



12

Innovation

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about innovation and new ideas
- Giving a formal presentation
- Responding to difficult questions and comments
- Using superlative forms to talk about extremes

Case study

- Presenting innovative products

Starting point

1 Work with a partner. Put these twentieth-century innovations and inventions in order from the earliest (1) to the most recent (6).

- photocopier
- Velcro
- handheld calculator
- vacuum cleaner
- instant coffee
- parking meter

Check your answers in File 09 on page 137.

2 Which inventions and innovations of the twentieth century do you think were the most

- important?
- useful?

Working with words | Innovation and new ideas

- 1 When and where do you get your best ideas? At work? After lunch? In the middle of the night? When you're exercising? In the car?**
- 2 Read this article and answer questions 1–2.**
 - 1 Why did Mitchell Ditkoff and John Havens invent The Breakthrough Café?
 - 2 Would you like to go there?

Food for thought

The Breakthrough Café is the **brainchild** of Mitchell Ditkoff and John Havens. The aim is that customers will have at least one **'a-ha' moment** during an evening that is a combination of 'party, restaurant, and brainstorming session'.

Over a three-course meal, customers begin by meeting each other and reading their name badges. The name badge also contains the words 'How can I ...?' Each customer completes this with a question about an idea or **obstacle** in their life. For example, 'How can I start my own catering business?', 'How can I find someone to invest in my **prototype**?', 'How can I get a new job?' As well as discussing and giving advice to each other, there are 'Innowaiters' who serve food and drink, but also act as **facilitators** to encourage **innovative** ideas.

Ditkoff explains how he first **came up with the concept**. 'I've asked thousands of people: "Where do you get your best ideas? What is the **catalyst**?" Less than one per cent of people say they get their ideas at work. They get their ideas when they are happy, away from the office, late at night, and in the company of friends.'



3 Match the words in bold from the text in 2 to definitions 1–9.

- 1 an idea for something new: _____
- 2 an idea or invention of one person or group of people: _____
- 3 new and original: _____
- 4 when you suddenly realize or understand something: _____
- 5 people who help you: _____
- 6 something to cause change: _____
- 7 think of a new idea or plan: _____
- 8 something stopping you: _____
- 9 the first form of something new: _____

4 50▶ The article in 2 gives three examples of questions people might ask at the café. Listen to three conversations at the Breakthrough Café. Which question from the article does each person have on his / her badge?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

5 50▶ Listen again. Tick (✓) adjectives each speaker uses to describe the three categories in the table.

	Job / Company	Technology	Idea
dynamic	✓		
original			
reliable			
revolutionary			
simple			
sophisticated			
traditional			

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 12 on page 124.

6 Work with a partner. Discuss these questions and give reasons for your answers.

- Which of the adjectives in 5 describe your company or job?
- How would you describe the technology you use?

7 Read these quotes from people talking about ideas and obstacles in their lives. Work in small groups. Think of different ways to help these three people. Then tell the class.

1 6 I have this really simple idea for setting up a cleaning company where we clean local companies and people's houses. The only problem is I have two small children who aren't at school yet. How can I do both? 9

2 6 My brainchild is a motorbike that runs on hydrogen, not petrol. I've already built a prototype, but how can I get the money to manufacture and market it? 9

3 6 I've retired with a pension but I'm bored. I have some money, but I don't know what to do with it. I don't want to work too hard. What could I do? 9

8 Think back to all the ideas and discussions in 7 and answer questions 1–4.

- During the group discussion, did you hear any ideas which were
 - innovative?
 - original?
 - simple?
 - other?
 - revolutionary?
- Which was the best 'brainchild' you heard?
- Who was the most useful facilitator or catalyst in your group?
- What obstacles did you encounter?

9 Work with a partner and compare your answers to 8.

10 Write your own *How can I ...?* question.

- Tell the class your question and ask each person to give you an idea / solution.
- Choose your favourite idea and explain why you like it.

Example: I like the idea that Antje came up with because it's simple but also very innovative and original.

Tip | invention and innovation

An *invention* is a design of something new. An *innovation* is an idea or way of doing something that is completely different from anything that has gone before.

Presenting | Giving a formal presentation



- 1** Read this company mission statement. Do you have something similar for your company?

Bertran RL aims to create innovative and state-of-the-art conferencing technology products of the highest value, with the greatest reliability and simplicity we can offer. We achieve this with employees who deserve the very best in professional support and development.

Agenda

- 1 How we want to be seen
- 2 Current company situation
- 3 Finding a mission statement

sophisticated
traditional simple
 innovative
up-to-date
 reliable

- 2** 51▶ The PR Manager of Bertran RL is giving a presentation about rewriting their mission statement. Listen to her introduction. Correct the agenda.
- 3** 51▶ Put these phrases from the PR manager's introduction in the right order 1–7. Then listen again and check your answers.
- ___ a First, I'm going to talk ...
 - ___ b Feel free to ask questions ...
 - ___ c We have a lot to do, so let's start.
 - ___ d Good morning, everyone, and thanks for coming.
 - ___ e I'd like to begin by explaining ...
 - ___ f And finally, after coffee, we'll try to ...
 - ___ g Then, we'll try to ...
- 4** 52▶ Listen to the next part of the presentation. What do the coloured words on the slide represent?
- 5** 52▶ Listen again and complete phrases 1–3 for referring to visuals.
- 1 First of all, _____ slide.
 - 2 _____ it has a number of words that describe our company.
 - 3 _____ some words are in blue and some are in red.
- 6** 53▶ Listen to the final part of the presentation. Why does Rudi criticize mission statements? Do you agree with him?
- 7** 53▶ Correct the mistakes in 1–5. Then listen again and check your answers.
- 1 That's everything I want to tell for the moment.
 - 2 Thank you all for listen.
 - 3 The best reason for this meeting is to ...
 - 4 Are there any answers?
 - 5 We think it a good idea because ...

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 12 on page 124.

8 Prepare and give a short presentation using as many of the phrases in 3, 5, and 7 as possible. Talk about one of the objects below. You have one minute to convince your partner why this object is the best or most useful in the world. Follow the four stages in the flow chart.

- pen
- mobile phone
- laptop
- MP3 player
- paper
- cash card

1 Introduce your object

I'm going to tell you about ...

2 Show your object

As you can see ...

3 Explain why


The best thing about it is ...

4 End the presentation

Thanks for listening ...

9 Prepare and give a longer presentation to your partner or the rest of class about how your customers view your company, service, or product. Design a slide with adjectives you think your customers would use. Organize the presentation like this.

- Introduce the aim and structure of the presentation.
- Present the slide and explain the main reasons for each adjective.
- Close the talk and answer any questions.

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Starting

Good morning and thanks for coming.

I'm here today to ...

Let's start.

My name's ... and I'm going to tell you / talk about ...

I'd like to begin by (+ -ing) ...

Previewing

First, I'll / I'm going to ...

Then, we'll ...

And finally ...

Feel free to ask questions.

I'll take questions at the end.

Referring to visuals

Let's look at this ...

As you can see, ...

You'll notice that ...

Explaining reasons / benefits

The main reason for this meeting is ...

The best thing about this is ...

We think it's a good idea because ...


Closing

That's everything I want to say.

That brings me to the end of my presentation.

Thanks for listening.

Are there any (more) questions?

 » Interactive Workbook
» Phrasebank

Practically speaking | How to respond to difficult questions and comments

1 54▶ Listen to the final part of a presentation. Tick (✓) the methods of responding to questions the presenter uses.

- 1 Ask for the question again. ____
- 2 Compliment the question. ____
- 3 Explain that you will answer the person later. ____
- 4 Understand their opinion, but disagree. ____
- 5 Say you don't understand the question. ____
- 6 Understand their opinion. ____

2 Match 1–6 in 1 to a–f.

- a Sorry, I couldn't hear you. ____
- b Yes, I know what you mean, but ... ____
- c Good question. ____
- d Sorry, I don't think I follow you. ____
- e I totally agree with you. ____
- f Can I get back to you on that one? ____

3 Work with a partner. Here are some difficult questions and comments from a presentation. Take turns to ask / say them, and answer using some of the techniques above.

‘Why did the company have its lowest profits ever this year?’

‘Why are sales of our latest product so low?’

‘What's the current sales situation in Brazil?’

‘How do you propose to satisfy increasing customer demand?’

‘I think we are risking losing our profit margin.’

Language at work | Superlative forms

- 1 Read this extract from a sales brochure for a Bertran RL conference-call system and correct the mistake in each line.**

CallTerminal VVX 1000

Your conference room phone is one of your most valuablest assets. Multicell's CallTerminal VVX 1000 delivers best sound quality and picks up speech from six metres away – that's a furthest of any on the market. Conference-call participants are happiest with Multicell!

- 2 Read this article and answer questions 1–2.**

- 1 What is DreamWorks famous for?
- 2 What is its new innovation?

For most people, DreamWorks Animation (DWA) is probably best known for producing films like *Toy Story* and, recently, *Shrek 2*, which was the third highest-grossing film of all time. However, the company's latest release isn't a film, but what may be the most sophisticated videoconferencing system the world has ever seen.

- 3 Underline the superlative forms in the article in 2.**

- 4 Match extracts a–c to rules 1–3 about using the superlative.**

- 1 To describe the maximum or minimum: _____
 - 2 To place something in a position after first place: _____
 - 3 With the present perfect to describe our experience of something: _____
- a ... **the most sophisticated** videoconferencing system the world has ever seen.
 b ... the company's **latest release** ...
 c ... the **third highest-grossing** film of all time.

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 12** on page 125.

- 5 Work with a partner. Using the words in the table below, take turns to ask and answer questions. You will need to use the superlative form of the adjectives.**

Example: A What's the worst decision you've ever made?

B Leaving my first company.

A So what's the secnd worst decision you've ever made?

B Joining this one!

What's / Who's the (second / third)	bad	country / place	you've ever	met?
	good	film		made?
	big	decision		had?
	nice	person		seen?
	beautiful	hotel		stayed at?
	friendly	idea		visited?
	exciting	experience		heard?

- 6 Work with a partner. Make a list of ways to communicate with colleagues and clients.**

- 1 Which do you like best and why?
- 2 Which do you like least and why?

Example: I like email the best because it's the quickest and easiest way to contact someone.

Presenting innovative products

Background

Clever products

A clever car

The Kenguru is a car with a difference, designed specifically for wheelchair users. Built in Hungary, it is small, stylish and easy to park and gives users greater freedom and independence.

The Kenguru holds one passenger in a wheelchair. It doesn't have doors or seats like a normal car. To get in, the driver opens the extra large back door and rolls inside without leaving the wheelchair. The chair automatically locks into place inside the car. The controls are simpler than a normal car too – a joystick instead of a steering wheel means that drivers with limited arm mobility can easily control the vehicle.

The Kenguru is electrically powered. It has a range of up to 60 km and a top speed of 35–40 km/h, and costs about the same as a small family car.

An intelligent water pump

Tom Smith, a science graduate from Cambridge in the UK, has developed a new kind of pump which is powered by the sun's heat. This means it can be used in places that do not have electricity.

Tom is working on two possible uses for the pump. One use is to help supply water to farmers in parts of the developing world. The other, more commercial use is to create a more energy-efficient way of circulating hot water in central-heating systems.

The pump can raise water from several metres under the ground, so it is very useful for farmers in the developing world.

The pump has no moving parts and it can be produced very cheaply.

The Expert View

How can organizations become more innovative? Many senior managers want their companies to develop products and services that create new market opportunities. However, this is challenging because there are many elements to managing innovation. Companies need, for example, to develop better ways of discovering customer needs and to create the right 'culture of innovation'. These are issues that top managers need to devote sufficient time to. Don't neglect innovation – if you do, your organization will never reach its true potential.

Keith Goffin, Professor of Innovation and New Product Development
Cranfield School of Management

Discussion

- 1 What are the particular selling points of these two products?
- 2 Who are the customers for these products?
- 3 How can these products be marketed effectively?

Task

- 1 Work with a partner or in small groups.
 - 1 Brainstorm things that you would like to improve in your everyday life – for example, at home, in your workplace, in your local community.
 - 2 Choose one of these problems and brainstorm ways to improve or solve it. It could be a new product, invention, or idea for a new way of doing things or for adapting an existing product.
- 2 Prepare and give a presentation of your new brainchild to the class. You will need to
 - open the presentation
 - show a simple design of the new item / idea
 - explain why it is the best idea
 - describe your target market and explain how you would promote your product
 - close the presentation and answer any questions.



Case study

File 07 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

Student A

- 1 You are the hotel manager. Read some more reviews from recent customers.

Customer feedback

'The customer service is a well deserved 1 star!!'

'When we eventually arrived at the hotel after bad directions the Duty Manager was really rude to my wife as I was parking the car.'

'The TV stopped working on the first day and although they promised to fix it, nothing happened.'

'The staff, on the whole, I am sorry to say, were very abrupt and were most definitely not trained in customer service.'

- 2 Call Student B who works for a business consultancy.
 - Explain that you are calling to ask for some help. You want to improve your customer reviews.
 - You would like the hotel to have an image that would attract business people wanting to relax and take a break from their busy lives.
 - This is high season and staff are all very busy, but you usually have some time free on Monday mornings and you have a half day off on Wednesday afternoons.

File 08 | Unit 7

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 45

Student A

Read this email, make notes, then update your partner.

To: All administrators
From: Head of Administration
Subject: New security measures

As many of you are aware, we've recently been having a number of problems with the underground car park. In one case, an employee had her bag stolen from her car. As a result, we've decided to install CCTV in all parts of the car park and in the corridors around the offices.

By the end of the month, you will see these cameras around the building. The cameras are connected to TV screens at reception.

File 09 | Unit 12

Starting point, Exercise 1, page 72

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 / 2 vacuum cleaner (1901) | 4 photocopier (1938) |
| 1 / 2 instant coffee (1901) | 5 Velcro (1948) |
| 3 parking meter (1935) | 6 handheld calculator (1966) |

File 10 | Unit 6

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 41

Student A

You are the Human Resources Director of a Swedish company that is working closely with an Indian company on a joint venture in India. Many of your staff are now based in India. You are meeting with your Indian colleague. You have both received complaints from your own employees working on the project in India.

- 1 Read through the information below before you begin.
- 2 Take turns to exchange information. Tell your partner about a problem below that your Swedish employees are having. Your partner will try to explain why. Then your partner will tell you a problem his / her Indian employees are having. Use the 'Business etiquette' information below to explain the possible reasons for the problems.

Problems reported by Swedish employees

'My local Indian team members are always late for meetings. It's such a waste of my time having to wait so long for our meetings to start.'

'No wonder we are missing deadlines – my Indian colleagues take really long lunches – I hardly leave my desk all day! And I start work earlier.'

'My colleague never finishes a job when she says she will – I'm finding it really hard to plan my own workload.'

'The managers that report to me never consult me – they often just ask their staff to do things that are not in the best interests of the project.'

Sweden – Business etiquette

The working day: The working day often starts early, at 8.00 a.m. or earlier, and lunch is often only a half-hour break at around midday.

Concept of time: Arriving at meetings on time and starting them promptly are very important. If you are going to be late for any reason you must phone and let someone know. Being late is seen as poor etiquette.

Communication styles: Swedish communication style is direct and open – people say what they think. This can seem rude but is not meant to be so.

Status and hierarchy: Equality is an important social value in Sweden. Swedes like to establish relationships on an informal level and at work they usually address everyone by his / her first name.