



# 4 | New ideas

## Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about ideas and innovations
- Presenting an idea, product or service
- Thanking and responding
- Talking about present, past and future ability

## Case study

- Investing in a new idea

## Starting point

- 1 What is the difference between an 'invention' and an 'innovation'?
- 2 What is your favourite invention, and why?
- 3 What innovation would improve the quality of your life at work? And outside work?

## Working with words | Ideas and innovations

### 1 Read the text and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What are the aims of the Ashden Awards?
- 2 How does the charity achieve its aims?
- 3 What is 'sustainable energy'? What kinds of sustainable energy can you think of?
- 4 Do you know of any local schemes in your country or around the world that might qualify for an Ashden Award?

### the Ashden Awards for sustainable energy

The Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy is a charity that rewards and promotes excellent sustainable energy solutions in the UK and the developing world.

Each year, the Ashden Awards holds a competition to find and reward organizations which have carried out practical and innovative programmes that demonstrate sustainable energy in action at a local level. These are based on the use of local, renewable energy sources.

The charity raises international awareness of the potential benefit of local sustainable energy projects to deal with climate change and to improve the quality of people's lives. It also aims to encourage more people and communities across the world to take up the challenge of finding new ways of meeting their energy needs.



The charity helps the development of sustainable energy projects in several ways. It gives cash prizes, to enable winners to take their work forward. It also publicizes the winners and their work through a worldwide media campaign, which aims to inspire others to follow their example. And by bringing together the winners with the main decision-makers and opinion formers, they aim to change thinking and policy among governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### 2 12, 13▶ Listen to details of two projects that have won an Ashden Award.

- 1 What is the main purpose of each project?
- 2 What are the advantages of the technology in each project?

3 Match the adjectives in A to the nouns in B to make phrases used in the text and audio 12▶ and 13▶. What other combinations are possible?

A		B	
technological	practical	concept	design
key	potential	feature	proposition
cutting-edge	innovative	benefit	idea
major	commercially-viable	breakthrough	solution
revolutionary	state-of-the-art	technology	advantage

4 Work with a partner. Create a sentence for each phrase in 3.

5 Match these phrasal verbs from the text and audio 12▶ and 13▶ to a verb 1–9 with the same meaning.

- carry out   come up with   pay off   take up   bring down*  
*bring about   take forward   get round   set up*

- avoid (a problem): \_\_\_\_\_
- cause (something to happen): \_\_\_\_\_
- create (an idea, a solution to a problem): \_\_\_\_\_
- develop (a plan, a project): \_\_\_\_\_
- have a good result: \_\_\_\_\_
- perform (an activity, research): \_\_\_\_\_
- reduce (costs): \_\_\_\_\_
- respond to (a challenge): \_\_\_\_\_
- start (a business, a project): \_\_\_\_\_

6 Complete the texts with the correct form of a phrasal verb from 5.

At the Barefoot College, we've <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ an idea to <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ the problem of sustainable energy for lighting in remote mountain villages in India. We've <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ a project to supply solar power to these villages, and we train local people to install and maintain the systems. Many of our new engineers are women – they've really <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ the challenge of learning new skills. The main advantage of our training programme is that the new technology we install works properly and has a long life – so it can <sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ real improvements to people's lives, and to the environment.

At KXN we've developed the technology to <sup>6</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ a plan for improving the refrigeration of vaccines in northern Nigeria. Standard refrigerators are useless in remote areas because the mains electricity supply is so unreliable or not available at all. After <sup>7</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ research and trials, our solution was to buy special refrigerators which use photovoltaic (PV) cells to generate and store electricity from sunlight. The initial investment was high, but it has <sup>8</sup>\_\_\_\_\_. This type of refrigerator has excellent insulation, so it needs relatively little electricity to keep the contents cool. This has helped to <sup>9</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ the overall cost of vaccination for people in these remote areas.



» For more exercises, go to Practice file 4 on page 108.

7 Work with a partner. Prepare to talk about an innovative idea for a new invention or new system. This can be connected with the place you work, live or study. Choose at least eight words from 3 and 5 to use in your talk.

# Business communication skills

## Context

PharmaLab is a medical research company seeking to increase security in its research centre. Securikey develop and supply hi-tech security systems. Shireen Casey from Securikey has been invited to present her company's solution to PharmaLab's management team.

## Presenting | Presenting an idea, product or service



- 1 How is security managed in your workplace? Is there too much security or not enough?
- 2 14► Read the *Context*. Listen to Part 1 of Shireen's presentation and make notes to complete the slides.

**Presentation to PharmaLab**  
Shireen Casey

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_

Questions

**What is DiScan?**

A <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
system, based on  
<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
Two years' <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
Three months' <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

**How does DiScan work?**

Employees <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The system <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and  
<sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

## Tip | Linking ideas

Use *although*, *however*, *in comparison to* and *whereas* to link contrasting ideas or facts.

**Although** it may sound radical, it's up to you how far-reaching you want it to be.

It's a very sophisticated system.

**However**, it's really easy to use.

This means that DiScan is extremely secure **in comparison to** systems where a code is needed.

You can learn someone else's code, **whereas** you can't copy their fingerprints.

**3 14▶ Listen again and complete these phrases.**

- 1 Good. OK. What I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ three things.
- 2 First, I'll \_\_\_\_\_ of the product.
- 3 After that I \_\_\_\_\_ a short demo film.
- 4 Does that sound OK? ... OK. We \_\_\_\_\_ DiScan.
- 5 ... based on fingerprint scanning. It's \_\_\_\_\_ intensive R&D.
- 6 How does it work? Well, \_\_\_\_\_ – employees are identified by their fingerprints.


**4 15▶ Listen to Part 2. What are the main advantages of DiScan?****5 15▶ Listen again and answer questions 1–2.**

- 1 Make a note of the phrases Shireen uses to
  - a explain the advantages of DiScan
  - b compare current and future ability.
- 2 What phrases does Shireen use to
  - a check that the audience are following what she is saying?
  - b move on to the next point?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 4** on page 108.

**6 Use the slides and your notes from 2 to 5 to give a similar short presentation about DiScan.****7 Prepare a short presentation about a new idea, a product, a system or a service that you know about, or are interested in. It doesn't have to be connected with work, but it can be. Make sure you**

- preview your talk
- talk about benefits
- discuss current and future ability.

 » Interactive Workbook »  Email

## Key expressions

**Introducing / Previewing a talk**

What I'd like to do in this presentation is ...

First, I'll give you a brief overview of the product.

Then I'll talk about ...

After that I'd like to show you ...

**Introducing a product or service**

We call the system (DiScan).

Basically, (DiScan) is ...

It's the result of ...

It is already being used ...

It's a pretty simple concept.

**Explaining benefits**

There are two main benefits of using (DiScan).

The biggest potential benefit of (fingerprint scanning) is ...

This means that ...

Another advantage is that ...

The other major advantage of (DiScan) is ...

And this is another great thing about (DiScan) ...

**Comparing current and future ability**

With your current system ...

(they) can / can't ... However,

with (DiScan), (they) will / won't be able to ...

At the moment, you can / can't ..., whereas in the future, you'll / won't be able to ... as well.

**Moving on**



OK, let's look at what (DiScan) has to offer.

OK, now I'd like to move on to ...

**Checking**

Does that sound OK?

So, is everything clear so far?

 » Interactive Workbook »  Phrasebank

## Practically speaking | Thanking and responding

**1 16▶ Listen to six short conversations at work. What has happened in each situation?****2 16▶ Listen again and make a note of the phrases used to thank someone and respond. Which phrases might be more suitable for a more formal situation, and which for a more informal situation?****3 We often add a comment when we thank someone or respond. Turn to audio script 16▶ on page 153 and look at the comments the speakers made.****4 Work with a partner. Take turns to thank each other and respond in the following situations. Make sure you choose an appropriate phrase for the situation, and add a comment. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.**

- A colleague brings you a cup of coffee.
- A taxi takes you to the station after work.
- A friend pays for lunch.
- A stranger holds the door for you.
- Your manager supports you at a difficult meeting.
- Someone on a train lends you their mobile phone.
- A client invites you to present your new project to their team.
- Your team leader helps you with a report – which took until midnight to finish!

## Language at work | Present, past and future ability

**1** 17▷ Listen to Richard Lake talking about his new business idea to some potential investors and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What is Boatnet?
- 2 What is the current situation for boat owners who want to use the Internet?
- 3 What will Boatnet enable them to do in the future?
- 4 What protection does Boatnet have against competitors?

**2** Read these extracts from the presentation.

- a I **could see** that there was definitely a market.
- b Boat owners want to **be able to access** the Internet.
- c You still **can't access** the Internet from your boat.
- d Our subscribers **will be able to access** the Internet for a basic monthly fee.
- e We **were able to test** the system extensively.
- f We **can offer** the service for £25 a month.
- g We'd like to **be able to increase** this.
- h Have you **been able to get** any sort of protection for it?
- i We **couldn't get** a patent.
- j So other companies **won't be able to compete** with you?

Which extracts refer to

- 1 present ability? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 past ability? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 future ability? \_\_\_\_\_

**3** Use the extracts to complete the rules with these words and phrases.

*has / have been able to    can    couldn't    was / were able to  
be able to    could    is / are able to    wasn't / weren't able to*

- 1 To talk about general or present ability, we use \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 To talk about future ability, we use \_\_\_\_\_ after *will, might* and *may*, and verbs like *want to* or *would like to*.
- 3 We use \_\_\_\_\_ to talk about past ability with a connection to the present.
- 4 We use \_\_\_\_\_ to talk about general ability in the past, and before *hear, see*, etc.
- 5 To talk about a specific situation in the past, if we mean 'tried and succeeded', we use \_\_\_\_\_. But if the sentence is negative we can use \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 4** on page 109.

**4** Look at these rapidly-changing technologies and talk about past, present and future ability when using them.



*Example: In the past, I wasn't able to use my mobile phone for taking photos – I could only text or make calls. With my current phone, I can take photos and video clips, play games and download music files. In the future, I'd like to be able to use my phone for international videoconferencing as well.*

**5** Work with a partner and discuss similar changes affecting your own lives, in or out of work. Talk about technology, systems or methods of working, or choose from the list.

- electronic equipment
- vehicles
- travel
- work practices
- education
- medicine

🔗 » Interactive Workbook » Exercises and Tests

### Tip | managed to

*Managed to* can also be used when talking about a specific action in the past especially when we succeed in doing something difficult after trying hard.

*I managed to pass my driving test at the fifth attempt.*



## Investing in a new idea

### Background

## Concrete Canvas – the building in a bag

Will Crawford and Peter Brewin are joint directors of Concrete Canvas, and have developed an innovative product – an inflatable concrete shelter. They came up with the idea in response to a competition to find new uses for cement. They visited refugee camps in Africa to do further research. They believe their product could get round the problem of supplying cheap, easy-to-use shelters in disaster situations such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

The shelter is basically a sealed plastic sack that measures under two metres square. Inside is a fabric that has been soaked in cement and this is attached to the outside of an inflatable plastic liner. To inflate the shelter, the sack is filled with water, the fabric is unfolded and a chemical pack releases gas into the plastic liner. Twelve hours later, the

thin concrete fabric has set in the shape of the inflated liner, creating a rigid but lightweight shelter. No training is needed, and the weight and size are similar to those of tents used by aid organizations and the military.

Crawford and Brewin aim to test their idea with an aid organization such as Médecins Sans Frontières or CARE. If the testing goes well, they hope to raise the necessary funding to take the project forward. Initially, they need an investment of \$300,000 to build and field-test prototypes.

#### SOME FIGURES

Useful life of a tent in some conditions:  
less than 3 weeks

Useful life of Concrete Canvas shelter:  
minimum 10 years

Time needed to put up shelter: 40 minutes

Time until shelter is ready to use: 12 hours

## The Expert View

Two essential factors for the success of a new venture are a unique business opportunity, combined with an excellent understanding of the market and resource requirements. To convince an investor, the entrepreneur needs to make a business pitch that is well presented and easily understood – and which covers the business idea, the market, resource requirements and future growth potential. As an investor, you need to pick an idea which offers a good return on investment and has a management team with good leadership skills and market understanding. Be aware the greater the risk, the greater the need to gain a higher rate of return!

Dr Stephanie Hussels, Lecturer in Entrepreneurship  
Cranfield School of Management.

### Discussion

- 1 What advice would you give to Will Crawford and Peter Brewin about obtaining the investment they need?
- 2 What information would potential investors need before deciding to put their money into this product?
- 3 Do you think this is a good project to invest in? Why?

### Task

In this activity you will be both an entrepreneur and an investor. Your aim is to be either the winning entrepreneur or the winning investor. The winner is the person or team with the most money at the end.

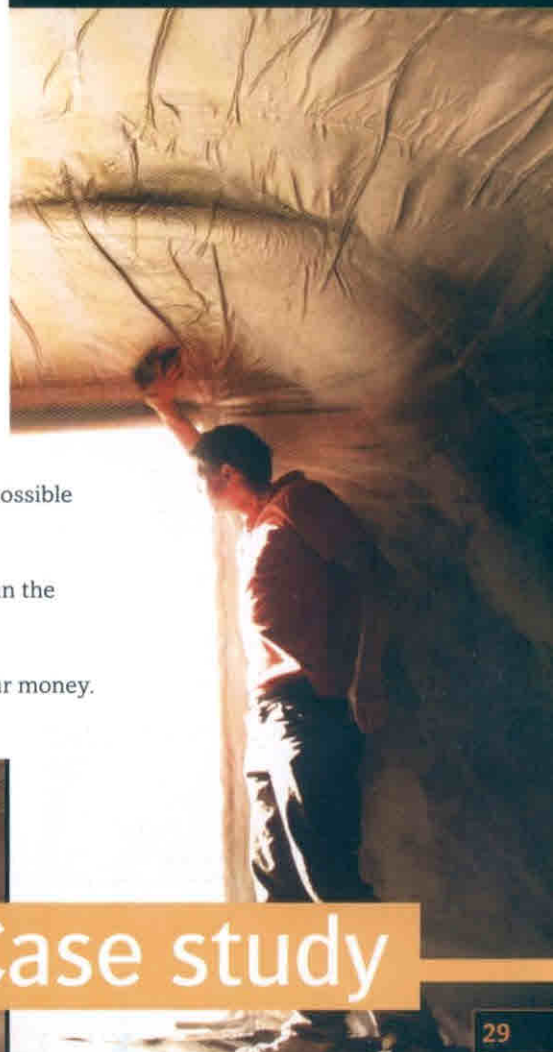
#### Entrepreneurs

- Present a new idea to the investors and get them to invest as much money as possible in it. You have three minutes to make your 'pitch'.

#### Investors

- You have \$500,000 to invest. Your aim is to invest as much money as possible in the winning idea.
- You can invest all your money in one idea or divide it between different ideas.
- You can't invest in your own business idea, and you don't have to spend all your money.

Turn to File 09 on page 138 and follow the instructions.



## Case study

## 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.'

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

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

14

### Part 1

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

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

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

... OK. We call the system DiScan.

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

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

15

### Part 2

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

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

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

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

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

**David** And the second benefit?

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

**David** It sounds impressive.

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

16

1

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

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

2

**A** Here's that document you wanted copied.

**B** Thanks a lot – I appreciate it.

**A** No problem – any time.

3

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

**B** You're welcome – I really enjoyed it.

4

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

**B** No problem – thanks for your help.

5

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

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

6

**A** After you.

**B** Thanks.

**A** That's OK.

17

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

because the technology wasn't in place.

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

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

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

**Jason** And how long are these contracts?

**Richard** Seven years.

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

**Richard** That's right.

## Unit 5

18

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

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

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

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