



# 2

# Motivation

## Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about motivation at work
- Making small talk
- Exiting a conversation
- Using question forms

## Case study

- Solving staffing problems

## Starting point

- 1 Which of these things motivate you in your job?
  - colleagues
  - interesting work
  - gifts for achieving targets
  - promotion
  - training
  - flexible hours
  - money
  - job security
- 2 What else would you add to the list in 1?

## Working with words | Motivation at work

### 1 Discuss these questions.

- 1 What is the difference between 'a reward' and 'an incentive'?
- 2 What different rewards and incentives does your company offer?

### 2 Read this text. Is it negative or positive about incentive schemes?

## Incentive schemes or cash?

Employers often don't know whether to offer **incentive schemes** (such as travel, trips, excursions, social events, merchandise) or cash to help their company achieve its goals. When you ask employees what they want, they generally say 'more money' – but salary increases or **annual bonuses** are not always the best way to **motivate staff**. **Non-cash rewards** such as merchandise and travel can be a far more effective way to **improve performance**, **boost staff morale** and **foster company loyalty**.

### Why do non-cash incentive schemes work better?

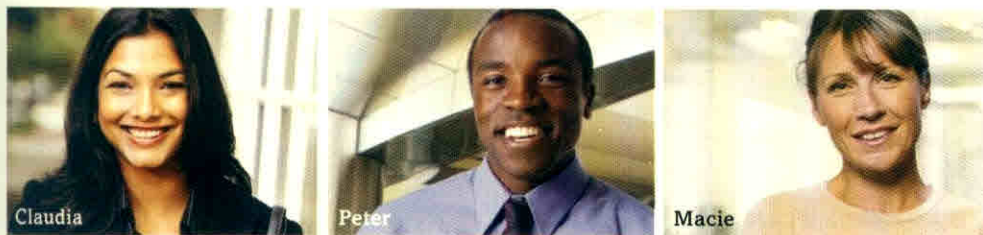
- They provide a lasting reminder of the **achievement** and the positive feelings that go with it.
- They offer rewards that can be shown to others or talked about – and it is socially acceptable to 'boast' about the achievement. The same certainly cannot be said for cash.
- They provide a guilt-free form of reward, often something employees would not otherwise do or buy, whereas they may feel guilty for not spending cash on necessities.
- They have a higher perceived value. The actual cash value is secondary to the **recognition**.
- The employee's family is often involved in the reward selection and the reward chosen may **benefit** the whole family.
- Extra cash in the monthly pay packet disappears into the bank account or wallet. In fact, 72% of people receiving cash rewards use it to pay bills, can't remember what they spent it on, or don't even know they received it!

**3 Read the text again and answer questions 1–4.**

- 1 What are the advantages of incentive schemes for employers?
- 2 What are the advantages of non-cash incentives for employees?
- 3 What are the disadvantages of cash rewards?
- 4 Do *you* think incentive schemes are better than cash rewards? Why or why not?

**4 Match the phrases in bold in the text to these definitions.**

- 1 encourage employees to want to work harder: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 something done well by your own effort or skill: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 make employees feel better about themselves and their work: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 praise and reward for something you have done: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 make people work more efficiently: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 programmes that provide extra rewards for good work: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 be useful to someone or improve their life in some way: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 bonuses that do not involve money: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 encourage commitment to the company: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 extra money for good work – added to salary once a year: \_\_\_\_\_

**5 05▶ Listen to three people talking about their jobs and answer questions 1–3.**

- 1 What job do they do?
- 2 What benefits, rewards and incentives does their company provide?
- 3 What other factors give them job satisfaction?

**6 Which of these words and phrases from audio 05▶ are**

- 1 material benefits? *profit-sharing scheme*
  - 2 non-material benefits? *fulfilment*
- profit-sharing scheme fulfilment company car autonomy feel valued  
be acknowledged commission staff discount attendance reward appreciation  
on-time bonus compensation plan positive feedback (personal) development  
praise satisfaction private medical insurance non-contributory pension plan*

**7 Work with a partner and discuss questions 1–3.**

- 1 Which of the material benefits in **6** are standard in an employment contract in your country? Which are additional benefits?
- 2 How does this vary according to profession?
- 3 How important to you are the non-material benefits? How do they compare to the material benefits?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 104.

**8 Work in small groups. You are partners setting up your own company.**

- 1 Decide on the type of company (service or product oriented) and how many employees you will need.
- 2 What benefits, rewards and incentives will you offer to your employees?
- 3 What effects will these have for both the employee and the company?
- 4 How will you make sure your employees receive some of the non-material benefits in **6**?

# Business communication skills

## Context

A global media company has organized its annual incentive event to reward its most successful members of staff – a one-week cruise. Employees from all over the world have arrived on board and are now meeting on the first evening.

## Socializing | Making small talk

1 Work in small groups. Read these tips and decide which five are the most useful.

### The art of small talk

- 1 Introduce yourself and use a 'tag line', e.g. *Hi, I'm Jules from Munich*. This can get the conversation started as your colleague can ask a question about your home town or your trip.
- 2 When your colleague introduces himself / herself, try to repeat his / her name when you reply, or use their name later in the conversation.
- 3 Break the ice with a comment about a current news story or a remark about the event you're at, its location and the weather.
- 4 Avoid these topics of conversation: your health, your private life, gossip. The best conversation topics are sports, books, theatre, movies, food, museums and travel. Try and find a shared experience or something else you have in common.
- 5 Keep the conversation flowing by not monopolizing the conversation. Ask a question and really listen to your colleague's reply. Then respond with comments from your own personal experience and ask another question.

- 6 Ask open questions which require more than a one-word answer. If your colleague asks a *Yes / No* question, give some extra information.
- 7 Sounds like *hmm* and phrases like *Really* can be used to indicate that you are listening and interested, and will encourage your colleague to tell you more.
- 8 Share information about yourself but keep it positive. People don't like colleagues who are negative, depressed or who complain a lot.
- 9 Remember your exit strategy. Have some phrases ready for excusing yourself politely and moving to another group of people, e.g. *It was nice talking to you. I'll see you later*. A transition word like *Well ...* can also communicate that it's time to stop.
- 10 If you've enjoyed talking with your colleague, tell them so, e.g. *I've really enjoyed talking with you. I hope we have the chance to talk again soon*. Leave a positive final impression with a smile and strong handshake.



## Tip | well and so

Use *well* to introduce a comment or a piece of information in a conversation.

Use *so* to indicate you're changing the direction of the conversation.

**A** *Are you here with colleagues?*

**B** *No.*

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

2 06▶ Read the *Context* above. Listen to four conversations from the first evening of the cruise. Work with a partner and answer questions 1–2 for each conversation.

- 1 Which of the tips in 1 are used or not used?
- 2 Is the conversation successful or unsuccessful? Why?

**3 06▶ Listen again and answer questions 1–8.****Conversation 1**

- 1 What does Harry say to start the conversation?
- 2 What phrases does he use to end the conversation?

**Conversation 2**

- 3 What does Paolo say to start the conversation?
- 4 How does Sonia respond?

**Conversation 3**

- 5 What two phrases show that the speakers are interested in what the other person has said?

**Conversation 4**

- 6 What phrases do Adriana and Adam use to greet each other?
- 7 How does Adriana show that she is listening?
- 8 What does she say to end the conversation?

**4 07▶ Listen to a second conversation Adriana has later in the evening. This time the conversation is successful. Number these phrases 1–12 in the order you hear them. How do the phrases help the conversation flow?**

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| — a Don't you ...       | — g In fact ...              |
| — b ... by the way?     | — h So ...                   |
| — c Well ...            | — i I see.                   |
| — d What a coincidence! | — j That sounds interesting. |
| — e So ...              | — k Well ...                 |
| — f Really?             | — l Apparently ...           |

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 104.

**5 Work with a partner.**

- 1 Read conversations 1 and 4 in audio script **06▶** on page 151.
- 2 Discuss what each speaker could say to make the conversation more successful.
- 3 Use your ideas in 2 to have the two conversations.

**6 Work with a partner and have a conversation. Keep the conversation going as long as possible. Discuss as many of these topics as you can.**

- |                       |                |                                 |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| • hobbies             | • TV / cinema  | • work                          |
| • education           | • vacation     | • news                          |
| • sport               | • other people | • family                        |
| • an interesting fact | • food         | • an enjoyable excursion nearby |

**i** » Interactive Workbook » Email

**Key expressions****Starting a conversation**

Hi, I don't think we've met.  
Hello. It's (Adriana), isn't it?  
Hello, I saw you ... but I didn't have a chance to speak to you.  
I'm ...  
Hello / Hi, I'm ... (from / based in ...).  
Is this your first (company event)?  
I thought I might see you (here).  
How lovely to see you here.  
How are things?

**Showing interest**

Really?  
I see.  
What a coincidence!  
That's amazing!  
That sounds interesting.  
Oh dear ...  
Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that.

**Keeping a conversation going**

By the way ...  
Well, ...  
Apparently ...  
I've heard ... – is that true?  
In fact ...  
So ...  
Don't you ...?

**Ending a conversation**

See you later.  
It's been nice talking to you.  
Look, I have to go. Catch you later.  
You don't mind if I go and get myself (a coffee)?

**i** » Interactive Workbook  
» Phrasebank

**Practically speaking | Exiting a conversation****1 08▶ Phrases 1–5 below might seem a little rude if used on their own to exit a conversation. Listen and make a note of the follow-up phrases used to make them more acceptable.**

- 1 Is that the time?
- 2 I promised to meet someone else.
- 3 I'm going to get some food.
- 4 Is that James over there?
- 5 Look, I really don't have time to chat at the moment.

**2 Work with a partner. Turn to File 02 on page 136 and choose two of the situations each. Have one or two minutes of small talk, then exit the conversation appropriately. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.**

## Language at work | Question form review

**1** Read these questions from audio 06▷ and 07▷. Match them to categories 1–4. (Some questions match more than one category.)

- a Where do they come from?
- b ... is that true?
- c Who did you come with?
- d Don't you live in Italy?
- e Have you spent much time in India?
- f You're from Calcutta?
- g Who told you?
- h It's Adriana, isn't it?
- i Dinner was fantastic, wasn't it?

- 1 Starting a conversation: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Finding out information: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Checking or confirming information: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Showing surprise: \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Look at the questions in 1 again. Answer these questions.

- 1 What is the usual word order for *Wh-* and *Yes / No* questions?
- 2 In which question, c or g, is *who*
  - the subject of the question?
  - the object of the question?
- 3 How can a statement be made into a question without changing the word order?
- 4 What answer is expected to questions h and i?

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 105.

**3** Work with a partner. Think of questions to ask in these situations.

- 1 Your company is sending you to work in Hong Kong. You want to know about travel plans and accommodation.
- 2 You are about to order a product and want to check these details are correct:  
Price: €200 / Delivery: 5 days / Delivery charge: €8 / Guarantee: 1 year
- 3 You're at a conference and meet someone who went to the same college as you.
- 4 You're waiting for an interview and make conversation with the person next to you.

**4** Question tags are often used to start a conversation or keep it going. Work with a partner. Add a question tag to these conversation openers and statements. Reply with a suitable comment (not just *yes* or *no*).

*Example: A Everyone enjoyed themselves, didn't they?*

*B Yes, it was a great party.*

- 1 That wasn't a very interesting presentation.
- 2 The negotiations have been going pretty well.
- 3 The manager was in a good mood today.
- 4 The meeting won't finish late.
- 5 Emily's looking tired these days.
- 6 You're going to Alpbach tomorrow.
- 7 Ken can't speak Japanese.
- 8 Nobody got here on time today.

**5** Work with a partner. Student A and Student B turn to File 07 on page 137. Take turns to ask and answer questions about a tourist attraction.

② » Interactive Workbook » Exercises and Tests

### Tip | Question use

Use questions to start and develop conversations in social situations

- to find out information about the other person
- to check or confirm information
- to show surprise (or other emotion)
- to encourage a response.

## Solving staffing problems

### Background

### Improving staff morale at Palmate Hellas

Palmate Hellas is the Greek subsidiary (270 employees) of an international company specializing in household products. The company has quite a loose structure, which worked well when it was first introduced. Each department is responsible for its own personnel and has a budget allocated to it each year for new hires and personal development. There is quite a difference between departments' priorities for spending their budget and sometimes personal development is not as promoted as other areas. HR is reported back to on

an annual basis and it has an advisory role, enforcing policies and guidelines and only intervening in staffing issues when necessary. The one policy which is enforced company-wide is that of fixed working hours. Over the last five years, Palmate Hellas has had to deal with high staff turnover and absenteeism in particular departments. The company has decided to carry out an employee satisfaction survey (to find out what staff think about the company) with a view to reducing staffing problems.

### Discussion

- 1 What are some reasons for low staff morale and motivation in companies?
- 2 How important is it for companies to have guidelines in place to ensure their employees are kept motivated? What examples do you know of?
- 3 What reasons could there be for the staff's lack of motivation at Palmate?

### Task

Work in groups of four. Student A, turn to File 05 on page 137. Student B, turn to File 10 on page 138. Student C, turn to File 30 on page 144. Student D, turn to File 41 on page 147.

- 1 Read the information in your file from Palmate's employee satisfaction survey.
- 2 Ask and answer questions in your group to complete this table.

Prospects / Training

Communication

Middle management comments

Working conditions

- 3 Discuss what could be done to solve the company's staffing problems.
- 4 Draft a list of priorities and present these to the class. Choose the five best ideas.
- 5 Turn to File 46 on page 148 to find out what changes the company actually implemented.

### The Expert View

Staff morale and productivity are linked in complicated ways. Employees want to know that they are respected by the organization and are being treated fairly. Increasingly, organizations understand the need to address issues such as quality of working life and work-life balance. This is done through a package of benefits as well as pay – these may include flexible working, training provision and other innovations. Whilst company-wide policies need to be consistently and equitably applied, the key is to treat everyone as an individual, with their own circumstances, needs and desires. This will enhance their self-esteem, improve competence and aid their contribution to the effectiveness of the organization.

Richard Kwiatkowski, Senior Lecturer in Organizational Psychology  
Cranfield School of Management



## Case study

## File 01 | Unit 1

Case study, Task, page 11

**Name:** Silent Systems

**Product:** cabinets for servers / audio / technical equipment

**Information for your networking colleagues:**

Cabinets reduce the noise and keep equipment cool. They can be positioned in the office, avoiding the need for a purpose-built computer room.

We provide demonstrations, customized units and value for money. Recent clients include government agencies and several multinationals.

**Current activities:** breaking into the US market

**Name:** Languages Today

**Product:** translation, interpreting and proofreading services

**Information for your networking colleagues:**

150 languages can be translated and interpreted at this agency by linguists around the world. Specialist / technical subjects can also be translated.

**Current activities:** setting up a database of clients and translators; producing specialist glossaries for key clients

**Name:** Sitemagic.com

**Product:** all-in-one website design for small- to medium-sized businesses

**Information for your networking colleagues:**

Provide a website, domain registration and email at very reasonable prices. We can start your website after one phone call.

**Current activities:** expanding to fifteen staff and moving to new premises; offering websites in other languages

**Name:** Reisinger & Taylor

**Product:** independent corporate caterer

**Information for your networking colleagues:**

Provide catering for offices, schools and colleges – USP = fresh ingredients. We offer value for money and a large distribution network. No company is too small.

**Current activities:** expansion into more regions; new events catering service; special banquet service available

## File 02 | Unit 2

Practically speaking, Exercise 2, page 15

- 1 You meet a client by chance at the theatre during the interval. The bell for the second half has just rung.
- 2 You meet your old manager at your child's football match. You have a lot of friends there so you don't really want to talk to him / her for long.
- 3 You're at a conference and have been talking to an acquaintance for five minutes. You've run out of small talk topics.
- 4 You're just leaving your friend's birthday party. It's been a long day and you want to get home. You bump into a colleague who's just arrived and wants to chat.

## File 03 | Unit 3

Language at work, Exercise 3, page 22

Student A

- 1 Your colleague is in a project team which is converting an old building to provide new company premises. Ask how the project is going. As your colleague is speaking, comment on what he / she says and ask additional questions.
- 2 Your company is building a new warehouse and office complex. Update your colleague, using these prompts and / or your own ideas. Use *already* and *yet* and appropriate time expressions.
  - finish the main building work
  - have problems with some of the suppliers
  - not install the IT system
  - not complete electrical wiring
  - reschedule the opening date

## File 04 | Unit 9

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 57

Pair A: Managers

Your company is finding it difficult to keep staff – apparently your competitor has better working conditions. Two members of staff have recently told you that they are thinking of leaving. Hold a meeting with them to discuss working conditions. Find out what they want. Then decide what you can offer them and what you are willing to compromise on. Likely areas of discussion are

- flexible hours / home working
- better travel expenses
- more perks: fitness club membership, lunch vouchers, new computer
- increased salary (this should be no higher than 1% more than inflation)
- less bureaucracy in the job
- more training for future promotion.

You will lead the discussion. Make sure that you outline the situation, put forward proposals, state the consequences of these, bargain as necessary, and summarize your progress.

## File 05 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, page 17

Student A

### PROSPECTS / TRAINING

1 Overall, employees felt their job lacked prospects, and personal development has not been consistently encouraged throughout the company.

'dead-end job' 'not going anywhere'  
'no encouragement to better ourselves'

'I've been at the company 6 years and have only been offered a training course once - when I began the job.'

'When I asked for a training course, I was told I'd have to take holiday or time in lieu to do it.'

2 There is a clear difference between what's offered to employees in different departments - this depends very much on management of department and where their priorities lie.

'unfair if you're in a "disinterested" department'

'not fair if you're in one (department) where no importance is given to staff well-being'

'differences between departments' spending priorities is quite demotivating if you're in a department that never invests in its staff'

## File 06 | Unit 3

Working with words, Exercise 7, page 19

Project: increase plant space of factory by 25% and install new production train

Total cost of the work: estimate = 1 million; actual cost = 1.3 million

Target date for completion of project = 18 months; actual date = 2 years

- Project meetings not held on regular basis - communication often by email (not everyone copied in)
- Clearing of site took place quickly and easily - met deadline
- Production manager changed specification of production train to increase capacity but didn't tell project manager - software program had to be rewritten quickly - resulted in errors in program
- Problems during construction - discovered length of new building 2 m short (due to changes in specification - suppliers not told of change)
- Production train delivered two weeks late - not able to install power connections at scheduled time - loss of several weeks of production
- All other new equipment ordered arrived on time
- Kept to budget for first six months but overspending after construction problems

## File 07 | Unit 2

Language at work, Exercise 5, page 16

Student A

Over lunch with a colleague in the canteen, you suggest a tourist attraction that a visitor to your company might enjoy (think of a tourist attraction that you personally know very well). However, you are not in a talkative mood today. Be prepared to answer your colleague's questions, but make him / her work a bit harder than normal to get the information and keep the conversation going. When you have finished, change roles.

Student B

Over lunch in the canteen, your colleague suggests a tourist attraction that a visitor to your company might enjoy. You think it sounds like a great idea, and want to find out more, but your colleague is being uncommunicative today. Ask questions

- 1 to check that what you have heard about the place (if anything) is correct
  - 2 to get factual information, e.g. location, opening hours
  - 3 to show surprise or interest in what your partner says.
- When you have finished, change roles.

## File 08 | Unit 3

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 21

Student A

- 1 Read the 'To do' list you sent to Ian and the notes you have written under your tasks (M).
- 2 Begin by calling Ian. Ask Ian to update you on his tasks (I).
- 3 Answer his questions about your tasks.
- 4 Make and respond to suggestions as necessary.

### Launch date 'To do' list

Bring Anvikon merchandise to venue (I)  
Finalize timetable of day with sound engineers (M)

*Meeting with them later today.  
Suggestion: sound check night before?*

Brief Anvikon staff about handset demonstration (I)  
Check replies from the press - who's coming? (M)

*Behind schedule! Some invitations sent only 2 days ago!  
Suggestion: we plan for more people than expected?*

Send Anvikon PR manager's speech to MMT-Tec (I)  
Make sure Sarah's briefed on everything (I / M)

*Suggestion: Wait till last minute - want to give her positive information! Make good impression!*



## File 09 | Unit 4

### Case study, Task, page 29

#### Entrepreneurs

- 1 Decide on your new business idea. It can be a new product, a new service, or any other kind of business idea. Use your own idea, or one of the ideas below.
- 2 Prepare your presentation.
  - Introduce yourself and preview the presentation.
  - Introduce your business idea – what it is and how it works.
  - Explain its benefits to users.
  - Compare the future benefits for the users with the present (or past) situation.
  - Explain what stage of development it is at, why you need the investment and how much profit you expect to make in the next three years.
- 3 Give your presentation.

#### Investors

- 1 Listen to the presentations.
- 2 After each presentation, ask any questions that seem important, such as: why their idea is different; whether they have already made any sales; what the competition is; who their customers are; what experience they have of running a business of this kind.
- 3 At the end of all the presentations, decide how much you will invest in each idea. Explain to the group which ideas you've chosen to invest in, how much you will invest, and why.  
**Important!** Do not tell the other groups how much you are prepared to invest until the end of the activity.

#### The result

- 1 Entrepreneurs – the winner is the idea which attracted the biggest total investment from the investors.
- 2 Investors – the winner is the one with the most money at the end. Double the amount of money you invested in the winning idea, and add it to any money you did not spend.

**Business idea:** Hpod – self-contained, stackable housing unit; made from polished concrete, aluminium and glass

**Benefits:** internal wiring and plumbing built in; simple design – no joins and sharp corners; three sizes: 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms (8 x 6 m, 8 x 9 m and 8 x 12 m); available within a month of ordering

**Future benefits:** order a second Hpod and plug it in; can be stacked to 30 stories high; long-lasting materials

**Current stage of development:** spent four years on research and design; you've lived in Hpod yourself – practical and comfortable; manufacturer interested in making Hpods; \$350,000 needed to start production; target – treble investment in three years

(Source: <http://www.springwise.com>)

**Business idea:** Concrete Canvas – inflatable concrete shelter, ideal for emergency situations like earthquakes, or for military use.

**Benefits:** cheap to produce and buy, light, strong

**Future benefits:** aid organizations can buy and store the shelters cheaply; easy to transport; easy to use (no training needed); offer better protection than tents; can be made medically sterile

**Current stage of development:** talked to many aid organizations; prototypes built and tested; \$300,000 needed to make the full-sized prototypes for field testing with an aid organization; target – double investment in three years

**Business idea:** Spider catcher – remove spiders from your home without harming spider

**Benefits:** keeps you at comfortable distance from insects while you catch and transport them outside; unbreakable nylon bristles controlled by trigger handle – surround insect and hold it securely; two sizes: compact (for travelling), standard (for home)

**Future benefits:** have an instant solution for family / friends afraid of spiders; no harm to spider

**Current stage of development:** prototypes made and design refined; patent obtained; product promoted at innovation exhibitions worldwide; \$100,000 needed to produce and market product; target – double investment in three years

(Source: <http://www.ideas21.the-dude.net>)

## File 10 | Unit 2

### Case study, Task, page 17

#### Student B

#### MIDDLE MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

Generally, middle management staff are satisfied with remuneration but feel they lack support.

'Financial rewards are ok – no complaints. My team works extremely hard and I really appreciate what they do for me, but who appreciates me?'

'My team seems to compare us with other departments and there's a lot of dissatisfaction. I don't know where I'm going wrong and there are no channels for discussing this.'

'My department works very hard for me and we're lucky to have such loyal workers in this department; staff retention has been good – especially compared to other departments – but I don't get any praise or thanks for this!'

'How can we expect our staff to stay, if our department managers change every two years?'

'It would be nice to have more guidelines when allocating our budget from HR.'

## 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

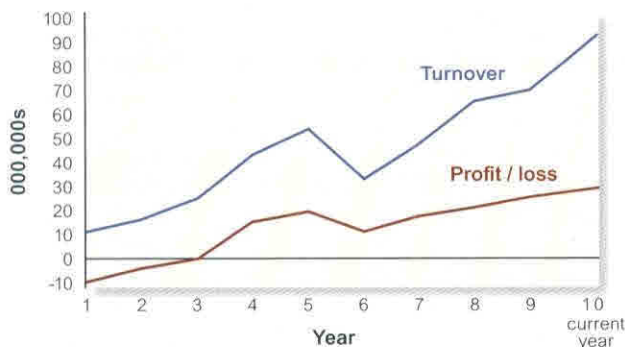
**Activities:** Biopharmaceuticals, antivirals, hepatitis care

**Company HQ:** Copenhagen, Denmark

**No. of countries:** 16

**Employees:** 372

**Annual revenue:** €93,000,000



**Name:** Wengler

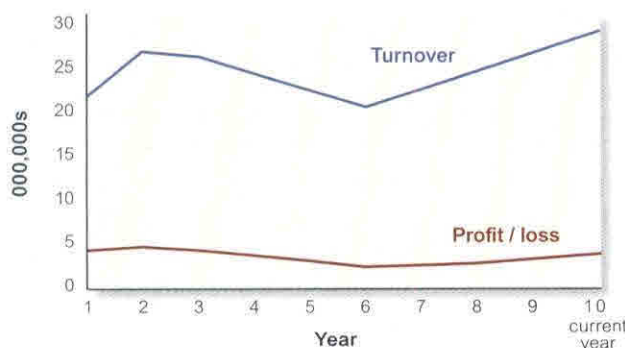
**Activities:** Accountancy and financial consultancy

**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

#### Craigslist.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.'

## File 39 | Unit 9

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 59

### Group B: HR Managers

- 1 Look at the proposed incentives and possible consequences. Think of an alternative proposal for each incentive (based on the original idea), which could be a realistic compromise if you need it.

Proposed incentives / perks	Consequences of this	Alternative / amended idea
Overtime is paid at double time	This puts you over budget and would have to be implemented for the whole company	e.g. Overtime is taken as time in lieu
Costs of children's schooling at the private International school covered	There's not enough money to pay for school fees for all employees on the project	e.g. Help children to get a scholarship for the International School (private tutor if necessary)
Interest free loan for living costs, e.g. deposit for a house or car	This would make a divide within the workforce – not fair for those who weren't chosen for the project abroad	Assistance for rehousing and / or loan for deposit for a house / car
1 month assimilation time before going back to full-time work	May give employee time to look around for another job	
Job promotion on return	This is difficult to implement as there may not be a position available	

- 2 Think of two extra proposals (plus the possible consequence) to suggest to the Team Leaders.
- 3 Prioritize the three incentives you would really like to persuade your team leader to accept.

### Points system

While you negotiate, consider this scoring system.

- 2 points if you get agreement on an alternative
- 1 point if you agree on the whole incentive
- 0 points if you completely refuse the incentive

## File 40 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

### Student B

In theory everyone has been trained up who needs to be trained. There was no regular training as there was a lot of time between visits. PCR tried to check everyone was following in the training sessions and regularly took breaks for questions and to clarify misunderstandings – but everyone always said they understood. After the breaks PCR recapped and asked each trainee to run through a bit of the program they'd just covered. The trainees generally got it wrong or seemed confused. PCR are not sure where the problem lies but are sure there are still areas that aren't clear for the Malaysians.

## File 41 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, page 17

### Student D

#### WORKING CONDITIONS

The offices were given a good rating and the facilities are satisfactory. Improvements need to be made to working times and perks.

'I sometimes need the flexibility to work from home and look after my children.'

'One major reason my colleague left her job recently was because she needed somewhere with flexitime, to fit in with her family commitments – I agree with this.'

'Extra provisions for women returning to work after having a baby would be nice.'

'Pay is fair (but not great) but I'd like to see some more benefits, which would compensate for the salaries.'

'We must be the only subsidiary which doesn't offer its staff discounted products!'

'Our subsidiaries in other countries provide private health insurance. How can it be possible for them and not for us?'

## File 42 | Unit 3

Language at work, Exercise 3, page 22

### Student B

- 1 You are in a project team which is converting an old building to provide new company premises. Update your colleague, using these prompts and / or your own ideas. Use *already* and *yet* and appropriate time expressions.
  - finish the first floor building work
  - have delays caused by plumbing contractors
  - not complete the second floor adaptations
  - postpone date for roofing work
  - find good decorating firm
- 2 Your colleague is involved in the building of a new warehouse and office complex. Ask how the project is going. As your colleague is speaking, comment on what he / she says and ask additional questions.