

10

New business

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about starting up a new business
- Asking about work and life
- Asking a favour
- Avoiding saying 'no'
- Talking about activities and results using the present perfect simple and continuous

Case study

- Using contacts to help in business

Starting point

- 1 What attracts people to starting up their own business?
- 2 What are the challenges?
- 3 Are business start-ups in some sectors of the economy likely to be more successful than others? Why?

Working with words | Starting up a new business

- 1 39▷ James Murray Wells and Jurga Zilinskiene are both very successful owners of business start-ups. Listen to them talking about their experience and complete this table. What do you think the most important factor in their success was?



James Murray Wells



Jurga Zilinskiene

Nature of business

Sources of finance

Biggest problem

Advice

- 2 Match these nouns and noun phrases from audio 39▷ to definitions 1–12.

*gap in the market business plan venture capitalist stake
return on investment turnover business model business angel
start-up capital network of contacts financial backing loan*

- 1 someone providing money for a business: _____
- 2 share in a business – you gain if it succeeds: _____
- 3 profit from shareholding: _____
- 4 opportunity to sell something not yet available: _____
- 5 document containing financial estimates for a business: _____
- 6 group of people who can be helpful to your business: _____
- 7 someone providing experience and money for a business: _____
- 8 support in the form of money: _____
- 9 money to fund a new company: _____
- 10 amount of business done in a given period of time: _____
- 11 money which is lent or borrowed: _____
- 12 the way a business operates to make money: _____

**3 Complete this advice about funding a start-up with the phrases in 2.**

When you have spotted a ¹ _____ for a product or service, one of the biggest challenges is to raise enough ² _____ to get your new business started. You may be able to get a bank ³ _____ if you can show you have a good ⁴ _____ for the operation of your business, plus a ⁵ _____ that contains detailed financial estimates. Alternatively, you could approach a ⁶ _____ or ⁷ _____ to secure the funding you need. Either way, your investors will want a ⁸ _____ in the new company – maybe 50% or even more – and will want to feel confident they will get a high ⁹ _____. Once your business is started, it is a good idea to build up a ¹⁰ _____ who might be able to help you find further ¹¹ _____ until your ¹² _____ has increased enough for you to make a profit.

4 40▶ Listen to eight extracts from James' and Jurga's talks. What adjectives come after adverbs 1–8?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 hugely _____ | 5 totally _____ |
| 2 incredibly _____ | 6 completely _____ |
| 3 extremely _____ | 7 absolutely _____ |
| 4 really _____ | 8 really _____ |

Read the Tip below. What type of adjective – gradable / ungradable – goes with the adverbs

- a *hugely, extremely, incredibly?* b *totally, completely, absolutely?* c *really?*

5 Arrange these adjectives into two groups that match the groups in 4. Think of other adjectives to add to each group.

*kind terrible nice fantastic expensive impossible outrageous
useless risky complex profitable ridiculous high wonderful*

6 Work with a partner. Using an adverb and a suitable adjective, take turns to respond to these statements.

- The bank has refused to give us a loan.
- What's it like working for yourself?
- I've just been nominated for the 'Entrepreneur of the Year' award.
- Our business start-up is losing €50,000 a week.
- One day we'll be bigger than Microsoft.
- The venture capitalists wanted an 80% stake in the company.

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 10 on page 120.

7 Work in small groups. Choose one of these business ideas (or think of your own) and discuss questions 1–3.

- A collapsible scooter that you can take on the train or put in boot of your car to use in busy cities to avoid traffic. You plan to import these scooters from the US and sell them to customers in your own country.
- A fleet of self-service pay-as-you-go cars for urban commuters. Users are given a special PIN number to access the cars (which are located in designated parking places). Users pay a membership fee and then have to pay a fee based on the amount of time they use the car.

- What's your opinion of the business idea? How successful could it be?
- What help might someone need setting up this business? Who could they approach for finance? What advice would you give?
- What problems or challenges might the business face?

Tip | Gradable and ungradable adjectives

Gradable adjectives describe qualities that can exist in different strengths, e.g. something can be more or less good or old.

Ungradable adjectives describe qualities that can't exist in different strengths, e.g. something is either perfect or impossible or it is not.

Business communication skills

Context

Maintaining contacts with business colleagues is important as their help or expertise may be useful at a later date. Three businesspeople have contact with former colleagues and ask for assistance with a business venture.

Socializing | Asking about work and life | Asking a favour



- 1 Think of the last time you had a chance encounter with someone you hadn't seen or heard from for a long time. Describe the meeting. How did you feel? What did you talk about?
- 2 **41▶** Read the *Context*. Listen to the three conversations and choose a piece of information from each column to describe each one. Write the number of the conversation in the correct space. (There are two extra pieces of information in each column.)

Situation	Relationship	Update	Favour requested
A phone call at work ____	College friends ____	Found present job by chance ____	Contacts in Internet insurance business ____
At a trade fair ____	Ex-work colleagues ____	Married a French woman ____	New local member of staff ____
In a taxi queue ____	Business acquaintances ____	Had a promotion ____	Business contacts ____
At an airport ____	Customer / supplier ____	Business has lost customers ____	A new job ____
In a coffee shop ____	Competitors ____	Works in car industry ____	Venture capital ____

- 3 Which conversation is
 - a more formal? ____
 - b neutral? ____
 - c less formal? ____
- 4 Match 1–8 to a–h to make phrases.

1 I'm not sure ... ____	a work?
2 I haven't ... ____	b looking for someone to work with us ...
3 What have ... ____	c the reason why I'm calling.
4 How's ... ____	d think about it.
5 It's good to ... ____	e seen you for ages.
6 That's actually ... ____	f you been doing?
7 The thing is, I'm ... ____	g hear from you.
8 I'll certainly ... ____	h if you remember me.
- 5 **41▶** Listen to conversation 1 again and check your answers.
- 6 Put the phrases in 4 into these categories.
 - a Greeting an old friend / colleague: _____
 - b Asking about work / life: _____
 - c Changing the subject to introduce a favour: _____
 - d Asking a favour: _____
 - e Responding to a request for a favour: _____
- 7 Turn to audio script **41▶** on page 159. Underline all the phrases in conversation 2 and 3 which match the categories in 6. Compare the level of formality of the phrases used in all three conversations.

Tip | anyway

Use *anyway* to return to an earlier topic, change the subject or end the conversation.

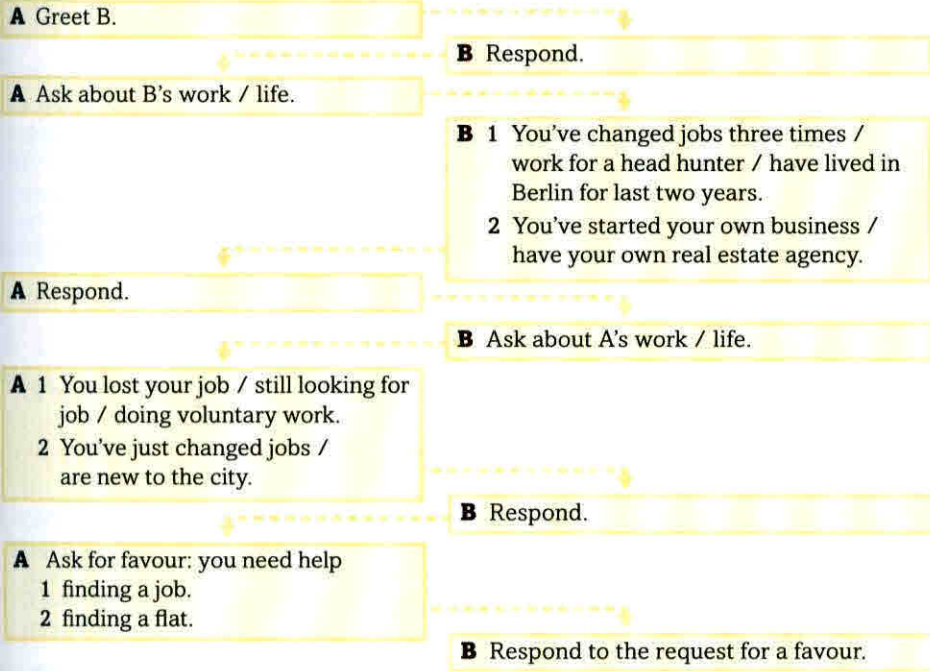
Anyway, you mentioned changes. What's been happening?

Anyway, what have you been up to?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 10** on page 120.



8 Work with a partner. Have two conversations using the flow chart. Take turns to be Student A. Use the prompts numbered 1 for the first conversation and the prompts numbered 2 for the second.



9 Write down three true and three untrue events which have happened to you over the last few years.

- 1 Work with a partner. Have a conversation. Greet each other and find out as much information about your partner's recent past as possible.
- 2 Decide which information was true / untrue.
- 3 Check with your partner if you were correct.

» Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Greeting old friends / acquaintances

I'm not sure if you remember me. I haven't seen you for ages ... It's good to hear from you. What are you doing here? When was the last time we saw each other? It's been a long time since we've been in contact.

Asking about work / life

What about you? What have you been doing / been up to? How's work? How's life treating you? How's business with you? Are you still ...?

Changing subject to introduce a favour

That's actually the reason why I'm calling. By the way, could you do me a favour? With that in mind, maybe I could ask you for a favour.

Asking a favour

The thing is, I'm looking for someone to ... Could you put me in touch with ... since you ...? We are looking for ... and I wondered if ...

Responding to a request for a favour

I'll certainly think about it. Let's chat / talk about that over dinner. It sounds an interesting proposal. Send me the details ... That isn't something I can decide on right now.

» Interactive Workbook » Phrasebank

Practically speaking | Avoiding saying 'no'

1 Sometimes when we're asked a favour, we don't like to say 'no' in a direct way. Discuss questions 1–3 with a partner.

- 1 How easy is it for you to say 'no' when someone asks a favour?
- 2 Is it easier to say 'no' to some people than to others and in different situations? Why?
- 3 Which of the *Useful phrases* on page 135 could you use to avoid saying 'no' in a direct way to these favours?
 - a 'Could you do the on-call shift next weekend?'
 - b 'Could you help me look into this customer complaint we've received?'

2 Work with a partner. Take turns to respond to these favours. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 135.

- 1 'Do you think you could have a look at the results from our customer survey and prepare a report for the team meeting on Monday?'
- 2 'I'm supposed to be making a presentation at the investor relations meeting next Friday but I want to take a day's leave. Could you stand in for me?'
- 3 'Could you stay late tonight and help with the stocktaking?'
- 4 'We need someone to help at the conference next weekend. Are you free?'

Language at work | Present perfect simple and continuous

1 Match these extracts from audio 41▶ to situations 1–3. What tense is used in each situation?

- a Our company **has secured** a huge contract with Mobelitec.
- b GBF **have been keeping** me very busy.
- c Since you left GBF, life's **been** extremely hectic.

- 1 a state that started in the past and is unchanged ____
- 2 a continuous activity that started in the past and is still going on ____
- 3 a finished activity with an end result ____

2 Read these two sentences. Which suggests that something is temporary? Which suggests that something is permanent? What tenses are used?

- 1 **Since** last month, I've **been commuting** between France and Belgium.
- 2 She's **lived** in Brussels **for** years.

3 What is the difference between the use of *for* and *since* in the sentences in 2?

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 10** on page 121.

4 Choose the best ending (a or b) for each sentence and explain your choice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 I've worked out a final price,
I've been working out a final price | a but I'm still waiting for a couple of figures.
b and it's lower than the original estimate. |
| 2 I've been calling Mrs Fischer
I've called Mrs Fischer | a but I can't get through to her.
b and left her a message. |
| 3 I've worked with Karen
I've been working with Karen | a because her supervisor is on sick leave.
b for over 30 years. |
| 4 We've been hiring
We've hired | a a manager and three supervisors.
b people for the new factory. |

5 Work with a partner. You are planning to set up a new business. You have both been responsible for doing various tasks. Student A, turn to File 22 on page 142. Student B, follow the instructions below.

Student B

- 1 Use these prompts to ask questions about the progress your partner has made. What two tasks has your partner actually completed?
 - sort out insurance
 - decide on company name
 - phone solicitor
 - do anything about accounting system
 - set up website
- 2 Use the information in the table to answer your partner's questions. Say what you have been doing this week and what tasks you have / haven't done.

Ongoing this week	Done	Not done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact estate agents in all possible locations. • Check local newspapers for business premises to rent. • Research transport links in all the possible locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss required features of a business location with business adviser. • Make list of possible business locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to any of the possible locations.

6 Give a short presentation about three or four current activities that you or your company are involved in. For each activity, say how long it has been going on, what has already been achieved and what remains to be done.

Using contacts to help in business

Background

Miho brings bagels to Tokyo

Miho Inagi, an IT graduate, resigned from her safe office job to run her own New York bagel company in the heart of Tokyo. It was a risky decision as bagels weren't well known in Japan when she came up with the idea. To begin with, the company struggled due to lack of advertising. However, this all changed

when an enthusiastic customer wrote a rave review on @bagel café – a website which rates the bagel bakeries in Japan. What differentiates Miho's bagels from others in Tokyo is the authentic choice of toppings – she doesn't bow to Japanese tastes but offers exactly what you'd expect to get in New York.

42► Listen to Miho describe how she moved from computer programming to baking bagels.

Discussion

- 1 Can you think of any Eastern products that have been successfully introduced into Western culture and vice versa?
- 2 What factors might businesses need to consider when introducing a product from another culture?
- 3 How important were contacts and 'favourites' for the success of Miho's business venture?

Task

Work in groups of four. Student A, turn to File 25 on page 143. Student B, turn to File 38 on page 146. Student C, turn to File 43 on page 148. Student D, turn to File 50 on page 149.

You and your colleagues have been chosen to help set up a new division of a company. You have been asked to set up the new division as fast as possible so you need to work together. However, you all have a lot of individual tasks to do to get things up and running. Unfortunately, money, time and resources are tight. You each have three favours you'd like to ask of each other. Read the rules below and try to get the favours granted by your colleagues as fast as you can. The person with all three favours granted first is the winner.

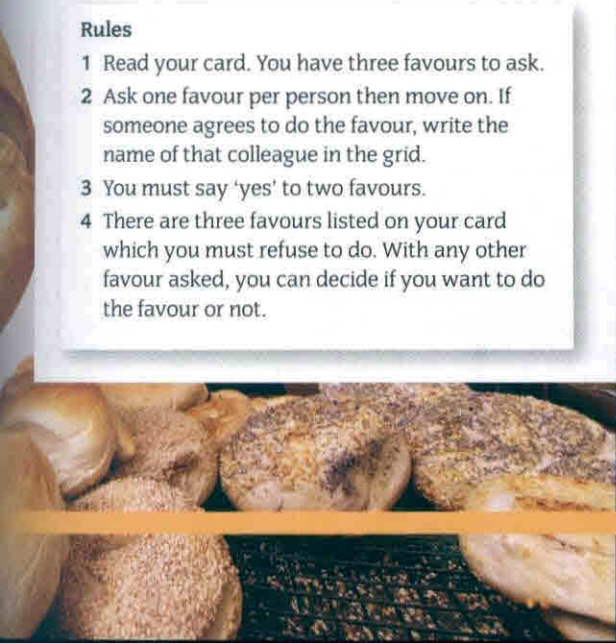
Rules

- 1 Read your card. You have three favours to ask.
- 2 Ask one favour per person then move on. If someone agrees to do the favour, write the name of that colleague in the grid.
- 3 You must say 'yes' to two favours.
- 4 There are three favours listed on your card which you must refuse to do. With any other favour asked, you can decide if you want to do the favour or not.

The Expert View

Starting up a new business requires two kinds of 'personal asset'. Firstly, you have to be tough, and prepared to work long hours, face setbacks, and overcome challenges and disappointments. Secondly, you need some specific business skills. Perhaps the single most important personal quality is the ability to sell. Finding the money to support a new venture is vital, so you must persuade people to invest in your business. Suppliers must be convinced to supply the goods and services you need. And you have to persuade customers who don't know you to buy from you. No matter how good the business idea, without customers it will never succeed.

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Case study

Information files | 19–26

File 19 | Unit 8

Case study, Task, page 53

- By 2007, Russia will have 5% market share of software outsourcing revenue.
- More than 250 global companies are active in Russia-based offshore software development.
- Currently Russia ranks number three in the number of scientists and engineers per capita worldwide.
- There are approximately 250,000 IT professionals in the country.
- The number of newly-graduated IT specialists has risen by 11% this year.
- Scientific talent has attracted western companies to open development centres in Russia: Intel, Sun, Motorola, Siemens.

Advantages of Russia vs Asia

- Russian business hours are in better sync with US and Europe.
- Russia is physically closer to US and Europe – more face-to-face interaction possible.
- Russia has closer cultural affinity with Europe and US.

File 20 | Unit 9

Language at work, Exercise 5, page 58

Student A

You are the manager in a small country office. Student B wants a temporary secondment for six months in a department in a large city office – to get wider experience (and to fill in for someone on maternity leave). Say 'no' to the request at first, but see if you can come to an agreement.

Student B

You work for Student A in a small country office. You have the chance of a temporary secondment for six months in a large city office. This will help you get wider experience while replacing someone on maternity leave. You are prepared to make a lot of compromises to get Student A's agreement.

Talk about:

- A: The negative effects on the day-to-day running of office
B: The positive effects in terms of learning new skills, etc.
- A: The staffing difficulties this would cause
B: The solutions for the staffing problems
- A: The negative effects on B's ability to do the job when B returns
B: The positive effects of the secondment in terms of personal development and experience
- A: The impracticality of a long transfer as opposed to a two-week secondment
B: The impracticality of a two-week secondment as opposed to a long transfer
- A: The possibility of a salary reduction after the secondment
B: The possibility of a salary increase after the secondment
- A: Other outcomes if the secondment was approved
B: Other outcomes if the secondment was not approved

File 21 | Unit 9

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 57

Pair B: Employees

Your company is finding it difficult to keep staff – its competitor has better working conditions. You have spoken to your managers about leaving to join the competition. You don't really want to change jobs but the offer is very attractive. Your managers have invited you to a meeting to discuss whether they can improve working conditions. The areas that the competitor has made attractive to you are

- flexible hours / home working
- better travel expenses
- more perks: fitness club membership, lunch vouchers, new computer
- increased salary
- less bureaucracy in the job
- more training for future promotion.

Discuss these with your managers and see if they can improve your working conditions. Decide which points are important to you and what you want the company to offer. Be ready with some proposals and be prepared to bargain.

File 22 | Unit 10

Language at work, Exercise 5, page 64

Student A

- 1 Use the information in the table to answer your partner's questions. Say what you have been doing this week and what tasks you have / haven't done.

Ongoing this week	Done	Not done
Telephone insurance companies to get quotes.	Write business plan.	Contact solicitor about drawing up legal documents.
Research possible accounting systems.	Check availability of our proposed company name.	
Discuss website with local IT company.		

- 2 Use these prompts to ask questions about the progress your partner has made. What two tasks has your partner actually completed?
 - contact business adviser
 - think about business locations
 - make list of estate agents
 - find information about premises
 - look into transport
 - visit any locations

File 23 | Unit 11

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 68

Procedures for a teleconference

- Make sure room and equipment are available.
- Have a technician on hand in case you have technical problems (and can't solve them yourself).
- Make sure there's an agenda and this has been emailed to the participants ahead of time – the same applies for any documents you may want to refer to.
- Do a roll call – check who is there.
- Encourage participants to state their name before speaking.
- Speak loud and clearly – avoid background noise like rustling papers, mobile phones, coffee cups, scraping chairs.
- Stick to the agenda – keep participants' contributions short.
- Clarify and check everyone understands.
- Summarize points whenever necessary, especially before any decisions are made.
- Encourage the KISS acronym (keep it short and simple).
- Call people by name and location – *Chris (from Milan) what do you think?*
- Vary the tone of your voice, to keep people interested, and be enthusiastic.

File 24 | Unit 11

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 71

An international company is responsible for the check-in systems at airports. There are eight employees in the Technical Support Department and shift work has been introduced. This has been divided into four shifts, with two employees on each shift (four teams of two). In order to make the shift work fair, shifts are rotated, so that each week an employee's shift changes to the later time. This means the same two people do one shift for only one week at a time before it changes. As the team is made up of both new and existing employees, none of the clients are allocated to one particular employee – the employees work for all clients and the team leader distributes the tasks, queries and problems among them as they arise.

The problem

When clients email or call, they never know who they will deal with or if the member of staff will have knowledge of their specific problem. The emails and calls are generally to report problems or bugs, or to ask for support. It is essential that these are prioritized so the most urgent problems are dealt with immediately.

File 25 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

Student A

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Lend me one person from your department for my team – temporary measure.	
Give me some contact names to add to my client mailing list.	
Share a data projector – my finances are too tight to buy one.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Help with next year's budget.
- Help organize an 'office warming' party.
- Substitute colleague at meeting in Brussels.

File 26 | Unit 13

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 81

Student A

	Facts and figures	Comments
No. people surveyed	Just over 4,500	
Type of people	1	2
Survey results		
read blogs	80%	Ads will reach a lot of people
read blogs once a week	3 % (approx. ⁴)	
read blogs weekly for business information	5	6
read weekly on technology topics	57%	
pass on information or content from blogs	70% (approx. 3,150)	Word-of-mouth advertising will be useful
indicate that blogs influence their purchase decisions	7	8
are thinking of starting their own blogs	32%	Growing market!

File 34 | Unit 15

Case study, Task, page 95

Maximuscle

Zef Eisenberg didn't hire an expensive PR agency to deal with the bad press. He invited journalists to the company and spoke to them – showing all the necessary certificates and documentation about his product. This led to him getting a few million pounds of free advertising through the newspaper articles and, as a result, his company took off again. The only negative effect of this was that he didn't have enough stock to cope with the demand. Maximuscle grew exponentially and Zef soon had to find a strong management team to lead the company through the fast expansion. A couple of years later, Zef decided to make his product more appealing to a wider range of consumers. He relabelled the product, making it clearer and less technical. He then did some brand advertising and finally began securing good relations with national chains.

Innocent Drinks

One holiday weekend, they loaded up a van and took the drinks round 50 delicatessens and health shops in their local area. They gave four boxes free to the companies and told them to contact them if they sold. Forty-five of these shops called to order more. The Innocent team then went back to the distributors and gave them a box, telling them how many retail outlets had requested the product. Five years on and 10 million sales later, Innocent drinks are in shops across the country and word is spreading. But despite the overwhelming growth, until last summer, Innocent hadn't spent a penny on advertising. An effective marketing ploy is to distance itself from the big corporates and provide an alternative, 'student' image.

Innocent also gives away drinks to the homeless, plants trees, encourages recycling and donates to the third world, while its entire staff are treated to a snowboarding trip every year, awarded £2,000 for the birth of each child and invited to apply for a £1,000 scholarship to achieve something they've always wanted to do.

File 35 | Unit 13

Case study, Task, page 83

Student B

Myspace.com

Founded: 2003 Users: 100 m

What is it?: Social networking site / friend-making shop

Who started it?: Tom Anderson / Chris DeWolfe

Approximate statistics / facts:

- More page visits in UK than the BBC website
- Growing by 240,000 a day
- 4th most visited website in the world
- Many attractions: adverts, events and chance to upload music
- 2.2 m new music bands have used site
- 2005: website bought by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch for \$580 m

File 36 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 4, page 33

Student A

- 1 You work in the Communications Department and receive a call from an internal customer.
Action to promise: look into problem / call back tomorrow.
- 2 You work in the Customer Services Department and phone the Logistics Department.
Problem: a customer needs its goods earlier than expected.
Further information: a loyal customer has asked if their goods can be sent a week earlier – is this possible?
Deadline: need to let the customer know by tomorrow afternoon at the latest.

File 37 | Unit 3

Language at work, Exercise 4, page 22

- 1 **Student A:** You were unexpectedly called away from the office and left a list of tasks for your colleague to do. It is now 4 p.m. and you are back in the office. Ask your colleague about the tasks on the 'To do' list.
Student B: Decide which two tasks you have done on the 'To do' list, when they were done and what exactly you did. Decide which two tasks you haven't done and think of an explanation why.
- 2 **Student B:** Your colleague has asked you attend a conference in Madrid on his / her behalf. This morning you gave your PA a list of things to organize for the trip. It is now 4 p.m. Ask your PA about the tasks on the 'To do' list.
Student A: Decide which two tasks you have done on the 'To do' list, when they were done and what exactly you did. Decide which two tasks you haven't done and think of an explanation why.

File 38 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

Student B

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Help me with next year's budget – I don't have much time.	
Contact the IT company to set up the internal network – I don't have time.	
Borrow your secretary until I've appointed a new one for myself.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Lend one person from team to move to another department – on a temporary basis.
- Give two of your offices to your colleague.
- Buy a pool of software licences.

File 43 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

Student C

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Help me organize 'office warming' party for new division – I'm not very interested in doing this.	
Give me two of your offices as we don't have enough space in our department.	
Give me the name of a good, reliable, financial controller.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Give contact names for mailing list.
- Contact IT company for internal network.
- Use / share your department's coffee machine.

File 44 | Unit 13

Case study, Task, page 83

Student C

Slashdot.org

Founded: 1997 **Users:** 5.5 m per month

What is it?: Technology news website and technical forum

Who started it?: Ernst Kohl / Luciana Francolini

Approximate statistics / facts:

- Hosts discussion forums for 'techies'
- Discussions run to 10,000 comments a day
- Pioneer of 'user-generated' site
- Developed from a personal blog – was bought by current owners for \$5 m in 1999
- Only 10 employees maintaining the site!
- Holding company was bought for \$900 m in 2006
- Based in California

File 45 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

Student C

PCR employees took part in meetings and expected a round of discussion resulting in a decision. They questioned their Malaysian counterparts, asking for opinions and tried to draw conclusions from the answers. However, there were no direct answers to the questions. A result of this was that PCR became frustrated, thinking meetings were a waste of time. The Malaysian counterparts were frustrated because the decision-maker wasn't always consulted and PCR seemed to be expecting decisions to be made from any one of the participants.

File 46 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, page 17

- Set up 'sideways' moves across to different departments / job areas and promotion. Organized internal transfers with subsidiaries abroad.
- Revised pay scales in alignment with industry standards.
- Introduced compensation package which included private health scheme.
- Brought in a 24-month leave period for new mothers – although legal requirement is 15 months.
- Promoted flexible working and home working.
- Introduced training budgets per head – encouraged training and personal development. New policy: each employee is entitled to four training courses a year – two must be attended, one of which is job-related.
- Arranged a monthly managers' breakfast. This took the form of an informal meeting where a big breakfast was provided. The idea was to promote discussion / small talk amongst managers in an informal setting.
- Made gift giving at Christmas standard throughout company – same given to everyone.
- Required departments to arrange a once-a-month Friday lunch to encourage socializing and teamwork.
- Management met department heads individually, twice a year, to review job and discuss concerns, wishes, etc. and most importantly, to give them feedback, thanks and praise.

Results:

As a result of these changes, voluntary staff turnover reduced to 3.3%; absenteeism reduced to 0.3%; 20–30% of staff accepted the offer of working some of their week from home.

File 47 | Unit 16

Language at work, Exercise 5, page 100

Student A

You want to take a one-year career break but do not want to risk losing your job on your return. Answer your manager's questions (use your own situation or invent the details).

Student B

You are the HR Manager. An employee wishes to take a career break. Ask questions to find out:

- what they like about their current job
- if there is anything they dislike about the work
- what they are planning to do / where they would like to go
- how long they hope to go away for
- if they are planning to develop any new skills
- if they want to carry on working with the company when they get back / if they are expecting to get the same job back
- if they would be prepared to do a different job on their return
- if they will mind earning less than their colleagues.

When you have finished, change roles.

File 48 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 35

1 (Student B)

- 2 points. This is very generous of you but might backfire! You are also working with the magazine which may have its own deadlines – don't promise anything until you're certain you can meet your promise.
- 6 points. Very sensible. You're giving yourself enough time to make sure everything's possible – you can always contact the client sooner if you have the information.
- 4 points. This is quite harsh but if it's not your job to deal with the problem, pass it on to someone who can deal with it more effectively.

2 (Student B)

- 6 points. You're keeping your options open – also for the client. This is a good strategy, especially if you fear your department is already booked out.
- 2 points. Stalling your client isn't going to help anyone. If you don't have any rooms available, admit it early enough to negotiate an alternative.
- 4 points. Very efficient – but are you certain you'll have enough time to look into this and also find alternatives if your rooms are fully booked?

3 (Student A)

- 4 points. Your colleague will at least have an immediate answer but if you don't have the stock, the problem hasn't been solved. You'll probably still have to look at option b after this.
- 6 points. You're winning yourself valuable time here and also going out of your way to help your colleague get the material they need. Very customer-oriented!
- 2 points. Waiting until the last minute isn't going to help you or your colleague and also means you still have the problem to deal with later rather than sooner. In the meantime, surely there is something else you can do to help as the final solution won't be satisfactory for your colleague.

4 (Student A)

- 2 points. This is risky, greedy and can easily backfire! Once you've accepted the translation you must find a translator; and your reputation could be compromised if you don't find a good one.
- 6 points. You're doing exactly what the customer wants: sending an offer first. In the meantime, you can contact your translator. The company can still turn down the offer if necessary, but will respect you for your professionalism and continue working with you in other capacities.
- 4 points. This is rather 'last minute' but will give you time to contact your most reliable translator(s). If a client wants something done by a tight deadline, they have to be willing to work to your deadlines too.

File 49 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

Doing business in Malaysia

Concept of time Predominantly Malaysia is made up of a mixture of Malays, Indians and Chinese. Which nationality you're working with determines whether deadlines and punctuality are important. Malays tend to be less strict about punctuality and deadlines than Indians and Chinese. It's important to know which nationality the decision-maker and organizer is as this will determine whether meetings are planned or just take place without prior warning, and whether appointment times are strictly kept.

'Yes' meaning 'no' Loss of face is an important issue in Malaysian culture. For example, when a trainer asks a group if they understand, the group will say 'yes', even if they don't. It may only be when the trainer is alone with a trainee that the trainee will ask about a point not understood. To do this in front of the group would be to lose face. Direct answers, particularly negative ones, are avoided in order to prevent disagreement and preserve harmony (two very important aspects of Malaysian culture). Therefore it often takes time to get feedback.

Hierarchy and decision-making process Hierarchy is extremely strong within organizations. There is normally one person at a meeting who can make the decisions and other participants are expected to give their opinions only when asked by their superior.

Relationship building This is an important aspect of doing business. Business relationships take time and one should not rush things. If a business partner needs longer to work through a contract or try out a product, so be it. If a contract has been signed, one shouldn't expect that to be the business finalized. There will probably be a lot of discussions and decision-making behind the scenes, which will eventually be discussed together with the new business partner.

File 50 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

Student D

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Fly to Brussels and take part in kick-off meeting instead of me.	
Buy a pool of software licences – to save money.	
Share your department's coffee machine – budget is empty.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Share your department's data projector.
- Lend your secretary to your colleague.
- Give a name of a financial controller.

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.