13 | Facts and figures

Starting point

Discuss these questions. Choose one of the answers (if you disagree with the options, give an answer of your own).

1 When is the best age to retire?
   50   60   65   70
2 How long should the working week be?
   20 hours   45 hours
   35 hours   60 hours
3 What is a fair total income tax rate?
   10%   25%   40%   60%
4 What proportion of a year should working people have as holiday?
   $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{5}$
5 What was the most interesting decade to be born in?
   the 1890s   the 1970s
   the 1940s   the 1990s

Working with words | Numbers and trends

1 **Look at the three pictures in the text. These are all examples of 'killer' technologies. Why are they called this? Read the text quickly and find out.**

'Killer' technologies

When the steamship was introduced, it was known for blowing up. Eventually, however, the technology improved and it mostly replaced its predecessor, the sailing boat. Then along came the internal combustion engine, and the steamship in turn became redundant.
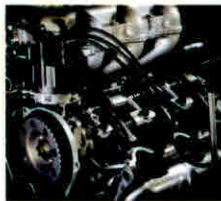
The petrol engine proved to be by far the most important technology of the early 20th century and car ownership grew by **approximately** 50% each year between 1910 and 1930. As well as replacing what came before it, this 'killer' technology revolutionized the entire world economy in **just over** 20 years with its impact on transport, trade, road-building and oil.

In the second half of the 20th century, the transistor experienced a similar extremely fast growth. The number of transistors produced in the world has reached 10^{18}, compared to just over a million in 1955. The average price per transistor has fallen steadily from $\frac{1}{10}$ of a cent in 1975 to about one ten-millionth of a cent this year. In addition, chips'* critical dimensions have shrunk from 5,000 nm* to **slightly less than** 90 nm since 1974 and are continuing to fall.

The combustion engine and transistor were core technologies that changed society. They led to thousands of new developments, including mass tourism and television respectively, but as they opened new opportunities, they also destroyed older industries.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Internet promises to bring about as much change as anything in history, and is developing fast. Internet speeds have increased **substantially**. We have moved rapidly from 28.8 kbps connections to broadband, and in Europe, there was 206.2% growth in Internet usage between 2000 and 2007, thus reaching **fractionally** less than 40% of the population, or **somewhere in the region of** 322,000,000 people.

* chip = silicon chip which contains invisible transistors   * nm = a nanometre = one billionth of a metre

2 **Read the text again. Which of these statements are made or implied?**
   1 The steam engine was not a reliable technology initially.
   2 The petrol engine was the dominant technology between 1900 and 1950.
   3 Transistor production peaked in 1955.
   4 The transistor was indirectly responsible for mass tourism.
   5 Internet connection speeds were slow to improve.

3 **What do these numbers refer to in the text? How do you say them?**

1 10^{18}	6 20th
2 28.8	7 206.2%
3 1910	8 21st
4 2007	9 5,000 nm
5 $^{1}/_{10}$	10 322,000,000

4 **Match the words / phrases in bold in the text to these words / phrases with a similar meaning.**

1 marginally: _____
2 a little more than: _____
3 a great deal: _____
4 just under: _____
5 roughly: _____
6 about: _____

5 **Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions 1–5. It is unlikely you will know the exact figures so use the words / phrases in 4 to give an estimate.**

1 What's the average price of a car (economy, mid-range, luxury) in your country?
2 How much does your family spend on travel costs each month?
3 What percentage of items in your home contain electronic chips?
4 What Internet connection speeds are currently available?
5 How many emails do you get in a week? What percentage of these are useful?

6 **51▷ Listen to an Irish music producer being interviewed about music downloads on the Internet. What does he say about.**

1 downloads of singles in Ireland?
2 sales of singles in music stores in Ireland?
3 sales of albums in music stores in Ireland?
4 the Internet being a threat?
5 the Internet being an opportunity?

7 **Where would you put these phrases from audio 51▷ on the line?**

grow gradually   crash   rise substantially   drop slightly
stay the same   grow rapidly   a significant drop

●————————●————————●————————●————————●
fast/big fall   **slow/small fall**   **no change**   **slow/small rise**   **fast/big rise**

8 **Where on the line would you put the phrases in *italics* in these sentences?**

1 Oil price *shoots up* by 30% on Middle East worries.
2 Gold *plummets* to all time low.
3 There are worrying signs of *a significant increase* in unemployment.
4 Doctors express concern at *a noticeable rise* in teenage smoking.
5 We'll see *a slight fall* in house prices as mortgages rise.
6 All quiet as FTSE *levels off.*
7 *A substantial drop* in exports predicted as euro rises.
8 Cost of borrowing *rockets* as interest rates double.

>> For more exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 126.

9 **Work with a partner. Using as many different phrases from 7 and 8 as you can, talk about changes in the cost of living in your country in the last ten years.**

10 **Work with a partner. Prepare and present a short talk about a company. Turn to File 27 on page 144 for instructions.**

ⓘ >> Interactive Workbook >> Glossary

Tip | *by* and *from … to*

Use *by* to refer to a difference.
Car ownership grew by approximately 50%.
Use *from* to refer to an initial figure and *to* to refer to a final figure.
The price has fallen steadily from $^{1}/_{10}$ … to about one ten-millionth of a cent.

Business communication skills

Exchanging information | Asking for and explaining factual and numerical information

1 Do you look at the ads and pop-ups that you see on websites or do you ignore them? How influential are they?

2 52▷ Read the *Context*. Listen to Caroline reporting back on the seminar. What do these figures refer to?

  1 18–30   2 198.4%   3 81.4%   4 $300.4 m   5 154.4%

3 Match 1–10 to a–j to make phrases.

  1 Could you fill us … ____
  2 Apparently, a recent … ____
  3 What's that … ____
  4 Simon claimed … ____
  5 Roughly … ____
  6 So how should we … ____
  7 Can we look … ____
  8 According to a recent … ____
  9 So the bottom line … ____
  10 The overriding trend … ____

  a in terms of growth?
  b is that user-generated media will be our new advertising platform …
  c speaking, by 2010 it'll only be 39.7%.
  d interpret this drop?
  e in on the most relevant information from the seminar?
  f is for technology, car and media brands to use this.
  g that last year blog advertising accounted for …
  h at the figures?
  i study shows a huge increase in advertising investment via this media …
  j survey, total projected expenditure …

4 52▷ Listen again and check your answers.

5 Put the phrases in **3** into these categories.
  a Asking for factual or numerical information: _____
  b Reporting factual or numerical information: _____
  c Summarizing findings / trends: _____

Tip | *supposedly* and *apparently*

Use *supposedly* when a fact is not proven and to add an element of doubt to the claim.

> *Supposedly*, podcast advertising will be the front runner over the next four years.

Use *apparently* to quote or repeat something you have heard from someone else.

> *Apparently*, a recent study shows a huge increase in advertising.

》 For more exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 126.

6 Work with a partner. You and your colleague have been researching the popularity of blog advertising and have collected some information. Student A, turn to File 26 on page 143. Student B, use the information below. Read your information and report it to your colleague. Request the missing information 1–8.

Student B

	Facts and figures	Comments
No. people surveyed	1	
Type of people	Professional, global companies, different jobs / industries / segments	Provide reliable results – a good cross section
Survey results		
read blogs	2	3
read blogs once a week	51% (approx 2,300)	
read blogs weekly for business information	53%	Need more information about who these people are and which blogs
read weekly on technology topics	4	
pass on information or content from blogs	5	6
indicate that blogs influence their purchase decisions	53% (approx. 2,385)	Very important information for us!
are thinking of starting their own blogs	7	8

ⓘ ≫ Interactive Workbook ≫ Email

Practically speaking | Talking about news at work

1 53▷ Listen to three short conversations about news at work. Which one is about
1 relationships? ___
2 a missing item? ___
3 leaving the company? ___

2 53▷ Listen again. Which of these phrases can you use to introduce the topic of news, repeat news you have heard or respond to news?
1 Rumour has it …
2 Surely not!
3 I spoke to (Robert) and he told me that …
4 Did you hear the latest about …?
5 According to (Sam), …
6 That's nonsense!
7 (Anna) says that …
8 Have you heard the news?
9 Apparently, …
10 You'll never guess what I heard …

3 Work in groups of four. Each person thinks of two pieces of news. Work with a partner and share your first piece of news. Change partners and share your second piece of news. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 135.

Language at work | Reported speech review

1 Work with a partner. Discuss how you could report these things your manager
said to you using *say*, *tell* or *ask*.

1 'Contact Helen immediately if you have any problems.'
2 'Could you come back a little later? Is that OK?'
3 'Do you know when Jan is getting back?'
4 'Have you seen Mr Smith?'
5 'I always feel a bit nervous when I get on a plane.'

2 We can use other reporting verbs that summarize what people said. Discuss h
to report the following in as few words as possible. Use the summarizing verbs
brackets.

1 'I'm really grateful for your help.' (thank)
   He thanked me for helping him.
2 'Go on, apply for the promotion.' (encourage)
3 'I'm afraid I haven't finished the report yet.' (apologize)
4 'No, no – this mistake was not my responsibility at all.' (deny)
5 'I won't do your shift on Friday.' (refuse)
6 'I can reduce the price by €200.' (offer)
7 'OK. I see your point and I'll look at the terms and conditions again.' (agree)

>> For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 127.

3 **54▷** Work with a partner. Listen to four extracts from a meeting at a cable
company.

1 Student A, make notes on what the speakers said in extracts 1 and 3. Student B, n
   notes on what the speakers said in extracts 2 and 4.
2 Ask and answer questions about the meeting. Student A, ask about extracts 2 and
   Student B, ask about extracts 1 and 3.

   Extract 1
   a What did John say about Lisa?
   b What excuse did Peter give for missing the meeting?
   c What did Anna say about the airport?

   Extract 2
   d What did John ask Peter?
   e What did Peter say about the Europe figures?
   f What did Peter say about the Venezuelan issue?

   Extract 3
   g What did Anna ask Peter?
   h What did Peter say about the US figures?
   i What did Peter promise to do?

   Extract 4
   j What did Anna want to know?
   k What was Anna's main complaint?
   l What did Peter guarantee?

4 Work with a partner. Take turns to report a conversation you have had, sayin
who said what. Choose one or two of these situations (or think of your own
situations).

- a difficult situation with a customer or colleague
- an encounter with a policeman or someone in authority
- a misunderstanding with a colleague or friend
- a meeting you attended that a colleague has missed
- a piece of exciting / interesting news from a friend or family member

ⓘ >> Interactive Workbook >> **Exercises and Tests**

Reaching target markets online

Background

New venture at MPS

Digital music sales will more than double in the next few years and the majority of the revenue generated will be from the ringtone industry. According to business analysts, personalized data services for mobile devices, from ringtones to screensavers, are currently a $20-billion global business. However, competition is strong in this area and companies have to be willing to pay premium prices to advertise on websites which will attract their target market.

MPS is based in Germany – one of Europe's biggest markets for personalized mobile phone accessories. Its core business is acting as a 'middleman' between the music industry and the mobile phone companies. MPS negotiates rights for music recordings with the music industry and then enters into contracts with the mobile phone service providers who in turn offer the music as downloadable ringtones on their corporate websites.

MPS is aware how huge the ringtone industry has become and has decided to set up a division dedicated to offering ringtones direct to the end-user. Their Internet platform is ready to do business, but they need to decide where to advertise.

The Expert View

Consumers are no longer the passive recipients of advertising messages delivered through TV, radio and print media. Many advertisers try to reconstruct the old, one-way mode of communication over the Internet by using banner advertising, email campaigns, pop-up adverts and text messaging. But in the new media environment, communication is increasingly interactive and controlled by consumers, who direct their own information searches, participate in online communities, use RSS feeds and create blogs. The challenge for advertisers is to adapt their approach, to create a real dialogue that meets consumers' changing expectations.

Dr Stan Maklan, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Marketing
Cranfield School of Management

Discussion

1 What is the target market for mobile phone accessories?

2 Is it 'ethical' to encourage people to spend their money on these types of accessories?

3 What sort of websites would provide the best advertising platform for ringtone companies?

Task

Work in groups of three. You have each researched facts and numerical information about one Internet site which could be suitable as an advertising platform for MPS. Student A, turn to File 28 on page 144. Student B, turn to File 35 on page 146. Student C, turn to File 44 on page 148.

1 Read your information. Decide how the facts and figures may influence your decision to advertise on the site (e.g. continuous growth of visitors = more exposure to potential customers). Make notes under these headings.
   • Name of site   • Facts   • Figures / Trends   • Interpretation / Comments

2 Report the facts / figures / trends to the rest of your group.

3 While you listen to your colleagues, record the information under the same headings as in 1.

4 Check you have understood everything correctly. Ask for interpretation of the facts / figures where appropriate and add these to your notes.

5 In your groups, decide which site would be most suitable for MPS to advertise on and why.
   • Is the website well established?
   • Will it survive and be worth investing in?
   • Does it attract enough visitors?
   • Do its visitors fit your customer profile? (Read between the lines!)

Case study

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 27 | Unit 13

Working with words, Exercise 10, page 79

Talk about your own company or one of the companies below, giving as many figures and trends as possible. If you do not know the exact figures, use some of the 'approximating' language from **4**. Give details of

- company activities
- company HQ
- number of countries it operates in
- number of employees
- annual revenue
- performance in the last ten years (turnover / profit / loss).
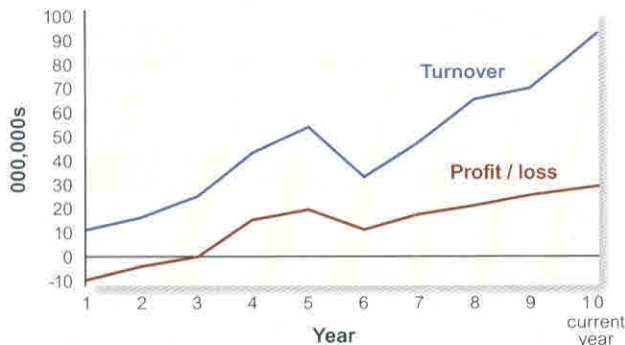

Name: Hengist Healthcare
Activities: Biopharmaceuticals, antivirals, hepatitis care
Company HQ: Copenhagen, Denmark
No. of countries: 16
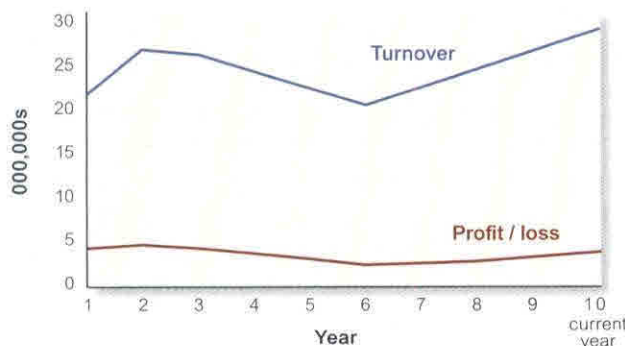**Employees:** 372
Annual revenue: €93,000,000

Name: Wengler
Activities: Accountancy and financial consultancy
Company HQ: New York
No. of countries: 22
Employees: 950
Annual revenue: US $28,000,000

File 28 | Unit 13

Case study, Task, page 83

Student A

Craiglist.org

Founded: 1995
Users: 4 bn page views per month
What is it?: Centralised network of urban communities featuring free classified ads and forums
Who started it?: Craig Newmark
Approximate statistics / facts:

- Began as an email listing events in San Francisco
- Risen to more than 30m users a month
- 2004: eBay acquired 25% share of company
- Receives 25m classified ads each month
- Up to 500,000 new job listings each month
- 80 topical forums with 40 m user postings (comments)

File 29 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

Student D

PCR finds it very frustrating when cut over is postponed, especially when it needs to see what problems arise once the system is actually being used. PCR sent regular emails and made phone calls to get feedback about the project. Emails remained unanswered and PCR was frustrated by what it saw as a lack of communication. The Malaysian customer felt hurried and hassled by the constant bombardment of calls and emails.

File 30 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, page 17

Student C

COMMUNICATION

There was a mixed reaction to this subject. Positive comments were made about the emailing policies we introduced two years ago. However, overall face-to-face communication can be seriously improved upon.

'Each department seems to go their own way on many matters. We employees just do what we're told and don't bother to question it any more.'

'Sometimes I don't know what's going on. Decisions have been made and I haven't been consulted – and I'm in a more senior position and need to know these things!'

'There must be more communication between us! We work together but don't actually have time or opportunity to get to know each other.'

'It's difficult for ideas to filter through.'

'The company is quite big – so I sometimes feel I'm just a number.'

Information files | 34–42

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.