



7

Making decisions

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about personality and decision-making
- Participating in a decision-making meeting
- Talking about social plans
- Talking about countability and quantity

Case study

- Resolving an expansion crisis

Starting point

- 1 Think of one or two good decisions you have made. How much were you guided by facts and figures? How much did you follow your intuition?
- 2 Does having more time produce better decisions? Or do you decide faster and more wisely when under pressure?

Working with words | Personality and decision-making

1 Read this text about personality and decision-making. Which personality type

- 1 thinks it's important to be on time?
- 2 enjoys an argument?
- 3 finds it hard to concentrate on one thing at once?
- 4 is more interested in the future than the past?

Are you an extrovert or an introvert?

Extroverts are often **outgoing** and enthusiastic. They are good with people and enjoy a public role. They prefer to do lots of things at once and can be easily distracted. They're talkers rather than listeners and can be **impulsive**.

Introverts are often **self-contained** and reserved. They can be very **focused** when working on tasks and prefer to focus on one thing at a time. They are good listeners, they think before they act and prefer to be behind the scenes.

Are you a sensor or an intuitive?

Sensors are often sensible and **pragmatic**. They are good at understanding details and remembering facts and specifics. They are reliable and **methodical** and work at a steady pace. They trust their own experience and use established skills.

Intuitives are often energetic and **creative**. They like to focus on the big picture and on future possibilities. They like things that are new and different and prefer to learn new skills. They are **thoughtful** when making decisions and trust their instincts.

Are you a thinker or a feeler?

Thinkers usually take a **rational** approach to decision-making and prefer to remain **detached**. They are honest and direct, valuing fairness. They can be ambitious and critical. They take few things personally and like arguing and debating issues for fun.

Feelers are often **instinctive** in their decisions rather than relying on facts or reasons. **Tactful** and diplomatic, they avoid arguments and take many things personally. They appear warm and friendly, like to be appreciated and are good at complimenting others.

Are you a judger or a perceiver?

Judgers often make decisions easily and quickly. They appreciate plans, rules and schedules and are usually punctual. They are **determined**, keep to their deadlines and like to complete projects. They are serious and **conventional**, and like decisiveness in others.

Perceivers are often **indecisive**; they like to be **flexible** and to keep their options open. Being unconventional, they dislike rules and deadlines. They like to start projects and prefer to play now and work later.

2 Match the adjectives in bold in the text to these statements.

- 'I am not influenced by other people or my emotions.' **detached**
- 'I always do things in a careful and well-ordered way.'
- 'I find it hard to make up my mind about things.'
- 'I focus on what I want to do and don't let anyone stop me.'
- 'I do things based on my own feelings.'
- 'I am happy to change my plans when necessary to suit my friends.'
- 'I am confident and friendly.'
- 'I like to think about things carefully.'
- 'I can produce new things using my imagination.'
- 'I do what is normal and acceptable.'
- 'I make decisions objectively.'
- 'I don't do things that will upset or annoy people.'
- 'I depend on myself.'
- 'I pay careful attention to what I'm doing.'
- 'I do things as I think of them without considering the consequences.'
- 'I like to find practical solutions to problems.'

3 Work with a partner. Choose five of the adjectives in 2 and explain what kind of people you like to work with the most and why. Then choose another five adjectives and explain what kind of people you like to work with the least and why.

4 Work with a partner.

- Find things in the text that the personality types
a are good at / with b like / prefer to do.
- What are you good at / with? How do you like / prefer to approach decision-making?

5 Decide which personality type you are most like in each section in the text.

- Write down the letter for the type you choose in each section.
 - Extrovert (E) or Introvert (I)? ____
 - Thinker (T) or Feeler (F)? ____
 - Sensor (S) or Intuitive (N)? ____
 - Judger (J) or Perceiver (P)? ____
- Turn to File 18 on page 141 to find out what your choice reveals about you.
- Share the information with a partner. Say if you agree or disagree with it and why.

6 27▶ Listen to four people talking about decision-making. Which personality type best applies to each speaker?

Speaker 1: Extrovert or Introvert?

Speaker 3: Thinker or Feeler?

Speaker 2: Sensor or Intuitive?

Speaker 4: Judger or Perceiver?

7 Match the verbs in A to the noun phrases in B to make phrases from audio 27▶.

A		B	
weigh up	consider	(my) own judgment	different perspectives
delay	have confidence in	my decision	all the options
rely on	get	two things	my instincts
trust	decide between	feelings	information

8 Work with a partner. Use the phrases in 7 to talk about the way you made one or two recent decisions in or out of work.

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 7 on page 114.

9 Work with a partner. What personality types from the text would be most suitable for these jobs and why?

- air traffic controller
- sales manager
- website designer
- human resources manager
- office administrator
- accounts controller

Tip | good at / good with

Use *good at* (something / doing something) to talk about a skill or activity.

Marc is **good at** languages / speaking Italian.

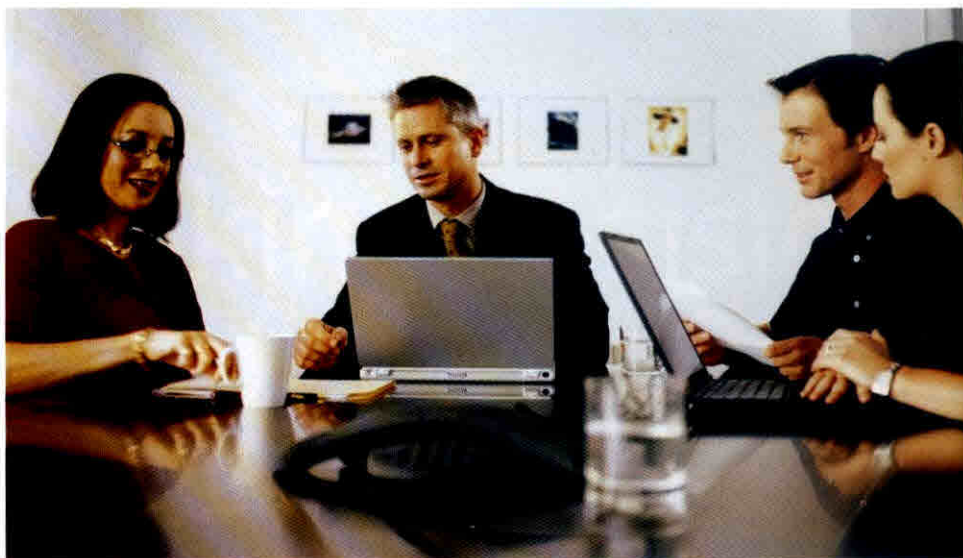
Use *good with* (something / somebody) to talk about using something or dealing with someone.

Joel is **good with** people.

Context

The Scandinavian company KYM has a budget deficit. Each region has been asked to cut costs. Three regional customer service managers (Jens from Denmark, Matt from Finland, Anna from Sweden) are meeting to discuss where savings can be made. The meeting is led by Sinead, a consultant brought in to oversee the measures.

Meetings | Participating in a decision-making meeting



1 28▷ Read the *Context*. Listen to the meeting and tick (✓) the points discussed.

- 1 Freeze on recruitment ____
- 2 Cut back on overtime ____
- 3 Reduce office resources ____
- 4 Change telephone provider ____
- 5 Reduce client expense accounts ____
- 6 Cut back on business trips ____

2 28▷ Listen again and complete the phrases in these sentences.

- 1 Yes, well, _____ our costs for personnel are very high
- 2 ... number of employees. _____ the overtime figures. They're _____, and they're costing us ...
- 3 The _____, we need to look at why we have so much overtime.
- 4 ... a lot of waste. _____ printing emails out on expensive copy paper.
- 5 So _____ is monitoring the office supplies ...
- 6 I'm _____.
- 7 As _____, we'd make hardly any savings ...
- 8 Matt _____. But _____ cut expense accounts ...

3 Put the phrases in 2 into these categories.

- a Presenting / Supporting an argument: _____
- b Giving an opinion: _____
- c Responding to an opinion / argument: _____
- d Clarifying a point: _____

4 Sinead is leading the discussion. Turn to audio script 28▷ on page 156 and underline the phrases she uses to

- 1 set the agenda for the discussion
- 2 manage turn-taking
- 3 invite people to express their opinions
- 4 move on to a different topic
- 5 indicate enough time has been spent on a topic
- 6 monitor action points.

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 7** on page 114.

Tip | *getting at*

Use *getting at* to talk about what someone means.

What **are** you *getting at*?

So what **you're** *getting at* is ...

5 Work in small groups. You are going to continue the meeting from audio 28▷.

- 1 Look at this agenda item and decide on your opinion of each suggestion. Add two extra suggestions to the list.

Reduce staff benefits / activities

- reduce subsidies in staff cafeteria
- cancel annual staff away day
- restrict Christmas event to staff only
- introduce a PIN number for photocopying and limit number of copies per person

- 2 Choose eight phrases from *Key expressions* that you have never used or are not very familiar with. Write these on separate cards / pieces of paper. (Don't include phrases from *Leading the discussion*.)
- 3 Continue the meeting from audio 28▷. As you participate, 'play' your phrase cards by placing them in front of you when you use the phrase correctly. Your colleagues will return the card to you if the phrase is used incorrectly.
- 4 The winner is the first person to play all their cards.
- 6 Work in groups of four. You are at a departmental meeting. You have €50,000 left in your annual budget. As a group, try to decide how to spend the money.**
- 1 Before the meeting do the following.
- Decide on what type of department you are.
 - Make a list of five suggestions for spending the money (the money can be divided between more than one idea).
- 2 Prepare for the meeting with a partner. Decide which suggestions on the list you agree / disagree with and think of arguments to support your opinions.
- 3 Hold the meeting, taking turns to lead the discussion.
- 4 Report back to the class on any decisions you made.

 » Interactive Workbook »  Email

Practically speaking | Talking about social plans

- 1 29▷ Listen to five short conversations about plans for the evening / weekend / holidays. In which conversation is the second speaker**
- a certain about plans? ____
- b certain about plans but unhappy with them? ____
- c certain about having no plans? ____
- d fairly certain about plans? ____
- e uncertain about plans? ____
- 2 29▷ Listen again. For each conversation, make a note of the phrases used to**
- 1 ask about plans
- 2 respond to a question about plans
- 3 react to someone's plans.
- 3 Talk to as many people as possible in the class. Ask and answer questions about your evening / weekend / holiday plans. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.**

Key expressions

Presenting / Supporting an argument

If we look at the facts, we'll see ...

Look at ... They're here in black and white ...

The fact is ... / The thing is ...

The advantage / drawback is ...

If we ..., it'll mean ...

A classic example is ...

Giving an opinion

I (don't) think (we should) ...

If you ask me, we should ...

..., that's my view.

In my opinion, ...

As far as I'm concerned, ...

I think it would be crazy to ...

Responding to opinions / arguments

Exactly / Absolutely.

You're right / X is right.

What ... says is right.

Yes, but ...

I'm not convinced.

Clarifying

Could you give us some detail, please?

What I mean is ...

So what you're getting at is ...

In other words ...

Leading the discussion

Today, I'd like to establish ... (Jens), could you start us off, please?

What's your position on this?

Hang on, let's hear what (Jens) has to say ...



I don't want to spend too long on this point.

Can we move on to ...?

Let's turn to the next item ...

Let's look into it ... and discuss it again at our next meeting.

Let's draw up some action points on ...

 » Interactive Workbook
»  Phrasebank

Language at work | Countability | Expressing quantity

1 Read these extracts from audio 28▷. Match the nouns in **bold** to 1, 2 or 3.

- a We'll find there's a lot of **waste**.
- b It could be a **project** for one of our work experience students.
- c We'd make hardly any **savings**.
- d We need to look at why we have so much **overtime**.
- e We should look carefully at client travel **expenses**.
- f I don't want to spend too long on this **point**.

- 1 a singular countable noun _____
- 2 a plural countable noun _____
- 3 an uncountable noun _____

2 Decide if these nouns are countable (C), uncountable (U), or both (C/U). If the noun can be both, is there a difference in meaning between the two options?

*news product colleague expenditure paper information suggestion
business travel experience time fact accommodation journey software
correspondence proposal money equipment insurance document advice*

3 Put three more of the nouns in 2 into each box in the diagram (make the nouns plural if necessary).

a / an / the / one

product

(too) many, (not) many, (a) few,
fewer, very few

facts

lots of, plenty of, more, most, some,
(not) enough, hardly any, (not) any

news

(too) much, (not) much, a little, less,
very little

4 Complete the sentences with these quantifiers.

too much any enough very little a some too many fewer

- 1 There's _____ money left in the budget so we can't buy that new software.
- 2 The meeting went well – there were _____ points of disagreement than expected.
- 3 The project is late because we spent _____ time on the planning stage.
- 4 I need _____ information about hotels in the area.
- 5 They didn't take _____ of my suggestions on board at all.
- 6 We haven't got _____ chairs for the meeting – could you get a couple more?
- 7 Currently we're employing _____ people – we have to make some cuts.
- 8 Would you like _____ drink?

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice File 7** on page 115.

5 Work with a partner. Compare these situations, using as many of the phrases in 1 as you can.

- working for a multinational company vs working for a small family firm
- communicating by email and text vs communicating face to face
- working with an experienced colleague vs working with a trainee

6 Work in small groups.

- 1 Discuss how you could improve the services and facilities in the building / local area / town or city where you work.
- 2 Present your ideas to the class and give reasons for the improvements.

① » Interactive Workbook » Exercises and Tests

Tip | most

Use *most* to refer to something in general.

Most people have jobs.

Use *most of the* to refer to a more specific group.

Most of the people I know have jobs.

Remember not to say *the most people*.

Resolving an expansion crisis

Background

Cyclepods Ltd struggles to meet demand

A new product is currently on the market. It's environmentally-friendly – made from almost 100% recycled aluminium – and supports the 'green' mode of transport: the bicycle. The product is called a Cyclepod and it is an innovative space-saving cycle storage design which secures eight cycles in a two-metre diameter. The Cyclepod enables the cyclist to lock the front wheel of their cycle, frame and back wheel to the unit, securing the most expensive and highly-targeted parts of the cycle in place. And because the Cyclepod holds bicycles in a vertical position, they are high up and visible on any CCTV that may be installed for extra security. In addition, the Cyclepod is fully brandable and graphics can be applied by the purchaser.

Since it was founded, the company – Cyclepods Ltd – has been going from strength to strength. After the company's

first year of trading, it had sold its product to eight major organizations and the orders have been flooding in since. The problem Cyclepods Ltd now has is meeting the demand. It doesn't have any stock – the Cyclepods are made to order. The company doesn't have the money to invest in mass production yet and because production is slow, profit margins are low. Despite its apparent success, Cyclepods Ltd isn't making enough profit to cover its overheads and is facing a cash-flow crisis.

FACT FILE

Founders: James Steward, Natalie Connell

Growth: 8 contracts in first 9 months – customers included Pepsi and Reebok

Price per unit: £3,900

Required investment: £200,000

Discussion

- 1 What are the company's strengths and weaknesses?
- 2 What is the company's USP?
- 3 Where is the market for this product? Who would buy a Cyclepod?
- 4 What is your own opinion of the product?

Task

Work in groups of four.

- 1 Establish the current situation for Cyclepods Ltd.
- 2 Individually, or with a partner, decide what you think the company should do to resolve its cash-flow crisis and increase its profit margin. Prepare your arguments and be ready to give your opinions.
- 3 Choose one person to lead the discussion. As a group, discuss all the options you think the company has.
- 4 Decide on the two best options and present them to the class.
- 5 Have a class vote to decide on the best option for the company.
- 6 Turn to File 12 on page 139 to find out how the company actually resolved its situation.

The Expert View

When faced with making decisions, it is helpful to decide what sort of decision is required. Is the decision tactical or is it strategic? Tactical decisions offer short-term solutions to operational problems. They don't affect the broad plans of the organization. Strategic decisions will challenge fundamental principles such as the company's approach to marketing or production. Strategic decisions should help to create a long-term sustainable business approach for an organization. Tactical decisions should help to solve short-term issues within a fundamentally sound and successful business model. Make sure you know whether the decision you need to make is tactical or strategic.

Roger Delves, Programme Director, Centre for Customized Executive Development
Cranfield School of Management



Case study

File 11 | Unit 5

Language at work, Exercise 4, page 34

Student A

- 1 You are at a travel agency enquiring about flights to / from New York and hotel accommodation for a business trip. You want to leave a.m. 20 March and return p.m. 23 March. Find out about
 - departure and arrival time of flights
 - cost of flights
 - recommended hotels
 - hotel location and cost.
- 2 You work in Reception at a hotel in Prague. Use this information to answer your partner's questions about things to do in Prague.

The Grand Tour of Prague: see all the most important sights of Prague (starting in the Old Town Square)

- Includes a tram ride and 'Walks of Prague' CD
- Daily at 11.00 a.m. and 2 p.m., lasts 4 hours
- Price: CZK450

Prague Castle: largest ancient castle in the world with several museums

- Take tram no. 22 or 23
- Open 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
- Price: entry to courtyards and gardens is free; entry to all castle museums is CZK350

Trade Fair Palace: Gallery of modern art – four floors of art exhibitions

Take tram 5, 12, 14, 15 or 17

Open 10 a.m.–6 p.m. from Tuesday to Sunday

Price: CZK100 to CZK250.

File 12 | Unit 7

Case study, Task, page 47

A management consultant was engaged to give advice, he suggested

- reviewing and, if necessary, rewriting their business plan to have available for potential investors
- looking for possible investors
- focusing on improving production in terms of price, speed and volume in order to be able to supply bulk orders
- actively looking for business partners – attend events, etc.
- focusing on marketing and PR activities.

James and Natalie followed all the advice and this resulted in

- generating investment capital – €348,000
- moving manufacturing to China – faster, cheaper and better quality
- increasing profit margin to 76% as a result of the previous decision
- ensuring the company can supply on demand
- winning an award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

File 13 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

Student A

- 1 **Situation:** you work in Marketing and recently ordered a print advert to be placed in an international magazine. You have noticed some errors which must be corrected before the ad goes to print. Your superior is angry and wants confirmation that things can be amended asap. Call your advertising agency about the changes.
Problem: misspelled name: not *Katherine* but *Katerina* / wording – change contact information to: chocorollo@dandp.com / ad to appear twice monthly, not weekly
Deadline: by Thursday (today is Tuesday)
- 2 **Situation:** you work in Marketing in the Lisbon office. Your company is decentralized – departments are responsible for own office area and finances. You are holding an international meeting in the Barcelona office and need to reserve two meeting rooms and equipment. Call to discuss your needs.
Problem: two weeks ago, you were quoted €1,000 for the rooms – is this correct? / need a quote for the use of two data projectors and videoconferencing equipment / must have room rental agreement forms and confirmation for your procurement department asap
Deadline: next Wednesday (today is Thursday)
- 3 **Situation:** you work in Marketing in a French confectionery company. You're responsible for marketing events and ensuring the necessary promotion material is available for the region Europe West. You have a lot of events currently taking place so some of your material is out of stock. You receive a call from a colleague from PR in Denmark. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.
Action: decide which course of action you can promise.
 - a Call back later today after checking what's in stock.
 - b You need time to calculate stock and see if you can get any material back from neighbouring countries. Call back next week.
 - c You're expecting a delivery of merchandise at the end of next week. You could send some material when it arrives – it'll reach Denmark in 10–12 days and is only merchandise.
- 4 **Situation:** you run a successful translation agency, working with mostly European languages. You receive a call from a client about an urgent matter. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.
Action: decide which course of action you can promise.
 - a Accept the translation immediately before you've contacted the translator (specialist languages are big money and there's an added charge for short notice translations).
 - b Promise to send an offer by this afternoon and confirm if the translator has time by this evening.
 - c Promise to call back / email all details by lunchtime tomorrow.

- 3** If you have to make a decision, don't listen to your intuition. Intuition is for people who don't want to think. OK ... it's fine for the small decisions in life, like what kind of ice cream to buy. But for the big decisions, you need a more systematic way of thinking. Let's say you have to decide between two things – two applicants for a key position, two properties you're thinking about buying. You check the facts, check the figures, and your analysis says to pick A over B. But your intuition says to choose B. What do you do? Most people stick with their intuition – which is wrong. You need to delay your decision until you can work out why your intuition is telling you something different. That's the whole point of analysis: to make you consider all the options – so you don't make the wrong decision.
- 4** To make good decisions, you need to have confidence in your own judgement. We all make bad decisions, but the important thing is not to worry about them. As a judge, I often have to decide between the evidence of two people standing in front of me. I don't know which one is being honest but I know one of them is lying. That's when making decisions becomes very difficult. Even so, I never base my courtroom decisions on my feelings or my instinct. I do it by the evidence, and by what the law tells me.
- 28**
- Sinead** Today, I'd like to establish where we think we can cut costs. We can discuss actual figures when we've considered what's possible. Jens, could you start us off, please?
- Jens** Yes, well, if we look at the facts, we'll see that our costs for personnel are very high ...
- Anna** Yes, but we've discussed lay-offs before.
- Sinead** Hang on, let's hear what Jens has to say about personnel before we reject the topic.
- Jens** You're right, Anna, but I'm not talking about reducing the number of employees. Look at the overtime figures. They're here in black and white, and they're costing us a lot of money. The fact is we need to keep these to a minimum to save money.
- Sinead** Matt, what's your position on this?
- Matt** What Jens says is right. The thing is, we need to look at why we have so much overtime and if it's realistic to try to reduce it.
- Anna** If we do reduce it, it'll mean dramatic savings. We could set up a ...
- Sinead** ... That all sounds pretty positive. Let's look into it at a country level and discuss it again at our next meeting. Can we move on to office resources? Anna, this was your point. Could you give us some detail, please?
- Anna** Yes, what I mean is paper, office supplies, that sort of thing. I think if we look closely at what we actually use, we'll find there's a lot of waste. A classic example is printing emails out on expensive copy paper.
- Matt** So what you're getting at is monitoring the office supplies and making sure we're not using too many or wasting too much?
- Anna** Exactly.
- Jens** I'm not convinced. As far as I'm concerned, we'd make hardly any savings compared to the personnel costs.
- Matt** The drawback is, it's quite labour intensive to keep a check on this. ... But it could be a project for one of our work experience students.
- Anna** Yes, we're ...
- Sinead** ... I don't want to spend too long on this point. We should set up the project Matt mentioned – with the student – and see how it goes. There are plenty of other areas we could consider. Let's turn to the next item, customer expenditure.
- Matt** If you ask me, we should look carefully at client travel expenses and entertainment costs.
- Jens** Absolutely. We spend far too much money on clients. The expense accounts aren't taken seriously enough ... that's my view.
- Sinead** Anna, you've been very quiet.
- Anna** Yes, I was just doing some calculations ... Matt is right. But I think it would be crazy to cut expense accounts. In my opinion, we should introduce tighter guidelines.
- Sinead** Good, we seem to be getting somewhere. Let's draw up some action points on what we've discussed so far.
- 29**
- 1**
- A** What've you got on this weekend, Alex?
- B** Well, I'm supposed to be helping a friend move house.
- A** Oh, poor you.
- 2**
- A** What are you up to tonight?
- B** We'll probably catch a movie.
- A** Sounds good.
- 3**
- A** Are you taking any time off in the summer?
- B** Mmm – it depends on my colleagues and their vacations.
- A** I see.
- 4**
- A** What are you doing this weekend?
- B** We're off to Paris!
- A** Lucky you!
- 5**
- A** Anything nice planned for the weekend?
- B** Nothing special. What about you?
- Unit 8**
- 30**
- 1**
- Paula** Every day, EU companies are outsourcing business process tasks to emerging economies where labour costs are lower – in areas like call centres, airlines, legal processing, finance, and IT of course. The UK jobs are going to India, French jobs to North Africa, Spanish jobs are going to Latin America. Germany is outsourcing to Central European countries like Poland and Hungary, and Scandinavia is outsourcing to the Baltic States and India. Of course outsourcing benefits these countries – by injecting money into their economies and driving the development of a modern communications infrastructure. But it also leads to significant job losses in the home countries. I believe that member states of the EU need to do much more to respond to such losses, which can have a big impact on communities. This is not about protectionism. But we need to develop strategies to cope with serious job losses, and to create more high-quality jobs in the EU.
- 2**
- Christian** I work for a Swiss financial services company. We first started outsourcing some of our back-office work to India a couple of years ago – at a time when we were considering what cost-cutting measures we could take. Labour costs out there were actually 70% lower than in Switzerland. It's been very successful. We've been able to streamline our operation and free up resources for our core activities. We've now moved two-thirds of our IT work to India. We have an IP-based VPN, a Virtual Private Network, which simplifies the operation and improves efficiency. But it's not just about savings, or gaining a competitive edge. If you look at countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China – they're obviously very important for outsourcing, but they are also important potential markets in their own right. They're growing very very fast, and with hundreds of millions of customers, you can't afford to ignore them.
- 3**
- Chitra** I am working in Bangalore as a customer adviser for a UK company. There are many companies coming over here nowadays, and it's not just because they can achieve lower overheads. There are a