



8

Performance

Learning objectives in this unit

- Discussing employer / employee expectations
- Giving an impromptu presentation
- Using questions
- Dealing with difficult questions

Case study

- Increasing staff and customer satisfaction

Starting point

- 1 What benefits can employees bring to their companies?
- 2 What do organizations do to recognize and reward employees?

Working with words | Discussing employer / employee expectations

- 1 Make a list of what makes you happy to work for a company.
- 2 Read this text about what employees are looking for at work and compare your ideas in 1.

Happiness at work

Employees **make a difference** to companies, and they are **gaining recognition** for their contribution. More and more employers are realizing that there is a real correlation between happy staff and a strong bottom line. But what makes us happy at work?

According to the HR Consultants Chiumento's 'Happiness at work' index, employees have interests that rank higher than a big pay cheque, which comes in at a lowly tenth place. Instead, it's people first – **feeling part** of a friendly, supportive atmosphere, where you **have a say** in what happens, and where people take care of each other. At Google, for example, they **take pride** in the fact that employees enjoy a 'fun workspace'.

Second in line on the 'Happiness at work' index

comes enjoyable work, where employees derive satisfaction from their achievements. It also helps if you can relate to the values of the company where you work. According to a recent newspaper survey, Innocent, a young, fast-growing fruit drinks company, attracts employees who **see a future** for themselves in a company with clear values. Innocent 'innocently' claims they want to 'leave things a little better than we find them'. At Google, where they receive 100,000 job applications a month, their philosophy is to make money 'without doing evil'. Employees are clearly keen to make the most of their opportunities, especially if they feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to their company while helping to improve the world they live in.

- 3 The combinations below follow the pattern: verb + noun + preposition. Complete each one with a noun from the list.

Example: make a contribution to

pride recognition a difference a say a future part

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 make _____ to | 3 feel _____ of | 5 take _____ in |
| 2 gain _____ for | 4 have _____ in | 6 see _____ for |

- 4 Match the combinations in 3 to definitions a–f.

- a get public praise or reward for work / actions _____
- b be able to influence a decision by giving your opinion _____
- c get satisfaction from doing something well _____
- d have an effect on something _____
- e know that you are included and involved _____
- f think that something / someone will do well _____



5 Work with a partner. Discuss how satisfied you are at work at the moment / in a previous job you had using the combinations from **3**.

Example: I gain recognition for the extra hours I do. My boss gives me time off in lieu at the end of each month.

6 **45–47**▶ Listen to three employers being interviewed at a graduate careers fair about working in their companies.

- 1 What are the companies and what do they each look for in their employees?
- 2 Do you think you would like to work for these companies? Why / Why not?

7 **45–47**▶ Combinations 1–8 follow the pattern: verb + preposition + noun, and combinations 9–11 follow the pattern: verb + noun + preposition. Complete each one with the correct preposition(s), then listen and check your answers.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 seek _____ opportunities | 7 think _____ your feet |
| 2 believe _____ the need to ... | 8 put someone _____ the test |
| 3 benefit _____ diversity | 9 demonstrate the ability _____ |
| 4 build _____ rapport | 10 show a willingness _____ |
| 5 live _____ expectations | 11 show a desire _____ |
| 6 strive _____ a healthy work-life balance | |

8 Work with a partner. Replace the underlined sections of sentences 1–5 with a combination from **7**.

- 1 We had to fire Joanna. She didn't achieve the results that we thought she would.
- 2 I'm convinced that we need to improve communication between teams.
- 3 He isn't improving. He needs to convince us that he is prepared to change.
- 4 I didn't expect to have so many difficult questions after the presentation. I had to react very quickly.
- 5 You need to show us that you can accept criticism and move forwards.

»» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 8** on page 116.

9 Choose four of the combinations from **7** and give examples from your own experience at work.

Example: I had to think on my feet when my boss was taken ill, and I had to give a presentation in his place.

10 Work in two groups and prepare for a careers fair.

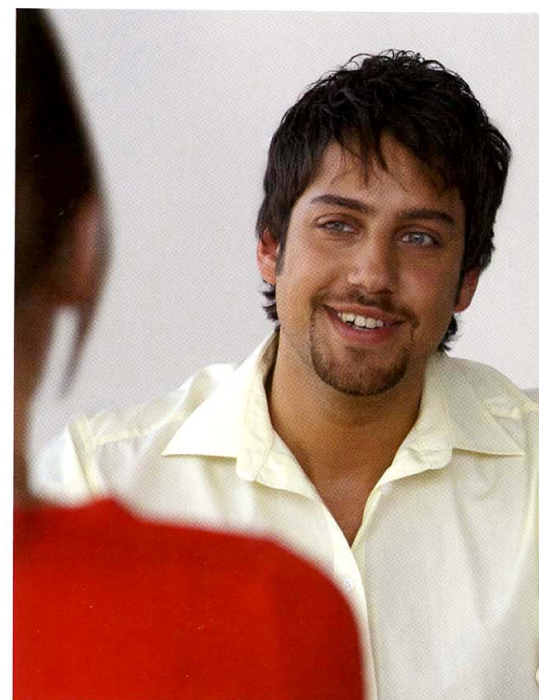
Group A, you are the employer. Work together to decide on your ideal employee. What would you offer in order to attract / keep this ideal employee? What would you expect in return? Base your ideas on the company you all work for, or turn to File 34 on page 144 for some alternative company profiles.

Group B, you are the employees. Ideally, what do you each hope to gain from working for Group A?

11 Work with a partner from the other group. You meet at a careers fair. Have an informal discussion about

- what Student A's company looks for in an employee
- Student B's expectations of an employer
- what Student B has to offer as a potential employee.

Then decide how well-suited you are to each other.

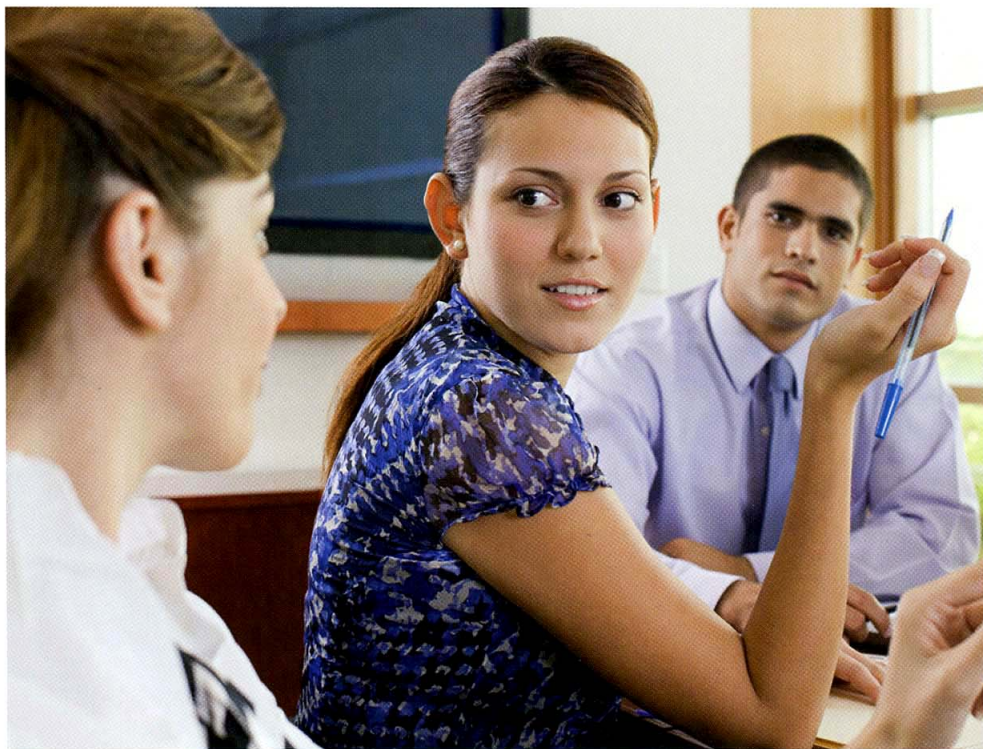


Context

Ovanta is an international financial services company which has been created from the recent merger of three smaller companies. The company holds regular briefing meetings to update the senior management team on key initiatives following the merger.

The Operations Director, Ian Dungannon, has invited two project team leaders to the latest briefing. Anya is in charge of a project looking at training needs across the organization; Pavla is leading an initiative to improve relations between management and the union. Both women are knowledgeable about their subjects, but neither has been specifically asked to make a presentation at this meeting.

Presenting | Giving an impromptu presentation



1 Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

- 1 How is an impromptu presentation different from a formal presentation?
- 2 How do you feel about giving impromptu presentations? Do you find them easier or more difficult than formal presentations? Why?

2 48, 49► Listen to extracts 1 and 2 from the management briefing at Ovanta. Choose the best answer for questions 1–5.

- 1 How does Anya begin her impromptu talk?
 - a She explains in detail what she is going to say.
 - b She gives an informal overview of the current situation.
- 2 How would you describe Anya's way of signalling what she wants to talk about?
 - a informal and conversational
 - b formal and structured
- 3 How does Anya deal with Ian's questions?
 - a She's negative and defensive.
 - b She's positive and constructive.
- 4 In her update, Pavla chooses to
 - a emphasize the key points of the discussion.
 - b give a detailed account of the discussion.
- 5 How do both Anya and Pavla respond to unexpected requests for details?
 - a They just say they don't know / aren't sure.
 - b They say they don't know / aren't sure and promise future action.

3 48► Listen again to the first part of extract 1 and complete these sentences.

- 1 Well, to be honest, we haven't got as far as I'd hoped. _____
... er, we've just completed the initial consultation stage.
- 2 However, _____ the initiative will be complete and in place before the annual review.
- 3 _____ give you a more precise date,
_____ do that at the moment.
- 4 _____ run the details by Jean-Paul and the team leaders first ...



Key expressions

Setting the context

Where we are at the moment is ...
 What I can tell you is that ...
 I'd like to be able to ... but unfortunately I can't ...
 You'll appreciate that I still need to ...

Signalling intention

Perhaps it would be a good idea if I just ...
 I'd just like to sketch out ...
 Let me just touch on ...
 I think that's covered everything.

Responding to questions and challenges


I was coming to that.
 I have to admit that ...
 You're quite right, we need to address this.
 That's a good point.

Highlighting key points

So, the first thing is ...
 And I think you should be aware that ...
 So that's one key point right there.
 ... and I think this is a really important point ...
 So, the main thing to remember is ...

Responding to requests for detail

Let me check ... and I'll get back to you.
 I can't remember exactly, but off the top of my head ...
 I can double check if you like?
 I don't have the exact figures, but what if I ...?

 >> Interactive Workbook
 >> Phrasebank

4 48▷ Listen again to the second part of extract 1 and complete these sentences.

- 1 So, now, _____ went through some of the other training programmes we are running.
- 2 So if it's OK, _____ the core elements of the plans ...
- 3 I don't know if you've heard of a 'balanced scorecard'? _____ this approach and how it works in practice ...
- 4 ... And that's more or less it ... _____.

5 Match the phrases you noted in 3 and 4 to the following categories.

- a Signalling what you intend to talk about next: _____
- b Setting a context for the whole talk: _____

6 Work with a partner. Turn to File 07 on page 137. Read the information and decide what you would say in an impromptu presentation to

- a set the context
- b signal the key points you intend to cover.

7 Work with a partner. Brainstorm phrases you could use to highlight your main points in an impromptu presentation (e.g. *So, the first thing is ...*). Then turn to audio script 49▷ on page 160 and compare your ideas with the phrases that Pavla uses.

8 48, 49▷ Listen to both extracts again. Note down what Anya and Pavla say in response to the following questions from Ian.

- 1 Anya, you haven't said anything about management training.
- 2 And you've still got time to do that, have you?
- 3 If it was just one or two individuals, then just how useful are the results?
- 4 ... it might also be worth touching on the numbers of complaints per business unit.

>>> For more exercises, go to **Practice file 8** on page 116.

9 Work with a partner. Look back at the situation in 6 and decide how you would respond to the following questions from your audience. Then take turns to ask and answer the questions.

- 1 'The process is taking quite a long time, isn't it?'
- 2 'How confident are you that you have time to process all the data?'
- 3 'Could you say something about the kind of questions you asked?'
- 4 'How many people were interviewed in each area?'
- 5 'Isn't there a danger that the data will be out of date before we can process it?'
- 6 'I assume you have further research planned – can you give us details?'

10 Work in groups. You are going to take part in a team meeting. Think about your current projects at work. Write an agenda with your names and a list of these projects. Then follow points 1–2.

- 1 Take turns to give an impromptu presentation of the project you are working on to your group.
- 2 When listening to the other presentations, ask questions to get more information or check details.

 >> Interactive Workbook >> Email

Language at work | Using questions

1 Look at questions 1–10 from two impromptu presentations. The letters in brackets tell you who is asking the question, the presenter (P) or the audience (A). Match the questions to categories a–d below (more than one match may be possible).

- 1 Now, how can I put this? (P) _____
 - 2 If it was just one or two individuals, then just how useful are the results? (A) _____
 - 3 Anya, can you give us an overview of where we are with this? (A) _____
 - 4 I assume everyone participated in the brainstorming, did they? (A) _____
 - 5 I don't know if you've heard of a 'balanced scorecard'? (P) _____
 - 6 It's probably best if I just highlight some of the ideas we came up with, don't you think? (P) _____
 - 7 And you've still got time to do that, have you? (A) _____
 - 8 Would you like to run through the union complaints briefly? (A) _____
 - 9 OK. How long do I have? (P) _____
 - 10 Anya, you haven't said anything about management training? (A) _____
- a buying time to think
 - b challenging the presenter or checking the facts
 - c prompting or leading the presenter
 - d previewing the topic

2 Which of the questions in 1

- 1 are *wh-* / *how* questions? _____
- 2 use a question tag? _____
- 3 are statements used as questions? _____
- 4 include a modal auxiliary verb? _____

3 Which of the questions 1–10 in 1

- 1 don't expect an answer (rhetorical questions)? _____
- 2 expect a *yes* / *no* answer? _____
- 3 expect more than a *yes* / *no* answer? _____

» For more information, go to **Language reference Unit 8** on page 130.

4 Work with a partner. Ask questions using prompts 1–8 and the information in brackets.

- 1 Is it a good idea? (**challenge speaker**)
- 2 Latest figures? (**prompt speaker**)
- 3 Send a draft to the listener first? (**check facts**)
- 4 Best way to present the information? (**give yourself time to think**)
- 5 Familiar with this new software? (**preview topic**)
- 6 Present findings to the client without showing them to senior management first? (**challenge speaker**)
- 7 The research phase has been completed? (**check facts**)
- 8 Initial impressions from research trip? (**prompt speaker**)

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 8** on page 117.

5 Work in groups of three. Student A and Student B are in an update meeting.

Student A Student B asks you for an update on your work over the last two weeks. As you start to speak, give yourself time to think. Ask questions to ensure that Student B is interested and is following what you are saying.

Student B Ask Student A for an update on her / his work over the past two weeks. Interrupt as often as you can with a variety of questions. If necessary, prompt Student A to move on and talk about a new point.

Student C Listen and make a note of the questions asked and their function.

Now change roles.

Practically speaking | Dealing with difficult questions

- 1** What can you do if someone asks you
- a question you don't know the answer to?
 - a question you don't want to answer?



- 2** 50▶ Listen to six questions and the responses. In each conversation (1–6), tick (✓) the strategies used by the person responding to the question.

Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6
admit ignorance						
directly refuse to answer						
avoid the question						
distance yourself from the situation						

- 3** 50▶ Listen again and note down the phrases the speakers use for the strategies in 2.

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

- 4** Work with a partner. Student A, read the information below. Student B, turn to File 37 on page 144. Take turns to ask / respond to two difficult questions, using the information / prompts given.

Student A

- You've just heard that the budget on your project will be cut significantly, and the launch date for your product will be pushed back by a year. Find out from Student B
 - if this is true
 - what the implications are for you.
 - You've been involved in a series of secret meetings where the decision has been taken to restructure Student B's department. Student B has just found out. Respond to Student B's difficult questions by
 - admitting ignorance
 - directly refusing to answer.
- 5** Think of two difficult questions for your partner about his / her job. Then take turns to ask / respond to each other's questions.

»» Interactive Workbook »» Exercises and Tests

Key word | just

Match phrases 1–5 with *just* to synonyms a–e.

- It's *just* that everyone is dying to know who ...
- We've only *just* started looking at the figures.
- Could I *just* ask how you got to hear about the problems in the factory?
- You know I *just* might do that.
- Just* the man I'm looking for!

- very recently
- precisely, exactly
- only
- take this opportunity to
- actually, really



Culture question

- In your culture when (if at all) is it acceptable to ask questions about a) someone's salary b) someone's latest appraisal c) someone's family situation?
- How would you respond if someone from another culture asked you a question that you found unacceptable or inappropriate?

Company profile The Ritz-Carlton

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. has grown to over 70 hotels worldwide with plans for further expansion in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas. It has won numerous awards, and its business practices provide a benchmark not only in the hotel industry, but also in other sectors. Its corporate philosophy is based on an unwavering commitment to service.

Increasing staff and customer satisfaction Background

The Portman Ritz-Carlton, Shanghai

In 1998 The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. took over management of The Portman Shangri-La, which was to become The Portman Ritz-Carlton, Shanghai.

Prior to 1998, The Portman Shangri-La in Shanghai was a five-star property much like any other in the city. Employee and guest satisfaction ranged between 70% and 80%, and finances were unspectacular. But fortunes changed under Ritz-Carlton management – employee satisfaction soared, guests were much happier, and finances improved. For five consecutive years, its annual employee satisfaction rate has been the highest among all the Ritz-Carlton hotels worldwide.

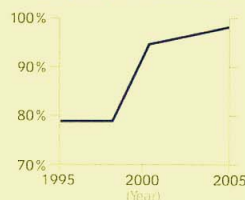
Portman Ritz-Carlton under Ritz-Carlton management

Guest satisfaction
92–95%

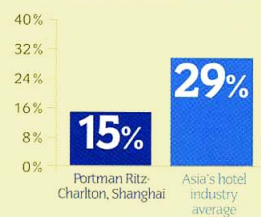
Employee satisfaction
98%

Annual financial growth
15–18%

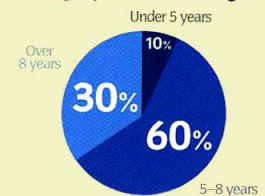
Employee satisfaction



Employee turnover



Employee service length



Leadership and management practices at The Portman Ritz-Carlton, Shanghai

- Leadership consistency:** The executive team works with employees when issues arise, no matter how small. They lead by example: 'People believe what they see, not what is said.'
- Selecting the right employees:** The General Manager (GM) is involved in the interview process of all employees to show how important that individual is to the company. The GM will try to determine whether candidates are seeking a long-term relationship with the hotel.
- Training and daily briefing:** After an initial two-day orientation and 30 days of training, every employee receives at least 130 hours of training a year in company culture, their department, language, and computer skills. There is also a daily briefing.
- Listening and communication:** This is ensured through breakfast meetings between the GM and employees, regular meetings between the executive team and department managers, talks by the executive team to the entire staff, and sessions with HR and randomly selected employees to discuss concerns. Every employee can speak in private with the GM or HR Director and there are also employee satisfaction surveys.
- Empowerment and continuous improvement:** Employees are empowered to spend up to \$2,000 to resolve customer complaints. Employees are also encouraged to be innovative and creative in improving their jobs, without a lengthy and bureaucratic approval process.
- Information support:** Employees record a guest's check-in, room service, and housekeeping preferences. These are then entered in the Ritz-Carlton's worldwide database, so whenever guests make a reservation at a Ritz-Carlton hotel, their needs are known and taken care of.
- Reward and recognition:** Employees are recognized for outstanding customer service at staff meetings, on the HR bulletin board, and also by colleagues, who send first-class compliment cards for service excellence. The Five-Star Employee Award rewards the winner with a five-night stay for two at a Ritz-Carlton anywhere in the world.



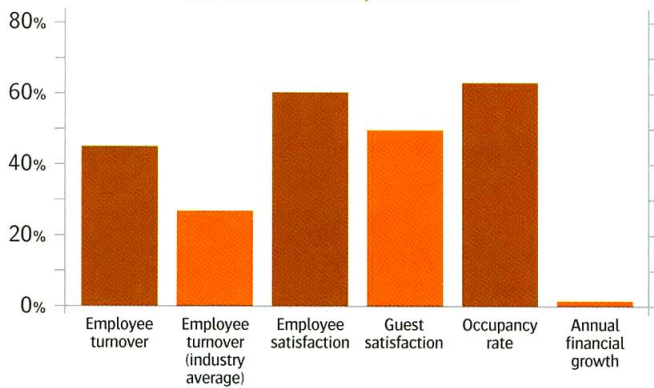
Discussion

- 1 How has The Portman Ritz-Carlton, Shanghai achieved such radical improvements?
- 2 To what extent do you agree with Ritz-Carlton leadership and management practices? Which of the practices do you find most innovative?
- 3 What other factors could contribute to
 - your satisfaction as a hotel guest?
 - staff satisfaction at a hotel?

Task

- 1 Work in groups of three. You are HR managers at GS International Hotel Group. You have just taken over the four-star Katisha Hotel in Buenos Aires and have been asked to devise a proposal for improving the hotel's staff and customer satisfaction levels. Look at the graph below and briefly discuss the areas for improvement.

The Katisha Hotel, Buenos Aires



- 2 51▶ Shortly after the takeover, the newly-appointed General Manager of the Katisha has an update meeting with the Business Development Director of GS International. Listen to the extract from their meeting and make further notes about the current problems at the Katisha on the graph above.
- 3 Work in your groups of three. Spend ten minutes devising your plan for improvements at the Katisha Hotel. You have heard about how Ritz-Carlton management turned the Portman Shangri-La around, and you may wish to use some of these ideas, together with your own.
- 4 Present your ideas to the class.

The Expert View

A leadership focus on improving both employee commitment and, consequently, customer satisfaction can lead to gains in shareholder value. These causal linkages have now been widely embraced across many industry sectors and the reasons for this are clear. As the business model in most developed economies shifts from 'make and sell' to 'listen, serve, and customize', the provision of service has become a key means of differentiation between competing firms. As a consequence, senior management have engaged in developing the means to empower, incentivize, train, and retain personnel directly involved in delivering customer services to improve both customer satisfaction and the commitment of these front-line personnel.

Prof. Simon Knox, BSc PhD,
Professor of Brand Marketing
Cranfield School of Management



- We can use most conjunctions before the participle. An exception is *because*.
After travelling by train, I needed some fresh air. (Not: Because travelling by train, I allowed plenty of time.)
- Usually, we use the present participle (verb + *-ing*) for present and recent situations, in place of the present simple / continuous / perfect, and past simple / continuous.
Since living in Dubai, I've learnt to cope with hot weather. (= since I have lived ...)
Learning English, I often wrote difficult words on post-it notes. (= when I was learning ... / learnt ...)
- Having* + past participle is used in place of the past perfect (for a past action before another past action).
Having decided to hire Fatima Mattar, we made her a job offer. (= after we had decided)
- We can use a passive participle in place of a passive adverbial structure.
Offered the job, I wasn't sure whether to accept it. (= when I had been offered the job)
- Note also *given*, which has a meaning similar to *because* + *be*.
Given his reluctance to accept criticism, you'll have to be careful how you word the letter. (= because he is reluctant ...)

Future in the past

Was going to

- We can use *was going to* to talk about the future from a point of view in the past: to talk about things that were planned, or former intentions.
I was going to visit our Alicante office too, but my plane was delayed.
- It is the **intention** that is in the past and has changed. The time the plan / intention refers to can be in the future.
Tomorrow we were going to go to the races, but the course has been flooded.
- The time the plan / intention refers to can also be in the past.
Yesterday I was going to have my appraisal, but my boss was ill.
- This structure is often used to explain why something did not happen, to make excuses, to explain changes to plans, to give background to our current intentions / thoughts.
Hi, John. I was going to call you today, but I totally forgot.
We were going to have the meeting in the café, but it was too noisy.
I was going to invite Denis out to dinner tonight. Do you think it's a good idea?
- We can also use perfect tenses with *going to*, for different perspectives in the past.
She's been going to visit this office for ages – I don't think she ever will.
They had been going to make me redundant, if I hadn't taken early retirement.

Other structures

A number of other structures are also possible.

- The past continuous can be used for former arrangements (just as we would use the present continuous for a current arrangement).
I was meeting their sales rep at 3.00 p.m., but he's just cancelled. (Compare with: I'm meeting their sales rep at 3.00 p.m.)

- Was to* / *were to* is possible, as the past form of *be to*, particularly to talk in a formal style about past plans and arrangements.
We were to launch the product at the International Spring Convention. Unfortunately there were delays beyond our control.

Unit 8 | Using questions

Yes / no questions

Yes / *no* questions are questions that could be answered *yes* or *no*. They usually begin with an auxiliary verb or *be*, followed by the subject. It is usually impolite to reply with just *yes* or *no*. Extra words are necessary for politeness, and often giving extra, more detailed information is appropriate.

Is this the best solution? ~ *Yes, after detailed research we're convinced that it is.*

Wh- questions



Wh- questions ask for specific information about people, places, etc., and begin with *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, *which*, *how many*, etc., followed by inversion of subject and auxiliary (note the position of *did* and *you* in the example below).

Where did you study for your MBA? ~ *In Stanford. Why do you ask?*

Indirect questions and modals in questions

- In indirect questions, the question that asks for information is contained ('embedded') within another question or a statement. Note that, unlike with standard questions, there is no inversion of subject and auxiliary.
I'd like to know how many days annual leave you offer.
- Modal verbs are also used to make a question less direct.
Would you say that you're a team player? (Rather than: Are you a team player?)
May I ask if you'd be likely to accept the job?
Could I check whether you've signed in with security?

Other ways of asking questions

- A statement can sometimes have the function of a question. In writing, this is shown by a question mark (?). In speaking, there is a rise in intonation. 
And you trained as a lawyer before moving into banking? ~ *Yes, that's right.*
- Particularly in speech, we can sometimes use parts of statements to similar effect. 
And your other interests? ~ *I like football and tennis.*

Question tags

- We can follow a statement with a question tag (inverted subject and auxiliary / *do* / *be*), to check or confirm information, or check that the person we are talking to agrees with or is following us. Usually a positive statement has a negative tag, and vice versa.
They said they'd arrive around 9.00 p.m., didn't they?
It's probably best if we deal with that later, don't you think?

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 06 | Unit 2

Business communication skills, Exercise 9, page 17

Student B

Item 1

- limit employees to one coffee a day
- increase price of coffee
- other ideas?

Item 2

- issue everyone with a company mobile
- hold a daily team meeting first thing in the morning
- other ideas?

Item 3

- set up closely-monitored e-learning programmes
- allocate x number of hours for study in working time
- other ideas?

Item 4

- pay employees a bonus for keeping days absent to a minimum
- allow employees greater flexibility so they can work from home if they choose
- other ideas?

File 07 | Unit 8

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 65

Context: You are researching customer reactions to your new product.

- You don't have as much quantifiable data as you'd originally planned, but will submit the final report by the agreed deadline.
- You are making good progress, but can't give exact figures now – still processing the feedback.
- You need to wait for more questionnaires to come back before finishing the report.

Key points you intend to cover

- give an overview of responses to the product so far
- explain some of the difficulties involved
- talk about 'effective questionnaires'

File 08 | Unit 2

Practically speaking, Exercise 4, page 19

Student A

Monthly reports

You would like everybody's report to be handed in one week earlier than originally planned.

Sales figures

Official figures have not yet been released, but you believe your group did particularly well.

File 09 | Unit 11

Working with words, Exercise 9, page 87

Student B

Company Y fact file

- makes laptop and desktop computers for home and business use
- is highly successful, with a reputation for quality and reliability
- advertises its laptops as robust enough to be taken anywhere, using the slogan 'Ready to go whenever you are'

Company Y laptops a health hazard!

A laptop fire on an intercontinental flight caused panic amongst passengers. Fortunately, the cabin crew were able to extinguish the fire, but it's still unclear why this happened. This isn't the first time that a laptop from Company Y has caught fire. There have been several other reports of laptops exploding or bursting into flames without warning. One destroyed a truck in America, while another caused a huge fire in a family home in Britain. As a result of the latest incident, several airlines have now banned passengers from travelling with laptops made by Company Y. According to the company, the fault lies with the batteries, which are made and supplied by another company.

Company Y's situation following the news article

- Company Y issued a statement publicly blaming their supplier for the problem.
- Despite the statement, sales of their laptops are falling, and an increasing number of corporate customers are cancelling their contracts.
- To limit the damage, the directors have agreed to replace any laptops that have been destroyed, and have recalled all recently sold laptops for free battery replacement.

File 34 | Unit 8

Working with words, Exercise 10, page 63

Company profiles

Company A

A is a multinational with offices in every major city in EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa). A's core business is accountancy and auditing, but they have a small up-and-coming consultancy division which is gaining a lot of recognition. There is a rigid hierarchical structure and clear career path.

Company B

B is an SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) specializing in the provision of office supplies. They operate only within national borders, although some of their suppliers are found abroad. B values flexibility and rewards loyalty above all.

Company C

C is a franchise business which focuses on cleaning (commercial and domestic) and disaster-recovery services. It is a rapidly expanding business, although at the moment it has relatively few full-time employees. The master franchisee holds the licence for many further related brands which have not yet been exploited in your market. The master franchisee's Head Office is also based in your city.

Company D

D is a family business managed and owned by a husband and wife. Their core business is software development and they have made a name for themselves in the industry for their cutting-edge programming. Both the husband and wife also teach IT courses at the local university as well as an online master's degree in programming. There are three other employees.

File 35 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 21

Group B

- Establish a system to find the right people to develop in order to fill existing and emerging roles in the company.
- Invest in training – e.g. how to conduct career development interviews.
- Invest in an IT programme for monitoring employees' career progression and to help managers to select the right 'internal' candidate.
- Establish a process to ensure that career development is a shared process between employee and employer.
- Establish a set list of questions that all managers ask in performance / career review interviews.
- Write role profiles for existing and emerging positions.
- Write achievement-orientated career plans and make them clear to employees from the outset.
- Other ideas?

File 36 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 10, page 41

Student B

Situation 1

You are working on a project with very tight deadlines. You are supposed to hand over a piece of work to Student A tomorrow. You need a few more days. You've been ill and you also think the deadlines weren't very realistic. Student A is going to ask you about progress.

Situation 2

You share an office with Student A and Student C. The office has to be manned constantly so you can't go out at the same time, even for a few minutes. Student A and Student C both want some time away from the office tomorrow afternoon. Help them to reach an agreement. (You can't man the office for them, as you are on holiday tomorrow.)

Situation 3

You work in a team with Student B and Student C. Student C is refusing to accept work you have carried out. You don't want to do the work again because it would delay the whole project, and anyway, you carried out the work according to Student C's brief.

File 37 | Unit 8

Practically speaking, Exercise 4, page 67

Student B

- 1 You've just come out of a meeting where the suggestion was made to cut the budget on Student A's project and to push back the schedule date, because priorities have changed. Respond to Student A's difficult questions by
 - avoiding the question
 - distancing yourself from the situation.
- 2 You've heard from colleagues that your department is going to be restructured within the next year. Find out from Student A
 - who is ultimately responsible for the plan
 - if it would mean any redundancies.