course – the course should begin next week, but the training company hasn't received the signed contract from us.

Boris OK. Could you give me the order number and I'll look into it?

Paola Uhuh. It's 02/584.

Boris Right. Can you tell me when you sent it to us?

Paola At least a month ago. Training Direct needs the contract before the course can begin. That's by Friday at the latest.

Boris OK, let me get this straight. What you're saying is we still have the contract and you need it back, signed by us?

Paola Well, yes.

Boris OK. These things do take time, I'm afraid. Ah ... I have the contract here. What I'll do is check the figures and see if Angela can sign it by tomorrow. If you give me the fax number of Training Direct I'll fax it straight to them and post you a copy.

Paola Will it be ready in time for the deadline?

Boris I'll do my best.

Conversation 2

Chris IT Help Desk. Chris speaking. How can I help you?

Johann Hi, Chris. It's Johann here from Copenhagen.

Chris Ah, hello, Johann. I haven't heard from you for a few days! Have you worked out our new customer database yet?

Johann Yes, just about. This isn't a problem about that. My computer keeps going black.

Chris You mean the screen goes blank?

Johann Er, yes – but the hard drive light is still on.

Chris If I understand you correctly, this is a hardware problem, so I'm afraid I can't help. Ask one of your IT guys in house.

Johann I tried. They told me to call you.

Chris OK. Could you explain exactly what the problem is? Talk me through it.

Johann Well, firstly, when I open the customer transactions program ...

Chris ... Good. OK, I've noted all that down. I'm going to have to look into this. I'll get back to you shortly.

Johann Do you know why it's doing this?

Chris Give me time to check the system. Say, by lunchtime? Don't open the program for the next couple of hours and I might be able to sort out the problem.

Conversation 3

Marcel Hello, Marcel LeGrand speaking.

Donna Hello. This is Donna Fitzpatrick from AS Consulting.

Marcel Good morning. What can I do for you today?

Donna Well, we received a paper delivery from your company, but it arrived out of office hours and was just left in front of our door.

Marcel Could you tell me when this happened?

Donna A couple of hours ago.

Marcel OK. And can you tell me if you've got an order number?

Donna Umm ... 560H. We specifically requested that our paper delivery arrive between 9.30 a.m. and 4 p.m. We now have twenty heavy boxes that need carrying up to the third floor. You're normally so reliable.

Marcel Right ... Could I just clarify what you're saying? You ordered paper and informed us of the required delivery date and time?

Donna Yes. I have it here in black and white. Oh, and even more importantly – the order was wrong, too! There's too much paper and no printed envelopes.

Marcel OK. Once I've checked the details, I'll call you back.

Donna Could you let me know how long it will take? We need the missing envelopes for a mailing tomorrow.

Marcel As soon as I've looked into it, I'll call you back.

10.3

1

A ... So as I was saying, any chance of getting it to me by tomorrow?

B You're breaking up. I'm afraid I didn't catch that last bit.

A I said, any chance of getting it to me by tomorrow?

B Sorry Veronica, it's a really bad signal.

A OK. I'll hang up and call you on your landline.

2

A ... So can we discuss the transport arrangements for the Japanese visitors?

B Sorry, but this'll have to be quick, René, I'm about to board a plane!

A So now's not a good time to call?

B Not really, no. I'll be landing in two hours. Can you call me again then?

A Sure, no problem.

3

A Hi, Mike.

B Beatrice? Is that you?

A Yes, I'm calling about...

B ... Look, I'm sorry, but I'm just on my way out. Can I call you back tomorrow?

A Yes, I'm around in the morning.

B OK, I'll speak to you first thing.

Unit 11

11.1

Whenever companies and organizations introduce changes, large or small, it can be a slow and sometimes painful process. There will be individuals who oppose the changes and react negatively, but even for the supporters of change, the reality of making it happen can be challenging. The ADKAR model provides the five steps you need to follow in order to achieve lasting change. First of all, 'A' stands for Awareness. This is all about letting everyone know what is changing and how it will affect them. One way to convince people who resist change is to explain the danger of not changing at all; for example, perhaps profits will fall if no action is taken. Step 2 is Desire. In other words, people need to accept that change is necessary and they have to feel motivated to support change. Of course, establishing awareness and desire is one thing, but making it happen is another. That's where Knowledge comes in. Your staff will need to know how to change, what to do – perhaps they will need training in new skills. So knowledge is part of a transitional stage which leads into the second 'A' – that's Ability. After getting the knowledge in stage 3 you still need to know if everyone is able to change and if there are any remaining barriers that will prevent change. Finally, and this is probably after many months or even years of hard work, you can implement your changes, but that isn't the end. Over time people can revert to their old habits and ways of working. Stage 5 is Reinforcement in order to maintain the changes. It means monitoring the processes you have in place and recognizing successes – perhaps giving incentives to staff.

11.2

Rachel ... OK. I've spoken about our consultants' findings and we're well aware of your concerns regarding how the changes will affect our staff. As you all know, it is likely there will be some job losses, but we'd like to assure you that we will keep these to an absolute minimum and try to reduce headcount through natural wastage. Decisions will definitely have been made by March as to how big the cutbacks will be. Many of you have asked about a rumoured pay freeze ... We aren't counting this out, but this is something we'd like to avoid. Over the next few weeks, we'll be hosting departmental meetings to give more specific information ... and we plan to keep you informed about any other changes so you can answer your staff's queries with well-informed answers. Starting from next month, we'll be putting regular updates on our Intranet regarding potential changes ... but more about that later. I'd like to pass the next point over to Imran, who has been working closely with the consultants on the subject of bottom-up management.

Imran Thanks, Rachel. Yes, bottom-up management has proven to be very successful in a number of companies and we've been working on a similar concept to implement here at FGR. Hopefully, the new model will be in place by the end of the month. Bottom-up management is quite a simple idea ...

... Normally when change takes place, this is decided and implemented by senior management. However, to make the changes work we need the enthusiasm, motivation and energy from everyone who will be affected by those changes. Let's digress for a moment and look at this in more detail. Our idea is to give everyone the opportunity to propose changes which will benefit themselves and the company. We're proposing a Friday afternoon ideas forum where employees can put forward their suggestions for change. Each department nominates someone to present the most popular ideas to senior management, along with a business plan or some sort of proof that benefits can be gained. The first forum will be on Friday the 24th at 3.30. I'll be visiting our suppliers in Bradford on that day, so Rachel will be here to lead the session. You may be wondering if this will work – Friday afternoons are free for most of our employees. We're convinced the opportunities outweigh the disadvantages of staying at work longer. We must see this as a step towards becoming a more effective company. It's crucial to get the employees on our side ... and we need to emphasize that there will be money available for remuneration ... which could be paid if we see real results after the changes are implemented. This last point is probably going to be difficult to administer at the beginning, but the consultants had an example of remuneration scales for us to consider. I'm sure some of you are sceptical of the consultants' proposals, but we're calling on you to be positive – pass this information on and create enthusiasm ... sell the idea of empowerment to our staff and highlight the rewards this could bring us all. Later this year we'll be reassessed to see how effective the changes are ...

11.3

1

A I don't like the idea of changing the team meeting to Friday afternoons. People like me who are on flexitime often choose to leave early on Fridays.

B Yes, I have some reservations about it, too. Everyone's concentration probably won't be as good at the end of the week. But I can also see the point of moving it. We can never get everyone together in the same place at the same time during the week because we're all so busy. So at the moment Friday is the only option unless someone has another suggestion.

2

A If you ask me, this new restructuring is just a clever way of getting rid of staff.

B Err, I can see both sides of the argument. On the one hand, management want to streamline the company's operation, but on the other hand employees are naturally worried about possible job cuts.

3

A I can't believe the company is going to make us all learn Spanish.

B It sounds interesting – I like the idea of having a common language for the company – though I also understand that people who aren't confident in their language skills might find it difficult.

4

A Do you think this latest proposal is a good thing?

B Mm. I'm not sure. The main argument for it is that extending our office hours should improve the service. But the argument against it is the added costs. We really need to be certain that it will generate the extra revenue needed.

11.4

1

A Your project is finishing at the end of this week, isn't it?

B In theory, yes, but I might have to spend a bit more time on it – there are bound to be a few loose ends to tie up, there always are. But there probably won't be that much to do, so there's a good chance I'll be free in ten days or so.

2

Newsreader The problems for the government are getting worse, and it is doubtful whether it will be able to hold on to power for much longer. There is certain to be more bad news in the coming week – the latest inflation figures, due out on Tuesday, are likely to show an economic situation that is steadily getting worse.

3

A Cristina, I'm still in Ecuador. I'm just calling to say I definitely won't be able to speak at the conference on Friday.

B Things are still bad, are they?

A Yes, and it'll probably take a few more days at least to sort everything out. Perhaps I'll be able to get back next week sometime, I don't really know.

B OK. Then I'll get Bill to stand in for you – obviously I need someone who will definitely be there. Is that OK with you?

A Yes, that's fine.

Unit 12

12.1

Renata ... Could you fill us in on the most relevant information from the seminar?

Caroline Sure. It was extremely informative and, basically, it gave us an overview of figures regarding advertising via blogs and podcasts.

Yari Interesting ... What did you find out?

Caroline Well, in general, traditional forms of advertising to our 18 to 30s market are becoming less effective. They're saying that the way ahead is to advertise where our target audience are 'hanging out' – which is on blogs and podcasts.

Renata OK ... So what are the facts and figures?

Caroline Apparently, a recent study shows a huge increase in advertising investment via these media just in the last year. In fact, spending went up to \$20.4 million.

Yari What's that in terms of growth?

Caroline It's 198.4% ... in one year. Which is pretty incredible.

Renata That sounds very promising ...

Caroline Yes. One of the presenters, Simon Darby, said companies were investing fast and that we should take this opportunity before our competitors do.

Yari OK. How do these figures compare within the different user-generated media?

Renata 'User-generated media' ... meaning ...?

Yari Oh, I mean things like blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds ...

Renata Ah, OK ... thanks.

Caroline Yes. Simon claimed that last year blog advertising accounted for ... 81.4% of collective spending on user-generated media, but, roughly speaking, by 2025 it'll only comprise 39.7%.

Renata So how should we interpret this drop?

Caroline Well, supposedly, podcast advertising will be the front runner over the next four years, overtaking spending on blog ads.

Yari Can we look at the figures?

Caroline Yes, I have them here on this graph. According to a recent survey, total projected expenditure on blog advertising will reach \$300.4 million in four years, whereas expenditure on podcast advertising will have grown at an annual compound rate of 154.4% to \$327 million.

Renata So the bottom line is that user-generated media will be our new advertising platform, whether we like it or not.

Caroline That's right. Simon assured us that this form of advertising more or less guarantees we reach our target audience.

Yari Can you give us the low-down on the types of companies advertising through these media?

Caroline Sure. The overriding trend is for technology, car and media brands to use this form of advertising. I've got examples of some of these companies here ...

12.2

So on the whole, there was a noticeable rise in the overall response to this month's campaign. We sent out approximately 5,000 emails and the click rate was 35%. So compared to last month, that figure stayed roughly the same. But what changed was the click through. It went up significantly from 15% to 25%. I think the offer of a 20% discount this month gave the campaign a substantial boost.

Unit 13

13.1

1

If you're working, or doing business, outside your home country, understanding the local culture is essential. You need to be informed about the culture you're working in and be prepared to be tolerant of different customs. And, you know, you can make some very expensive mistakes if you get it wrong. I'll give you an example. My boss, Tony, ... he used to sell mainframe computers, and a few years ago he was working in the Middle East. One of the big electricity companies said it was interested in buying a new system. Now, Tony had been there a few years, he was familiar with the country and how things worked ... so over a period of two or three months, he had a lot of meetings, making contacts, getting to know the right people ... And then a competitor from the US came over – with a better product, and at a better price. Obviously he was used to doing things the American way – so he gave a few presentations, had a few quick meetings – and then he flew back to the States thinking he had a deal. But he didn't. In the end, it was Tony who got the contract, because even though his product wasn't as good, he understood the way business was done. The other guy was very, very good at his job back in the States, in a different context ... but in this case, he was actually responsible for losing a multi-million-dollar deal because he'd completely failed to adapt to the culture, to a different way of doing things.

2

We run a training centre for employees of multinational companies who are going to be sent abroad for work ... for sometimes up to three years ... And they come from many different companies and industries – telecoms, engineering, computers, banking and so on. Our aim is to help people be more aware of the culture they are going to. This involves all kinds of things. First of all, we give them a basic understanding of the country they are going to – its political system, the social structure, basic cultural norms. We talk about any issues that people are sensitive about – it's surprising how many countries have taboo subjects, often political, that you just don't talk about. In the second part of the course, we look at the most significant cultural differences between the person's home country and the host country, and we focus particularly on aspects of the work culture – how meetings are conducted, how agreements are made, attitudes to time, the hierarchy in the workplace and how respectful of authority and seniority employees are, how important personal relationships are – all things which will help them adjust to working in the local culture. And at the end – when they finally arrive at their destination – they will be far more sensitive to important local issues ... And their colleagues and the people they meet through work will have much more respect for them.

13.2

- 1**
Dieter There was one situation I remember while I was living in Korea. You know I went out there to help with an engineering project?
Tonya Yeah ...
Dieter Well, I was responsible for a team of telecom engineers, great guys. We all got along very well and I was welcomed into the company as if I'd lived over there for years. As time went by, I noticed that things weren't being done that I'd requested them to do.
Tonya Oh?
Dieter Yes. If I asked someone to do something and they said 'yes', nine out of ten times it wasn't done. That was when I was aware we had a problem.
Tonya Go on ...
Dieter At first I thought it might be a language problem.
Tonya Well, that's understandable.
Dieter Yeah. But it was actually nothing to do with language. And it wasn't until I talked to a Korean friend that I realized what was wrong.
Tonya What had you done?
Dieter Nothing. I told my friend what had happened and he explained that there were two problems ... First, my team didn't want to refuse my request due to respect for my seniority ... But also, they didn't want to give an argument why they couldn't do what I wanted. So their answer was 'yes'.
Tonya I see. So, you mean, they didn't want to admit they couldn't do what you'd asked them to do ... or to show negativity towards you by saying 'no'?
Dieter Exactly. Luckily, I found this out before I confronted anyone about the jobs that hadn't been done.
Tonya And did you resolve it?
Dieter Yes. After that I was a lot more careful what I asked my team to do and how I phrased the request.
- 2**
Gaby ... I was responsible for finalizing the new office building in Warsaw along with my manager in the Netherlands. While I was liaising with both the Polish employees and my manager I discovered our two cultures had quite different approaches.
Nico Go on ...
Gaby Well, for example, when we were finalizing the plans for the office space. My manager wanted glass partitions, but the Polish employees hated the idea.
Nico Oh?
Gaby Yeah ... but then I realized they hadn't actually told him this – they told me and hoped I'd tell him on their behalf!
Nico So what did you do?
Gaby I told him! It seems that none of them wanted to question an authority figure. So that was the first problem solved.
Nico There were more?
Gaby Oh yes. Another situation occurred when I was mentoring a recent IT graduate, Magda. While we were developing a new database, I gave her the job of asking staff for their views on the database ... I even put together a few sample questions.
Nico What happened?
Gaby Well, she came back with very little information. I was extremely disappointed ... What's more, the information she had only related to the questions I'd written. She hadn't written any questions of her own to get useful information for us. I didn't know what to do. All in all it was a difficult situation.
Nico So what did you do?
Gaby Well, in the end I asked Anna, a Polish colleague.
Nico What was her view?
Gaby Well, despite Magda's qualifications, she was still the most junior person in the department, so apparently more senior people would be unwilling to answer her questions.
Nico Oh, a hierarchy thing?

- Gaby** Yes. It came about because of the lack of information about why we were questioning them. It seems that Magda also wasn't comfortable with the task, so she didn't add to the questions I suggested.
Nico So how did you solve the problem?
Gaby Well, I sent out a memo explaining what Magda would be doing and why. I also noted Magda's qualifications and wrote the memo in English. The reason being that Magda needed to be respected by her colleagues and English gave the note neutrality.
Nico And ...?
Gaby It really surprised me, but it worked.

13.3

- 1**
A Have you heard the news?
B No ... What?
A Apparently, Gabriel is leaving the company and moving to France.
B Surely not!
A Anna says that he bought a house and vineyard when he was on holiday there last month.
B Are you sure?
A Well, rumour has it he's planning to produce wine and he's been doing a winemaking course after work!
- 2**
A You'll never guess what I heard.
B No ... What?
A Well ... You know that Dimitri went away on business last week and took one of the company's laptops with him?
B Yeah, but that's standard procedure.
A I know, but according to Sam, when Dimitri arrived back in Athens he was in such a hurry to get home, he forgot the laptop and left it in baggage reclaim at the airport!
B Oh, I don't believe it! Did he get it back?
A Not yet, no!
- 3**
A Did you hear the latest about Sandra and Leroy?
B I heard they'd had some sort of argument.
A Yeah, a big one ... Apparently, they were both named salesperson of the month and Leroy refused to share the prize.
B No! That's really childish.
A Well, I spoke to Robert and he told me that Leroy thinks he's better than everyone else since he got that award ...
B That's nonsense!
A I know ... but it's created bad feeling in the whole team!
B I'm not surprised.

13.4

- 1**
 Ben and Jerry opened their first ice cream parlour in an old gas station. Everything they knew about ice cream had come from a \$5 correspondence course in ice-cream making, but one year later they celebrated their first birthday by giving their customers free ice cream all day. News of the delicious ice cream spread, and soon the two friends were delivering pots of ice cream to stores up and down the state of Vermont from an old Volkswagen car. In the end, the whole of the USA wanted to try the ice cream so they built their first manufacturing plant and with part of the profits, they supported community projects. That tradition of supporting local communities and social projects is one that employees at Ben and Jerry's still continue to this day.
- 2**
 Ben and Jerry opened their first shop in 1978. The two men had only taken a correspondence course in ice-cream making and had \$8,000 of their own and another \$4,000 from investors. Originally the first store sold 12 flavours. Now they produce 40. They employ 446 staff and have 5,812 eating locations. Annual sales for the business are \$132 million.

Unit 14

14.1

Interviewer Is it right that you've moved on from top-down staff appraisals to what you call 360-degree appraisals?

Manager No, we still have the more traditional top-down appraisals, but we're introducing 360-degree appraisals as well because they have different functions ...

Interviewer In what way?

Manager You have to think of 360 degree as a development tool basically ... a trigger for change ... rather than a way of deciding if anyone deserves a raise.

Interviewer So how does it work?

Manager Well, in 360 degree, instead of just your boss appraising you, you have several different people giving feedback ... So ... we hand out a feedback form to everyone you come into contact with – your manager, your colleagues, people on your team, your customers, contractors, suppliers – obviously it depends on the type of job and the organization, but we try to involve as many different people as possible ... and with this kind of peer rating, you end up with a more complete picture of how someone is doing in their job.

Interviewer And what do you ask them?

Manager We use a feedback form, with a scoring or value judgement system, asking them to comment on various different assessment criteria – job skills, abilities, attitudes, behaviour. Then you assess yourself using the same form to see how the two compare. ... There are two important considerations with 360-degree appraisal. First, it has to be completely confidential ... that way you get much more honest answers from people. And secondly, you need to make sure suitable counselling is available when you go through the feedback results.

Interviewer So, at the moment, you don't actually use it for appraising performance?

Manager No, it works better as a development tool. We use it as part of our overall performance management, a way of bringing about change, rather than assessing performance.

Interviewer Right. And does it really help change?

Manager Yes ... I had a new member on one of my teams recently ... I thought he was very communicative, very open, always said what he thought and I liked that. But when we did a 360-degree appraisal, the staff feedback was all negative, and he came over as domineering and forceful. As a result of this, he did change his behaviour ... and became more accepted by the team. And that's what I mean about it being different from top-down appraisals – in that example, a top-down appraisal from me would have told him to carry on speaking his mind ... but it was the 360-degree feedback that made us aware of the need for change.

14.2

Angelina ... I must say, we're very happy with your overall performance this year. What do you consider were your successes and failures?

Thomas Well ... one success certainly was helping to produce the in-house magazine. I thought it was well produced with interesting content. I really enjoyed doing it, particularly interviewing colleagues from other countries for the staff profile column.

Angelina Yes, and I think you demonstrated great prioritizing skills, especially with the tight deadlines you had to meet.

Thomas How can I improve my chances of working more with international colleagues?

Angelina Well, you ought to sign up to one of our language courses. That'll put you in a better position for being selected when international projects come up. It's a pity we didn't think about this when you joined us. If you'd started a language course then, you'd be quite proficient now.

Thomas OK ... Can I identify that as a personal goal for the coming year?

Angelina Of course.

Thomas Erm ... What I didn't enjoy was when the magazine budget was cut ... we had to lose a couple of staff on the editorial team and I ended up doing most of the work myself.

Angelina Hmm ... You shouldn't have been expected to take on so much. I noticed your overtime hours were quite high at that time. Look, if this happens again, you need to let us know.

Thomas OK.

Angelina Are there any areas you feel you need to improve on?

Thomas Er, no ... not really.

Angelina Hmm, all right. One area I'd like to mention is training. You turned down an office management course we offered you. Why was that?

Thomas I didn't think I really needed it. Besides, we were short-staffed. If Katy hadn't left, I probably would have done the course.

Angelina Mmm ... You really should have done that course. I think it would have helped you deal with your workload better.

Thomas Yes ... If I'd known that at the time, I might have done it.

Angelina I think you certainly need to focus on gaining some more qualifications. Let's put this course on your list of goals for the coming year, too. Now ... were there any constraints that affected your performance?

Thomas Well, I mentioned that we're short-staffed and despite all this extra work, to be honest I've found it difficult to delegate. How should I do this?

Angelina You need to start by ... So that brings us on to the office environment and resources. You've managed to create a very positive atmosphere in the new office. The move went very smoothly thanks to your team's organization.

Thomas Thanks.

Angelina On a less positive note ... You could have thought a bit more about the call centre rota. Feedback from that department has been poor.

Thomas I know. If we'd taken the old system to our new location, the rota would have been easier to organize ... but no one likes the new scheduling program. What's the best way to solve this, do you think?

Angelina I'll need to look into it. Let's arrange a meeting to discuss it next week.

Thomas Thanks. We could do with some training on the new program – there are some functions we don't really understand.

Angelina I'll check the budget.

Thomas If there's enough money, I'd also like another software program. I've already spoken to IT about it.

Angelina OK. Put your request in an email and I'll consider it.

Thomas Thank you. Oh ... and while we're talking about money, could we discuss ...?

14.3

1

- A** Hi. Thank you for coming at such short notice. Take a seat.
B No problem. Is everything OK?
A Err, no not really. Look, I'm going to get straight to the point. I've received a complaint about you from someone in your office.
B Who? Was it Rachel who works in ...
A Well, before we go any further, I'm not going to say who reported it, but I'd like to tell you what I've been told and then I'd like to hear your side of the story ...

2

- A** Hello, come in.
B Thanks.
A I've asked you here this morning because there's something we need to discuss.
B Sure. Is it about the current restructuring?
A Yes, it is. This is rather delicate, but as you know we've been reviewing the current level of staffing ...
B And you want to make me redundant. I guessed this was coming ...
A Well, I realise it isn't easy for you to hear this, and it wasn't an easy decision to make, but we don't have much choice ...

Unit 15

15.1

- Interviewer** So you're quite happy with the idea of people in your organization taking a career break?
Employer Yes, although we prefer to use the term 'flexiwork', which is a better description.
Interviewer How did the idea come about? I mean, a lot of employers wouldn't like the idea of their staff disappearing for a year or so ...
Employer We introduced flexiwork at a time when our industry was having a bit of a downturn ... things were quiet ... it meant we could cut the wage bill but also retain staff for when the situation improved again.
Interviewer So it was basically just a cost-cutting measure?
Employer No, it was more of an experiment ... one that wouldn't be too expensive ... and it's been very successful ... in fact, it's now official company policy.
Interviewer Do you think this is something that other companies will take up?
Employer I'm not sure – I think we're lucky because we specialize in consultancy. A lot of our work is project-based, and our consultants do three months here, six months there ... so it's quite easy for us to fit this kind of thing in.
Interviewer I think most people would see the advantages for the employee, but are there any other benefits for the company?
Employer Well, yes, apart from the cost savings that I mentioned before, it does a lot for our retention rate, so we don't get nearly so many resignations. If someone wants to broaden their horizons by having a long career break, they can have one, no problem. The other advantage is when we're recruiting, when we're looking for new talent. If we say we don't just allow career breaks, we actively encourage them – as part of your career development – that's very attractive to prospective employees.
Interviewer Presumably there are some people who go off for a few months and don't come back?
Employer For some people, yes, it acts as a catalyst for them to head off in a new direction ... but for most people, it gives them a chance to recharge their batteries and they return with renewed enthusiasm. From the point of view of motivation, it's great; it's a win-win situation. And in terms of personal development, people come back having learnt something new – maybe a new language – or they've developed a soft skill like leadership or whatever ... but the bottom line is, those new skills are of value to the company as well.

15.2

- Manager** So what you're saying is you want to take an extended holiday?
Lena No, not really ... I'd see it as a sabbatical. A journalist friend has invited me to be her photographer on her next assignment. A team is heading out to the Antarctic to document the impact of global warming.
Manager And you'd like several months off to accompany her?
Lena Yes. It's been a long-term goal of mine to do something like this. I did photography before I moved into IT, but I never saw it as a career. The thing is, I've been inspired by the people I studied with who've become professional photographers.
Manager Hmm. So ... you take nine months off and we're left without a technical author and no team leader.
Lena I know, but it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.
Manager But how do *we* benefit from this?
Lena Well, I think it's a win-win situation. I'd enjoy developing my creative side ... I'd fulfil a lifelong ambition ... so I'd come back to my job feeling more contented and satisfied with what I'd achieved in life ...
Manager Yes, and ...?
Lena And the experience I'd gain would be invaluable for managing the team.
Manager This isn't common practice, as far as I know. I'm not sure if ...
Lena I understand your misgivings – what if I don't come back, and so on – but the plus points are that I'd be working in extreme conditions with a team of strangers, and my leadership skills would be put to the test ...
Manager Mmm, I'm not convinced – go on.
Lena But there are also other benefits for you. I intend to put on an exhibition of my work after the trip and I'd like to do this with the support of the company. It would mean we'd get a lot of media exposure as well as great advertising opportunities.
Manager Yes, that sounds interesting; it's certainly worth thinking about.
Lena I really feel that this is a chance I can't afford to miss.
Manager Well, this would set a precedent. I'll have to discuss it with HR ... It's not going to be easy to persuade them. I'm afraid your arguments aren't very convincing from a business point of view.
Lena That's hardly fair. I've never refused to take on more work or to do overtime when it's been necessary. I've been extremely loyal when lots of employees went to the new competition and ... well ...
Manager OK. Fair point. I'll see what I can do.
Lena I'd really appreciate it if you could speak to HR and initiate a meeting for all of us.
Manager OK. I think I can manage that, Lena.

15.3

1

- A** Hi, Sami. Where were you yesterday? You missed the meeting.
B Didn't anyone tell you? I took the day off. I thought it was about time I used up some of my time off in lieu.
A Oh, I see. So what did you get up to then? Anything nice?
B Nothing much. I caught up on some DIY jobs I started in the summer!
A Not a very exciting way to spend your day off!
B I know, but it needed doing.

2

- A** Are you back from your holiday already? Did you manage to get away?
B For some of it. I've always wanted to stay up in the mountains, so I had a few days hiking in the Swiss Alps.
A How was it?
B It poured with rain the whole time!
A Oh no.
B It didn't really matter. The hotel had an indoor pool and great spa.
A Nice.
B Yeah, it was a relaxing way to spend a few days.
A Oh, lovely ...

3

- A** How did you spend the weekend?
B We managed to fit in a visit to my partner's family. I was a bit nervous because I hadn't met all of his family before!
A So how was it?
B Actually, it turned out to be a lot of fun. Some of them are keen golfers so I was able to get a game in.