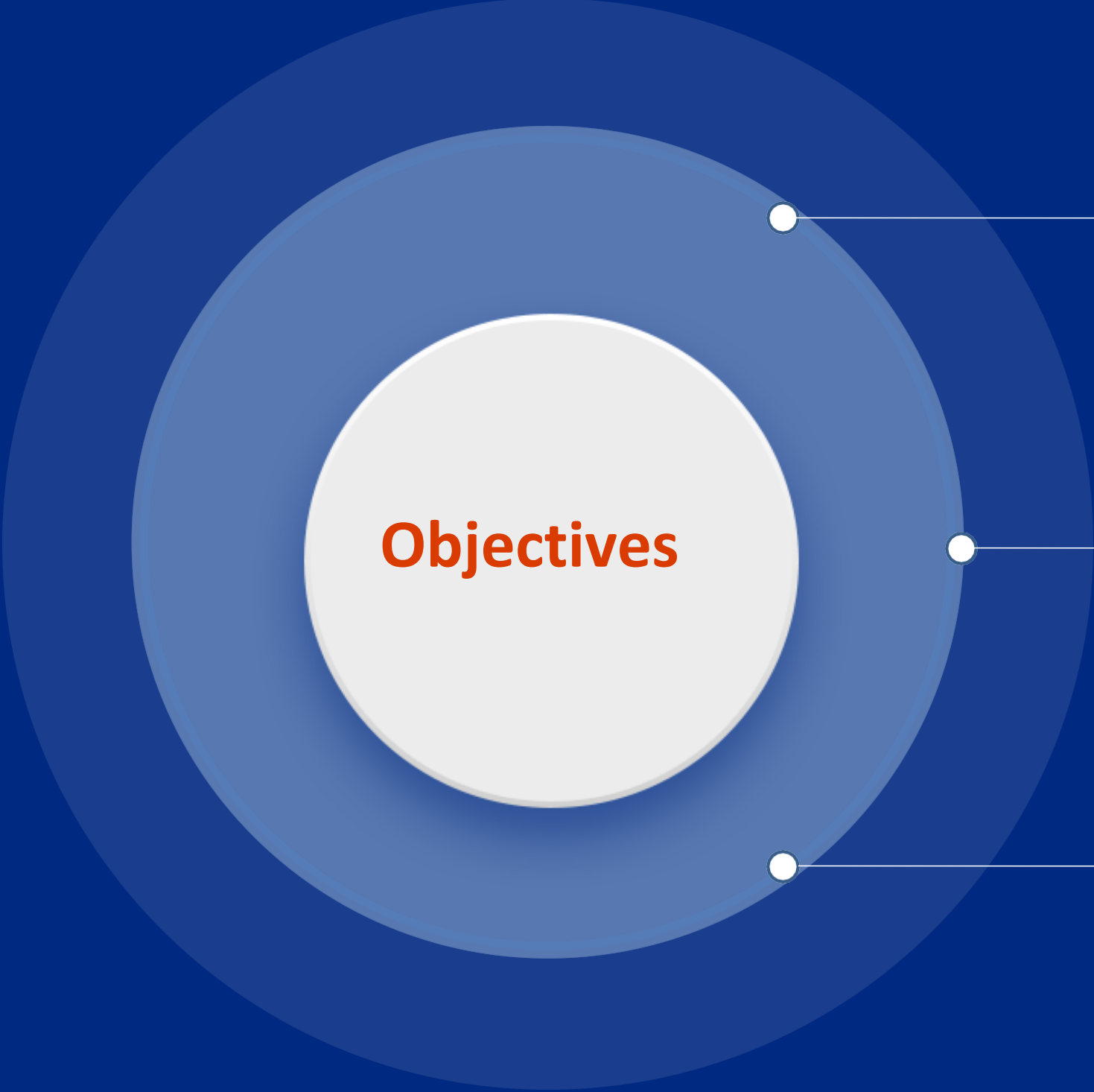


Business Advanced

Unit 6: Progress





Objectives

Discuss innovation

Talk about new ideas and use adverbs

Avoid giving direct answers

Starting Point

1. What do you think a company needs to do to stay ahead of the competition?
2. How can companies ensure continued progress?



Working with Words I Discussing factors for success

1. Read the quotation below from George Buckley, a former CEO of 3M. What concerns do you think the company might have faced? Why? Explain.

'You can't ... say, well, I'm getting behind on invention, so I'm going to schedule myself for three good ideas on Wednesday and two on Friday. That's not how creativity works.'

2. Read the text about changes at 3M and answer the following questions (1-3).

1. What did Jim McNerney do when he became CEO at 3M?
2. How successful was this change?
3. What factors are important for successfully changing corporate culture?





Despite being a multinational conglomerate, 3M’s cultural traits had traditionally revolved around **bouncing around** new ideas, encouraging individual initiative, and **looking beyond** mistakes in an environment which lacked the pressure for short-term results. These cultural traits fostered an atmosphere of entrepreneurialism, where employees would think outside the box in order to **hit on** the next new idea — factors crucial to 3M's success.

In 2001, low profitability prompted a change in senior leadership. 3M brought in Jim McNerney, a former vice president of General Electric (GE), as its new CEO. With McNerney came ‘Six Sigma’.

Six Sigma, which focuses on enforced standardization and regulation by identifying and removing causes for error, temporarily got 3M’s performance back on track, but when they **ran into** difficulty success waned, and tensions about its implementation surfaced. Employees were frustrated. They were vocal about their concerns over how metrics seemed to matter more than performance. Many believed Six Sigma was getting in the way of real invention.

Leadership at 3M wanted to address employee dissatisfaction and fuse corporate culture and practice. After observing their approach, the researchers Anna Canato, Davide Ravasi, and Nelson Phillips identified some factors that allow an organization’s desire for a successful change in corporate culture to come to fruition.

1. Implement with executive enthusiasm.

3M had promoted **trying** things **out** and making mistakes as a method of discovery and learning. But under Six Sigma, mistakes had to be recorded and were viewed as threats to productivity. By being personally involved in training and showing familiarity and enthusiasm for the system, McNerney stayed ahead of the game and helped employees recognize how new practices were important to the larger vision and purpose.

2. Identify sweet spots in subcultures.

3M management realized that support for Six Sigma varied depending on team structure and team subculture. Engineers and manufacturers at the company demonstrated less dissonance for the process than their colleagues in sales, marketing, and research. As such, the study points to subcultures of corporate culture.

These subcultures might better align with — or even welcome — new changes. Any adaptation and implementation plan should take into account possible subcultures and consider how to leverage these subcultures to get off the ground successfully; and use changes as an opportunity to bring the subcultures into greater harmony with the rest of the organizational culture, as well as recognizing that adaptation never ends.

When McNerney unexpectedly left his position at 3M in 2005, it was up to new-hire George Buckley to **figure out** and handle the cultural tensions. Buckley kept Six Sigma practices, but some of the strict, formal obligations, including the emphasis on extreme precision, fell by the wayside.

His approach was to drop elements employees considered less useful or that interfered with 3M operations. This resulted in a kind of lean Six Sigma where specific or custom elements were still in place. Employees supported this hybrid approach.

3. Match phrases (1-6) from the text in 2 to their pertinent definitions (a-f).

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. come to fruition | a. be realized |
| 2. fall by the wayside | b. be started |
| 3. get back on track | c. come up with creative/unusual ideas |
| 4. get off the ground | d. fail to make it |
| 5. stay ahead of the game | f. keep in front of the competition |
| 6. think outside the box | e. find the path to success again |

4. Replace the underlined words with a bold verb phrase from text 2. Adjust the verb form if needed.

- Out of the blue, they came up with an excellent project.
- I know that you're not impressed with what Johnny Red suggested, but why don't you test his ideas and see how they work when you put them into practice?
- I'm trying to work out how we can reorganize the team once Adrian has quit.
- We might suddenly face some big problems if we don't plan this very carefully. Close attention needs to be paid to this matter, team.
- You must stop concentrating on what's been done before - focus on the future.
- You should see what other people think about the ideas - someone might know how to develop them further.

5. What nouns pair with the bold verb phrases in text 2? Can you think of others?

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 1. bounce around | _____ | 4. look beyond | _____ |
| 2. figure out | _____ | 5. run into | _____ |
| 3. hit on | _____ | 6. try out | _____ |

6. Use phrases from 3 and 4 to tell your colleague about when you or your team came up with an idea at work.

7. Listen to Jost Van der Saar, a business analyst, talking about the situation at 3M. Make notes about the situation:



Audio 6.1

- ☐ before McNerney's leadership
- ☐ during McNerney's leadership during
- ☐ George Buckley's leadership

8. Choose the correct noun in *italics* to collocate with the following verbs in (1-7).

1. cause *a stir / precision*
2. control *profits / costs*
3. cut into *the success / the bottom line*
4. outperform *earnings / the competition earnings / ideas*
5. shift *the competition / the emphasis*
6. tolerate *mistakes / progress*
7. undergo *change / progress*



9. Complete these sentences from the interview with the pertinent collocations from 8 above. Then listen again to check your answers.



Audio 6.1

1. How do you run an efficient company, but also create space for those new, innovative ideas, without _____?
2. They _____ some significant _____ when James McNerney took over.
3. McNerney set out to _____ from the start.
4. He _____. McNerney's approach to raising profitability certainly satisfied the shareholders.
5. This is a programme aimed at improving quality, controlling costs and increasing efficiency, and it doesn't _____.
6. George Buckley was convinced he could _____ by reigniting top-line growth.

10. Think of a recent project you were involved in. Consider the following:

- ☐ how you came up with the idea
- ☐ how you measured/ ensured quality
- ☐ changes/ problems with the project
- ☐ the relative success of the idea

Hold a post-project review meeting to discuss what happened and what you could do differently.



Context

Skion PCs is a small computer hardware store set up by two IT graduates, James Logan and Gareth Newman. Currently it has one shop on the high street, and a website for online sales. It prides itself on the expertise and specialized knowledge of its employees. However, competition from the large, well-known national and international PC chains is threatening business. Skion PCs needs to find an innovative niche market to maintain its position. James and Gareth decide to hold a brainstorming meeting with two key members of staff - Sue Edwards and Jessica Williams.

1. Listen to three extracts from the meeting at Skion PCs.

- 1. Fill in the following table with the four ideas from the meetings.
- 2. Jot down the pros and cons that are mentioned for each idea.

	Ideas	Pros	Cons
 1			
 2			
 3			
 4			

Audios 6.2 - 6.4

2. Listen to the first extract one more time to fill in the blanks.



Audio 6.2

- 1. ... and _____ it would really be cost-effective.
- 2. _____ collect a customer's old computer ...
- 3. _____ set up a programme where staff can choose to ...
- 4. _____ something charitable, ... and send X per cent off to developing countries, _____?
- 5. _____ that would work in practice ...
- 6. _____ what about moving into the area of recycling?
- 7. Also, _____ 'caring'.
- 8. I mean, _____ ways to develop our image ... ?
- 9. To tell you the truth, _____.
- 10. Well no, but _____ that it's profitable, _____.

3. Match expressions in 2 (1-10) to (a-e) below.

- a. Putting forward an idea:

- b. Asking for clarification:

- c. Clarifying the idea:

- d. Building on the idea:

- e. Evaluating the idea:

4. Brainstorm alternative ways of saying sentences (1-9).

Example: *That's not such a bad idea. ► I actually quite like this idea.*

1. And there's nothing stopping us from setting up as brokers ourselves, is there?
2. I can't help thinking whether it would be money-wise really effective.
3. I was thinking along the lines of solar-powered laptops.
4. I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but how about a wider policy on environmental issues?
5. In terms of marketing, I think it has potential.
6. It's certainly worth thinking about.
7. Supposing we were to sell recovered parts ... back to the manufacturers?
8. We should at least consider it.
9. What did you have in mind, guys?

Key Expressions

Putting forward an idea

- *Couldn't we consider ... ?*
- *I would have thought it would be possible to ...*
- *I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but how about ... ?*
- *Supposing we were to ...*

Building on the idea

- *Thinking about it, we could even ...*
- *And there's nothing stopping us from ... is there?*

Clarifying the idea

- *Well, for example, ...*
- *I was thinking along the lines of ...*

Asking for clarification

- *It's not clear to me what you mean by ...*
- *Oh I see, so you're thinking ...*
- *Am I right?*
- *What did you have in mind?*

Evaluating the idea

- *I'm concerned about how ...*
- *I can't help wondering ...*
- *I would certainly need to know...*
- *Before ...*
- *It's certainly worth thinking about.*
- *We should at least consider it.*
- *In terms of ... I think it has potential.*
- *That's not such a bad idea.*

5 You work for a company that has grown rapidly over the last few years. Growth is now slowing due to high staff turnover. Read the following information from HR about this issue.

- One of the reasons for high staff turnover is the lack of company perks - apparently competitors are offering better conditions.
- Money is available to fund one or two perks within reason. Perks without costs would be preferable.

Prepare to hold a brainstorming meeting about the issue.

During the meeting:

- put forward all your ideas and note them down
- clarify and then evaluate the ideas
- decide on the best options

Students A and B

Choose two of these ideas to discuss in the meeting.

- Introduce a yearly summer ball for staff, with free food, drink and entertainment.
- Provide in-house gym facilities with showers.
- Offer staff a 'work at home' option.
- Install in-house 'nap machines' to allow staff to power-sleep for 20 minutes when necessary.

Discuss the advantages of the ideas and how they would work. Think of possible disadvantages and prepare a counter-argument.

Students C and D

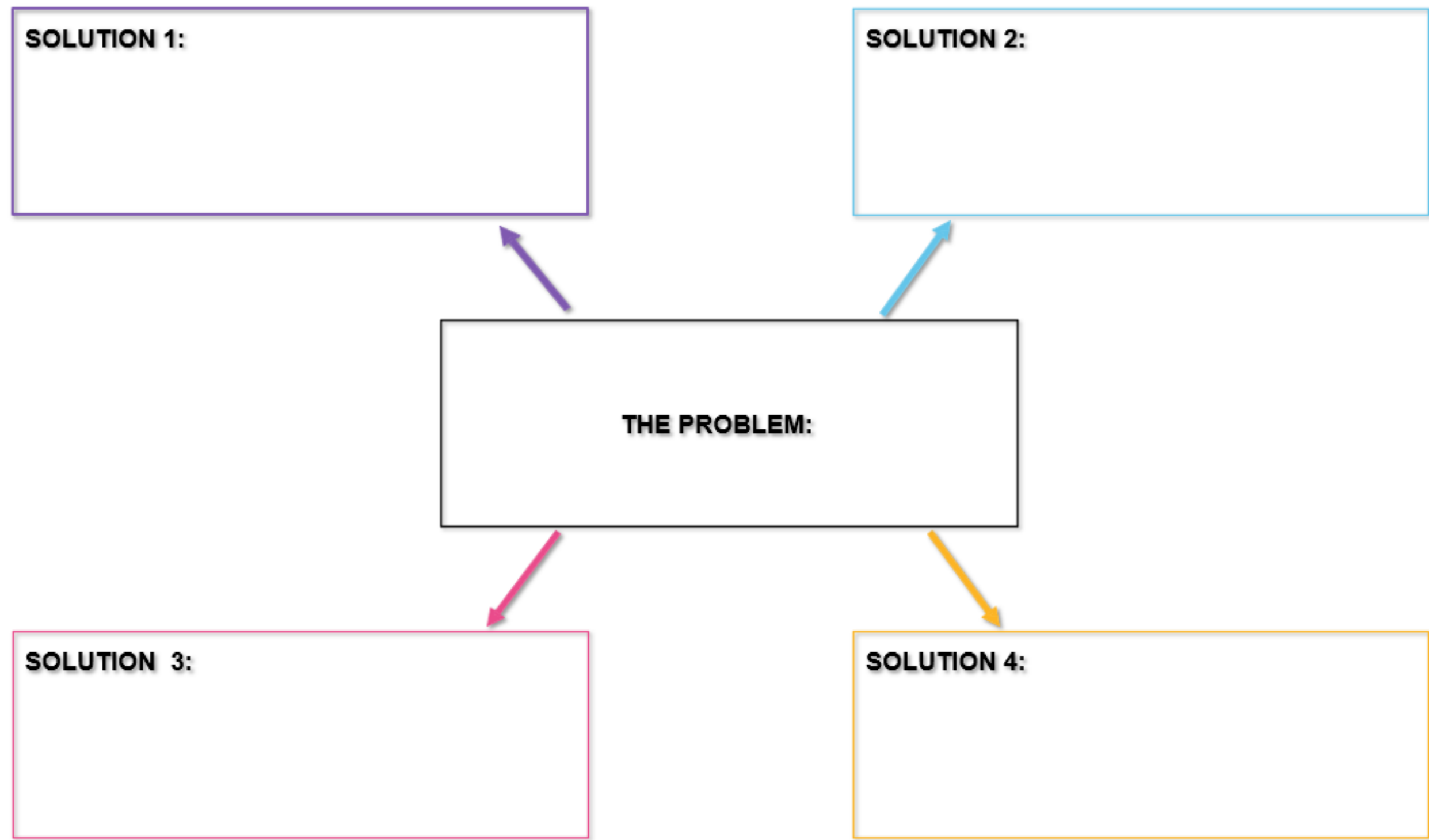
Choose two of these ideas to discuss in the meeting.

- Provide free coffee and biscuits for staff every day.
- Introduce a yearly paid bonus for all staff.
- Offer all staff three extra holiday days.
- Offer staff the option to work their hours in three or four days, rather than five.

Discuss the advantages of the ideas and how they would work. Think of possible disadvantages and prepare a counter argument.



6. Think of a work-related problem you've each had which needed a creative solution. Hold a problem-solving meeting to brainstorm possible solutions.



Alternatively, look at one of the following problems.

1. You have just found out that key features of the new product or service you are working on are very similar to those of one that your competitors launched last week at your industry’s annual convention.
2. You work in a sector where it is extremely difficult to attract and recruit suitable employees with the very specialist knowledge that is required for the job. You are in serious need of more staff and demand for the company's services is huge.

Culture Question

Think about the 'company culture' in your organization.

- ⦿ Are ideas developed hierarchically or can they come from any level?
- ⦿ How is support generated for these ideas?
- ⦿ Do you know how this compares to other company cultures?



Language at Work I Using adverbs to qualify attitudes

1. Listen to sentences (1-10) and match the adverbs in *italics* to their pertinent uses(a-d). There may be more than one possible answer.



Audio 6.5

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Could I just explain in a bit more detail? _____ | |
| 2. I don't really think we could get away with that, do you? _____ | a. emphasizing a comment |
| 3. I'm just not convinced. _____ | |
| 4. I'm not so keen on the idea. _____ | b. expressing an attitude contrary to expectation |
| 5. I'm not totally convinced. _____ | |
| 6. It was actually one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. _____ | c. persuading others to listen to you |
| 7. It's been a surprisingly difficult year. _____ | d. softening a negative reaction |
| 8. It's easily the best idea I've heard so far. _____ | |
| 9. Look, I only say that because there's big money in energy-saving. _____ | |
| 10. You've obviously given this some thought. _____ | |

2. Now listen to these pairs of sentences, where the meaning changes according to the position of the adverb. What is the difference in meaning?



Audio 6.6

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 a Could I explain in just a bit more detail? | 3 a It was actually one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. |
| b Could I just explain in a bit more detail? | b Actually, it was one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. |
| 2 a Surprisingly, it's been a difficult year. | 4 a I really don't think we could get away with that, do you? |
| b It's been a surprisingly difficult year. | b I don't really think we could get away with that, do you? |

3. Discuss what B might say in conversations (1-6).

1. a I don't have much time - what is it you wanted to talk about?
b (Needs to run through some ideas. Persuades A to listen.)
2. a Do you have any thoughts on my idea for a new staff car park?
b (Thinks the money could be used elsewhere. Softens this negative reaction.)
3. a The conference wasn't as well attended as last year, was it?
b (Thinks more people there than expected. Responds contrary to expectation.)
4. a I hear you're not happy with the way the new project's going.
b (Doesn't understand why it's delayed. Emphasizes this negative reaction.)
5. a Are you pleased with the outcome from this morning's meeting?
b (Thinks the best proposal got accepted. Emphasizes this positive reaction.)
6. a Are you happy with our choice of candidate?
b (She wouldn't have been the first choice. Responds contrary to expectation.)

4. Put adverbs from 1 into sentences (1-6) below. Listen to your colleague. What attitudes does she/he express?

1. Could I talk you through tomorrow's programme?
2. I have to say I'm not keen on this idea. It's risky.
3. I need to run through those figures with you.
4. It's not that complicated.
5. She's the best candidate for the job.
6. My boss smiled at me.

5. Think of your favourite and least favourite technological innovation. Explain your choices using adverbs from 1.



Practically Speaking I Using vague language

1. Listen to three conversations where people are being asked for information.
For each conversation answer questions 1-2.



Audio 6.7

- 1. How does the person being asked for information sound (e.g. Knowledgeable, tentative, vague, encouraging, lazy)?
- 2. Why isn't the information more precise?

2. Look at the phrases used to show that the information is imprecise in the table below. Listen again and add four more phrases for each conversation.



Audio 6.7

Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3
Something about ... I think!	I'd say you're on the right track.	No, not really.
... you've put me on the spot there.	... It's the kind of thing	It's difficult to explain
		Really .

extra vocabulary

Keyword | *still*

Look at sentences 1- 5. In which sentence is the word *still* used to ... ?

- a. emphasize a comparison
 - b. offer a contrasting viewpoint
 - c. refer to a possibility in the future
 - d. say what remains to be done
 - e. say you continue to wait for something which is
-
- 1. That should still give you time to revise your draft.
 - 2. I still need to bring it all together.
 - 3. Still, there was one place that was quite interesting.
 - 4. He still hasn't got back to me.
 - 5. More worrying still is that it's only a month away.

3. Role Play. Have the conversations.

Student A

Situation 1

You have asked to give a tour and presentation of your company to a group of graduates. You are busy planning the event, and you know Student B organized the same day last year. Speak to Student B and find out what she/he did to be prepared for the event.

Situation 2

In order for the MD to authorize a new project, you need to present a written proposal with Student B. Student B has written the first draft. However, it looks long, and you haven't had time to read it in detail. Student B asks you for feedback.

- **Student B** needs to add the long-term benefits for the company.
- The basic structure looks OK.
- The text looks very wordy - you'd prefer to see more bullet points.

Student B

Situation 1

Student A will ask you for some tips on how to organize a tour and presentation of your company to a group of graduates. You organized the same event last year. You can remember the day in general, but you have trouble recalling the details.

- Started with a tour of the building -lasted all morning?
- Short lunch break - sandwich lunch in meeting room, or fast food in staff canteen?
- Afternoon - talk by representative from each department. Introducing different job types?
- Finished with question and answer session?

Situation 2

In order for the MD to authorize the new project you are working on, you need to present a written proposal with **Student A**. You have written the first draft. Ask **Student A** for feedback before writing the second draft. Ask questions if you feel you need more detail from **Student A**.

4. Role Play. Ask each other about a topic from the list. Answer your colleague's questions, using vague language where necessary.

- a training session you've been to
- a hotel you have stayed in
- a city you've visited
- a product from a competitor
- a presentation you've been to
- a business trip you've been on

Focus

Preview

In this video lesson, you will watch an interview with Professor Hiram Samel on the subject of ethical consumption, also known as conscientious consumerism.

1. In the video, the speaker will refer to these companies and organizations (Gap, Zara, Uber and Airbnb). Share anything you know about them (e.g. products, services, brand, ownership, values, business model, etc.).

2. The speaker in the video uses the following words and phrases. Match (1-11) to definitions (a-k).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. dictate the conditions | a. chain reaction where one thing causes another thing to happen |
| 2. floor price | b. control the system of business |
| 3. hit stockholder returns | c. fairness in relation to wealth and opportunity in society |
| 4. limited production run | d. manufacturing a fixed number of items |
| 5. monopoly platforms | e. negatively affect how much an investor receives |
| 6. network effect | f. owned items which are not used enough |
| 7. political and market mechanisms | g. systems set up by governments and business |
| 8. saturation point | h. tech companies that have sole control of a market |
| 9.social justice 10.under- | i. the lowest price a seller will agree to |
| utilized assets | j. the stage at which no more can be added to something |
| 11.uneven distribution of gains | k. when the benefits (e.g. profits) are not shared equally |

Profile

Hiram Samel is Associate Professor of International Business at Saïd Business School. He was an entrepreneur for 25 years before receiving his PhD.



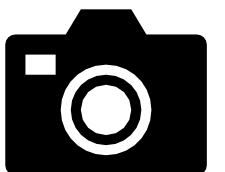
3. In the first part of this interview, Hiram Samel defines the terms 'ethical consumption' and 'conscientious consumerism'. Watch the video and complete this summary.



Video 01

Ethical consumption or conscientious consumerism is a way of encouraging social 1 _____ across borders. A good example of this is Fair trade which is a 2 _____ of certification that says the growers of products like coffee or chocolate in certain countries are guaranteed a 3 _____ price. This encourages the producer to reinvest in their 4 _____, train their 5 _____ and have a higher standard of 6 _____. As a result, customers are more willing to pay for it. In principle, it's using 7 _____ to bring about social justice in a world where the 8 _____ doesn't always provide this.

4. In the next part of the interview, Hiram Samel describes how systems designed to ensure ethical consumption don't always work effectively. Watch the video and answer these questions.



Video 02

1. Why doesn't a state always fulfil its role in terms of social justice?
2. Why is there sometimes an uneven distribution of gains in local villages and how does this affect consumer perceptions?
3. How can distribution channels make the system less effective for local farmers?
4. Why does Hiram think you need political mechanisms as well as market mechanism to ensure social justice?

5. Discuss questions 1-3.

1. How often is your decision-making in a supermarket affected by whether the product is ethically produced?
2. In general, would you describe yourself as a conscientious consumer?
3. Having learnt from the video that social justice sometimes doesn't work through market mechanisms, does this affect your perception as a consumer?

Comparing two business models

6. In this video, Hiram Samel talks about the challenges of being ethical in business. He compares the clothing companies Gap and Zara. Make notes about each company in the table below.



Video 03

	Gap	Zara
Country		
Where clothes are made		
Length of supply chain		
When it reaches the customer		
Types of clothing		
Cost of production		
How the regional capitalist economy affects their business model		

7. Discuss the following questions (1-3).

1. After listening to Hiram Samel describe each of the companies, do you think one of them is more ethical than the other? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Does your business rely on supply chains? How lengthy are they?
3. How much do the economic systems in your country affect your business and lead to ethical or unethical practices? Can you give any examples?

The Sharing Economy

8. What do you think the term 'sharing economy' refers to?

9. Watch Hiram Samel talk about the sharing economy. Take notes on:



Video 04

- his definition of the sharing
- economy how Uber works
- how Airbnb works
- positive and negative impacts
- different national perspectives on the sharing economy

10. Watch the video again and check your notes and add more details.

11. Based on the video and your own ideas, would you describe the sharing economy as ethical? Is there a difference between the theory and the reality?

12. Imagine you are setting up a local 'sharing' website based on the idea of local people making food in their own kitchens and delivering it door-to-door. Part of your website is called 'sharing and ethical' in which you list the positive impacts of your business on the community and how it is ethical. Brainstorm the list and present it to the class.

extra Glossary

flock to (v) go to something in large numbers (e.g. Shoppers flock to the high street sales)

predicated around vertical integration based on the idea of merging two or more stages in a process into one stage to improve communication and efficiency

raise their take of what the driver makes when a company takes more of their drivers' earnings than they did before