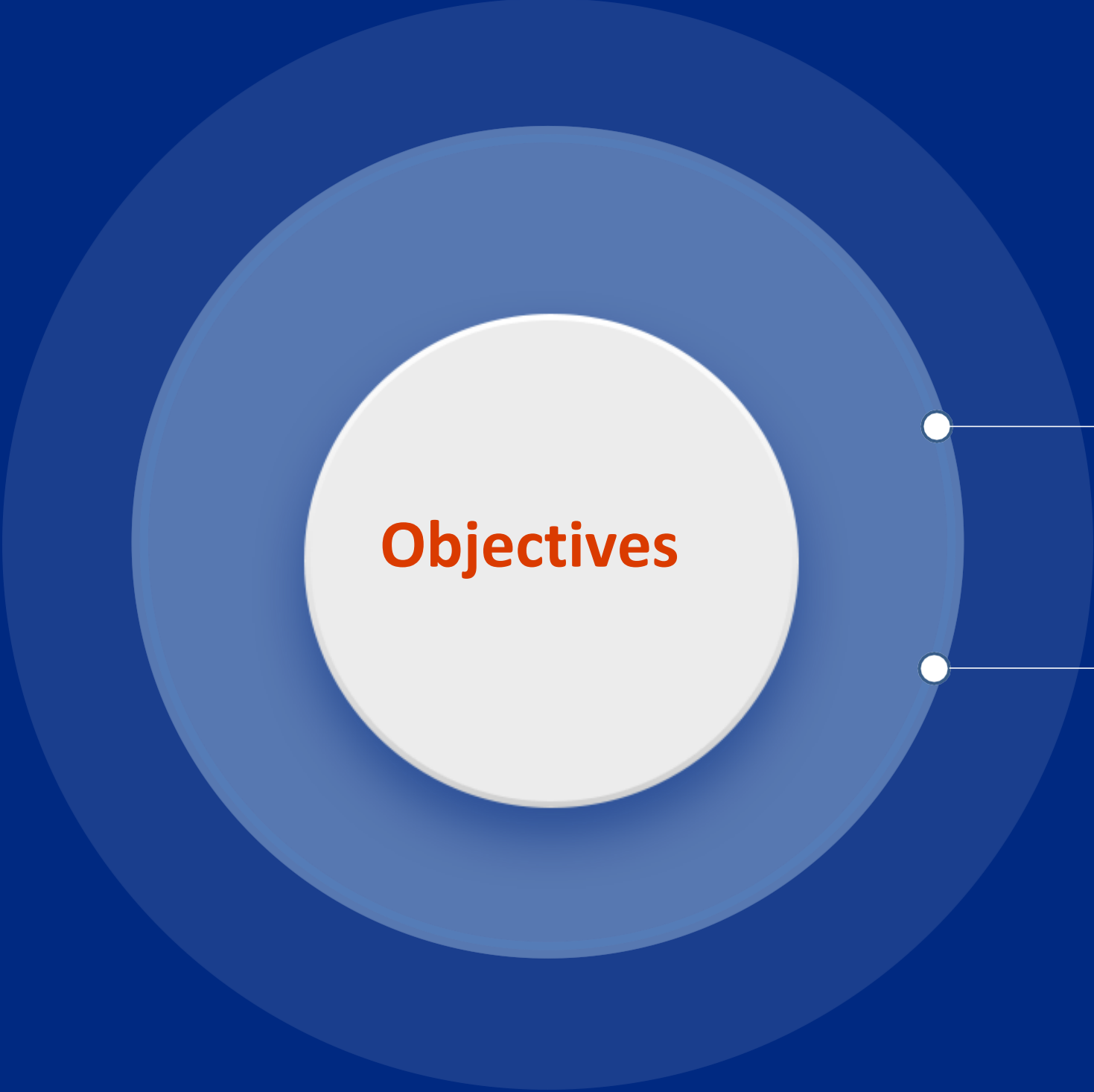


Business Advanced

Unit 8: Performance





Objectives

Discuss performance at work

Give informal presentations and deal with questions

Starting Point

1. What benefits can employees bring to their companies?
2. What can organizations do to recognize and reward employees?



Working with Words I Employer-employee expectations

1. Make a list of what makes you happy to work for a company. Provide some examples.
2. Read the text about what employees are looking for at work and compare it with your ideas in 1 above.

HAPPINESS AT WORK

Employees **make a difference** to companies, and they are **gaining recognition** for their contribution. More and more employers are realizing that there is a real correlation between happy staff and a strong bottom line. But what makes us happy at work?

According to the HR Consultants Chiumento's 'Happiness at work' index, employees have interests that rank higher than a big pay cheque, which comes in at a lowly tenth place. Instead, it's people first — **feeling part** of a friendly, supportive atmosphere, where you **have a say** in what happens, and where people take care of each other. At Google, for example, they **take pride** in the fact that employees enjoy a 'fun workspace.'

Second in line on the 'Happiness at work' index comes enjoyable work, where employees derive satisfaction from their achievements. It also helps if you can relate to the values of the company where you work. According to a recent newspaper survey, Innocent, a young, fast-growing fruit drinks company, attracts employees who **see a future** for themselves in a company with clear values. Innocent 'innocently' claims they want to 'leave things a little better than we find them.' At Google, where they receive 100,000 job applications a month, their philosophy is to make money 'without doing evil.' Employees are clearly keen to make the most of their opportunities, especially if they feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to their company while helping to improve the world they live in.

3. Complete phrases (1-6) with a noun from the text in 2.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. make a _____ to | 4. have a _____ in |
| 2. gain _____ for | 5. take _____ in |
| 3. feel _____ of | 6. see a _____ for |

4. Match the phrases in 3 to their pertinent definitions (a-f).

- a. get public praise or reward for work/actions ____
- b. be able to influence a decision by giving your opinion ____
- c. get satisfaction from doing something well ____
- d. have an effect on something ____
- e. know that you are included and involved ____
- f. think that something/someone will do well ____

5. Discuss how satisfied you are at work (or in a previous job) using the phrases from 3.

Example: I get paid for the extra hours I work, which is what did not happen in my previous job.

6. Listen to two employers being interviewed at a careers fair. Match the conversations with the companies in the pictures and answer the questions.



Audio 8.1 – 8.2

1. What does each company look for in their employees?
2. Do you think you would like to work for these companies? Why / Why not?

7. Complete phrases (1-12) below with the correct preposition. Then listen again and check your answers.

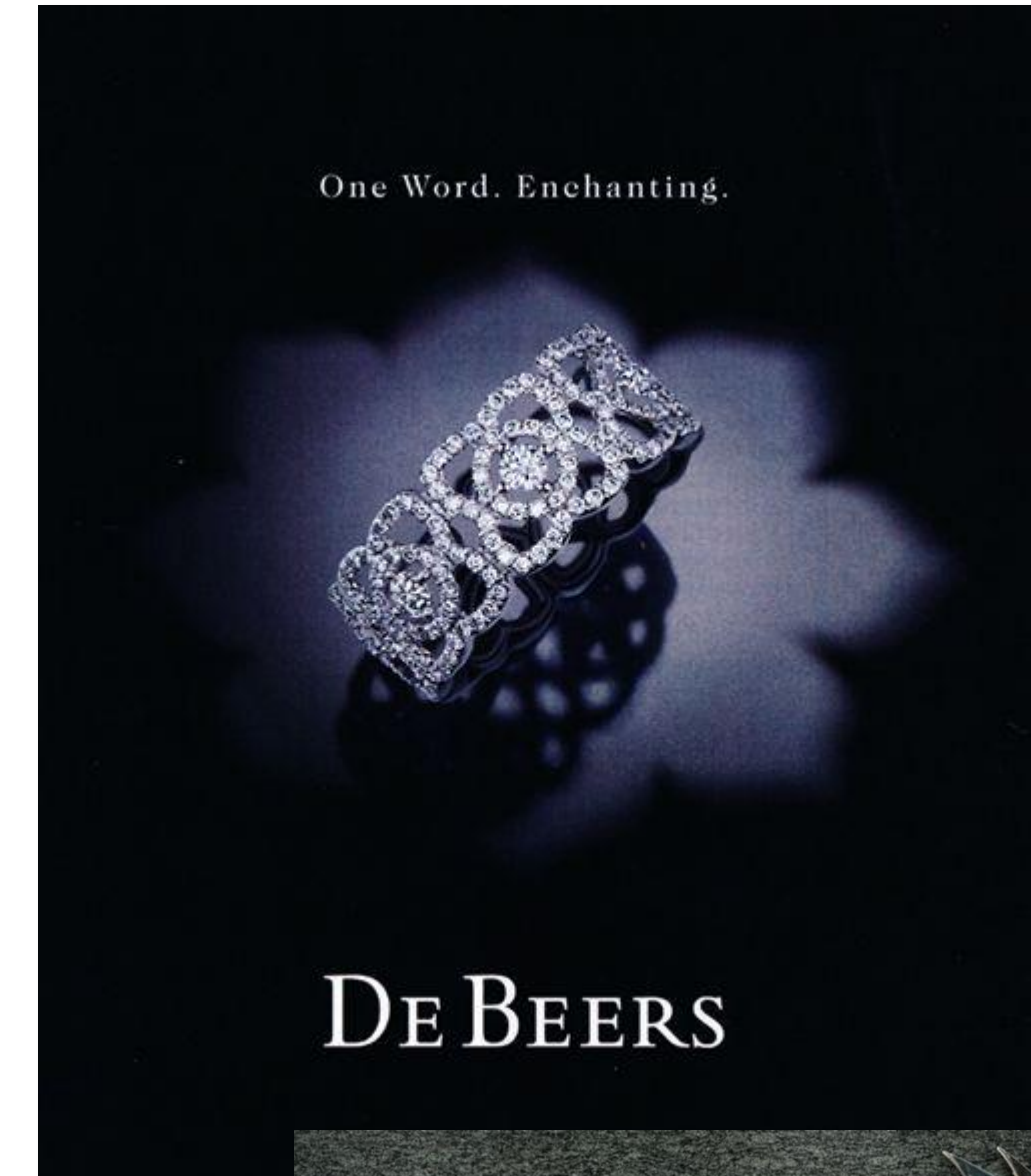


Audio 8.1 – 8.2

1. build _____ rapport _____ the client
2. connect us _____ a wider range of customers
3. inspire the creation _____ real value
4. make a significant contribution _____ maintaining our position
5. open _____ broader opportunities
6. provide opportunities _____ development
7. provide us _____ a competitive advantage
8. strive _____ a healthy work-life balance
9. support the development _____ our people
10. take pride _____ our track record
11. turn dreams _____ reality
12. unite us _____ a common cause

8. Pick up some of the phrases from 7 and give examples from your own experience at work.

Example: Our company strives for excellence in the service it renders.



9. Role Play. Prepare for a careers fair.

Student A

You are the employer.
Work together to decide on your ideal employee. What would you offer in order to attract/keep this ideal employee? What would you expect in return?

Student B

You are the employee/s.
What do you hope to gain from working for Group A?

Base your ideas on your company or refer to alternative profiles below.

Company profiles

Company A is a multinational with offices in every major city in EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa). A's core business is accountancy and auditing, but they have a small up-and-coming consultancy division which is gaining a lot of recognition. There is a rigid hierarchical structure and a clear career path.

Company B is a SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) specializing in the provision of office supplies. They operate only within national borders, although some of their suppliers are found abroad. B values flexibility and rewards loyalty above all.

Company C is a franchise business which focuses on cleaning (commercial and domestic) and disaster-recovery services. It is a rapidly expanding business, although at the moment it has relatively few full-time employees. The master franchisee holds the license for many further related brands which have not yet been exploited in your market. The master franchisee's Head Office is also based in your city.

Company D is a family business managed and owned by a husband and wife. Their core business is software development, and they have made a name for themselves in the industry for their cutting-edge programming. Both the husband and wife also teach IT courses at the local university as well as an online master's degree in programming. There are three other employees.

10 . You meet at a careers fair. Have an informal discussion about:

- What Student A's company looks for in an employee
- Student B's expectations of an employer
- What Student B has to offer as a potential employee

Then decide how well-suited you are to each other!



Business Communication I Giving an impromptu presentation

Context

Ovanta is an international financial services company which has been created from the recent merger of three smaller companies. The company holds regular briefing meetings to update the senior management team on key initiatives following the merger.

The Operations Director, Ian Dungannon, has invited two project team leaders to the latest briefing.

Anya is in charge of a project looking at training needs across the organization; Pavia is leading an initiative to improve relations between management and the union.

Both Anya and Pavia are knowledgeable about their subjects, but neither has been specifically asked to make a presentation at this meeting.

1. Discuss the following questions.

1. How is an **impromptu presentation** different from a formal presentation?
2. How do you feel about giving **impromptu presentations**? Do you find them easier or more difficult than formal presentations? Why?

Impromptu presentation: a presentation done without being planned.

2. Listen to Extracts 1 and 2 from the management briefing at Ovanta. Pick up the best answer for questions 1-5.



Audio 8.3 –
8.4

1. How does Anya begin her impromptu talk?
 - a. She explains in detail what she is going to say.
 - b. She gives an informal overview of the current situation.
2. How would you describe Anya's way of signalling what she wants to talk about?
 - a. informal and conversational
 - b. formal and structured
3. How does Anya deal with Ian's questions?
 - a. She's negative and defensive.
 - b. She's positive and constructive.
4. In her update, Pavia pick ups to
 - a. emphasize the key points of the discussion.
 - b. give a detailed account of the discussion.
5. How do both Anya and Pavia respond to unexpected requests for details?
 - a. They just say they don't know / aren't sure.
 - b. They say they don't know / aren't sure and promise future action.



3. Listen again to Extract 1 and complete these sentences.



Audio 8.3

1. Well, to be honest, we haven't got as far as I'd hoped. _____ ... er, we've just completed the initial consultation stage.
2. However, _____ the initiative will be complete and in place before the annual review.
3. _____ give you a more precise date, _____ do that at the moment.
4. _____ run the details by Jean-Paul and the team leaders first ...
5. So, now, _____ went through some of the other training programmes we are running.
6. So if it's OK, _____ the core elements of the plans ...
7. I don't know if you've heard of a 'balanced scorecard'? _____ this approach and how it works in practice ...
8. ... and that's more or less it. _____.

4. Match the expressions you noted in 3 to the following categories.

- a. Signalling what you intend to talk about next: _____
- b. Setting a context for the whole talk: _____



Key Expressions

Setting the context

- *Where we are at the moment is ...*
- *What I can tell you is that ...*
- *I'd like to be able to ... but unfortunately I can't ...*
- *You'll appreciate that I still need to ...*

Signalling intention

- *Perhaps it would be a good idea if I just ...*
- *I'd just like to sketch out ...*
- *Let me just touch on ...*
- *I think that's covered everything.*

Responding to questions and challenges

- *I was coming to that.*
- *I have to admit that ...*
- *You're quite right, we need to address this.*
- *That's a good point.*

Highlighting key points

- *So, the first thing is ...*
- *And I think you should be aware that ...*
- *So that's one key point right there .*
- *... and I think this is a really important point ...*
- *So, the main thing to remember is ...*

Responding to requests for detail

- *Let me check ... and I'll get back to you.*
- *I can't remember exactly, but off the top of my head ...*
- *I can double check if you like?*
- *I don't have the exact figures, but what if I ... ?*

5. Read the information on the right and decide what you would say in an impromptu presentation to:

- a. set the context
- b. signal the key points you intend to cover

Context:
You are researching customer reactions to your new product. You don't have as much quantifiable data as you'd originally planned, but will submit the final report by the agreed deadline. You are making good progress, but can't give exact figures now — you're still processing the feedback. You need to wait for more questionnaires to come back before finishing the report.

- Key points you intend to cover:**
- give an overview of responses to the product so far
 - explain some of the difficulties involved
 - talk about 'effective questionnaires'

6. Brainstorm expressions for highlighting main points in an impromptu presentation (e.g., "The first thing is..."). Then, check Audio Script 8.4 (next page) to compare your ideas with Pavla's.

7. Listen to both extracts again. Note down what Anya and Pavia say in response to the following questions from Ian.



Audio 8.3 – 8.4

1. Anya, you haven't said anything about management training.
2. And you've still got time to do that, have you?
3. If it was just one or two individuals, then just how useful are the results?
4. It might also be worth touching on the numbers of complaints per business unit.

8. Look back at the situation in 5 and decide how you would respond to the following questions from your audience. Then take turns to ask and answer the questions.

1. 'Could you say something about the type of questions you asked?'
2. 'How confident are you that you have time to process all the data?'
3. 'How many people were interviewed in each area?'
4. 'Isn't there a danger that the data will be out of date before we can process it?'
5. 'The process is taking a bit longer than expected, isn't it?'
6. 'We assume you have further research planned - can you give us details?'

9. You are going to take part in a team meeting. Think about your current projects at work. Note down your names and a list of these projects. Then follow points 1-2.

1. Take turns to give an impromptu presentation of the project you are working on to your group.
2. When listening to the other presentations, ask questions to get more information or check details.

8.4 Script

Ian: Pavla, I'm sorry to put you on the spot, but would you like to run through the union complaints briefly? We've really got to do something about job descriptions and pay scales. What ideas has your team come up with so far?

Pavla: OK. How long do I have?

Ian: As long as you need.

Pavla: Right. Well, it's probably best if I just highlight some of the ideas we came up with, don't you think? Erm, it was basically a brainstorming session. So, the first thing is, we feel that people are simply time-serving and spending too long here. I don't know if you agree, but I'm pretty sure that this isn't great for productivity in the long run. And I think you should be aware that it's not limited to one department ... it's crucial in the current climate. So that's one key point right there – we need to look at attitudes across the organization. Er, OK, next point, and I think this is a really important point: we need to start looking carefully at the current pay-scales ... and, er, I don't think there's anything I've forgotten, erm ... so, the main thing to remember is to listen. OK, I think that's about it.

Ian: Good, thank you for that. I assume everyone participated in the brainstorming, did they? If it was just one or two individuals, then just how useful are the results?

Pavla: I can't remember exactly, but off the top of my head, I think everyone had something to say. That's quite a significant factor, though ... I can double check if you like?

Ian: Yes, email me later.

Pavla: I was wondering if there was anything else you'd like to know about the origins of the ideas?

Ian: No, that's fine, but it might also be worth touching on the numbers of complaints per business unit.

Pavla: Well, I don't have the exact figures, but what if I run through the rough numbers we've come up with so far?

Language at Work I Using questions

1. Review questions 1-10 from two impromptu presentations. The letters (P) and (A) indicate if the presenter or audience is speaking. Match the questions to categories a-d below (multiple matches possible).

1.

Now, how can I put this? (P)
2.

If it was just one or two individuals, then just how useful are the results? (A)
3.

Anya, can you give us an overview of where we are with this? (A)
4.

I assume everyone participated in the brainstorming, did they? (A)
5.

I don't know if you've heard of a 'balanced scorecard'? (P)
6.

It's probably best if I just highlight some of the ideas we came up with, don't you think? (P)
7.

And you've still got time to do that, have you? (A)
8.

Would you like to run through the union complaints briefly? (A)
9.

OK. How long do I have? (P)
10.

Anya, you haven't said anything about management training? (A)
- a.

buying time to think
- b.

challenging the presenter or checking the facts ____, ____
- c.

prompting or leading the presenter ____, ____
- d.

previewing the topic ____, ____

2. Match the questions in 1 to (a-k) below.

- a.

are *wh-/how* questions _____
- b.

use a question tag _____
- c.

are statements used as questions _____
- d.

include a modal auxiliary verb _____
- e.

don't expect an answer (rhetorical questions) _____
- f.

expect a *yes/no* _____
- g.

expect more than a *yes/no* answer _____
- h.

buying time to think_____,_____
- i.

challenging the presenter or checking the facts_____,_____, _____
- j.

prompting or leading the presenter_____,_____, _____
- k.

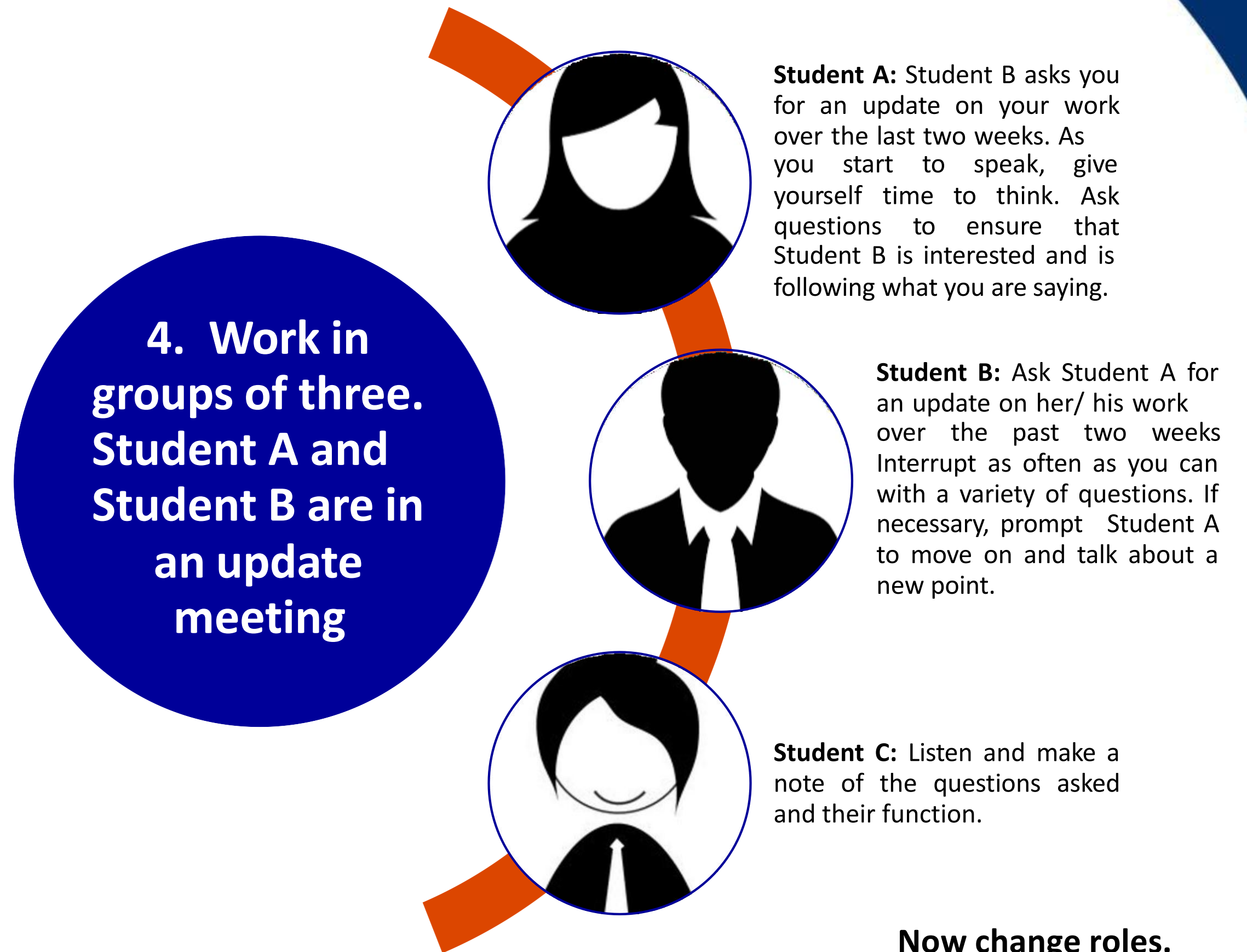
previewing the topic_____,_____



3. Role Play. Ask questions using the prompts and information in 1-8.

1. Best way to present the information? **(give yourself time to think)**
2. Familiar with this new software? **(preview topic)**
3. Initial impressions from research trip? **(prompt speaker)**
4. Is it a good idea? **(challenge speaker)**
5. Latest figures? **(prompt speaker)**
6. Present findings to the client without showing them to senior management first? **(challenge speaker)**
7. Sent a draft to the listener first? **(check facts)**
8. The research phase has been completed? **(check facts)**

4. Role Play. Work in groups of three. Student A and Student B are in an update meeting.



Now change roles.

Practically Speaking / Dealing with difficult questions

1. What can you do if someone asks you ... ?

- 1. a question you don't know the answer to
- 2. a question you don't want to answer

2. Listen to six questions and the responses. In each conversation (1-6), tick (✓) the strategies used by the person responding to the question.



Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6
admit ignorance						
directly refuse to answer						
avoid the question						
distance yourself from the situation						

extra vocabulary

Key word I just

Match the use of just in 1-5 to definitions a-e.

1. It's *just* that everyone is dying to know who ...

2. We've only *just started* looking at the figures.

3. Could I *just* ask how you got to hear about the problems in the factory?

4. You know I *just* might do that.

5. *Just* the person I'm looking for!

a. very recently

b. precisely, exactly

c. only

d. take this opportunity to

e. actually, really

3. Listen again and note down the phrases the speakers use for the strategies in 2.



4. **Role Play.** Student A, read the information on the left. Student B, read the information on the right. In turns, ask/respond two difficult questions, using the information/prompts given.

Student A

1. You've just heard that the budget on your project will be reduced in a very significant way, and the launch date for your product will be pushed back by a year.

Find out from Student B:

- ☐ if this is true
- ☐ what the implications are for you

2. You've been involved in a series of secret meetings where the decision has been taken to restructure Student B's department. Student B has just found out.

Respond to Student B's difficult questions by:

- ☐ admitting ignorance
- ☐ directly refusing to answer

Student B

1. You've just come out of a meeting where the suggestion was made to cut the budget on Student A's project and to push back the schedule date, because priorities have changed.

Respond to Student A's difficult questions by:

- ☐ avoiding the question
- ☐ distancing yourself from the situation.

2. You've heard from colleagues that your department is going to be restructured within the next year. Find out from Student A

- ☐ who is ultimately responsible for the plan
- ☐ if it would mean any redundancies.

5. **Think of two difficult questions for your colleague about his/her job. Then take turns to ask / respond to each other's questions.**

Culture Question

- ⦿ In your culture, when (if at all) is it acceptable to ask questions about ... ?
 - a. someone's salary
 - b. someone's appraisal
 - c. someone's family

- ⦿ How would you respond if someone from another culture asked you a question that you found unacceptable or inappropriate?



Talking Point

Context: Performance reviews

Most companies around the world use a performance management system which includes regular documented performance reviews. Some people love having their performance assessed in this way, while others find them to be far from helpful. Companies invest a lot of time in running the interviews and writing up the reports after the interview. Some companies are starting to wonder whether the performance reviews are actually improving performance, and whether they are worth the investment.

Rethinking Annual Performance Reviews

In September 2015, one of the largest companies globally made a significant move for its employees and managers: it eliminated the annual performance review. Accenture CEO Pierre Nanterme shared with *The Washington Post* that the professional services firm, which employs hundreds of thousands of people across cities worldwide, had been quietly preparing for this ‘massive revolution’ in its

internal processes.

The firm plans to phase out rankings and the annual evaluation process beginning in fiscal year 2016, which for Accenture starts this September. Instead, it will introduce a more dynamic system, where employees receive ongoing feedback from their managers following assignments. Accenture is now part of a growing yet notable list of major corporations that have had enough of forced rankings, excessive paperwork, and the frustration these systems cause among both managers and employees.

According to management research firm CEB, six percent of Fortune 500 companies have already abandoned rankings.

Interestingly, the decision to introduce an updated approach is seldom driven by a desire to reduce these costs.

Kropp observed that companies are unlikely to save much time or money by moving away from traditional ratings systems to a new evaluation process. The real benefit, he noted, lies in maximizing the return on those investments. ‘The most forward-thinking companies ask themselves, how can we get the best value out of the time and money we’re investing?’ Kropp said.

This was precisely the question Accenture asked itself. Its conclusion was that performance management needed to shift from retrospectively measuring employees’ contributions to actively supporting and positioning them for future success.

‘The essence of leadership isn’t about spending time measuring or evaluating,’ Nanterme explained. ‘It’s about selecting the right person. If you’re confident in your selection, you give that person the freedom, the authority, and the trust to innovate and lead—guided by a simple yet effective measure.’

Although many large companies have yet to follow suit, most recognize the flaws in their current systems. CEB reported that 95 percent of managers are unhappy with how their companies handle performance reviews, and almost 90 percent of HR leaders admit that the process often fails to produce meaningful insights. ‘Employees who excel in performance management systems are often the most narcissistic and self-promoting,’ said Brian Kropp, the HR practice leader at CEB. ‘These aren’t necessarily the individuals you need to drive your organization forward.’

CEB also discovered that, on average, managers dedicate over 200 hours annually to performance review-related tasks—things like attending training sessions, filling out forms, and delivering feedback to employees. Factoring in these hours alongside the cost of performance-management technology, CEB estimates that a company with approximately 10,000 employees spends about \$35 million a year conducting reviews.

1. Read the Context and article. How effective is your company’s performance management system? Would regular, timely feedback enhance your performance?

2. What are the pros and cons of not having an annual performance review? Consider the question from the company's, the manager's and the employee's points of view.

3. Read the quote from Accenture CEO Pierre Nanterme. How can companies make performance-development processes more ‘about you’?

1. Think of three jobroles in your company and complete the table with details for each one.

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3
Responsibilities (e.g. respond to incoming enquiries, process orders)			
Results expected (e.g. customer complaints to be resolved within 24 hours, a 10% increase in sales)			
Behaviour expected (e.g. strong ability to listen actively and respond to customers, show initiative in finding ways of attracting new customers)			

2. Performance assessment forms can be complex and include lots of different evaluation criteria. Nanterme advises keeping measures simple. Think of three simple performance measures for each of the roles in 1.

	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3
Role 1			
Role 2			
Role 3			

3. Talk about the roles, responsibilities, results, behaviours and measures you discussed in 1 and 2. Discuss how realistic the measures for improvement are, and decide whether performance reviews or a more informal approach would work best in developing people in these roles.