



6 Progress

Learning objectives in this unit

- Discussing factors for success
- Problem-solving and brainstorming ideas
- Using adverbs to qualify attitudes
- Using vague language

Case study

- Handling rapid growth and progression

Starting point

- 1 What do you think a company needs to do to stay ahead of the competition?
- 2 How can companies ensure continued progress?

Working with words | Discussing factors for success

1 The Creativity Lab is part of ITRI, a Taiwanese publicly-funded organization helping local companies develop their products and manufacturing techniques. Read the text and answer the questions.

- 1 What does the Creativity Lab do?
- 2 What is Hsueh Wen-Jean's attitude towards creativity and success?

Thinking outside the box

With Taiwan's successful track record in manufacturing, local electronics companies concentrated on **figuring out** ways to reduce cost and improve existing products, rather than on developing new products. Taiwan's niche was as an outsourcer for large American IT firms, but that market is now so mature that Taiwan's manufacturing sector has lost ground to lower-cost countries. Taiwan's IT elite realize change is needed in order to get back on track, and product innovation could hold the key to new business opportunities.

Hsueh Wen-Jean is the driving force behind the recently launched Creativity Lab. She is responsible for helping to green-light new projects, and is well aware that she and her colleagues need to think outside the box, **looking beyond** their technical training to find creative answers and innovative solutions.

The Lab conducts workshops to help their customers, a diverse group of companies known as the Next Consortium, to develop their creative thinking. Ideas are **bounced**

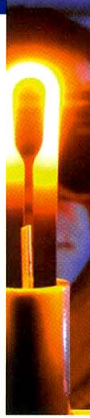
around, after which two or more companies are able to collaborate on projects based on these ideas.

The principle is that because so many ideas fall by the wayside, it is best to come up with as many as possible. This should help increase the chances of **hitting on** a few good ideas that can generate real income, and help these companies stay ahead of the game. Although most ideas never come to fruition, the Consortium's members can work together to **try out** different possibilities while avoiding the problems a company can **run into** by pursuing a bad idea on its own. 'A culture of success can tolerate mistakes, and all great entrepreneurs learn from their mistakes,' Hsueh says.

So far, the Lab has not laid down hard and fast criteria for judging whether, or how far, to explore a concept. At this stage Hsueh is reluctant to impose revenue targets, as there are numerous projects that do not get off the ground or prove to be impractical. That is all part of the process at The Creativity Lab.

2 Work with a partner. Match phrases 1–6 from the text in 1 to definitions a–f.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 get back on track | a be realized |
| 2 think outside the box | b be started |
| 3 fall by the wayside | c find the path to success again |
| 4 stay ahead of the game | d come up with creative / unusual ideas |
| 5 come to fruition | e keep in front of the competition |
| 6 get off the ground | f fail to make it |



3 Replace the underlined words in these sentences with a verb phrase in bold in the text in 1. You might need to change the form of the verb phrase.

- 1 I know that you're not impressed with what John suggested, but why don't you test his ideas and see how they work in practice?
- 2 We might suddenly face some big problems if we don't plan this carefully.
- 3 I'm trying to work out how we can reorganize the team once David has left.
- 4 You have to stop concentrating only on what's been done before, and focus on the future.
- 5 He suddenly came up with an excellent idea.
- 6 You should see what other people think about the ideas – someone might know how to develop them further.

4 Look at the text in 1. Find the nouns that collocate with the verb phrases in bold.

5 Read the quotation from George Buckley, CEO of 3M. What dilemma do you think the company might have faced?

6 31▶ Listen to Jost Van der Saar, a business analyst, talking about the situation at 3M, and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the dilemma that is discussed in the interview?
- 2 What has been 3M's traditional approach to creativity?
- 3 How did McNerney change things?
- 4 What is the company's current approach?

7 Match verbs 1–12 to the most suitable noun, a or b, to form collocations.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 cut into | a the success | b the bottom line |
| 2 undergo | a change | b progress |
| 3 pursue | a the competition | b ideas |
| 4 boost | a earnings | b money |
| 5 tolerate | a mistakes | b progress |
| 6 cause | a a stir | b a discussion |
| 7 shift | a the emphasis | b the competition |
| 8 explore | a a concept | b difficulties |
| 9 control | a profits | b costs |
| 10 impose | a targets | b problems |
| 11 demand | a process | b precision |
| 12 outperform | a earnings | b the competition |

8 31▶ Look at the text in 1 and listen to the interview again and check your answers.

9 Work with a partner and put the collocations from 7 in the table below. Then compare your answers with another pair and discuss any differences.

Profitability	Change	Creativity	Quality

»» For more exercises, go to Practice file 6 on page 112.

10 Work in groups. Think of a recent project you have been involved in. Think of

- how you came up with the idea
- how you ensured quality
- changes / problems with the project
- the success of the idea.

Hold a post-project review meeting to discuss what happened and what you could have done differently.



You can't ... say, well, I'm getting behind on invention, so I'm going to schedule myself for three good ideas on Wednesday and two on Friday. That's not how creativity works.

Business communication skills

Context

Skion PCs is a small computer hardware store set up by two IT graduates, James Logan and Gareth Newman. Currently it has one shop on the high street, and a website for online sales. It prides itself on the expertise and specialized knowledge of its employees. However, competition from the large, well-known national / international PC chains is threatening business. Skion PCs needs to find an innovative niche market to maintain its position. James and Gareth decide to hold a brainstorming meeting with two key members of staff – Sue Edwards and Jessica Williams.

Meetings | Problem-solving | Brainstorming ideas



1 32–34▶ Listen to three extracts from the problem-solving meeting at Skion PCs.

- 1 Complete the table below with the four ideas.
- 2 Note down the pros and cons that are mentioned for each idea.

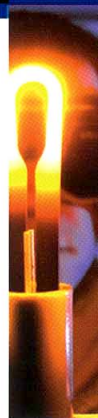
Ideas	Pros	Cons
1		
2		
3		
4		

2 32▶ Listen to the first extract again and complete these sentences.

- 1 I mean, _____ ways to develop our image ...?
- 2 Also, _____ 'caring'.
- 3 _____, what about moving into the area of recycling?
- 4 _____ collect a customer's old computer ...
- 5 _____ something charitable ... and send X% off to developing countries, _____?
- 6 _____ set up a programme where staff can choose to ...
- 7 To tell you the truth, _____.
- 8 _____ that would work in practice ...
- 9 ... and _____ it would really be cost-effective.
- 10 Well, no, but _____ that it's profitable, _____.

3 Work with a partner. Put phrases 1–10 in 2 into categories a–e.

- a Putting forward an idea: _____.
- b Asking for clarification: _____.
- c Clarifying the idea: _____.
- d Building on the idea: _____.
- e Evaluating the idea: _____.



4 Work with a partner. Brainstorm alternative ways of saying sentences 1–9. The meaning should be the same or similar.

Example: That's not such a bad idea. → I actually quite like this idea.

- 1 I can't help wondering whether it would be really cost-effective.
- 2 I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but how about a wider policy on environmental issues?
- 3 What did you have in mind?
- 4 I was thinking along the lines of solar-powered laptops.
- 5 Supposing we were to sell recovered parts ... back to the manufacturers?
- 6 And there's nothing stopping us from setting up as brokers ourselves, is there?
- 7 It's certainly worth thinking about.
- 8 We should at least consider it.
- 9 In terms of marketing, I think it has potential.

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 6** on page 112.

5 Work in groups of four. You work for a company that has grown rapidly over the last few years. Growth is now slowing due to high staff turnover. Read the following information from HR about this issue.

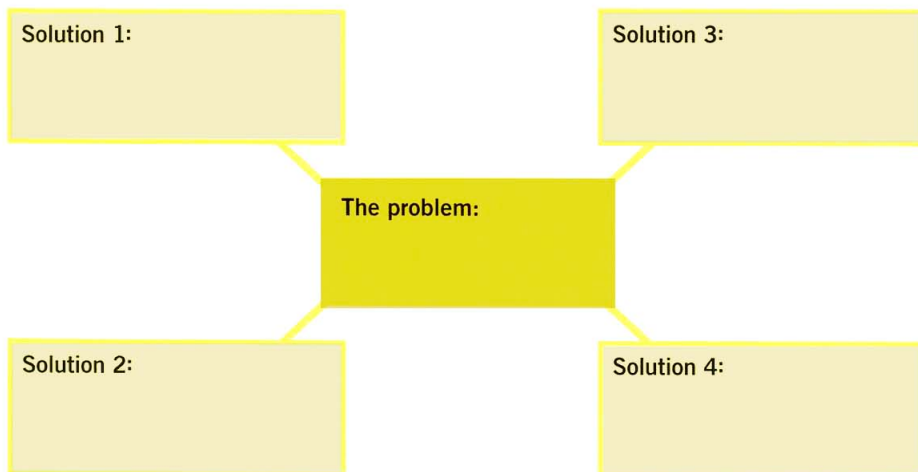
- One of the reasons for high staff turnover is the lack of company perks – apparently competitors are offering better conditions.
- Money is available to fund one or two perks within reason. Perks without costs would be preferable.

Prepare to hold a brainstorming meeting about the issue. Students A and B turn to File 23 on page 141. Students C and D turn to File 54 on page 149.

During the meeting

- put forward all your ideas and note them down
- clarify and then evaluate the ideas
- decide on the best options.

6 Think of a work-related problem you've each had which needed a creative solution. Hold a problem-solving meeting to brainstorm possible solutions.



Alternatively, look at one of the problems below.

- 1 You have just found out that key features of the new product or service you are working on are very similar to one that your competitors launched last week.
- 2 You work in a sector where it is extremely difficult to recruit suitable employees. You are seriously understaffed and demand for the company's services is huge.

i » Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Putting forward an idea

Couldn't we consider ...?
 I would have thought it would be possible to ...
 I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but how about ...?
 Supposing we were to ...?

Asking for clarification

It's not clear to me what you mean by ...
 Oh I see, so you're thinking ... am I right?
 What did you have in mind?

Clarifying the idea

Well, for example, ...
 I was thinking along the lines of ...

Building on the idea

Thinking about it, we could even ...
 And there's nothing stopping us from ... is there?

Evaluating the idea

I'm concerned about how ...
 I can't help wondering ...
 I would certainly need to know ... before -ing ...
 It's certainly worth thinking about.
 We should at least consider it ...
 In terms of ... I think it has potential.
 That's not such a bad idea.

i » Interactive Workbook
» Phrasebank

Culture question

Think about the 'company culture' in your organization.

- Are ideas developed hierarchically or can they come from any level?
- How is support generated for these ideas?
- Do you know how this compares to other company cultures?

Language at work | Using adverbs to qualify attitudes

1 35▶ Listen to sentences 1–10 and match the adverbs in *italics* to their uses a–d below. There may be more than one possible answer.

- 1 Could I *just* explain in a bit more detail? ____
- 2 You've *obviously* given this some thought. ____
- 3 I'm not *totally* convinced. ____
- 4 It's been a *surprisingly* difficult year. ____
- 5 It's *easily* the best idea I've heard so far. ____
- 6 I'm *just* not convinced. ____
- 7 It was *actually* one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. ____
- 8 Look, I *only* say that because there's big money in energy saving. ____
- 9 I'm not *so* keen on the idea. ____
- 10 I don't *really* think we could get away with that – do you? ____

- a emphasizing a comment
- b expressing an attitude contrary to expectation
- c persuading others to listen to you
- d softening a negative reaction

2 36▶ Listen to these pairs of sentences, where the meaning changes according to the position of the adverb. What is the difference in meaning?

- 1 a Could I explain in just a bit more detail?
b Could I just explain in a bit more detail?
- 2 a Surprisingly, it's been a difficult year.
b It's been a surprisingly difficult year.
- 3 a It was actually one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.
b Actually, it was one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.
- 4 a I really don't think we could get away with that – do you?
b I don't really think we could get away with that – do you?

»» For more information, go to **Language reference Unit 6** on page 129.

3 Work with a partner. Discuss what **B** might have said in conversations 1–6.

- 1 A I don't have much time – what is it you wanted to talk about?
B (Needs to run through some ideas. Persuades A to listen.)
- 2 A Do you have any thoughts on my idea for a new staff car park?
B (Thinks the money could be better spent elsewhere. Softens this negative reaction.)
- 3 A The conference wasn't as well attended as last year, was it?
B (Thinks there were a lot more people than expected. Responds contrary to expectation.)
- 4 A I hear you're not happy with the way the new project's going.
B (Doesn't understand why it's delayed. Emphasizes this negative reaction.)
- 5 A Are you pleased with the outcome from this morning's meeting?
B (Thinks the best proposal got accepted. Emphasizes this positive reaction.)
- 6 A Are you happy with our choice of candidate?
B (She wouldn't have been the first choice. Responds contrary to expectation.)

4 Choose your most favourite and least favourite technological innovation from the list (or think of your own). Work with a partner and take turns to explain your choices using adverbs from **1**.

- BlackBerry
- online teleconferencing software
- memory sticks
- digital television
- air conditioning
- automatic doors
- self check-outs in supermarkets
- central locking in cars
- electric windows in cars
- MP3 players

»» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 6** on page 113.

Practically speaking | Using vague language

1 37▶ Listen to three conversations where people are being asked for information. For each conversation, answer questions 1–2.

- 1 How does the person being asked for information sound (e.g. knowledgeable, tentative, vague, encouraging, lazy)?
- 2 Why isn't the information more precise?



2 37▶ Look at the phrases used to show that the information is imprecise in the table below. Then listen again and add any other similar phrases.

Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3
Something about ... I think! ... you've put me on the spot there.	I'd say you're on the right track. ... it's the kind of thing ...	No, not really. It's difficult to explain, really.

»» For extension and revision, go to **Useful phrases** on page 135.

3 Work with a partner. Student A, read the information below. Student B, turn to File 30 on page 143. Have the conversations.

Situation 1

You have been asked to give a tour and presentation of your company to a group of graduates. You are busy planning the event, and you know Student B organized the same day last year. Speak to Student B and find out what she / he did to prepare for the event.

Situation 2

In order for the MD to authorize a new project, you need to present a written proposal with Student B. Student B has written the first draft. However, it looks long, and you haven't had time to read it in detail. Student B asks you for feedback.

- Student B needs to add the long-term benefits for the company.
- The basic structure looks OK.
- The text looks very wordy – you'd prefer to see more bullet points.

4 Work with a partner. Ask each other about a topic from the list. Answer your partner's questions, using vague language where necessary.

- a training session you've been to
- a hotel you've stayed in
- a business trip you've been on
- a city you've visited
- a product from a competitor
- a presentation you've been to

Key word | *still*

Look at sentences 1–5. In which sentence is the word *still* used to

- a emphasize a comparison?
 - b say what remains to be done?
 - c say you continue to wait for something which is overdue?
 - d offer a contrasting viewpoint?
 - e refer to a possibility in the future?
- 1 That should *still* give you time to revise your draft.
 - 2 I *still* need to bring it all together.
 - 3 *Still*, there was one place that was quite interesting.
 - 4 He *still* hasn't got back to me.
 - 5 More worrying *still* is that it's only a month away.

Company profile

Mobile Interactive Group

Mobile Interactive Group is the UK market leader in providing interactive services via mobile phones. The company was founded in 2004 by three ex-O2 employees – Barry Houlihan, Anthony Nelson, and Nick Aldridge – and since then has grown rapidly to become a multi-million pound business and a key player in mobile software innovation. In four years the annual revenue grew from £252,000 to around £40 million and the number of employees went from three to more than 40. It specializes in mass participation events such as voting on reality shows, and provides billing solutions for premium SMS services, as well as interactive marketing services. Their clients include ITV (UK), TV3 (Ireland), Freemantle Media, and O2.

Handling rapid growth and progression

Background

How to manage rapid growth effectively

It's every entrepreneur's dream to start a new company and to see it grow rapidly to become one of the leading players in the industry. However, companies that grow too quickly can face unexpected difficulties, such as inadequate cash flow, loss of control, and problems associated with diversifying too quickly. Often these are due to a simple lack of management experience, but they can cause a company to lose sight of their core purpose and, ultimately, to fail.

Here are five tips for managing rapid growth effectively and avoiding some of the major pitfalls.

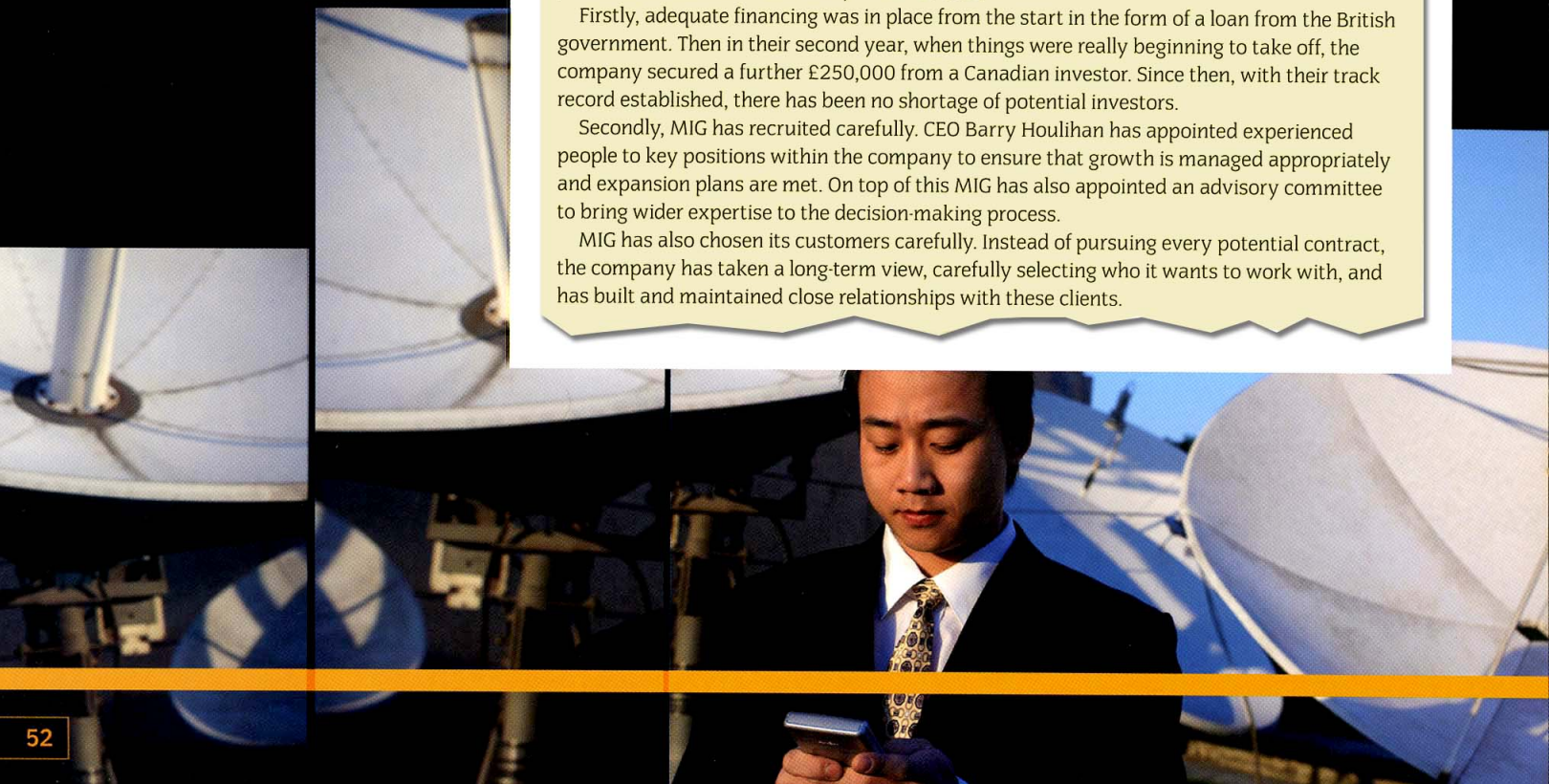
- 1 Make sure you have the money to expand.** It's essential that adequate financial resources are in place to support the cash-flow problems that often accompany rapid growth.
- 2 Employ qualified people to run the company.** Promoting from within can be tempting, but just because people have been with the company since the start, it doesn't mean they have the management skills to deal with the challenges the company faces.
- 3 Don't try to run before you can walk.** Rapid success brings with it the temptation to diversify away from your core business. This can lead to a 'watering down' of the company's overall strengths.
- 4 Always remember who your core customers are.** Customer service is a vital part of any business – if your customers feel you are neglecting them in order to chase new business opportunities, they will look elsewhere.
- 5 Stay true to your original vision.** Companies that grow too fast can sometimes lose sight of the core values that made them a success in the first place. Never forget who you are and why you're doing this.

Mobile Interactive Group (MIG) is recognized as one of the fastest-growing businesses in the UK, operating in a sector where technological developments happen constantly. A key factor in the company's success has been its apparent ability to avoid many of the usual pitfalls associated with new businesses experiencing accelerated growth over a relatively short period of time. So how have they achieved this?

Firstly, adequate financing was in place from the start in the form of a loan from the British government. Then in their second year, when things were really beginning to take off, the company secured a further £250,000 from a Canadian investor. Since then, with their track record established, there has been no shortage of potential investors.

Secondly, MIG has recruited carefully. CEO Barry Houlihan has appointed experienced people to key positions within the company to ensure that growth is managed appropriately and expansion plans are met. On top of this MIG has also appointed an advisory committee to bring wider expertise to the decision-making process.

MIG has also chosen its customers carefully. Instead of pursuing every potential contract, the company has taken a long-term view, carefully selecting who it wants to work with, and has built and maintained close relationships with these clients.



Discussion

- 1 Which tips for managing rapid growth in the article do you think are the most important? Why?
- 2 Do you think the fact that MIG managed its growth so effectively was due to luck, judgement, or both? Why?

Task

- 1 Work with a partner. Read about Adamo Automotive's company history and discuss what the company's key strengths are.

Adamo AUTOMOTIVE

Adamo Automotive

Adamo is an independent specialist car manufacturer. The company was established in the 1990s by Adam Crees and Morgan Terry who had previously designed and built vehicles for international racing teams. At the time, the company filled a niche in providing high-performance, 'no frills' two-seater sports cars at an affordable price.

Company situation in the 1990s

Typical customer profile: young, well-paid professionals aged 25 to 45

Models: the AV1 and the more powerful Capra

Financial performance: Within five years Adamo had a turnover of over £30 million and was producing more than 1,000 cars annually. Strong European and American economies and relatively low fuel prices supported growth.

Staff: The workforce were highly skilled and motivated – all employees received stock options. Starting out with a team of only eight, within five years Adamo employed 45 people.

Strengths: The cars gained a reputation for innovative construction and distinctive styling.

Weaknesses: Despite being a high-status brand, Adamos offered little in the way of luxury features – the cars were about performance and the driving experience.

- 2 Turn to File 31 on page 143 to find out what has happened to Adamo in recent years. Discuss the information with your partner and make a list of the main problems they are now facing.
- 3 Adamo's directors have asked a team of consultants to advise the company on how to reverse its decline. You and your partner are two of the consultants. Prepare for a brainstorming meeting by discussing the following questions and making notes on your answers.
 - 1 Based on what you know about the current economic climate, what do you think are some of the ways the company can address the problems?
 - 2 Which (if any) of the advice offered in the article could be followed by Adamo?
- 4 Work with another pair. Follow the agenda and hold the brainstorming meeting.

Agenda – Adamo Automotive

- 1 Each idea to be put forward, then clarified and recorded
- 2 Ideas to be evaluated and built on if possible
- 3 Best ideas and recommended strategy for Adamo to be decided on
- 4 Decision to be made on who will report suggestions to the board

The Expert View

Some entrepreneurs have been able to take their vision from its initial conception to market success, creating and sustaining a growing organization. Creativity is part of the process of bringing new products and services to the market, but truly innovative organizations are able to select the new ideas that they are best placed to exploit and then implement them successfully. They must be expert at 'making things happen'. To nurture creativity and to ensure that rapid growth can occur, organizations must be comfortable with experimentation, novelty, and uncertainty – they must not fear failure. They must also have excellent processes – they must manage risk and control resources.

Alan Cousens, MA MBA MSc PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Operations Management
Cranfield University School of Management

Fronting

- In most active sentences, the subject of the verb comes first. However, we can alter the word order to place the information we want to emphasize at the beginning of the sentence. This is called 'fronting'.
I liked the conference hall, but I thought the accommodation was awful. → The conference hall I liked. The accommodation I thought was awful.
- Note that subject and verb / auxiliary are inverted after negative expressions, after *only*, and after participles.
Rarely have I seen such a confident presentation.
Only in Japan can you get fish as fresh as this.
Included in the contract was a job description.

It-clefts

Form

it + *be* + emphasized language + relative clause

Use

To focus our attention on a noun phrase or adverbial.

It was the finance director who suggested freezing recruitment.
It was earlier this morning that she phoned me.

What-clefts

Form

what + noun phrase / clause + *be* + emphasized language

Use

To move our attention to the end of the sentence.

What he does is assess proposals.
What I want is an evening off.

Other phrases

We can also use phrases such as *the person / people who / that, the place where, the reason why, the thing that* to add emphasis.

Tom is the person that you need to speak to.
The place where our 2012 conference will be held is Brighton.
The thing that annoys me most is that no one contacted us about the problem.

Unit 6 | Adverbs

Adverbs of degree

- Many adverbs of degree are used to qualify the gradable adjective or adverb they precede, e.g. *quite, rather, pretty, fairly, a bit, a little*, and, especially in American English, *somewhat*.
*The figures were **quite** promising.*
*He suggested, **rather** stupidly, that we forget about the deadlines.*
- We can use most of these words with adjective + noun combinations. Note the word order with *quite*.
*It was **a rather tedious** speech.*
*It was **quite a good party**. (Not: ~~It was a quite good party.~~)*
- We can also use an adverb of degree with *not*, e.g. *not very, not really, not absolutely*. We can also say *not at all*.
*I'm **not very** / **not at all** concerned about the canteen's closure.*

- Note that *not really* can mean both *not very* and *not, in fact*. The word stress (see the underlined words in the examples) in the sentence helps to convey the different meanings.

*I'm **not really** angry about her resignation, just disappointed. (not angry, in fact)*
He wasn't really angry, but he raised his voice. (a bit angry)

- When the adverb comes before *not*, the meaning is different.
*I'm **not absolutely** convinced. (less than 100%)*
*I'm **absolutely not** convinced. (0%)*

Note that putting the adverb before *not* isn't possible with *very*.

*I'm **not very** happy with this situation. (Not: ~~I'm very not happy with this situation.~~)*

Focus adverbs

- The adverbs *even, just*, and *only* focus our attention on one part of a sentence. They usually come before a main verb, but after an auxiliary or *be*.
*Exetica **only** had better results than us in May. (not in June, etc.)*
*I **just** don't understand why team A didn't complete the first away day task. (I really don't understand)*
*Jo couldn't **even** remember all the details. (a criticism of Jo)*
- If these adverbs refer to a noun phrase then they come before it, and the meaning is changed.
***Only** Exetica had better results than us in May. (no other company)*
*I don't understand why team A didn't complete **just** the first away day task. (they managed to complete all the others)*
*I don't understand why **just** team A didn't complete the first away day task. (all the other teams managed to do it)*
***Even** Jo couldn't remember all the details. (Jo is expected to be good at remembering and the fact that she couldn't indicates that there were a lot of details.)*

Functional adverbials

Adverbials are often used to refine the message conveyed by the sentence, without altering the meaning of any individual words. For example, they can be used

- to soften negative reactions
***Unfortunately**, I can't agree with you. (also: regrettably, sadly)*
- to provide a link to what someone else has said
***Of course**, you're right about that, but ... (also: no doubt, obviously, evidently, certainly)*
- to move the subject of conversation / writing onto a different area
***Frankly**, I'd prefer not to discuss that ... (also: to be honest, honestly, actually)*

Unit 7 | Participle clauses | Future in the past

Participle clauses

- An adverbial clause begins with a conjunction (e.g. *because, when, after*) and gives extra information about the main topic in a sentence.
***When I travel by train**, I prefer to sit by the window.*

Often it is possible to use a clause with a present participle instead. This is called a participle clause.

***Travelling by train**, I prefer to sit by the window.*

No, I'm sorry. I don't see what you're getting at.
I'm not sure I agree with you.
I'd like a second opinion on this, if you don't mind.

6 | Using vague language

Something about ..., I think!
... you've put me on the spot there.
I'm not quite sure now.
I seem to remember ...
... something like that, in any case.
I'm sure I would have done.
I'm trying to think ...
I'd say you're on the right track.
... it's the kind of thing ...
It just needs a bit more ...
You know, ... and so on.
Something along those lines ...
Yes, ... something like that.
No, not really.
It's difficult to explain, really ...
It almost had a hint of ...
It was kind of ...
... you know, that sort of thing.
... a bit like that, but not quite as ...
It was a bit ... oh, I don't know.

7 | Expressing dissatisfaction

I have to admit, I'm not getting much out of it.
It's doing my head in!
It's really testing my patience.
I think I've reached my limit.
It hasn't lived up to expectations so far.
I have to say, I was expecting something a bit more ...
It's just not up to scratch.
To be frank, I'm not very happy with ...
I can't really see the the point of ... -ing.
To be honest, I'm finding it a bit frustrating that ...
I just don't think this is the best use of my time.
This is ridiculous.
This is just not good enough.

8 | Dealing with difficult questions

Admitting ignorance

I'm afraid I don't know any more than you do.
Sorry, I don't know what you mean.
I'm afraid I'm not up to speed on ...

Refusing to answer

I'm sorry, but I can't answer that.
I would prefer not to talk about it.
I'm afraid I can't disclose that information – it's confidential.

Avoiding the question

Well, it's not that straightforward.
It's hard to say at the moment.
I can't really comment.

Distancing yourself from the question

I'm afraid I'm really not in a position to talk about that.
It's not for me to say.
It's nothing to do with me.

9 | Dealing with misunderstandings

Saying you haven't understood

I don't know what you're talking about.
What do you mean?
I don't get it.

Responding to a misunderstanding

I didn't mean that.
Sorry if I didn't make that clear.
No, you've got it wrong.
I was thinking more along the lines of ...
That's not really what I meant – what I actually wanted to say was ...
What I meant was ...
Can I put this straight?
It may seem ..., but actually ...
No, that's not right.
No, that's not exactly what I'm saying.

10 | Expressing personal views

Encouraging someone to express personal views

So what did you think of ...?
Such as?
You're not in favour of ..., then?
I was interested in what you said earlier about ...
What did you like about it in particular?
It must have been ...?
How does it feel to ...?
You were saying earlier that ...
I heard ...
What do you mean?
So ...?
What are your thoughts on ...?
I'd like to know what you think about it.

Expressing personal views

To be honest with you, ...
Personally speaking, ...
I have to say ...
To tell you the truth, ...
To be perfectly honest, ...
Honestly?
Personally, I think ...
I look at it like this: ...
My attitude is ...

11 | Raising a difficult point

I don't mean to sound rude, but ...
This is a bit delicate.
Please don't take offence.
Please don't take this the wrong way.
You see, the thing is, ...
I'm not quite sure how to put this.
With respect, ...
I have to say that ...
The fact is, ...
Don't be offended, but ...
I'm sorry to have to say this, but ...

12 | Giving and responding to compliments

Complimenting

That was great.
A very worthwhile meeting / discussion.
You're looking well.
I like your ...
I thoroughly enjoyed that.
It was very interesting.
Great design.
I love ...
Well done, you did a great job.
You have very nice ...
That was brilliant.
I saw your ... and I thought it was excellent.

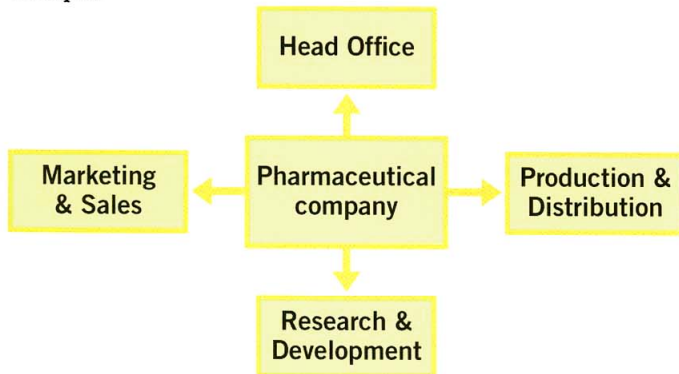
Responding

Thanks.
Thank you. I felt it went well.
Thanks for the feedback.
I don't know how you can say that, but thanks anyway.
I was hoping it'd be well received.
Glad you enjoyed it.
I'm glad you liked it.

File 21 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 21

Group A



Due to the rapid expansion HR have employed staff on a short-term needs basis. They have had to give particular attention to

- R&D roles (e.g. research scientists)
- Head Office roles (e.g. legal, financial, HR, secretarial, IT).

Commercial roles (e.g. medical reps) and production / distribution roles (e.g. production operatives, supervisors) will become more important once the company has developed more commercially-viable products. This means that the Marketing, Sales, and Production departments are not yet fully resourced.

File 22 | Unit 5

Practically speaking, Exercise 5, page 43

Student A

- 1 Give feedback to Student B on her / his report.

The report your colleague wrote was incomplete. You are particularly concerned about the summary. Most of the summary doesn't link with the findings of the report. However, you thought the report was well presented and the findings that are included are very interesting.

- 2 Student B is going to give you some feedback.

Your boss wants to talk to you. You think it is about the mistakes you made in the database management.

File 23 | Unit 6

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 49

Students A and B

Choose two of these ideas to discuss in the meeting.

- Introduce a yearly summer ball for staff, with free food, wine, and entertainment.
- Provide in-house gym facilities with showers.
- Offer staff a 'work at home' option.
- Install in-house 'nap machines' to allow staff to power-sleep for 20 minutes when necessary.

Discuss the advantages of the ideas and how they would work. Think of possible disadvantages and prepare a counter-argument.

File 24 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 45

Student A

Head of Finance

You've just joined the company and your main objective is to increase profitability.

Your suggestions

- Lose the 'all-for-one' principle – the company is too big now for this to work.
- Create more of a hierarchical structure – several competitors are succeeding with this kind of structure and it may allow you to cut back on staff and save money.
- Servers should just get on with their jobs – they should serve customers as quickly and efficiently as possible and leave the 'ideas' to management.

Ideas that you do not support

- You do not support a continued lack of clarity in roles. Managers should manage and servers should serve.
- You do not want to spend more company profits on expensive Christmas parties or food-tasting days.

File 25 | Unit 12

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 101

Student B

Fact file: Brazil

Country size: 8.5 million square kilometres, fifth largest country in world

Population: 180 million

Economic factors

- Property price returns of 20% per annum in some locations.
- Good currency exchange rates, making it cheap for foreign investors.
- President's progressive policies have brought many improvements to Brazil, including a decrease in inflation to an all-time low of 5.7%.
- Active encouragement of and incentives for foreign investment – you can own 100% of land and property.
- Cost of living at only 20% of that in the UK / Europe, while property maintenance costs are extremely low.
- Increase in manufacturing industries relocating to Brazil and boosting the economy.
- Expected to be self-sufficient in oil reserves within the next year.
- Brazil believed by some economists to be amongst the leading economies of the future, along with Russia, India, and China.

File 30 | Unit 6

Practically speaking, Exercise 3, page 51

Student B

Situation 1

Student A will ask you for some tips on how to organize a tour and presentation of your company to a group of graduates. You organized the same event last year. You can remember the day in general, but you have trouble recalling the details.

- Started with a tour of the building – lasted all morning?
- Short lunch break – sandwich lunch in meeting room, or fast food in staff canteen?
- Afternoon – talk by representative from each department. Introducing different job types?
- Finished with question and answer session?

Situation 2

In order for the MD to authorize the new project you are working on, you need to present a written proposal with Student A. You have written the first draft. Ask Student A for feedback before writing the second draft. Ask questions if you feel you need more detail from Student A.

File 31 | Unit 6

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 53

Post-1990s – the downturn begins

- A split in the management team led to Adam Crees gaining full control of the company in 2001. Against advice he decided to diversify and to invest in developing a model for the luxury market, competing with Porsche, Aston Martin, and Maserati. This led to the launch of the Adamo Tera in 2004.
- The Tera was not well received and failed to compete in its class on performance, quality, and price. However, the push toward diversification continued, and in 2006 and 2007 Adamo launched the Tera 2 and the Bos.
- Production became increasingly automated, leading to the company having more managers than workers, many of whom had been with Adamo since the start and knew little about running a large company.
- Increased competitor activity meant that the luxury car market became flooded with high-quality models. Adamo's costs spiralled while its revenues began to fall.
- The poor reputation of the Tera and Bos models has had a negative impact on the AV1 and the Capra – customers are turning away from these models and sales have plummeted.
- A slowing global economy has accelerated the recent downturn in sales with Adamo expecting a fall in revenue of at least 25% on the previous year.

File 32 | Unit 7

Working with words, Exercise 10, page 55

Company 1

- no formalized training approach – training needs of each department are extremely varied, so this would be too complicated
- no in-house training – only learning from more experienced employees whilst doing the job
- money for external training available, but only given in response to a direct request from an employee

Company 2

- structured and formalized training approach
- senior management decide what kind of training courses are made available
- employees in first year of employment must complete two courses designed for their particular job – this is decided by the line managers
- employees in the second year of employment must complete two more general courses related to the company (e.g. product presentations, business processes, etc.) – this is decided by the line managers and employees during appraisals
- employees must complete two training courses per year after their second year

File 33 | Unit 7

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 61

Student B

Suggested action

1 Continue recruiting in UK, but use psychometric testing to help find people with the right attitude and who will learn skills quickly.

Why?

- Although it will be expensive to employ a qualified practitioner to manage the tests, the company will have more control over the recruitment process.
- It will enable the company to find people who can grow within company and make it easier to develop training to meet their needs.

2 Introduce an extensive training programme, including specific job-related and company-specific training in-house, along with generic external courses.

Why?

- Although this will be expensive, it will be worth it in the long-term – employees will gain skills specific to their job as well as a wider understanding of the company as a whole.
- External courses will also enable them to increase self-awareness and develop their general business skills.
- The government is likely to make such training schemes compulsory in a few years, so starting it now will put the company in a strong position.

File 54 | Unit 6

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 49

Students C and D

Choose two of these ideas to discuss in the meeting.

- Provide free coffee and biscuits for staff every day.
- Introduce a yearly paid bonus for all staff.
- Offer all staff three extra holiday days.
- Offer staff the option to work their hours in three or four days, rather than five.

Discuss the advantages of the ideas and how they would work. Think of possible disadvantages and prepare a counter-argument.

File 55 | Unit 12

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 101

Student A

Key performance indicators

FJR Immo's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI = ensuring customer satisfaction - monitored in the form of a survey

KPI = focusing on investors - returns are judged on measures of profitability and efficiency

KPI = focusing on employees - measuring productivity and employee satisfaction whilst rewarding good work and offering opportunities for education

KPI = measuring standards of the suppliers (i.e. local agents) and ensuring our high standards are met, e.g. customer care, documentation, communication, etc.

These benchmarks give a quantitative indication of how the company is performing and if it is achieving the targets it has set itself.

Objectives can be readjusted from time to time depending on progress.

File 56 | Unit 4

Case study, Task, Exercise 3, page 37

Pair B

Possible strategies

Information and education

- Take steps to inform the public about the quality of AST's products.
- Emphasize the cleanliness of preparation factories.
- Educate the nation about curry and its benefits.
- Make spokespeople available for talk shows.
- Get articles into magazines.
- Use advertisements for information-giving.
- Offer supermarket taste tests.
- Position ourselves at the front of the healthy-eating movement.
- Other options?

Product development

- Introduce new US-only lines.
- Improve product ingredients to allay fears.
- Remove all artificial additives.
- Reduce fat levels.
- Make sure all fats in products are 'good' ones.
- Consider specializing in a purely vegetarian range.
- Source more local, natural, or even organic ingredients.
- Other options?

Sell differently

- Find a US partner - i.e. work with a local food producer and combine our expertise in Asian food with their trading name and reputation.
- Focus sales drive on regions or cities with large minority populations who are most likely to buy products.
- Other options?

Start up production in the US

- Buy or rent production capacity and have US-sourced products.

Exit the US market

- Focus on the markets we know best and stop the haemorrhage of money before it becomes too serious.
- Find ways to expand in Europe instead.