



## 4.1 About business The project team

### Discussion

**1** Work with a partner. Discuss the meaning of these statements. Choose the two which you think are closest to the truth. Explain your choice to another pair.

Project management and team-building quotes

Nothing is impossible for the person who doesn't have to do it.

If you're six months late on a milestone due next week but nevertheless really believe you can make it, you're a project manager.

There is no I in Teamwork.

If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

Getting good players is easy. What's difficult is getting them to play together.

### Listening

**2** 1:31 Listen to part of a project review meeting. What is being built? Which two stages of the project caused the delays? Choose from the list.

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| a Land purchase     | e Excavation for foundations |
| b Project approval  | f Dam construction           |
| c Feasibility study | g Resettlement               |
| d Geological survey | h River diversion            |

**3** The Gantt chart below relates to the updated schedule. Listen again and complete the gaps with the correct project stages from 2.

Project schedule	
Year 1	Year 2
J F M A M J J A S O N D	J F M A M J J A S O N D
Year 3	
Year 4	
J F M A M J J A S O N D	J F M A M J J A S O N D
Logistics	Feasibility study      Project approval      (2) _____      Resettlement
Engineering	(1) _____      (3) _____      Excavation      (4) _____

### Reading

**4** Read the first three paragraphs of the article opposite. Answer these questions.

- What examples of 'ineffective team-building activities' does the author mention?
- Why do companies continue to run them?

**5** Read the rest of the article. Match the four points of advice in a-d with gaps 1-4 in the text.

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| a Create an open and honest atmosphere. | c Have a common plan.         |
| b Learn from the best leaders.          | d Focus on a clear objective. |

**6** Which essential team building characteristic is missing in each situation a-d?

- We're going round in circles. It's like a ship without a captain!
- The project scope is too wide and unclear.
- I think we all know where we're going, but we have different views on how to get there.
- We all get on OK, but everyone's too politically correct.

### Discussion

**7** Work in small groups. Discuss these questions.

- Have you ever played volleyball? What are the principles of the game?
- Volleyball has often been called the ultimate team sport. Why is this and what lessons can be learned and applied to project management?
- What similar lessons can be learned from other team sports or group activities? For example, playing in a band.

### Internet research

Search for the keywords "Gantt charts" to discover more about them. How many different types of chart exist and how are they used in project management? Report back to the class.



# Smells like team spirit



Weekend retreats and touchy-feely exercises may do more to create bad-feeling than build teams. Instead, take some lessons from a winning volleyball coach

It's time someone finally said it: most of what passes for team-building these days doesn't really build teams. So why do companies spend millions of dollars annually to make their employees go through ineffective team-building activities: walking around in blindfolds, navigating rope courses, and sitting crosslegged on the floor with paper and crayons illustrating their 'life paths'?

There are three reasons. While it's generally recognized that a great team will beat a mediocre team 99 times out of 100, little hard thinking goes on at most companies about how effective teams are actually built. Employees usually don't complain about silly team-building efforts, whether out of apathy or for fear of being labeled 'anti-team'. Finally, most team-building practitioners are well-meaning, sincere people whom no one wants to offend.

So if conventional team-building activities are largely ineffective, how do you build a great team? In 1978, I played a supporting role on a volleyball team that won the first National Championship in our university's history. That team was made up of people who weren't the most physically-gifted athletes in the world. But they merged into a force that was far greater than the sum of the players' individual abilities.

Nearly 30 years later, what I learned that season remains one of the most important lessons of my life. Great

teams – whether composed of athletes, businesspeople, fire fighters, military commandos, or what have you – teach us four key lessons:

1 \_\_\_\_\_. One of the most memorable features of my 1978 team was the level of intensity which the players brought to every practice and game. The atmosphere was charged with an emotional commitment that caused members of the team to constantly push each other to give everything in service of the goal.

Far too often, a company thinks it has a team-building problem when what it really has is a goal problem. If you want to build a great team, make sure its members share a determined passion to accomplish something. How do you get that kind of commitment? By involving everyone in the development of the goal.

2 \_\_\_\_\_. It's not enough to get a bunch of people together who care deeply about reaching a goal. They need to have a strategy for achieving it. The best team-building tool ever is a good strategy that everyone buys into. If you want to increase teamwork, don't focus on the team, focus the team on the task.

My team coach had a detailed strategy for winning that the players bought into completely. A part of the strategy was to overcome our physical shortcomings with a commitment to superior conditioning and training. So, for two months the team endured a schedule so demanding that it was the

talk of the campus.

3 \_\_\_\_\_. Yes, trust and respect are key. But ironically, often the best way to increase levels of trust and respect on a team is to get them focused on the goal and the strategy. This gets people saying what they really think. When people say what they really think and are held accountable, trust and respect usually follow. Don't impose an atmosphere of false politeness.

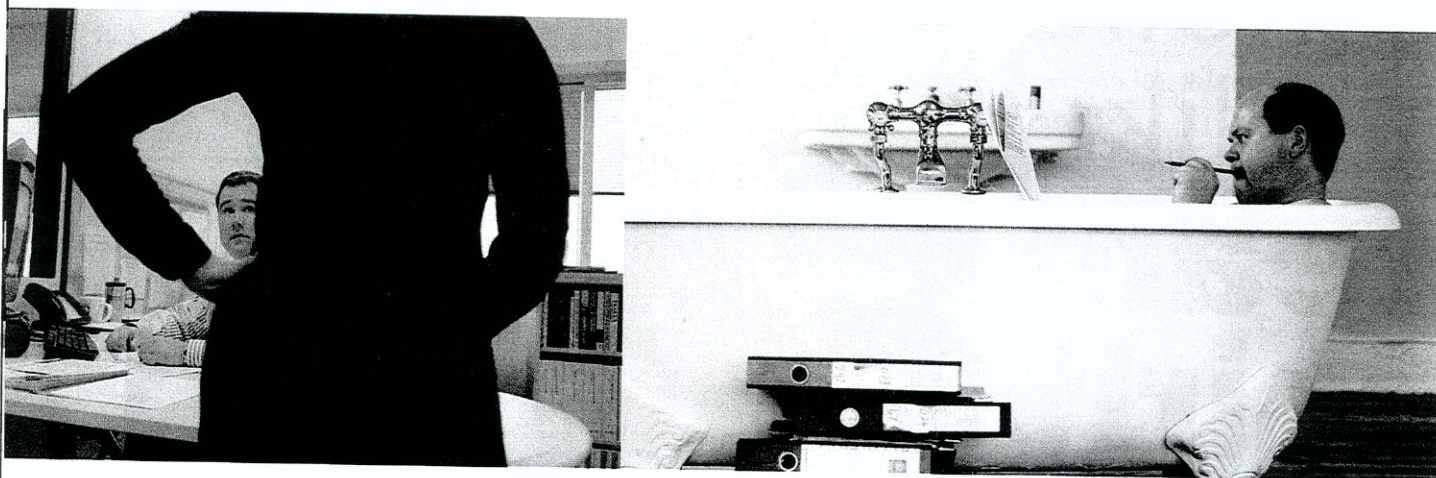
There was plenty of conflict on the team and people sometimes lost their tempers. But on the court an atmosphere of respect always prevailed. All great business teams share that same quality.

4 \_\_\_\_\_. There's no getting around it, great teams usually have great managers. My old team coach still coaches volleyball at that same university today. He has an unrivalled 426-162 win-loss record and has also coached a US team to a World Championship and an Olympic gold medal.

So, learn how to be a great coach. Aspiring business leaders would be a lot better off if they spent less time reading management literature, and more time around people like my old coach. The great college coaches may know more about team-building than anyone else in the world. After all, their leadership and team-building skills are measured in real time, in front of real crowds. And they start from scratch with a new team every year.



## 4.2 Vocabulary Managing people and projects



## Discussion

**1** Work with a partner. Match the nouns in the box with the descriptions a–e. Which character do you think would be most difficult to manage and why? Which description best describes you?

The bully    The team player    The leader    The workaholic    The maverick

- This character does things their own way. They may be effective, but they're difficult to control.
- This person has a natural ability to encourage others and take a project through to success.
- This person doesn't know when to stop, and they often believe the office would collapse without them.
- This person imposes their personality on others, making other people feel bad in the workplace.
- This person has a natural ability to fit in. They make positive contributions and build good relationships.

**2** Which character type in 1 would you associate with each adjective below?

aggressive    anxious    charismatic    confident    cooperative    decisive  
 easy-going    friendly    helpful    impatient    independent    individual    motivating  
 obsessive    over-critical    single-minded    stressed    unpredictable

## Listening

**3** 1:32 Listen to an HR manager and line manager talking about three different members of their team. Decide which of the labels in 1 best describes each person.

Anna \_\_\_\_\_    Bjorn \_\_\_\_\_    Katia \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Listen again. Which adjectives do you hear that confirm your answer in 3?

## Expressions

**5** The expressions in **bold** all occurred in the recording. Match phrases 1–8 with the appropriate reply in a–h. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Marion is in danger of <b>burning out</b> .           | a Except Rob, but he doesn't like anyone!             |
| 2 How are you <b>settling in</b> ?                      | b I wish I could, but things are just too hectic.     |
| 3 If we want to succeed, we must <b>pull together</b> . | c I know! He asked me to do his report for him!       |
| 4 He's always <b>passing the buck</b> !                 | d No, you can rely on me!                             |
| 5 She <b>gets on well</b> with everyone.                | e Perhaps we should run a team-building course?       |
| 6 Don't <b>let me down</b> , will you?                  | f Yes. She's a workaholic. It's affecting her health. |
| 7 Dave isn't <b>pulling his weight</b> !                | g You're right, and that means more work for us!      |
| 8 You should learn to <b>take it easy</b> .             | h Fine, thanks, though I still don't know everyone.   |



### Internet research

Search for the keywords "project management tips" and decide whether you would make a good or bad project manager. Prepare a one-minute talk to the class to explain your decision.

**6** Match the people involved in a project in 1–5 with their definitions a–e.

- 1 Sponsor
- 2 Project manager
- 3 Project team members
- 4 End users
- 5 Key stakeholders

- a The people who will benefit from the end results of the project on a day-to-day basis.
- b The person or group of people who decided the project was needed in the first place.
- c Anybody who might be affected by the project, whether positively or negatively.
- d The person responsible for running the project and delivering on time and within budget.
- e Staff chosen for the skills they can bring to the project, often from different departments.

**7** Below are different people or groups involved in or affected by a motorway construction project. Match them with the five key players above.

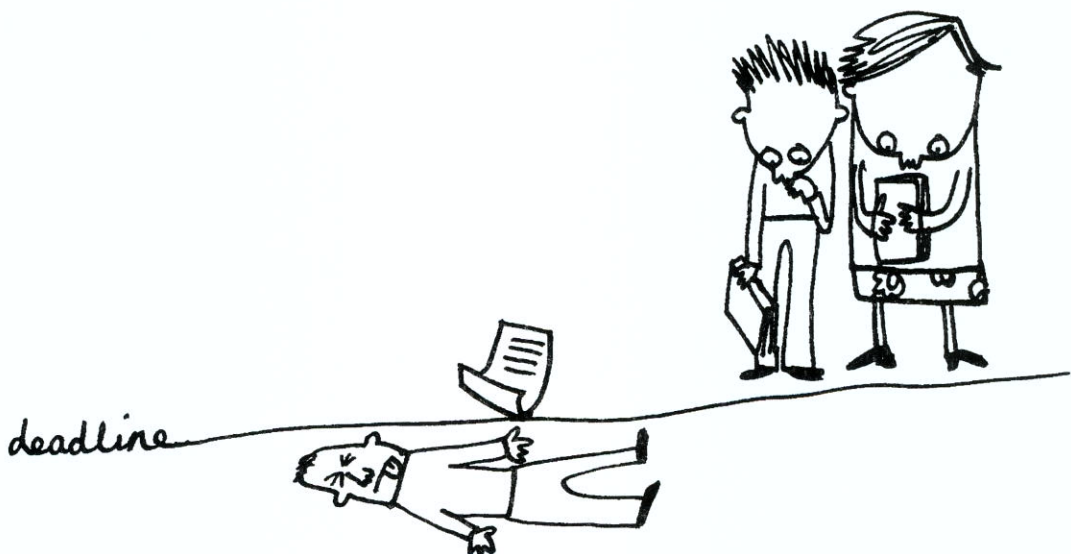
- a truck and car drivers
- b the Ministry of Transport
- c a senior engineer in a major civil engineering company
- d a plant hire company, an environmental protection group, and villagers living near the proposed route
- e a civil engineer, a surveyor, an environmental engineer and a transport consultant

### Collocations

**8** Complete the project management sentences using the correct form of verbs from the list which collocate with the nouns in **bold**. In some sentences, more than one verb is possible.

miss reach establish achieve meet stick to set fix

- 1 Unless the team really pulls together, we'll never \_\_\_\_\_ **the deadline** on the Malaysian order.
- 2 The project has been difficult so far. However, once we \_\_\_\_\_ **the next milestone**, everything should get easier.
- 3 To make sense of our tasks, we need to \_\_\_\_\_ **a timeframe** within which we can all work.
- 4 Frank is such an unreasonable boss: he always \_\_\_\_\_ **our targets** for overseas sales too high.
- 5 Congratulations! We've \_\_\_\_\_ **our targets** for quality this year due to all your hard work.
- 6 We've been vague about the schedule for too long. It's time we \_\_\_\_\_ **a date** for definite and moved on.
- 7 In the end, I \_\_\_\_\_ **my deadline** for my accountancy project, but it didn't matter: everybody else was late too.
- 8 Sam's excellent at getting things done on time, but she finds it impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ **her budget**.



### Speaking

**9** Work in small groups. Take turns to describe your personality, your strengths and weaknesses, and what you would be good or bad at doing in a project.



## 4.3 Grammar Regrets, speculation and habits

## Test yourself: past modals

- 1** Two directors of a pharmaceutical company are discussing the reasons why a new software project is behind schedule. Correct the errors in **bold** with the correct form of the verb.

**Rosanna** So, Bruce, where did we go wrong? We're two months behind schedule, Murray's just resigned and the end users are now saying the system will be unusable!

**Bruce** Well, Rosanna, we (1) **should not choose** Murray as project manager in the first place. Mavericks like him just don't make good PMs. We (2) **can predict** he wasn't going to change if we hadn't been in such a rush. In retrospect, we (3) **should put** Isabelle in charge. She's no star but she (4) **will do** a steady job.

**Rosanna** Yeah, I see what you mean, but it's easy to be wise after the event. She (5) **might be** a better choice in some ways, but (6) **will she listen** to the users? Their views (7) **ought to be taken** into account properly before we started the implementation phase. We (8) **must waste** at least one month asking them the wrong questions! If only we had got that right, we (9) **aren't** in the mess we are now!

**Bruce** I just wish we had been given project approval a bit earlier. That way we (10) **can make** sure people bought into the project in the first place. Anyway, the question is, what are the lessons learned and where do we go from here?

## Test yourself: third conditionals

- 2** Rosanna and Bruce are discussing the lessons learned. Rewrite the notes using the third conditional (*If + past perfect, would have + past participle*) as in the example.

Example

If we (put) Isabelle in charge, she (do) a steady job.

*If we had put Isabelle in charge, she would have done a steady job.*

- 1 If we (give) Murray a different role, he (not resign).
- 2 If we (not be) in such a rush, we (make) a better choice.
- 3 If the users (be) listened to, their views (be) taken into account.
- 4 We (not waste) one month if we (ask) the right questions in the first place.
- 5 If we (get) the project approval earlier, we (be able) to start correctly.
- 6 We (not have) all these problems if we (make) the right decisions!

Test yourself: *used to, be used to* and *get used to*

- 3** Complete these sentences using *used to, be used to* or *get used to* and the correct form of the verb.

- 1 We \_\_\_\_\_ (give) ourselves enough time, but these days it's just a mad rush!
- 2 Personally, I don't think I will ever \_\_\_\_\_ (work) like this.
- 3 You know, Murray has changed. He \_\_\_\_\_ (be) such a maverick.
- 4 You're right. He \_\_\_\_\_ (come) to me for advice, but now he does.
- 5 I remember when he joined us, he \_\_\_\_\_ (make) a lot of typos.
- 6 Yes, I remember! He \_\_\_\_\_ (use) a French-style AZERTY keyboard!
- 7 You can say that again! I \_\_\_\_\_ still not \_\_\_\_\_ (type) on an AZERTY after fifteen years!

## Refresh your memory

## Past modals

Use modal + *have* + past participle.

*Sue would have done a better job.*

For past regrets, use *should/ought to/could* + *have* + past participle.

For past speculation, use *may/might/could/must* + *have* + past participle.

## Third conditional

Use *If* + past perfect in the condition. Use *would have* + past participle in the result.  
*If we had spent more on marketing, we would have sold more.*

*used to* + infinitive

Past state or habit.  
*We used to work in a smaller office.*

Familiarity with a strange or difficult situation.

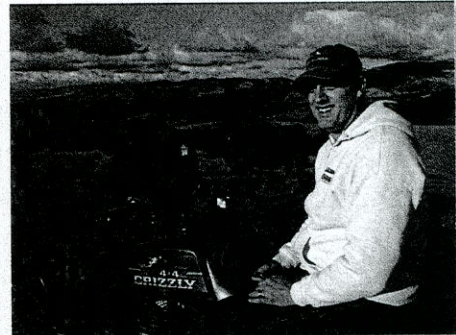
*be/get used to* + verb-ing/noun/pronoun  
*I'm used to working until 7 p.m.*



## Regrets

**4** The photos show two people whose career paths have been very different. Which person regrets their decisions more?

**GRANT** Yeah, I remember Kim. I studied business administration at college with her: we had a great time. I took a job as a trainee accountant in London at the same firm as her. But I felt it just wasn't for me. I was earning good money, and they offered me a salary of £45,000 just to stay, but I said 'no'. Instead, I downshifted. I left to become a dairy farmer. When I look at the people I used to work with, we're really different now. They live in nice houses and drive expensive cars. But overall, I think I made the right choice. I'm really happy on my farm. I'm not at all stressed.



**KIM** I studied business administration at college, but I didn't really enjoy it. I always really wanted to be a vet, but I made the wrong study choices. In the end, I joined an accountancy firm. Now I'm a senior partner, which means I have a great salary. But I sometimes think there's something missing. My friend Grant, who joined the same time as me, left after a few years to start a farm. He asked me to help him set it up, but I said 'no'. I think it was the wrong choice. He says his job's not at all stressful, but mine is constant pressure.



**5** Complete these sentences using an appropriate past modal form of the verb in brackets.

- Grant \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a career as an accountant, but he left.
- Grant \_\_\_\_\_ (earn) £45,000 or more, but he turned it down.
- In the end, Grant doesn't think that he \_\_\_\_\_ (stay) at the accountancy firm.
- Kim thinks she \_\_\_\_\_ (study) to become a vet, not an accountant.
- Kim now thinks that she \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) the accountancy firm and started a business with Grant, but she said 'no'.
- Kim \_\_\_\_\_ (live) a less stressful life on a farm.

**6** Complete the sentences a–d with your own ideas based on the stories of Grant and Kim.

- If Grant had stayed at the accountancy firm \_\_\_\_\_
- If Kim had studied to become a vet, \_\_\_\_\_
- If Grant hadn't become a farmer, \_\_\_\_\_
- If Kim had helped Grant start his farm, \_\_\_\_\_

**7** Read the list of activities in the list below. Which activities are part of Grant's past? Which activities are familiar parts of his life now?

earn a lot of money   work with animals   work in London  
run my own business   have a slow pace of life   work under pressure

**8** Write appropriate sentences about Grant using the ideas in 7. Use *used to* or *be used to* plus the correct form of the verb.

### Discussion

**9** Imagine you have recently quit a very well-paid business job to start a different life on a farm. Use the ideas in the box to imagine how you lived in the city and how you live now.

Means of transport   Home   Food   Social life  
How you spend your money   Typical day   Holidays

**10** Work in groups. Exchange memories of how you used to live. Say what you are finding it hard to get used to now.

### Internet research

Search for the keyword *downshifting* to discover more about this trend. Make notes on the different forms of downshifting and decide which you would adopt if you had the chance. Make a one-minute presentation of your choice to the class and vote on the best idea.




## 4.4 Speaking Coaching

## Discussion

**1** Decide how you would respond as a manager to each of these situations. Choose options from the list a-l.

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 A new employee has failed to complete an important project.               |                                   |
| 2 An experienced employee has failed to produce an important report.        |                                   |
| 3 A new employee has delighted customers with exceptional service.          |                                   |
| 4 An experienced employee has delighted customers with exceptional service. |                                   |
| a) fire the employee  | g) pay them a bonus               |
| b) supervise the employee more closely                                      | h) give them more autonomy        |
| c) scream and shout for twenty minutes                                      | i) thank them for their hard work |
| d) have a heart to heart talk to identify the causes                        | j) give them a promotion          |
| e) give them a final warning  | k) tell them not to overdo it     |
| f) do nothing   | l) something else                 |

## Listening

**2**  1:33-1:34 Listen to two interviews between Mrs Gomez, a store manager in the Philippines, and Rafael, a department supervisor. Answer the questions.

- 1 What was the objective of each interview?
- 2 What did Rafael do wrong or right?
- 3 How do you think Rafael feels at the end of each interview?

**3** Read the two procedures for giving feedback below. Which contains advice relevant to the first interview in 2? Which is relevant to the second?

## Recognizing merit

- 1 Make contact
  - Set the scene: describe the time, place and situation when performance was exceptional.
  - Refer to the work in question.
- 2 Give praise
  - Give a specific example of the facts or results you appreciate.
  - Point out the personal qualities which contributed to your employee's success.
- 3 Conclusion
  - Explain the positive consequences of the employee's behaviour for the company, the department, and for you yourself.
  - Keep the interview short and avoid discussing other subjects; one or two minutes are usually enough.

## Constructive criticism

- 1 Make contact
  - Set the scene: describe the time, place, and situation when the problem occurred.
  - Describe the problems and the results – state facts, not opinions.
- 2 Diagnose the problem
  - Elicit the causes of the problem (behaviour, method, equipment, organization, etc).
  - Express your opinion.
  - Explain the consequences for the organization.
- 3 Commit to action
  - Offer suggestions which recognize the employee's good points but eliminate the faults.
  - Invite the employee to make comments.
- 4 Conclusion
  - Set new objectives, stating the methods to be used and a deadline.

**4** Referring to the guide, explain why Mrs Gomez did not handle the interviews very well.



**Internet research**


Search for the keywords "how to manage difficult people". Draw up a list of your top ten tips.

**5** The statements below are good examples of *Recognizing merit*. Decide which pieces of advice in 3 these statements relate to.

- 1 You came in to work when Maria was sick.
- 2 Thanks to you, everything went smoothly and we didn't lose any business.
- 3 I really appreciate your dedication to our customers, your solidarity with your colleagues, and the support you have shown me personally in dealing with the problem yourself.
- 4 You are hard-working and conscientious; these are qualities the company values highly.
- 5 Before you go, let me shake your hand. Well done Rafael, and thank you!

**6** When giving constructive criticism, asking questions rather than making statements helps to reduce tension and establish a dialogue. Complete these questions to express Mrs Gomez's ideas more diplomatically.

- 1 I want to see you in my office, now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ have a word with you in my office?
- 2 I don't know what the hell you think you're playing at, but I'm not having it!  
\_\_\_\_\_ tell me exactly what happened with Mr Baitan on Friday?
- 3 I don't know what you did, but Mr Baitan was very upset.  
\_\_\_\_\_ any ideas as to why Mr Baitan was quite so upset?
- 4 If this happens again, you're out!  
\_\_\_\_\_ realize that this kind of problem can have serious consequences?
- 5 Now get back to work, and make sure you do better next time.  
So what \_\_\_\_\_ we can do to make sure this situation doesn't happen again?
- 6 I think I've made myself clear.  
So, before you go, \_\_\_\_\_ summarize what we have agreed?

**7**  1:35 Listen to another version of the first interview and check your answers.

**8** Make these criticisms more constructive by reformulating these statements as questions. Use the words in brackets and the example to help you.

Example  
You should've followed the company guidelines for dealing with complaints. (agree)  
*Do you agree that you should have followed the company guidelines for dealing with complaints?*

- 1 We risk losing Mr Baitan's business if we don't find a solution. (realize)
- 2 You should ask for help next time you have a problem. (think)
- 3 You should have called me on my mobile. (think)
- 4 If you'd been more flexible, this wouldn't have happened. (agree)
- 5 You should've remembered that the customer is always right. (realize)

**Role-play**

**9** You and your partner work in a large department store. Role-play four situations to practise giving constructive criticism and recognizing merit.

Student A should turn to page 113 for instructions.  
Student B should turn to page 114 for instructions.





## 4.5 Writing Reports



## Discussion

**1** The list below gives reasons for performance appraisals. Decide which benefit the employer most and which benefit the employee.

reviewing progress	discussing rewards	setting achievable goals
planning training	stating career objectives	encouraging communication
identifying strengths and weaknesses		

**2** Work with a partner. Put the sections of a report in a logical order from 1–7.

Recommendations	Introduction	Conclusions	Procedure
Executive summary	Findings	Title	

## Analysis

**3** Read the following report and number the paragraphs in the correct order 1–6.

## Introduction of annual appraisal interviews

- Firstly, Webwide Consulting used a system of anonymous questionnaires to investigate employee attitudes. For instance, some questions related to company image and job satisfaction. In addition, **interviews were held** with all staff.
- The Management Committee decided to engage Webwide Consulting on 11 October to advise on the possible introduction of formal appraisal interviews. **This decision was taken** owing to dissatisfaction with the existing system. This report covers the method by which **information was gathered** and sets out a plan for adopting appraisal interviews.
- A survey was carried out by external consultants** regarding the possible introduction of formal annual appraisal interviews. Their findings clearly show that most staff and managers are in favour. Consequently, *it is recommended* that a formal system be set up as soon as possible.
- Three main areas of concern were revealed by the individual interviews.**
  - Management are seen to lack interest in staff development.
  - Employees get little feedback on whether hard work is recognized.
  - Employees get no guidance on how to improve poor performance.
- 1 We should put in place a system of annual appraisal interviews within the next two months.  
2 Each interview should be 45 minutes in length due to the tight schedule.
- In conclusion, the survey results clearly show that a more formal approach to appraisal interviews would reduce staff turnover, increase motivation, and foster team spirit.

**4** Answer these questions about the report in 3.

- 1 Which headings from 2 match each of the paragraphs?
- 2 What other methods can be used to organize information in a report?



**Internet research**

Search for the keywords "plain english report writing" and write a short report on the advice you find. Exchange reports and give each other feedback.

**Linking words and phrases**

**5** Work in pairs. Match each word or expression in the box with the categories below. Find examples of similar expressions used in the report in 3.

moreover due to finally to sum up therefore next for example overall

- a) Sequencing
- b) Giving examples
- c) Adding
- d) Expressing cause and result
- e) Summarizing

**6** Complete the sentences below with appropriate linking phrases.

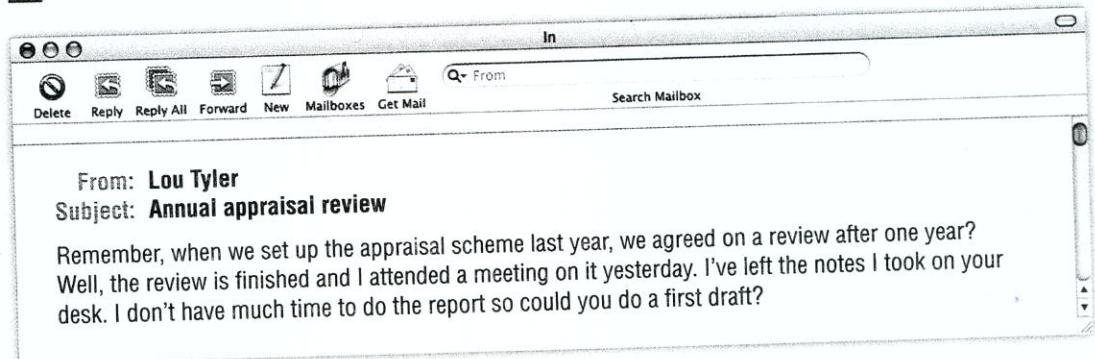
- 1 We wanted the survey to be anonymous. \_\_\_\_\_, names did not appear on the questionnaire.
- 2 Firstly, staff completed questionnaires. \_\_\_\_\_, they were interviewed by consultants.
- 3 The questionnaire covered job satisfaction. \_\_\_\_\_, some questions touched on company image.
- 4 Interviews were limited to 30 minutes each \_\_\_\_\_ the very tight schedule.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_, the results were positive but we agreed that there were lessons to learn.
- 6 Formal appraisal interviews will be introduced \_\_\_\_\_ dissatisfaction with the existing system.
- 7 There are several reasons for adopting appraisal interviews, \_\_\_\_\_, they can motivate staff.

**Report style**

**7** It is possible to write a report in an active or passive style. An active style is more direct. A passive style is more impersonal. Make the report in 3 more direct by changing the phrases in **bold** into active sentences.

**Writing**

**8** Look at the email and the notes below. What does your boss want you to do?



*Appraisal scheme review.*

- appraisal interviews: done in December by line managers
- during interviews: we asked for their feedback on the scheme. Most positive. One or two objections: lack of time (interviews too short - just 45 mins); and lack of 'objective measurement of performance'.
- overall, positive - increase the time allocated (one hour? - trial next year)
- Fred Berger (HR) to develop more objective performance indicators (targets to reach, etc). Will report in January.
- Final scheme to be approved by Board of Directors

**9** Write a short report for your boss using the company template below to help you.

- Title
- Introduction - explain the background to the report and why you are writing it.
- Procedure - how was information gathered?
- Findings - what information was gathered?
- Conclusions - what conclusions can you draw?
- Recommendations - what recommendations can you make?



# 4 Feedback

## 4.6 Case study Trident Overseas

### Discussion

- 1** Imagine you are working on a different continent from your own in which the business culture is very different. Answer the questions below.
- 1 In your opinion, can the same business methods and ethical standards be applied all over the world? Should they be adapted to local culture?
  - 2 What cultural differences might you find? Consider these categories.

recruitment   management style   productivity  
time management   personal development

### Reading

**2** Trident is a British-based oil company which operates in Africa. Read the magazine article and the email from a sales manager. Answer the questions below.

- 1 What determines petrol prices?
- 2 Why is customer service important?
- 3 How do local managers often behave?
- 4 Who owns the stations?
- 5 Why has John Thorpe been out of the office?
- 6 What did he find out?



## Trident put the service back in station

Drivers in Europe and America have become accustomed to buying petrol in deserted, fully automated petrol stations. In Africa, however, customers are greeted with a friendly smile and a polite welcome as they are directed to the appropriate pump. They can then sit back and watch uniformed forecourt staff fill the tank, top up the oil, and wash the windscreen.

With extreme driving conditions, few new cars, and little available income for engine repairs, oil sales are strategic and highly profitable. In many African countries petrol prices are government-regulated, so quality of service is the crucial factor in attracting customers who will buy oil as well as petrol. At Trident, staff training is a priority; management aim to ensure that customers keep coming back for friendly service and expert advice.

The screenshot shows an email client window with a toolbar containing icons for Delete, Reply, Reply All, Forward, New, Mailboxes, and Get Mail. The email header shows it is from John Thorpe. The main body of the email contains the following text:

Thanks for your email: sorry I've taken so long to answer – remember I told you I wanted to get out of the office more? Well, here I am in Kenya! I've just started a new job as sales manager for the southern region – from Nairobi to the Indian Ocean, down to Mombasa near the border with Tanzania.

Business in Africa can be very hierarchical; there are some really good managers, but for a lot of them, their idea of getting things done is to keep shouting until they get what they want. That's going to change! I have three district managers, who each have a team of sales reps who travel around the district meeting dealers. Some of the dealers own their service stations, so we have to handle them with kid gloves, or they'll just go over to the competition. More and more, we have what we call Young Dealers – employees who we train up to run the company-owned stations. So directly or indirectly there are three layers of management between me and the forecourt staff and mechanics – sometimes all shouting as loud as they can!

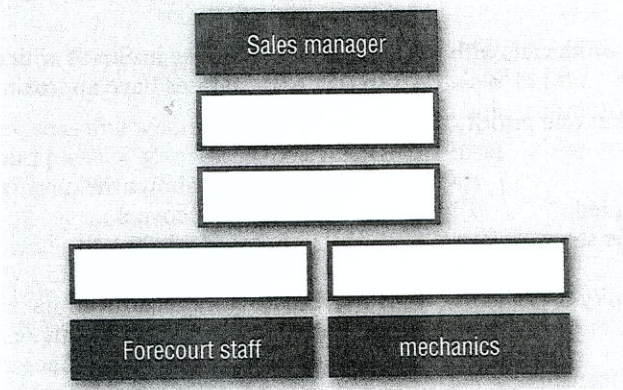
In fact there's been a lot of shouting in the Lamu district, and I've just come back to Nairobi from a three-day fact-finding trip. Their development project is way behind schedule, so I went down to have a word with the people in the field. It turns out it's quite a mess, and I could do with some help to sort it out, actually.



**Internet research**

Search for the keywords "managing your manager" to find tips on how to develop a better working relationship with your boss. What advice would you give the Kenyan Trident employees on managing their respective bosses?

**3** Complete the organizational chart for Trident in East Africa.



**Listening**

**4** John Thorpe spoke to three Trident employees on his fact-finding trip. Before you listen, read the notes and add the four names mentioned to the organizational chart.

**5** 1:36-1:38 Listen to extracts from the interviews and complete the notes.



**Abeba, Mechanic**

Says they are losing (1) \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of bad morale.  
 Mr Mbugua sacked some staff in order to hire his (2) \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 Mr Mbugua is Mr Wambugu's (3) \_\_\_\_\_ .



**Mr Mbugua, Young Dealer**

Would like Abeba to (4) \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 Has not checked whether Mrs Mohamed agrees with his (5) \_\_\_\_\_ policy .  
 Says that the company gives him no (6) \_\_\_\_\_ .



**Mrs Mohamed, Sales Rep**

Mr Wambugu gives her impossible (7) \_\_\_\_\_ , so she has no time to visit dealers.  
 Mr Mbugua treats (8) \_\_\_\_\_ employees very badly.  
 She tried to (9) \_\_\_\_\_ Mr Mbugua's appointment.  
 Believes that Mr Wambugu wants her to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Discussion and role-play**

**6** John Thorpe has asked for your advice on handling the situation in the Lamu District. In small groups, discuss the problems and brainstorm possible solutions.

**7** 1:39 Listen to a voicemail message from Mr Wambugu. How does this affect your strategy?

**8** With a partner from another group, role-play meetings with Abeba, Mr Mbugua, and Mr Wambugu to explain what action you have decided to take and, where appropriate, set new objectives.