

CD 1

Unit 1

01

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

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

Presenter There's more to it than that?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Presenter A case of less is more?

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

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

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

02

Ivan Ivan Formanek. How can I help you?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sean Well, I could certainly help you with that.

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

Sean I understand. When would you like to meet?

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

Sean Fine, whatever's best for you.

Ivan Let's say, provisionally, Tuesday the 13th at 11 o'clock and I'll get my assistant to call you later today to confirm. You'll be travelling in from Krakow, won't you?

Sean That's right.

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

Sean Fine. Well, thanks for your time.

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

03

Sean Hello, Sean McFee.

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

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

Catherine OK.

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

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

Sean Thanks. Another thing I wanted to check ... How long are you scheduling the meeting for? There's a train that leaves at 3 o'clock. Will I have time to catch that one or should I take a later one?

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

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

Catherine OK. When you arrive at the company, give your name to Reception and they'll send you up to us on the fifth floor.

And let me know if you need a taxi and I'll book one for you.

Sean That's very kind. Thanks a lot.

04

1

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

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

2

A Can I have Suzy's number and email address? I want to invite her to the next exhibition we host.

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

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

3

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

B No, you've probably got my old one. Here's my new card with my email address ... Er ... The one above is my business email. I check it regularly so please use that one.

A OK. I'll use the business one then if that's OK?

B Sure.

Unit 2

05

1

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

2

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

3

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

06

Conversation 1

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

Alessandro Hi. I'm Alessandro.

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

Alessandro Yes.

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

Alessandro No, not yet.

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

Alessandro No.

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

Alessandro No, I'm fine, thanks.

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

Conversation 2

Paolo Hi, I don't think we've met. I'm

Paolo from Napoli – I work for one of the company's suppliers.

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

Paolo Nice to meet you.

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

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

Conversation 3

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

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

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

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

Sumitra What a coincidence! Where do they come from?

Krishnan From Bhiwandi – near Mumbai.

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

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

Conversation 4

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

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

Adam Really? Who told you?

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

Adam Oh, Adriana – where should I begin? I injured my leg in January in a skiing accident. The doctor told me to take it easy. But how could I rest, with my job? Then I

got flu, but we were organizing a huge trade fair at the time so I had to keep going ...

Adriana Oh, oh dear ...

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

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

07

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

Adriana That's right. You're Harry. Dinner was fantastic, wasn't it? (Harry Yeah, it was, yeah.)

How are you enjoying the event?

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

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

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

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

Harry I see. Who are you working with?

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

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

Adriana Of course I will.

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

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

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

Adriana Really? Can I ask where?

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

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

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

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

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

Adriana Thank you. That would be very nice.

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

08

1 Is that the time? My parking ticket runs out in five minutes.

- 2 I promised to meet someone else. But I'll come back when I've seen them.
- 3 I'm going to get some food. I missed lunch because of the conference call.
- 4 Is that James over there? Excuse me, I really must go and speak to him.
- 5 Look, I really don't have time to chat at the moment. I'll call you tomorrow though.

Unit 3

09

Part 1

- Sarah** ... OK, I sent you a proposed agenda yesterday. Have you had a chance to look at it?
- Ian** Yes, it looks fine.
- Sarah** So, the purpose of today is to update each other on progress and consider anything that might affect our schedule.
- Ian** OK.
- Sarah** So, Michelle, why don't you start? How are things with the marketing department?
- Michelle** Up to now, the launch date has been set for the 15th of November, to capture the Christmas trade – this means we must meet our deadlines.
- Sarah** Good point. So how's the advertising campaign coming along?
- Michelle** That's fine. We've set a realistic schedule and planned in a bit of extra time in case the printing takes longer than expected.
- Sarah** Great. And how far are you with preparations for the launch party?
- Michelle** Our events manager says we're on track. He booked the venue two weeks ago and I've already received offers from various catering companies. I haven't made a final choice yet, but most of them are well within our budget.
- Sarah** That sounds good, Michelle, thanks. So, Ian, how does your side of things look?
- Ian** Well, actually, things aren't running as smoothly as I'd hoped. We've hit a problem with the handset battery life.
- Sarah** OK ... so what do you mean exactly?
- Ian** Well, in some cases, the battery can run out in six hours if its key features are in permanent use.
- Michelle** So what you're saying is we're about to launch a new revolutionary low-cost mobile phone and its battery only lasts six hours!?
- Ian** Well, obviously, that's an extreme case, but the engineers *have* identified that there is a basic design problem with the battery.
- Sarah** So the *real* problem lies with the battery manufacturers?
- Ian** Yes.
- Michelle** But, Ian, what about our deadlines? Can this problem be resolved?
- Ian** Well, our engineers are looking into it and if it's fixable, they'll do it, but they'll need time. We may have to reschedule.

- Michelle** But we can't postpone the launch at this stage! There must be something you can do.
- Sarah** Are there any alternatives?
- Ian** Well, I've got some suggestions but you may not like them.
- Sarah** Ian, you've put us in a difficult position – why don't we get another coffee and then we'll look at our options.

10

Part 2

- Sarah** The battery problem has to be resolved; otherwise the whole project is in trouble – that's how I see it.
- Michelle** Is that really the case? How about finding another battery supplier?
- Ian** I don't think that would help us meet our current deadlines. We could keep the same battery but not mention its lifespan.
- Sarah** That's possible, but our reputation is at stake here.
- Michelle** Yes, and if the project fails we have no chance of becoming market leader!
- Ian** OK. Why don't we wait and see what the technicians suggest and in the meantime move the launch date?
- Michelle** That's not an ideal solution. It means cancelling the printers, the caterers, the advertising ...
- Sarah** Do we have any other options?
- Ian** Well, using a different phone for the launch would be my proposal. We could use the VP20: it's new, cheap but not as hi-tech.
- Michelle** I'm not convinced. The whole idea of this project was to offer a hi-tech phone and services at an attractive price.
- Sarah** Yes. If you ask me, we should look at what we can reschedule.
- Michelle** Oh, I suppose so.

11

- 1**
- A** What are you doing at the moment?
- B** I'm learning Mandarin at an evening class.
- A** Good for you. That must be quite ... um, challenging.
- B** Yes, but it's a lot of fun too. We have a very good teacher ... What about you? Are you still playing golf?
- A** Yes, I am. But I don't play as much as I used to.

2

- A** ... So how's the new job going?
- B** It's going well, thanks. I'm really enjoying it.
- A** That's great. I'm glad it's working out.
- B** Yes, it's good. Anyway, how are things with you?
- A** Oh, fine. You know ... working hard.

3

- A** ... Have you been away recently?
- B** I've just come back from a long weekend in London. That's all, really. How about you?

- A** No, I haven't been on holiday for ages. I really need a break.
- B** Have you booked any holiday?
- A** Not yet. It's difficult to find the time. I'm always so busy.

4

- A** ... Do you still work for the same company?
- B** Yes, and we're really busy – as usual.
- A** And are you still enjoying it?
- B** Yeah, definitely. It's always different. And it keeps me on my toes.
- A** I'm sure it does.
- B** So, how about you? Are you still ...?
- A** No, I changed jobs about three months ago. It was a good opportunity, so ...

Unit 4

12

We run a project in the Rathnambhore National Park in India, which is home to a large tiger population. The villagers living near the park had been cutting down trees in the park for firewood. This was causing a serious problem, and we were asked to come up with a practical solution. We set up a project to build a lot of small biogas systems. It's not cutting-edge technology, but it's very reliable and cheap. Basically, you mix cow dung and water in an underground tank. From this, you get biogas which you use for fuel, and the rest can be used for fertilizer. We based the idea on an earlier model at Deenpandu, with a few small developments. It's an innovative concept – we give the families the specifications and some training, and they build the system themselves. You need at least four cows – it's not feasible with fewer than four animals. Projects like this bring about real improvements for everyone. The villagers get clean fuel and excellent fertilizer ... and another major advantage is they don't need to cut down so many trees. So, it's good news for the tigers too – a real success.

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We came up with this revolutionary idea just a couple of years ago, and we moved very quickly from an idea in R&D to the prototype, and then to the first production models. Our wind turbines make the production of electricity from wind power very efficient. They're small enough to fit on the roof of a building, and they can generate a significant fraction of a household's electricity so the initial investment will pay off in the long term. So, the key features of the turbine are its size, obviously, and its state-of-the-art design. As you know, conventional wind turbines are often very large – this causes concerns about where to locate them, about their environmental impact. But the

technological breakthroughs we've made in the design have allowed us to get round this problem – and our turbine is vibration-free and almost completely silent.

At the moment it is still quite expensive to buy and install, but with mass production we're hoping to bring the costs right down, and make installing a turbine a commercially-viable proposition for many people.

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Part 1

Shireen Firstly, I'd like to thank you for inviting me here today. We really appreciate this opportunity to work with PharmaLab again.

David Thank you for coming, Shireen. We're looking forward to hearing what you can offer.

Shireen Good. OK, what I'd like to do in this presentation is basically three things. First, I'll give you a brief overview of the product. Then I'll talk about some of the advantages for your company. After that I'd like to show you a short demo film so that you can see the system in operation. And after that, you can ask me any questions. Does that sound OK?

... OK. We call the system DiScan.

Basically, DiScan is a state-of-the-art security system based on fingerprint scanning. It's the result of two years of intensive R&D, and it has only been on the market for three months. However, it's already being used by five major organizations and our order book is filling up fast!

How does it work? Well, it's a pretty simple concept – employees are identified by their fingerprints. When they enter and leave a building or secure area, they touch a glass plate. The system scans their fingerprints and compares them with a central database set up by you.

15

Part 2

David So what are the advantages of DiScan compared to our existing system?

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

Why enhanced security? Well, the biggest potential benefit of fingerprint scanning is that no two people have the same fingerprints – every one is unique. This means that DiScan is extremely secure in comparison to systems where a code is needed. You can learn someone else's code, whereas you can't copy their fingerprints. Another advantage is that you can't lose or forget your fingerprints – they're always with you.

With your current system, if someone gets hold of a security code, they can go

anywhere they want in your company. However, with DiScan, they won't be able to do that. And another thing ... At the moment, you can only tell that someone is in a secure area, whereas in the future, you'll be able to tell exactly who that person is as well.

David And the second benefit?

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

David It sounds impressive.

Shireen So, is everything clear so far? OK, now I'd like to move on to some other advantages of the system, and after that we'll watch a demo ...

16

1

A Thank you for having me – it was a really interesting visit.

B It's a pleasure – it was good to see you.

2

A Here's that document you wanted copied.

B Thanks a lot – I appreciate it.

A No problem – any time.

3

A Thank you very much for lunch – it was delicious.

B You're welcome – I really enjoyed it.

4

A Thanks for your time this morning – it was good of you to come in.

B No problem – thanks for your help.

5

A I'd like to thank you for inviting me here today.

B Thank you for coming – we're glad you could be here.

6

A After you.

B Thanks.

A That's OK.

17

Richard So to sum up, Boatnet is a specialist Internet service provider that provides wireless Internet access at all the major marinas in the country. From the start, I could see that there was definitely a market. Boat owners want to be able to access the Internet to get information about the weather and sea conditions, as well as sending and receiving email. In the past, they could only do this on land

because the technology wasn't in place.

At the moment, in most parts of the world, you still can't access the Internet from your boat without the right technology. From now on, our subscribers will be able to access the Internet from their boats for a basic monthly fee. We set up a very successful pilot project in three marinas last year, so we were able to test the system extensively and we know it works. We've done a lot of research and we can offer the service for £25 a month – that's less than 40 euros. We'd like to be able to increase this in the future.

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

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

Jason And how long are these contracts?

Richard Seven years.

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

Richard That's right.

Unit 5

18

Interviewer ... Thanks for your call, Deepak ... So that's a good experience of customer service. I'd now like to turn to Maria who has a very different story. Maria ...

Maria Yes, well, this was something that happened quite recently. I wanted to get a Christmas present for a friend. Some time ago, she took me to a fantastic chocolate shop in Bond Street, I won't say the name, where we had the most amazing hot chocolate. Anyway, she's been very kind to me over the last year and I wanted to get her some of their handmade chocolates ... they're really special. I work in South London, so it's quite a long journey into the centre of town. I left work early – along with my laptop and stuff from work because there was going to be a tube strike the next day. It took quite a while – and I finally arrived at the shop at literally two minutes past five, only to discover that they'd closed at five. I could see there were still two assistants inside.

Interviewer So there were still people in the shop? (**Maria** Yes.) So what did you do?

Maria Well, I banged on the door and nobody took any notice. So I carried on and eventually one of the assistants opened the door and said they were closed and I should come back tomorrow. I explained that I wouldn't be able to get back if there was a tube strike the next day. I said, 'Look, it's the Monday before Christmas, and this is a present for a friend'. Basically she just said that was tough, they were closed. I

said, 'I'll pay cash, ring it up tomorrow, don't worry about a bag'. No luck. They just weren't interested.

Interviewer So you didn't get your chocolates ...?

Maria I didn't get my chocolates. And my question is this: When it comes to customer service, where should companies draw the line? I'm not someone who thinks the customer is always right. But I do know that if they had tried to help me, I would have been a customer for life. This shop does many things right. It has wonderful packaging, a superb product, a great café. But all that investment counts for nothing if a loyal customer who's made a special effort to buy their product is turned away at the door.

Interviewer OK, thanks Maria. Don't forget, you can call us on 0207 ...

19

Conversation 1

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

Borys What seems to be the problem?

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

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

Paola It's 02/584.

Borys Can you tell me when you sent it to us?

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

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

Paola Well, yes.

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

Paola Will it be ready in time for the deadline?

Borys I'll do my best.

Conversation 2

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

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

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

Johann Very funny. This isn't a problem about that. My computer keeps going black.

Chris You mean the screen goes blank?

Johann Um, yeah – but the hard drive light is still on.

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

Johann I tried. They told me to call you.

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

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

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

Johann Do you know why it's doing this?

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

Conversation 3

Marcel Hello, Marcel LeGrand speaking.

Donna Hello. This is Donna Fitzpatrick from AS Consulting.

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

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

Marcel Could you tell me when this happened?

Donna A couple of hours ago.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20/21

1

A How's the new job going?

B Today was terrible! I couldn't remember any of the training we did last week.

A I know it's hard at first, but you'll soon find your feet.

2

A How did the call with that difficult client go?

B Um ... the client asked to speak to my boss. But I know I followed procedures exactly.

A Yes. I'm sure you did the best you could.

3

A What's the matter?

B I've just been on the phone for an hour with the most difficult customer!

A How awful!

4

A You seem a bit unhappy.

B Yes ... I've broken the bulb in the data projector and they cost €200 to replace!

A Oh no!

22

José It was one of those unfortunate situations that occasionally occurs with online ordering. My customer services team reacted appropriately and did their best to satisfy the customer. It's regrettable that the money for the goods was deducted from the customer's account without any documentation to the order. We decided to refund the complete amount of the order, not only the goods that were missing – though without any record of the order being made, this wasn't an easy decision. Obviously we couldn't offer this to the company immediately as the situation needed investigating before compensation was given. I feel we did the right thing and the main thing is, we have a satisfied customer who will continue doing business with us.

Unit 6

23

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

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

Interviewer Not necessarily a good one.

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

top of our agenda, but we have schemes in place for education, health and training. We do take care of our people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24

Part 1

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

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

Reporter 1 Thanks.

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

Reporter 2 That sounds good.

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

Reporter 2 So can we interview them?

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

Reporter 2 Of course.

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

Reporter 1 That sounds really interesting.

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

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

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

25

Part 2

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

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

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

Reporter 1 Good idea.

Clare On the subject of language – you're also welcome to visit a project set up to promote schooling in the Tibetan language.

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

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

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

Reporter 3 What about environmental projects?

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

Reporter 3 What will we see?

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

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

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

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

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

26

1

A How about joining us for a coffee after work?

B Maybe ... Can I let you know later?

2

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

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

3

A Would you like to go to that new pizzeria for lunch?

B Why not?

Unit 7

27

1

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

2

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

3

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

4

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

28

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

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

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

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

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

Sinead Matt, what's your position on this?

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

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

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

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

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

Anna Exactly.

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

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

Anna Yes, we're ...

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

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

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

Sinead Anna, you've been very quiet.

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

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

29

1

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

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

A Oh, poor you.

2

A What are you up to tonight?

B We'll probably catch a movie.

A Sounds good.

3

A Are you taking any time off in the summer?

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

A I see.

4

A What are you doing this weekend?

B We're off to Paris!

A Lucky you!

5

A Anything nice planned for the weekend?

B Nothing special. What about you?

Unit 8

30

1

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

2

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

3

Chitra I am working in Bangalore as a customer adviser for a UK company. There are many companies coming over here nowadays, and it's not just because they can achieve lower overheads. There are a

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

31

Part 1

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

Sanjit Good morning, and thank you for inviting me to your headquarters. Today, I'd like to give you an overview of the business potential and possibilities of Bangalore as a location for outsourcing. As you probably know, Bangalore is situated in central southern India – it's the capital of the state of Karnataka.

So, to begin with, let's look at some general facts about the area. What does Bangalore have to offer in business terms? Well, statistics show that 10,000 companies are based in the region, and a population of nearly seven million people ensures that there is a buoyant labour market. How well qualified is the workforce? Recent data illustrates the fact that Bangalore's educational institutions have been awarded international recognition as a result of the quality of graduates being produced – from the Indian Institute of Science, for example. In fact, due to the dominance of a highly-educated workforce, Bangalore is becoming the fastest growing city in Asia and has earned the nickname 'India's Silicon Valley' ...

32

Part 2

Sanjit ... I've briefly looked at the background, so let's move on to some business facts. You will notice on this chart the breakdown of traditional industries, such as engineering, in relation to the emergence of IT companies. Bangalore has a strong tradition of attracting engineering companies to the region as a result of its engineering colleges. A knock-on effect

of this has been the establishment not only of government-run companies such as Hindustan Machine Tools, but also companies from the private sector. A subsidiary of the German Robert Bosch group has been present in this region for several years. What's more important and exciting for our potential investors is the new emerging economy focusing on IT. As I mentioned earlier, this has earned us the name 'India's Silicon Valley' and it is easy to see why. IT is booming.

Let's turn our attention to some specific facts on the IT sector. Looking at this slide, we can see it is expected that Indian IT services will continue to grow by 25–28% annually, and Bangalore accounts for about one-third of India's software exports. And have a look at these figures: more than 1,500 software and outsourcing companies – 512 of them multinationals – have offices in Bangalore, employing over 170,000 workers. In the first four months of this year alone, 64 new offices were opened in the city. Subsequently, nearly 1,000 new staff are being taken on every month. The job market is being fuelled by the tens of thousands of students in the area, many of them graduating from the Institute of Science, which I referred to earlier – and many of them specializing in IT-related subjects. A further point to mention is that a new sector of the job market is being opened up, offering opportunities for women employees – 25% of the workforce in software companies here is now female. The effect of this is more financial independence and greater freedom for them to pursue a career ...

... Before I go today, I'd like to leave you with some ... er ... some food for thought. Investment in Bangalore has resulted in dramatic, positive lifestyle changes for its people. Their futures are being secured and their quality of life has been improved threefold. By investing in our region, you will not only have the advantage of obtaining highly-skilled employees with a strong work ethic, but you will also ensure that our skilled workforce remains within India. Surely a win-win situation for us all.

33

1

- A Sorry I'm late, I got held up in traffic.
B It doesn't matter. We've only just started.

2

- A I do apologize for the mix-up with your order – our ordering system crashed.
B That's all right. I understand the problem.

3

- A I'm afraid I haven't prepared for this meeting – I've been really busy today.
B Don't worry about it. It's the same for me.

4

- A We've finished all the coffee. Sorry about that.
B That's OK – I'll have some water. Don't worry about it.

5

- A I'm really sorry about the mistake. I don't know how it happened, but it's my responsibility.
B Never mind. These things happen.

6

- A I'm sorry that I wasn't here when you called earlier.
B No problem. I spoke to your colleague, Anna – she was able to help me.

Unit 9

34

1

Tyler I left high school at 16 ... with no qualifications ... so my career prospects were not good ... but I got a job at the local automobile factory, working shifts on a production line. The work was kind of monotonous – but I had job security and the money was good. I'd worked there for almost thirty years when I was **made redundant** ... the company got taken over, and just like that they decided to downsize and shut the factory down. You can imagine ... in a small town like ours, when you get that many men **laid off** all at once because there's no work for them, there's no chance of finding another job. I'd lived there all my life so **relocation** to a new place was not an option. I had some redundancy money, and I went for retraining, first on a short computer course to **update my skills** and increase my employability, then a two-year course in programming. And because of my background, I ended up as an IT consultant to manufacturing companies. So it was a complete career change, but I don't regret it. It was a whole lot better than **being unemployed**, and having no job to go to, or just **taking early retirement**.

2

Fabia I worked for a multinational insurance company in Lausanne for six or seven years. The salary was good but there wasn't a lot of **opportunity for advancement** ... I was beginning to feel dissatisfied. And I ... I didn't feel particularly valued by the management ... I felt expendable ... like a commodity really ... I was working really long hours for little recognition. I could have made a **sideways move**, I suppose, but I decided to opt for self-employment. We moved to Geneva, where I set up my own recruitment agency – finding staff for insurance

companies. I've come to understand why people really want to change jobs – and it's hardly ever about money. Usually it's for personal reasons, like my own experience. A lot of my clients have some sort of issue with their boss – see them as incompetent, maybe. Sometimes we have very successful women who feel there's a **glass ceiling** where they work, and know they can only get on if they move elsewhere. For others, it's all about growth opportunities – they're looking for **training** and **personal development** but it's just not on offer in their company.

3

Karl I worked for Ericsson in Sweden until a couple of years ago – I was production manager – and I was a bit restless ... I had a good standard of living, my youngest child had just gone to university, and I suppose I was looking for a new challenge ... a **change of direction**. And to be honest, I didn't feel particularly comfortable with the **corporate culture** any more ... and I was getting frustrated by too many **rules and red tape**. I was considering applying for a **temporary secondment** to a production plant in the UK, when I came across a charity who were looking for an administrator to work in a specialist hospital in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, and I suddenly realized that what I was looking for was a complete career change. So I discussed it with the family ... I got the job and I've been here ever since ... I actually found that a lot of the skills I had were **transferable skills** – like leadership and planning. I don't regret it at all. Of course there are a few things I miss, and my salary is much lower ... but personally I feel much happier, it's very challenging here, but my quality of life is much better.

35

Johanna Right, Dermot, this is quite a challenge! What we need to decide on today is how to put together this new team.
Dermot Yeah – it's not going to be easy. The areas we need to discuss are: the make-up of the new team, who would be most suitable for it, and how our current teams can manage without them.
Johanna OK. So, let's look at what our options are. What I propose is we simply identify who our most capable workers are and send them.
Dermot Yeah ... If we did that, we'd end up with two weaker teams back here doing all the work, and I'm not sure they'd cope.
Johanna It wouldn't be for very long, but maybe you're right. We can't send all our best people in case we need them here.
Dermot How about we look at our team members' individual strengths and then each select three people based on this?

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

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

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

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

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

36

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

Johanna Exactly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dermot Great. I know them both – good choice!

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

Dermot Yeah, I can live with that.

Johanna Great. That sounds like a plan!

37

1

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

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

A Oh ... thanks a lot.

2

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

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

A Oh, well, never mind.

3

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

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

A OK, it's not that urgent.

4

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

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

A Thanks.

5

A Excuse me, could you spare a few minutes?

B Certainly. Take a seat.

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

6

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

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

A OK.

38

Maria ... A great deal of thought and investment goes into incentives and remuneration packages for sending employees to other countries to work. However, over the last few years, we've had to consider how to deal with returning employees and what their requirements will be.

Interviewer When does this occur? Can you give us an example?

Maria Sure. Well ... one particular company comes to mind, a large multinational, which had sent a group of highly-specialized IT experts from India to work in Scandinavia on a big expansion project. Obviously we were involved with the initial relocation and advising on the benefits package, but the real challenge came when the project was coming to an end.

Interviewer So what happened?

Maria Well, for the employees who were returning from their deployment, a sense of 'reverse' culture shock occurred. The employees had got used to a very different lifestyle – a Scandinavian standard of living and other luxuries as part of their relocation package. Adapting to life back in their own country became a problem. Even familiar things like poor road conditions or regular power failures suddenly made life very uncomfortable.

Interviewer I see. So ... what did this company do for their returning personnel?

Maria In this case, they drew up a compensation package and negotiated this with the employees. It's not an easy thing to do, I mean, relocation is a standard procedure but a repatriation package has to be made on a case-by-case basis. It depends where the employees have been working, what their lifestyle was like in that country ... how high their salary was.

Interviewer Can you give me some examples of what was offered?

Maria Well, this particular company offered its employees a returning salary that was significantly higher than the local going rate. It also offered help in financing the children's education in private or international schools ... support for the employee's wife or husband to find work ... and in some cases interest-free loans to buy a house, car and for other living expenses.

Interviewer That doesn't sound bad!

Maria No, but the company needed to hold on to these people so the package had to be attractive.

Interviewer I see.

Maria Other companies I've worked with have offered things such as free breakfast and dinner in the company restaurant, time in lieu or paid overtime – which sounds standard but it isn't often the case. Another thing would be a structured career path for the employee. This means their future is planned in terms of personal development and promotion possibilities, so their experience abroad isn't wasted.

Interviewer It all sounds rather expensive.

Maria It is, and companies really have to think carefully about the costs involved before sending their personnel abroad.

CD 2

Unit 10

39

James I run Glasses Direct. We sell glasses and contact lenses online, at a fraction of the price you pay if you go to a high street optician. I got the idea when I discovered the size of the markup on glasses. Did you know that a pair of glasses that costs, say, ten euros to make can sell for as much as 200 euros? So ... I researched the optical market – good market research is hugely important when you're starting out. I learnt about optometric testing, how the frames are made and the lenses are cut ... and it was clear that there was a gap in the market. I worked out a business plan for selling discounted glasses online ... it seemed like a viable idea that I could turn into a profitable business.

My father was incredibly generous ... he gave me a loan to get started, which meant I didn't have to raise finance by going to venture capitalists – they probably would have turned me down anyway because they don't generally take start-ups run by young people seriously ... and of course they want a big stake in the business and a high return on investment. The other people who were extremely helpful were some of my fellow students who designed and set up the website for me – I couldn't have done it without them.

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

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

Jurga I come from Lithuania, and I run Today Translations, one of the top translation companies in the UK. I set up the company six years ago ... We now have over 700 clients – and a fantastic team of linguists who interpret, translate and culturally adapt documents and websites in over 160 languages. They're totally brilliant at sharing their local market expertise with our clients. We hope to make one million euros this year, and my aim is to double turnover every year.

My background isn't actually in translation. When I was at school in Kaunas, I had my own shop and later I traded clothes in the United Arab Emirates, so I learned the importance of understanding local cultures and creating the right network of contacts. I moved to the UK to set up the translation business in 2001, and I suppose I'm completely different from most business-people because I don't like borrowing from banks or asking people like business angels

for start-up capital, despite the business experience they can offer. I believe in natural business growth. The investment I made in the business was gradual, and for me that is an absolutely perfect arrangement. It was my own money – from the profit I had made and saved from previous ventures. There were a few drawbacks ... lack of financial backing meant I couldn't expand as fast as I would have liked, but sometimes you just have to be patient. The fact that I'm a foreigner is actually an advantage rather than a problem – a lot of my clients feel I'm more sensitive to their needs, and I have a really excellent relationship with all of them. If I was going to give advice to someone starting out, I think I'd say you need to be prepared to take risks and be self-disciplined. But if you do your homework and have a clear and effective business model, you're halfway there.

40

- 1 ... good market research is hugely important when you're starting out.
- 2 My father was incredibly generous ... he gave me a loan to get started ...
- 3 The other people who were extremely helpful were some of my fellow students ...
- 4 It was really difficult to persuade them, but in the end we managed to get them on board.
- 5 ... and a fantastic team of linguists who interpret, translate and culturally adapt documents and websites in over 160 languages. They're totally brilliant ...
- 6 I suppose I'm completely different from most businesspeople because I don't like borrowing from banks ...
- 7 The investment I made in the business was gradual, and for me that is an absolutely perfect arrangement.
- 8 ... a lot of my clients feel I'm more sensitive to their needs, and I have a really excellent relationship with all of them.

41

Conversation 1

Erik ... Hello.

Nicole Is that Erik Lundberg?

Erik Yes, speaking.

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

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

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

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

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

Erik Congratulations – that sounds a bit tough, though.

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

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

Conversation 2

Xavier José? Hey, what are you doing here?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

José That sounds interesting ...

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

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

Conversation 3

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

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

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

Nadia Well, pretty good, actually. Our company has secured a huge contract

with Mobilitec. We've also been talking to Strauz & Co. They've just gone public, so there should be money in that one. Anyway, you mentioned changes. What's been happening?

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

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

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

Nadia Oh ... I'm not sure.

Stanislav I'd really appreciate your help.

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

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

42

Miho Some people say I'm lucky and that I managed to hit the market with my product at a time when Tokyo was having a 'bagel boom'. But I think it was more than just luck.

Interviewer So how did you go from being a computer programmer at Hitachi to Japan's first bagel baker!

Miho OK, well I was visiting New York with some friends from college, back in 1998. We went on a trip after we finished our studies. I loved the city, but best of all I got a taste for bagels. The first one I ate ... it had such an unexpected taste – I expected something like bread, but they are actually quite hard and crunchy ... yeah, surprising. Anyway, at that moment, I thought there must be a market for these back home in Japan.

Interviewer How did you learn to bake them?

Miho OK ... one year later, I went back to New York and I simply asked – in very bad English – could I work at the bagel shop where I ate my first bagel. Mrs Wilpon, the owner, she didn't really need anyone but she said I could spend a week with her, sweeping the floor, you know ... and just seeing how the business worked. And it was good experience. Then in 2001 I went back again, I shared an apartment with some other Japanese girls and I worked for six months with Mrs Wilpon. She helped me a lot. On the one hand, I didn't get paid for the work I did ... she didn't need another employee ... but on the other hand I learned so much from her, how to make the bagels and the toppings. This experience was so important.

Interviewer So then you went back to Tokyo and opened your own shop?

Miho Er ..., not quite. I'd been working in New York for free, so I didn't have any money when I came home. I persuaded a contact of mine to let me help him out working on an IT database project ... so I could earn some money. But the reason I was able to start up my own company was I got some help from my parents.

Interviewer They lent you some money?

Miho Yes. To begin with, they weren't very sure about my plan, not really convinced ... but I was so enthusiastic about it and so sure it would work ... We drew up a proper contract – so I pay them back the money over time – but that was the financial support I needed to get started.

Interviewer And how's the business now?

Miho Oh, it's very good. I have some very loyal customers ... and the recent publicity has been great for my business. Some mornings I arrive at work and already there's a line of customers ...

Interviewer There are people outside?

Miho Yes ... waiting for me to open!

Unit 11

43

Speaker 1 I think what we'll see is that communications systems will become more integrated ... For example, I was involved in the development of the software for Operation Lazarus – the first telesurgery back in 2005. An American doctor in New York actually carried out an operation on a patient in France using remote cameras and a robot surgeon ... Well that shows what can be done when communication is integrated with other systems. Now, as long as you can connect to the Internet, the potential of these integrated systems is almost limitless; whatever you do and wherever you are, you'll be able to collaborate with colleagues anywhere in the world ... I mean the implications for, er, health, education, training, business, manufacturing, ... are enormous.

Speaker 2 ... What you're saying is very interesting, and to some extent I agree, but the way I see it, there are three stages to the development of communication ... the first is when people use machines to communicate with people, OK – so we're talking about telephone, email, chat rooms – and we've reached that stage now. The second is when people interact with machines – digital TV, using the Internet as an information resource, playing games, voice recognition ... where the machine responds to the person. We're just in the early stages of that, there's a long way to go, OK. But the last stage is when

machines start talking to machines – we saw it first in the Wall Street crash in '87 when program trading caused complete chaos – computers were cutting prices, selling stock to other computers, and people didn't know how to stop it. It's a scary scenario because it takes us into a whole new area of experience ... and when that comes it's going to have a big impact on all of us.

Speaker 3 ... Yeah, I think maybe we're getting ahead of ourselves here ... this kind of speculation's all very interesting, but communication systems are no good if people can't use them. Now ... at the moment ... everyone you know may well have access to the Internet, subscribe to satellite TV and use a mobile phone, but that's just not the case for most people in the world. We need to focus on spreading around the basic technology we have now more fairly. As it is, more than half the population of the world has never even made a telephone call. Think about it – how good is a communication system if half the world is excluded from it?

44

Jimmy ... So this tool and service is offered to large-sized companies only. Are you with me?

Angelika OK ... Yes, I've got that.

Jimmy Mirela?

Mirela OK. I'm with you.

Jimmy Good. When you acquire your key account customer you must set up regular meetings. It's a good idea to plan these for once a quarter, every three months.

Angelika This is Angelika. What exactly do you mean by meetings? Do we still need to meet them face to face?

Jimmy Yes. We regularly bring out offers for key accounts. For example, at the moment, we're offering a special price for three job postings, one-month resumé access and logos on job ads ... so there's always something new to discuss.

Mirela Jimmy, you're very faint. Oh, this is Mirela by the way.

Jimmy Hang on ... Is that better?

Mirela Yes, it's fine again now.

Jimmy Can we speed up a little and discuss first meetings with the key accounts? There's another conference call booked for this room in ten minutes, so we can't run over.

All Yeah, no problem. / Fine. No problem.

Jimmy In your initial meeting, you need to make sure they've seen the demo for posting ads. What's useful is to send it to them on a CD a few days before the meeting.

Angelika So you're saying we don't have to go through the demo in the meeting?

Jimmy Normally not ... no. A few years ago, we always had to train them on the software, but now it's much more user-friendly and people are more familiar with form-filling and making payments online.

Mirela This is Mirela again. What do we do about price?

Jimmy OK. What happens is ... an offer is made according to the approximate number of postings the client will make in a month. Is that clear?

Mirela Yeah, that's clear. We've already started putting offers together but I just wanted to check ... And how is all this packaged?

Angelika Hello? ... I can't hear Mirela!

Mirela ... Is that better?

Angelika Yes, you're back again now.

Jimmy Well, to answer Mirela's question ... Basically, it's essential to tell them about our advantages over newspaper ads, the resumé and candidate filtering tool, the fact that responses received to ads can either be accessed online or directly sent to their email address – that's to name just a few.

Angelika Jimmy, could you slow down a bit? We're having problems following you.

Jimmy No problem. I'll email you our key account marketing information. You should read this through thoroughly and contact me if anything's still unclear.

Mirela OK. There's one last thing I wanted to ask ...

45

1

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

B I'm afraid I didn't catch that last bit.

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

B Sorry Veronica, this is hopeless. It's a really bad line.

A OK. I'll hang up and call you on the landline in five minutes.

2

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

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

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

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

A Sure, no problem.

3

A Beatriz? Is that you?

B Yes, how did you ...?

A I recognized your number on the display. Look, I'm sorry, but I have someone on the other line. Can I call you back?

B Yes, I'm around for another hour, then I have a meeting.

A OK, speak to you in a few minutes then.

46

Visitor ... So, Robert, what measures have been taken to improve your communication procedure with your clients, now that you've expanded and introduced shift work?

Robert Well, one long-term measure has been to invest in some help-desk software. But until that arrives we're working with quite a new, but ... er ... basic idea.

Visitor Can you tell me something about that?

Robert OK. Each day we have a 'man of the day'. This is always one person from the early shift and one from the late shift, one on each, yeah? These two employees check the emails and prioritize them. They also handle all the phone calls from the clients.

Visitor So how do they prioritize them?

Robert Well, at the moment, the emails are simply prioritized by being flagged. This does have its disadvantages, though. When more employees have access to the inbox, some emails get filed away and overlooked! Then we're in trouble ...

Visitor Oh ... yes, I see your point.

Robert ... Right. So our 'man of the day' has to prioritize the emails by content. If an email is connected to our auto warning system – that's a system that monitors our interfaces and feeds our clients with critical information – erm, that email has to be dealt with immediately. Then the employee checks and works on emails that the client has flagged as high priority ... and finally ... emails which are so-called 'show-stoppers' are highlighted.

Visitor Show-stoppers?

Robert Yeah, those problems that are going to affect our client's daily work and could cause delays, which obviously costs a great deal of money in the airline industry.

Visitor And how do you know what's been worked on and what's still outstanding?

Robert At the moment I speak directly to the 'man of the day'.

Visitor I see. What sort of difference will this new help-desk software make?

Robert Well, it should make a tremendous difference. It will assign a so-called 'trouble ticket' to each task or open item. As the item is being worked on, the status is updated and we can track what's being worked on, how it's being worked on, and what's already been done to it. So, for example, if a similar problem occurs, we can look back to see how we solved it last time.

Visitor It sounds as if this software will be very helpful for you.

Robert That's right. Not only for us, but in time it should be possible for our clients to receive the trouble tickets too, so they can follow the progress of the problem and not constantly have to call us to see how we're doing ...

Unit 12

47

1

... I'm in charge of a sales team based in Lille. Most of them are French speakers, of course ... you might think I'd prefer it if everyone spoke in English, but in fact I've been anti the whole idea ever since they brought the policy in. I told them why we were worried about it, but they don't listen, they refused to modify the policy in any way ... and now that it's been implemented, we've got real problems ... just as I predicted. They know I've always been hostile to this policy ... and I'm very critical, I admit it ... but one of the reasons is that I'm genuinely concerned about misunderstandings ... and I told my manager that my team weren't sure about trying out their language skills and doing everything in English, but she was all for it ... so what can you do? But things do go wrong ... last week we had to order up 15,000 new catalogues from the Paris office, one of my salespeople phoned them and we ended up with 50,000 – a complete waste of time and money. OK, in that example, it wasn't the end of the world, but it shows the kind of thing that can happen. I say, if two people speak French, let them speak French, otherwise, you know ...

2

When they introduced the language programme a couple of years ago, I think most people were quite positive about learning English though I personally had a few concerns. Anyway, they put on lots of courses for people who needed to develop their English ... but in my department – technical support – we ran into a few problems, especially just after it was introduced. Most of my team are not really natural language learners ... basically they are techies, and they weren't very keen on having to speak English all the time. They were very resistant to the idea of using English in meetings and especially on the phone. But in fact, it's OK. They found it pretty hard to start with – some of them were quite anxious about it, especially the older ones – but now they've been speaking English for a while, it's getting easier, and they've actually improved quite a lot. We can now deal with support calls from Spain, Italy and Finland, too, and I'm optimistic that we'll be able to take on more work in the near future.

3

... Well, as head of the training department, I was asked to carry out a review of language use in the company, and when it was completed, we came up with the idea of a single language policy. There was a real problem ... we had three different

company languages ... in meetings, you would get a mix of languages, or the majority language would dominate ... and all the documentation had to be translated, so we had an army of translators and interpreters, and there was just so much paperwork, so much waste ... So that was basically why we were in favour of the new policy. At the start, people were naturally apprehensive and a few people were against it – but it was nothing serious. I think most of the staff appreciated it was the right thing to do and they were very receptive to the whole idea. Now ... I think it's all working out very well. Very few people have dropped out of the courses. We've already achieved a lot, and our different offices are communicating much better as far as I can tell ... Ask me again in a year.

48

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

I'd like to pass the next point over to Imran, who has been working closely with the consultants on the subject of bottom-up management.

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

... Normally when change takes place, this is decided and implemented by senior management. However, to make the changes work we need the enthusiasm, motivation and energy from everyone who will be affected by those changes. Let's digress for a moment and look at this in more detail. Our idea is to give everyone the opportunity to propose changes which will benefit themselves and the company. We're proposing a Friday afternoon

ideas forum where employees can put forward their suggestions for change. Each department nominates someone to present the most popular ideas to senior management, along with a business plan or some sort of proof that benefits can be gained. The first forum will be on Friday the 24th at 3.30. I'll be visiting our suppliers in Bradford on that day, so Rachel will be here to lead the session.

You may be wondering if this will work – Friday afternoons are free for most of our employees. We're convinced the opportunities outweigh the disadvantages of staying at work longer. We must see this as a step towards becoming a more effective company. It's crucial to get the employees on our side ... and we need to emphasize that there will be money available for remuneration ... which could be paid if we see real results after the changes are implemented. This last point is probably going to be difficult to administer at the beginning but the consultants had an example of remuneration scales for us to consider.

I'm sure some of you are sceptical of the consultants' proposals, but we're calling on you to be positive – pass this information on and create enthusiasm ... sell the idea of empowerment to our staff and highlight the rewards this could bring us all. Later this year we'll be reassessed to see how effective the changes are ...

49

1

- A What do you think about changing the team meeting to Friday afternoons?
- B I have some reservations about it. People on flexitime often choose to leave early on Fridays. And concentration probably won't be as good at the end of the week ...

2

- A If you ask me, this is just a way of getting rid of staff.
- B I can see both sides of the argument. Management want to streamline the company's operation but employees are naturally worried about possible job cuts.

3

- A I can't believe they're going to make us all learn Spanish.
- B It sounds interesting – I like the idea of having a common language for the company – but people who aren't confident in their language skills might find it difficult.

4

- A Do you think this latest proposal is a good thing?
- B Mm. I'm not sure about it. Is management confident that extending our office hours will actually improve the service?

5

- A How do you feel about relocating to Vienna?
- B I need to think about it. It's a very important decision to make.

50

1

- A Your project is finishing at the end of this week, isn't it?
- B In theory, yes, but I might have to spend a bit more time on it – there are bound to be a few loose ends to tie up, there always are. But there probably won't be that much to do, so there's a good chance I'll be free in ten days or so.

2

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

3

- A Cristina, I'm still in Ecuador. I'm just calling to say I definitely won't be able to speak at the conference on Friday.
- B Things are still bad, are they?
- A Yes, and it'll probably take a few more days at least to sort everything out. Perhaps I'll be able to get back next week sometime, I don't really know.
- B OK. Then I'll get Bill to stand in for you – obviously I need someone who will definitely be there. Is that OK with you?
- A Yes, that's fine.

Unit 13

51

Interviewer So what difference will the Internet have on the way people buy music?

Producer Well, like everywhere else, downloads of singles are growing rapidly in Ireland. They accounted for about 45% of singles sold last year – and that was from legal sites like iTunes. The real figure for downloads is probably a lot higher when you think of filesharing, P2P and so on. So ... it is a problem for the music stores, but they aren't too worried ... Sales of singles in-store have dropped slightly, but album sales haven't crashed like they have in the UK ... And overall, turnover has stayed more or less the same.

Interviewer So why is that ... if music sales in the rest of Europe have fallen substantially, why hasn't there been a significant drop here?

Producer I think it's the way we think of our music ... and we think in terms of albums, not singles. It could all change, of course, but for the moment, it's albums that people want. The number of people with broadband is growing gradually, but there are still lots of places where broadband isn't available, so it's a lot quicker just to drive to the local music store.

Interviewer As a music producer, do you see the Internet as a threat?

Producer Yes and no. P2P and filesharing will always be a problem for the big music retailers ... But I think the Internet is a fantastic tool ... not just for letting people hear your music ... think of artists like Gnarl Barkley and Arctic Monkeys ... If you want to make a single yourself and get yourself heard, broadband and digital technology make it a lot easier. And it means that the number of artists has risen substantially – people are listening to different sounds and that can only be a good thing.

52

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

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

Yari Interesting ... What did you find out?

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

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

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

Yari What's that in terms of growth?

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

Renata That sounds very promising ...

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

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

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

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

Renata Ah, OK ... thanks.

Caroline Yes. Simon claimed that last year blog advertising accounted for ... 81.4% of collective spending on user-generated media, but, roughly speaking, by 2010 it'll only be 39.7%.

Renata So how should we interpret this drop?

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

Yari Can we look at the figures?

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

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

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

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

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

53

1

- A Have you heard the news?
- B No ... What?
- A Apparently, Gabriel is leaving the company and moving to France.
- B Surely not!
- A Anna says that he bought a house and vineyard when he was on holiday there last month.
- B Are you sure?
- A Well, rumour has it he's planning to produce wine and he's been doing a wine-making course after work!

2

- A You'll never guess what I heard ...?
- B No ... What?
- A Well ... You know that Dimitri went away on business last week and took one of the company's laptops with him?
- B Yeah, but that's standard procedure.
- A I know, but according to Sam, when Dimitri arrived back in Athens he was in such a hurry to get home, he forgot the laptop and left it in baggage reclaim at the airport!
- B Oh, I don't believe it! Did he get it back?
- A Not yet, no!

3

- A Did you hear the latest about Sandra and Leroy?
- B I heard they'd had some sort of argument.
- A Yeah, a big one ... Apparently, they were both named salesperson of the month and Leroy refused to share the prize.
- B No! That's really childish.
- A Well, I spoke to Robert and he told me that Leroy thinks he's better than everyone else since he got that award ...

- B That's nonsense!
 A I know ... but it's created bad feeling in the whole team!
 B I'm not surprised.

54

1

- John** ... but it wasn't really as good as we had expected. Anyway, Peter, what happened to you last week?
Peter Oh, sorry. Didn't Lisa explain?
John Explain what? I haven't seen her.
Peter Oh, Well, I'm sorry I missed the meeting – I did want to be there – but I was delayed at the airport ... there was nothing I could do.
Anna Was that on Thursday? When there was a bomb scare?
Peter Yes ... it was hopeless ... the whole place was at a standstill ... I didn't get home till after midnight.
Anna I saw it on TV – it looked chaotic.
Peter Yeah, it was ...

2

- John** OK ... Peter, have you got the October figures?
Peter Yes, ... Starting with Europe ... It looks good ... overall monthly revenue has risen by 11% to 218,000.
Anna That's not bad ...
Peter Well, October's often a good month ...
John Is South America doing any better?
Peter A little, but sales are still down by 3% ... The Venezuelan issue is still ongoing – supply chain problems are continuing ... but we're working on it.
John OK – so a mixed picture ... what about ...

3

- Anna** ... Peter, you haven't mentioned the US figures. Is there any reason for that? After all, it is the biggest market.
Peter Yes, you're quite right. There's a slight problem with the US figures – they aren't available yet ... um ... well, they haven't been finished.
John Mmm – that's not the first time.
Peter No ... I have spoken to Paul about this ... Anyway, I'll definitely circulate them as soon as they become available ... that'll be tomorrow, or the day after at the latest ...

4

- John** ... Yeah, and I'm just wondering if there's anything else you'd like to bring up.
Anna Yes, there is actually. I need to know if there's any news on that fibre-optic order.
John The one you mentioned last week?
Anna Yes.
John Peter, any info on that? ... I appreciate you weren't here last week.
Peter Yes ... Marian mentioned it earlier ... The order has been sent ... It will come.

Anna I do need to know when it's coming because my team is having real problems – we've got customers calling all the time, complaining about the delay.

Peter OK. OK ... As I said ... the order has been sent. I've checked and it'll arrive either tomorrow or the day after.

Anna Fine ... I hope you're right. Could you let me know as soon as it gets in ...?

Unit 14

55

1

If you're working, or doing business, outside your home country, understanding the local culture is essential. You need to be informed about the culture you're working in and be prepared to be tolerant of different customs. And, you know, you can make some very expensive mistakes if you get it wrong.

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

2

We run a training centre for employees of multinational companies who are going to be sent abroad for work ... for sometimes up to three years ... And they come from many different companies and industries – telecoms, engineering, computers, banking and so on. Our aim is to help people be more aware of the culture they are going to. This involves all kinds of things. First of all, we give them a basic understanding of the country they are going to – its political system, the social structure, basic cultural norms. We talk about any issues that people are sensitive

about – it's surprising how many countries have taboo subjects, often political, that you just don't talk about.

In the second part of the course, we look at the most significant cultural differences between the person's home country and the host country, and we focus particularly on aspects of the work culture – how meetings are conducted, how agreements are made, attitudes to time, the hierarchy in the workplace and how respectful of authority and seniority employees are, how important personal relationships are – all things which will help them adjust to working in the local culture.

And at the end – when they finally arrive at their destination – they will be far more sensitive to important local issues ... And their colleagues and the people they meet through work will have much more respect for them.

56

1

Dieter There was one situation I remember while I was living in Korea. You know I went out there to help with an engineering project?

Tonya Yeah ...

Dieter Well, I was responsible for a team of telecom engineers, great guys. We all got along very well and I was welcomed into the company as if I'd lived over there for years. As time went by, I noticed that things weren't being done that I'd requested them to do.

Tonya Oh?

Dieter Yes. If I asked someone to do something and they said 'yes', nine out of ten times it wasn't done. That was when I was aware we had a problem.

Tonya Go on ...

Dieter At first I thought it might be a language problem.

Tonya Well, that's understandable.

Dieter Yeah. But it was actually nothing to do with language. And it wasn't until I talked to a Korean friend that I realized what was wrong.

Tonya What had you done?

Dieter Nothing. I told my friend what had happened and he explained that there were two problems ... First, my team didn't want to refuse my request due to respect for my seniority ... But also, they didn't want to give an argument why they couldn't do what I wanted. So their answer was 'yes'.

Tonya I see. So, you mean, they didn't want to admit they couldn't do what you'd asked them to do ... or to show negativity towards you by saying 'no'?

Dieter Exactly. Luckily, I found this out before I confronted anyone about the jobs that hadn't been done.

Tonya And did you resolve it?

Dieter Yes. After that I was a lot more careful what I asked my team to do and how I phrased the request.

2

Gaby ... I was responsible for finalizing the new office building in Warsaw along with my manager in the Netherlands. While I was liaising with both the Polish employees and my manager I discovered our two cultures had quite different approaches.

Nico Go on ...

Gaby Well, for example, when we were finalizing the plans for the office space. My manager wanted glass partitions but the Polish employees hated the idea.

Nico Oh?

Gaby Yeah ... but then I realized they hadn't actually told him this – they told me and hoped I'd tell him on their behalf!

Nico So what did you do?

Gaby I told him! It seems that none of them wanted to question an authority figure. So that was the first problem solved.

Nico There were more?

Gaby Oh yes. Another situation occurred when I was mentoring a recent IT graduate, Magda. While we were developing a new database, I gave her the job of asking staff for their views on the database ... I even put together a few sample questions.

Nico What happened?

Gaby Well, she came back with very little information. I was extremely disappointed ... What's more, the information she had only related to the questions I'd written. She hadn't written any questions of her own to get useful information for us. I didn't know what to do. All in all it was a difficult situation.

Nico So what did you do?

Gaby Well, in the end I asked Anna, a Polish colleague.

Nico What was her view?

Gaby Well, despite Magda's qualifications, she was still the most junior person in the department, so apparently more senior people would be unwilling to answer her questions.

Nico Oh, a hierarchy thing?

Gaby Yes. It came about because of the lack of information about why we were questioning them. It seems that Magda also wasn't comfortable with the task, so she didn't add to the questions I suggested.

Nico So how did you solve the problem?

Gaby Well, I sent out a memo explaining what Magda would be doing and why. I also noted Magda's qualifications and wrote the memo in English. The reason being that Magda needed to be respected by her colleagues and English gave the note neutrality.

Nico And ...?

Gaby It really surprised me, but it worked.

57

1

A Have you read any good books recently?

B Well, I don't get much time to read, but I've just finished a novel called *Shadow of the Wind*.

C I read that – I really enjoyed it.

A What's it about?

B It's about a boy's quest to find the truth about an author who's mysteriously disappeared. It's set in Barcelona just after the Second World War. It's very atmospheric – I'd definitely recommend it.

C Absolutely. It's very well written and it's a real page-turner too. I took it on holiday with me and I couldn't put it down!

2

A ... and I must admit I'm completely hooked on it. I've watched this soap opera since it began ten years ago and I can't miss an episode!

B Sounds like you're addicted. I don't really have a favourite programme. But sometimes I just like to unwind in front of the TV, you know, after a bad day at work. The problem is I tend to channel-hop ... there are so many channels available.

C I don't have much time to watch TV. So much of it is just so bad. The live sport is good though.

A Yes ... When the World Cup was broadcast I recorded every match so I didn't miss any!

B Me too! What I really can't stand is all this reality TV. You know, like *Big Brother*.

A Oh ... I quite like that.

3

A ... It sounds great ... I mean, listen to this review ... 'A blockbuster of a movie which became a box office hit overnight. It's full of brilliant special effects with a star-studded cast and a gripping storyline that will have you on the edge of your seat from the beginning!'

B Well, I've seen it and it was really good. The whole thing is set in the future and it's about a group of historians who look back to the twenty-first century and analyse what we're doing and how we're behaving now.

C And were you 'on the edge of your seat'?

B I was, actually, yeah. I mean, OK, it's basically a science-fiction film, but it's very well done. It's very entertaining – there's quite a lot of humour in it. I don't want to spoil it for you, but there's a really surprising twist at the end – you must go and see it.

Unit 15

58

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

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

Interviewer In what way?

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

Interviewer So how does it work?

Manager Well, in 360°, instead of just your boss appraising you, you have several different people giving feedback ...

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

Interviewer And what do you ask them?

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

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

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

Interviewer Right. And does it really help change?

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

59

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

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

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

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

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

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

Angelina Of course.

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

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

Thomas OK.

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

Thomas Er, no ... not really.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Angelina You need to start by ...

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

Thomas Thanks.

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

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

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

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

Angelina I'll check the budget.

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

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

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

60

1

A Hello. Peter Li?

B Yes, that's right.

A Nice to meet you. I'm Jacqueline, Florence Talbot's PA.

B Ah, I think we've spoken on the phone.

A That's right. Please take a seat. Can I get you something to drink? Coffee or tea?

B A cup of tea would be nice.

A Certainly. Florence is just taking a phone call. She'll be out in a few minutes.

2

A Hello, Andrea ... welcome to HGP Birgit. Let me take your coat.

B Thank you.

A You can leave your bag over there, if you like.

B Thanks.

A Did you have any trouble finding us?

B No, not at all, but the traffic was terrible.

A Yes, it's always like that on Fridays. I hope you managed to avoid the roadworks.

B Well, I went via the industrial zone ...

3

A Hello. You must be our new technical adviser?

B Yes, that's right. Tom Schofield.

A Nice to meet you. Michel is in a meeting at the moment, but he'll be right with you.

B OK, no problem.

A So you've driven over from England today?

B Yes, I had quite a good journey. You have good roads in France.

A What was the weather like when you left? It's been raining all day here.

B Oh, it was much worse than this!

A Really?! ... I can't imagine how it could possibly be ...

Unit 16

61

Interviewer So you're quite happy with the idea of people in your organization taking a career break?

Employer Yes, although we prefer to use the term 'flexiwork', which is a better description.

Interviewer How did the idea come about? I mean, a lot of employers wouldn't like the idea of their staff disappearing for a year or so ...

Employer We introduced flexiwork at a time when our industry was having a bit of a downturn ... things were quiet ... it meant we could cut the wage bill but also retain staff for when the situation improved again.

Interviewer So it was basically just a cost-cutting measure?

Employer No, it was more of an experiment ... one that wouldn't be too expensive ... and it's been very successful ... in fact it's now official company policy.

Interviewer Do you think this is something that other companies will take up?

Employer I'm not sure – I think we're lucky because we specialize in consultancy. A lot of our work is project-based, and our consultants do three months here, six months there ... so it's quite easy for us to fit this kind of thing in.

Interviewer I think most people would see the advantages for the employee, but are there any other benefits for the company?

Employer Well, yes, apart from the cost savings that I mentioned before, it does a lot for our retention rate, so we don't get nearly so many resignations. If someone wants to broaden their horizons by having a long career break, they can have one, no problem. The other advantage is when we're recruiting, when we're looking for new talent. If we say we don't just allow career breaks, we actively encourage them – as part of your career development – that's very attractive to prospective employees.

Interviewer Presumably there are some people who go off for a few months and don't come back?

Employer For some people, yes, it acts as a catalyst for them to head off in a new direction ... but for most people, it gives them a chance to recharge their batteries and they return with renewed enthusiasm. From the point of view of motivation, it's great, it's a win-win situation. And in terms of personal development, people come back having learned something new – maybe a new language – or they've developed a soft skill like leadership or whatever ... but the bottom line is, those new skills are of value to the company as well.

Manager So what you're saying is you want to take an extended holiday?

Lena No, not really ... I'd see it as a sabbatical. A journalist friend has invited me to be her photographer on her next assignment. A team is heading out to the Antarctic to document the impact of global warming.

Manager And you'd like several months off to accompany her?

Lena Yes. It's been a long-term goal of mine to do something like this. I did photography before I moved into IT, but I never saw it as a career. The thing is, I've been inspired by the people I studied with who've become professional photographers.

Manager Hmm. So ... you take nine months off and we're left without a technical author and no team leader.

Lena I know, but it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Manager But how do we benefit from this?

Lena Well, I think it's a win-win situation. I'd enjoy developing my creative side ... I'd fulfil a lifelong ambition ... so I'd come back to my job feeling more contented and satisfied with what I'd achieved in life ...

Manager Yes, and ...?

Lena And the experience I'd gain would be invaluable for managing the team.

Manager This isn't common practice, as far as I know. I'm not sure if ...

Lena I understand your misgivings – what if I don't come back, and so on – but the plus points are that I'd be working in extreme conditions with a team of strangers, and my leadership skills would be put to the test ...

Manager Mmm, I'm not convinced – go on.

Lena But there are also other benefits for you. I intend to put on an exhibition of my work after the trip and I'd like to do this with the support of the company. It would mean we'd get a lot of media exposure as well as great advertising opportunities.

Manager Yes, that sounds interesting; it's certainly worth thinking about.

Lena I really feel that this is a chance I can't afford to miss.

Manager Well, this would set a precedent. I'll have to discuss it with HR ... It's not going to be easy to persuade them. I'm afraid your arguments aren't very convincing from a business point of view.

Lena That's hardly fair. I've never refused to take on more work or to do overtime when it's been necessary. I've been extremely loyal when lots of employees went to the new competition and ... well ...

Manager OK. Fair point. I'll see what I can do.

Lena I'd really appreciate it if you could speak to HR and initiate a meeting for all of us.

Manager OK. I think I can manage that, Lena.

1

A Hi, Sami. Where were you yesterday? You missed the meeting.

B Didn't anyone tell you? I took the day off. I thought it was about time I used up some of my overtime.

A What did you do?

B Nothing much. I caught up on some DIY jobs I started in the summer!

A Not a very exciting way to spend your day off!

B I know. I didn't really enjoy it, but it needed doing.

2

A Are you back from your holiday already?

B Yes, we just had a long weekend away.

A How was it?

B It poured with rain the whole time!

A Oh, no.

B It didn't really matter. We were on a three-day spa break.

A Nice.

B Yeah, I wasn't particularly keen on going at first – I thought I'd be bored – but I must say it was great for relaxing, switching off.

A Oh, lovely ...

3

A Did you have a good weekend?

B Yes, we managed to get away for the day on Saturday.

A Anywhere nice?

B We visited my partner's family. It made a real change. They all love golf, so I was able to get a game in.

Interviewer Can you tell us something about your placement with SPARK?

Consultant Of course ... what would you like to know?

Interviewer Well, maybe you could start by telling us where you were based and what you did.

Consultant OK. Well, we were based in Manila, in a small office, working with a mixed-nationality team – some locals, but mainly British and Swedish expats. Our task was fundamentally to strengthen the SPARK organization, which involved working through a lot of business process documentation. Something I was already very familiar with.

Interviewer So what did you find most enjoyable during your placement?

Consultant Well, it was a very different experience for me and I liked the fact that there were immediate results. It was great to see real changes taking place in front of me.

Interviewer I can imagine ... You can actually see your work benefiting other people. So what did you feel you gained from this experience, personally?

Consultant Well ... I feel I've returned with new skills and ... I think I'm more confident than when I left ... and I know I can achieve things on my own, make good decisions. It was good just to spend some time in a developing country ... you get a real sense of how important developing countries are becoming for Western business generally. So I feel that the knowledge and the cultural awareness that I've developed during my time with ADP ... erm ... has not only benefited SPARK and VSO now, but I'm sure they'll benefit Accenture in the future. Overall, it's been a fantastic experience. I'd recommend it to any of my colleagues.