

15

Performance

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about personal qualities
- Appraising performance and setting objectives
- Giving feedback
- Telling a story
- Using the past continuous and past perfect to talk about past events

Case study

- Giving a successful presentation

Starting point

- 1 How do you assess your performance at work? What about activities outside of work, such as sports, parenting, friendships, education, language classes?**
- 2 How do you define success? Which things on this list are important? What else would you add?**
 - money and wealth
 - family
 - good health
 - appearance
 - job and career
 - personal relationships
 - qualifications
 - type of car
 - busy social life
 - how your colleagues view you

Working with words | Personal qualities

1 Read this article and answer questions 1–2.

- 1 How does Howard Lawrence feel about the success of the scheme?
- 2 Who recommends or nominates employees for the award?

Employee of the month scheme at Elmgrove Park Hospital

The employee of the month scheme, which recognizes the work of individual staff, has been very successful. Howard Lawrence, Associate Director of the hospital trust is not surprised by this. 'At Elmgrove Park Hospital we have fantastic, **enthusiastic** staff who are highly **motivated** to ensure that each patient is relaxed and comfortable during their stay,' he says.

Nominations can be submitted either by members of staff or by patients. Since the scheme was launched in 2003, the winners have included:

James Briggs, ward assistant: April 2006. James was nominated for showing exceptional commitment to all aspects of his work and for being **flexible, patient, and helpful** at all times.

Nathan Wells, porter: March 2006. Nathan was chosen not only for being **hard-working, dependable**, fast, and efficient, but more importantly for his sunny personality.

Ana Suarez, clinical nurse specialist: December 2007. Her colleagues nominated Ana for being **caring, understanding, and dedicated**, not just to clients, their partners, and families, but also to the staff in the department.



2 Do you have a similar scheme to recognize success in your company? How else is good work rewarded (bonus / commission)? Do you think employee award schemes are a good idea? Why / why not?

3 Here are some nominations for employee of the month. Match the adjectives in bold in the newsletter in 1 to these descriptions. You may use more than one adjective if necessary.

‘Paula is able to adapt to any changes or deal with any new situation.’

1 _____

‘You never see him relaxing. He’s always doing something.’

2 _____

‘Samuel really wants to help customers and the people he works with.’

3 _____

‘Even with difficult customers, he’ll listen for as long as it takes.’

4 _____

‘She’s positive about any new idea. I’ve never heard her complain.’

5 _____

‘Inga is always punctual and never off work.’

6 _____

4 Think of a colleague where you work and nominate him / her for employee of the month. Tell your partner about your employee of the month using adjectives from 1.

5 Turn these adjectives into nouns by changing the endings of the words.

patient *dedicated* *punctual* *confident* *flexible*
creative *motivated* *dependable* *enthusiastic* *ambitious*

1 -ce: *patience*, _____

2 -ion: _____, _____, _____

3 -iasm: _____

4 -ity: _____, _____, _____, _____

6 Complete these sentences with the correct form of a word from 5. Then work with a partner and say if the statements are true (T) or false (F) for you / your company using a different form of the word.

Example: It’s not important for me to have flexible working hours.

1 It’s important for me to have some flexibility in my working hours. T / (F)

2 I’m not a very _____ person – I always want everything to be done ‘now’! T / F

3 _____ is one of my strong points – I’m never late for anything. T / F

4 I have a great deal of _____ in how my company is run and in its success. T / F

5 My company offers good incentives to ensure ongoing enthusiasm and _____ amongst the staff. T / F

6 My company is _____ to its employees and puts their needs before those of the customer. T / F

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 15 on page 130.

7 Write down the job titles of three people you know. Write down two qualities you think the people need for their jobs. Then, tell the class what you think. Does everyone agree?

8 Work with a partner. Talk about the qualities that are important for your job. How would you describe yourself? What happens if you do particularly well?

Example: Patience is important because I work in after-sales, and customers sometimes telephone to complain about ...

① » Interactive Workbook » Glossary

Tip | patient

The word *patient* can have different meanings.

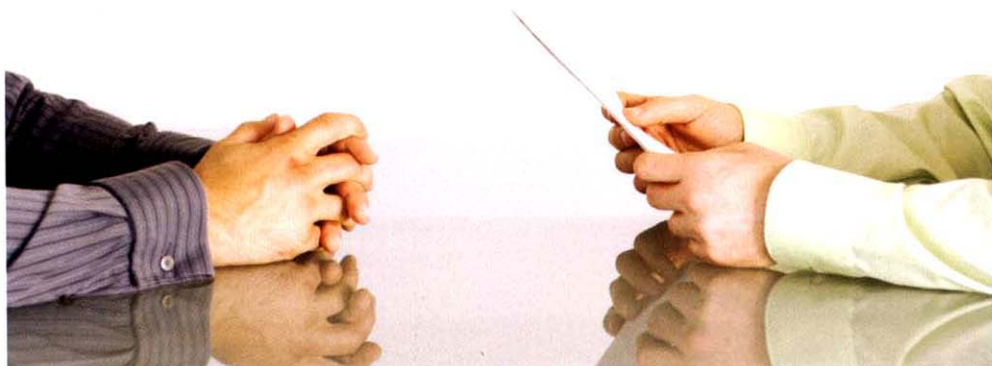
As a noun it means a person who is receiving medical treatment.

He is Dr Fisher’s patient.

As an adjective it means being able to wait for a long time or to accept annoying behaviour without becoming angry.

You have to be patient to work with Thomas. He takes a long time to do anything.

Meetings | Appraising performance and setting objectives



- 1** Chris Hately works in a factory producing shafts for cars. Chris is having his six-month performance review. Read what he has written on his form. Do you have similar forms at work?

Part A

Please answer the questions on this form and return to your line manager before your performance review.

- 1 Have the last six months been good / bad / satisfactory? Why?
Good. I've really learned a lot since I started here and everyone has been really helpful.
- 2 What do you consider are your most important achievements in the last six months?
I completed my initial training in June and was given a permanent contract.
- 3 Which parts of the job interest you the most? And the least?
Solving problems with machinery.
- 4 How could your performance be improved in your current position?
Just continue what I'm doing - by learning more.

- 2** 62▷ Listen to the first part of Chris's performance review and add any extra information to his answers in 1. Then compare these with a partner.

- 3** 62▷ Match 1–7 to a–g then listen and check your answers.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 In ... ____ | a doing very well. |
| 2 We're very pleased ... ____ | b to work on. |
| 3 You seem to be ... ____ | c general ... |
| 4 One thing I wanted ... ____ | d about working with other people? |
| 5 Is it an area ... ____ | e you'd like to develop? |
| 6 How do you feel ... ____ | f with your performance. |
| 7 That's something I need ... ____ | g to discuss was ... |

- 4** 63▷ Listen to the final part of the meeting and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 How does Chris's manager signal that it is the end of the meeting?
- 2 What have they agreed to do?
- 3 What two questions does Chris's manager ask to check agreement?

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 15 on page 130.

Tip | Being less direct

You can use the past simple instead of the present simple to sound less direct, especially in sensitive situations.

One thing I wanted to discuss was ...

One thing I want to discuss is ...

Both are correct, but the first one is less direct.

5 Imagine you have a performance review. Complete this form for your job.

Part A

Please answer the questions on this form and return to your line manager before your appraisal.

- 1 Have the last six months been good / bad / satisfactory? Why?

- 2 What do you consider are your most important achievements in the last six months?

- 3 Which parts of the job interest you the most? And the least?

- 4 How could your performance be improved in your current position?

6 Now take turns to appraise your partner using the form they completed in 5. The person leading the meeting should

- make general comments at the beginning
- give specific feedback
- discuss and ask questions about performance
- set and agree objectives at the end.

7 Work with a partner. Take turns to talk about one of the areas below. Evaluate your performance in the area you choose and say what improvements you could make. Decide with your partner on a plan of action.

- a hobby
- a sport you do
- your progress in English

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Giving a formal appraisal

Overall ... / In general ...
 I'm / We're very happy / pleased with your performance.
 You seem to be doing very well.
 One of your key strengths is ...
 Perhaps one thing to work on / consider is ...
 One thing I wanted to discuss was ...

Encouraging self-evaluation

How do you feel about ...?
 How are you getting on with ...?
 Have you thought about ...?
 What do you think would help you to ...?
 Is this an area you'd like to develop?

Evaluating your own performance

I'm really happy with ...
 Something I need to work on is ...
 I think ... is an area for improvement.

Setting objectives

So let's summarize what we've agreed.
 One thing you're going to ...
 You intend to ...
 You need to think about ...

Agreeing objectives

How does that sound?
 Is that OK with you?
 Is there anything else you'd like to add?

 » Interactive Workbook
 » Phrasebank

Practically speaking | How to give feedback

1 64, 65▷ Listen to two different versions of a conversation between Chris and his supervisor. What are the differences?

2 64▷ Listen to the first version again. Complete these phrases.

- 1 You're doing _____.
- 2 That's _____.
- 3 You've done a _____.
- 4 _____ done.
- 5 _____ at it.

3 Write three jobs you have completed recently. Work with a partner. Take turns to give your partner feedback on their completed jobs using phrases in 2.

*Example: A I've just finished my report.
 B That's great! Well done.*

Language at work | Past perfect and past continuous

- 1** Read this extract from an employee's appraisal and decide if statements 1–3 below are true (T) or false (F).

Appraiser I know there had been a few problems at the other factory before you moved here, but in the last six months, I've received lots of good reports about all your hard work.

Employee Good. That's nice to hear. I was finding it all a little difficult when I first came to work here ...

- 1 The employee had problems after he moved to his current factory. ____
 - 2 The employee found it difficult for a period of time. ____
 - 3 The employee doesn't have any difficulties now. ____
- 2** Match sentences a–c to uses of the past perfect / past continuous in 1–3.
- 1 To talk about something in progress at a particular time in the past: ____
 - 2 To say that one event happened before another completed past event: ____
 - 3 To give background information in the past: ____
- a I knew about the meeting because I had received the email.
 b What were you working on yesterday morning?
 c Most people were working quietly in the office.
- 3** Which sentences in 2 use the past perfect and which use the past continuous?

» For more information and exercises, go to Practice file 15 on page 131.

- 4** 66▶ Two people, Helena and Matthias, are describing some feedback they received. Listen, and for each of them say

- 1 what feedback they received
- 2 why they thought their appraisals were unfair
- 3 what happened after their appraisals.

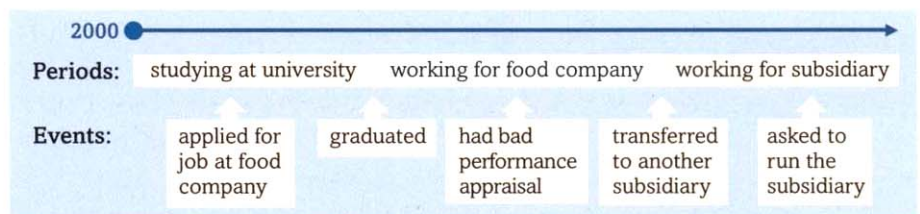
- 5** 66▶ Complete these sentences with the past perfect or past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. Then listen and check your answers.

- 1 I _____ (work) for a large food company which didn't employ many women.
- 2 It was terrible to hear this, because I _____ (already / discuss) with him how difficult it was to be the only woman.
- 3 Six months after that, I _____ (run) the factory!
- 4 We _____ (talk) about the usual things, but during all of this, he answered the phone twice and even replied to an email.
- 5 This annoyed me because I _____ (prepare) very thoroughly.
- 6 I heard that he got fired, but I _____ (already / leave) by then.

- 6** Work with a partner. Look at this timeline for Helena with periods and key events in her life. Make sentences about her using the past perfect and past continuous.

Example: She applied for the job while she was studying at university.

She'd applied for the job before she graduated.



- 7** Make a timeline for yourself with periods of time and important events. It can be about your studies, career, or life in general. Describe it to your partner.

Giving a successful presentation

Background

Help from the professionals

Balkan Healthfood Corp. is a successful food company in its home country of Croatia. It wants to start expanding its business into other European countries. More employees will need to go out to the market and present the company and its products to potential customers and partners. In order to do this, the company will

need to retrain some of its staff and employ new staff. It has decided to start with training its existing staff in presentation skills. The company has approached Media Training Associates, an organization that gives corporate training sessions in media and presentation skills, to take charge of this project.

67▷ Listen to a trainer from Media Training Associates and read the presentation feedback form.

The speaker introduced the topic

very clearly 5 4 3 2 1 not very clearly

Comments: _____

The phrases the speaker used to organize the content were

very helpful 5 4 3 2 1 not very helpful

Comments: _____

The speaker was

very convincing 5 4 3 2 1 not very convincing

Comments: _____

Other points to consider: _____

Discussion

- 1 Do you agree with the tips for giving a presentation? What else would you add?
- 2 Work with a partner. Add more criteria to the presentation feedback form, based on your ideas in 1.
- 3 What do you need to think about and prepare when you give a presentation?
- 4 What problems might you have if you are presenting to people from other countries?
- 5 What are the most common mistakes people make when they give presentations?

Task

- 1 **68, 69▷** Two Balkan Healthfood Corp. employees are attending a presentation training session with Media Training Associates. It is the start of the day and they are asked to give a short presentation of some of their products. Listen and make notes about their performances.
- 2 Work in small groups. You are the trainers. Discuss the performance of the two employees in 1. Write notes about their performances in the feedback form.
- 3 Work with a partner. Student A, you are the trainee in the first presentation. Student B, you are the trainee in the second presentation. Take turns to give each other feedback on your performances, based on your group discussions.

The Expert View

Preparation and practice are key elements of delivering successful presentations. Gain confidence by practising as a team, if possible in the room where your presentation will be held. Practising in front of a familiar audience helps you to focus on areas for improvement and estimate your timing. Use media as a support, not as a script. Information on PowerPoint slides should be kept to a minimum – include key points and diagrams only. Speak clearly and appear confident – this will keep the audience's attention. And use humour only when appropriate!

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