Business Advanced

Unit 9: Resources

Objectives

- Talk about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Discuss options using conditionals
- Avoid misunderstandings

Starting Point

Answer the following questions.

1. Think of examples of natural resources and company resources.

2. What kinds of things put pressure on these resources?

Working with Words | Corporate Social Responsibility

Starting a CSR project: Green Gold

Michelin, one of the oldest tyre manufacturers in the world, has a number of projects around the world connected to its **Corporate Social Responsibility** (CSR) **programme**. As Michelin is involved in what is considered an environmentally damaging industry, Michelin has developed an approach called 'Performance and Responsibility'. This concept allows the company to demonstrate that it is actively taking measures to reduce the industry's negative impact on the environment.

A small rubber project in northeastern Brazil set up by Michelin has become a flagship for the French tyre giant's Corporate Social Responsibility programme. With five rubber trees needed to produce one truck tyre, Michelin is an obvious target for those who claim that big business has a **track record** in using up **natural resources** too intensively. Although the company can't change the number of trees needed in the manufacturing process, it has initiated a successful project to offset the effects of its activities. The Ouro Verde ('Green Gold') project in Bahia state is a 'marvellous human adventure', the late Edouard Michelin said at its inauguration. Having owned a 9,000-hectare site there for 20 years, the French firm looked at closing the loss-making plantation and laying off the workers. Instead, it took advantage of the local **knowledge base** and passed ownership to twelve local Michelin managers, who set up a cooperative with the backing of loans underwritten by the parent company. This was a **critical success factor**: instead of laying off workers, 200 have been hired over the past two years.

Michelin has a positive track record in terms of **corporate accountability** and working with local communities. Lionel Barré, the plantation director at Michelin, says that the initiative stands as 'an example of **sustainable development** in a poor region'. The last two years have seen a burst of activity: the cooperative has planted cocoa next to the rubber trees to diversify its output; recycled some of its revenue into providing facilities for its employees; and has replanted parts of the depleted Atlantic rainforest in eastern Brazil, which contains 171 of Brazil's 202 **endangered species**.

1. Read about Michelin's 'Green Gold' project. Which of your examples of resources from Starting point are mentioned?

2. Discuss the following questions.

1. How could both Michelin and the local community benefit from this project?
2. What disadvantages could there be for Michelin or the local community?

3. Replace the words in italics in (1-8) below with a phrase in bold in the text in 1. Then work with a colleague and ask and answer the questions.

1. What examples of ***things in the environment that can be used for materials or energy*** can you think of?
2. Do you know of any ***groups of animals which are dying out***?
3. Why is having a wide ***range of skills and expertise*** important to companies?
4. What is the main ***measure of achievement*** in a project you are working on?
5. What does ***having to justify actions to stakeholders****, customers and societies* mean for how companies behave?
6. What does your company do in terms of ***using materials and energy efficiently without harming the environment***?
7. What is your company's ***performance over a number of years*** on green issues?
8. Does your company have a ***project which contributes to the welfare of a community or the environment***?

4. Listen to three people talking about CSR and answer questions (1-3) below.

Audio 9.1

1. What's the first person's argument *against* CSR projects?
2. What's the second person's argument *for* CSR projects?
3. What's required of a CSR colleague with the third person's company and why?

5. Complete the following sentences (1-9) with phrases from the list.

assets - bottom line - cost-benefit analysis - drain on resources - long-term viability - market value - quantifiable data - return on investment - short-term profit

1. Our highly-skilled workforce is one of our key _____________________.
2. The shareholders were disappointed because the drop in sales had an impact on our _____________________.
3. We need to be sure that our projected figures are based on _____________________.
4. This project is costing us far too much; it's a real _____________________.
5. Rather than future stability, the company's strategy is all about _____________________.
6. To find out if the project's worth doing, we need a _____________________.
7. Our reputation as a responsible employer has enhanced the company's _____________________.
8. We'll have to do some forward projections to check the project's _____________________.
9. Before I commit a lot of money to the project, I need to be sure of a good _____________________.

6. Using vocabulary below and from 5, discuss the pros and cons of investing in projects (1-4) for each case:

- **current employees**
- **customers**
- **shareholders**

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme
- track record
- natural resources
- knowledge base
- critical success factor
- corporate accountability
- sustainable development
- endangered species

Projects

1. Invest in extensive IT and skills-based training programmes for all members of staff, and include residential team-building weekends for managers.
2. Offer work to asylum seekers in the local area: train them and provide them with free language lessons to enable them to work effectively.
3. Invest in a project to protect the environment - encourage staff to leave their cars at home and install solar panels on the roof of office buildings.
4. Relocate the customer services department to a developing country. Pay the staff in that country a higher salary in comparison with other companies.

7. Would your company invest in any of the projects in *6*? Explain.

Business Communication | Discussing options

Context

Floralope is located in Hungary and manufactures seed packets for companies in neighboring countries. Floralope is part-owned by a Dutch company, so any major decisions have to be discussed with them. Recently, Floralope has found it hard to keep up with its competitors, due to outdated systems and a more demanding customer base. Investing in a new IT system would help keep existing customers and could enable expansion. The question is whether this is a wise investment and if long term expansion is the right strategy. Zoltan and Judit from the Hungarian company, and Margit from the Dutch parent company, meet to discuss the situation.

1. Read the Context. How might the company's current resources affect the decision to expand and invest in a new IT system?

2. Listen to four extracts from the meeting. Check your ideas in 1 and answer questions (1-4).

1. What type of company resources were discussed?
2. Which resources are problematic?
3. Who takes a positive lead in the meeting? How do you know?
4. Who seems quite negative throughout? How do you know?

Audio 9.2 - 9.5

3. Listen again and complete expressions (A-L).

a. So, looking at the situation from __________, if the IT system is updated, you'll be more efficient in terms of your customer admin...
b. We need to develop __________ to move the business forward.
c. Well, we have _______________.
d. OK, that's all very positive, but I think we need to look at __________.
e. I think __________ here.
f. __________, you took on some younger people?
g. And we're in a great location, so I think we're in __________ to find new staff.
h. Basically, we __________ for a long-term plan like this— __________ provide training for everyone, which will be a substantial investment, __________ accept that it's totally unfeasible.
i. We have to bear in mind _______________ of a commitment like this.
j. So __________ that long-term we have the human resources for the strategy.
k. Are there any other __________?
l. Right, so __________.

4. Look at sentences (1-6) from the meeting and the underlined expressions. Answer the questions (a-c).

1. Assuming we decided to commit to the full amount, we could also look at ways to save money in other areas.
2. I mean, there's no point in investing in a system upgrade if we don't have the space, personnel or finances to carry it through.
3. I'm not sure that would work.
4. Provided you agree upon the terms and conditions we will start now, but I'm convinced we can answer to any of your questions, if any.
5. Realistically, would we be able to finance this marketing campaign?
6. Yes, but we do have some employees who've had the experience you are looking for.

a. **Which sentences focus on positive results?**

b. **Which sentences focus on negative results?**

c. **In which sentences are the main points dependent on a condition/situation?**

extra vocabulary **Key word** | *look*

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

1. Look, you've got this wrong.
2. It looks as if Kenzo's left the office.
3. You look lovely in that new outfit!
4. I have to look for the document our boss asked us to send now.
5. Could you take a look at this contract before I sign it?

a. it seems / it is apparent
b. to focus on something, think about it, and give a reaction
c. to describe appearance
d. to indicate you're highlighting something
e. to search

Key Expressions

Setting the context / discussing strategy

- *Looking at the situation from a long-term perspective ...*
- *We need to develop a clear strategy to ...*
- *I think we need to look at the bigger picture.*
- *We have to bear in mind the long-term viability ...*

Stating / discussing options

- *We have a number of options.*
- *I think our options are quite clear here.*
- *How would it work if you / we ... ?*
- *Basically we don't have much choice ... We can either ... or we ...*
- *We're in a really strong position to ...*

Discussing feasibility / evaluating options

- *There's no point in ... -ing, if we don't / can't ...*
- *Provided we ... , I'm convinced we can ...*
- *I'm not sure that would work.*
- *Realistically, would we be able to finance this strategy? Assuming we decided to ... ,*
- *We could also ...*

Reaching decisions

- *So, the general consensus is that ...*
- *Are there any other points to consider?*
- *Right. So we're decided.*

5. Role-Play: Margit discussed Floralope's strategy with a Dutch manager; some ideas were rejected, alternatives suggested. Follow the agenda below and hold a meeting to discuss the alternative suggestions. Try to reach a decision.

Agenda

Impact of new IT system

1. Human resources - training and staff issues?
2. Financial resources - how will the IT system and training be funded?
3. Timescale - when will the new system be introduced?

Student A and B

You support these alternative suggestions from the Dutch parent company:

1. Replacing some of the older staff with more IT-literate staff.
2. Raising capital by selling off some unused property and getting a bank loan.
3. Delaying the decision for six months until more information has been gathered by:
   - reviewing return on investment for a new IT system
   - analyzing the company in comparison to the competition
   - conducting a customer satisfaction survey

Students C and D

You support these original proposals from Floralope:

1. Investing in training for all staff on the new system is essential.
2. Using cash in the bank to invest in the system is necessary.
3. Going ahead with the new system as soon as the cost-benefit analysis has been done.

Discuss the advantages of these original proposals. Think about how the company's performance or reputation will be affected.

6. Discuss projects 1–6 in relation to your company and answer questions a–c. During the discussion, try to use as many expressions from the Key expressions as you can.

a. Which projects would be appropriate for your company?
b. What resources would be necessary?
c. How would the resources be managed?

1. new computer system
2. new building / relocating
3. new product / service
4. refurbished offices
5. increase in staff numbers
6. merger / restructuring

7. Present your ideas to the class.

Language at Work | Using conditionals

1. Look at the meeting extracts (1-9) and underline all the verbs.

1. ... if the IT system is updated, you'll be more efficient in terms of your customer admin ...
2. Provided we check out the feasibility of these options thoroughly, I'm convinced we can find a system upgrade that will work for us.
3. ... there's no point in investing in a system upgrade if we don't have the space, the personnel or the finances ...
4. ... if we'd invested in our production facilities five years ago, ... we would have knocked down the old building and had one purpose-built.
5. If we made them our key users, we could gradually train up the rest.
6. ... if you'd recruited more young employees at the start, they would have had some IT knowledge from school.
7. Imagine we only had a couple of people initially who could use the system, how could they cope with the extra work?
8. ... if we hadn't invested in the system, we'd be way behind the competition.
9. On the condition that we work more efficiently with the customers, our reputation can only improve too.

2. Match the sentences in 1 to the following categories (a–f).

a. Expressing regret for past inaction: ________
b. Making a suggestion: ________
c. Predicting the results of a decision in the future: ________
d. Questioning the results of a future situation: ________
e. Stating a fact: ________
f. Talking about the present results of a past action/inaction: ________

3. Look at the verbs you underlined in *1* and the categories in *2*. Identify the conditional type for each sentence.

- **Zero: ______.**
- **First: ______.**
- **Second: ______.**
- **Third: ______.**
- **Mixed: ______.**

4. Role-Play. Take turns to discuss these situations. Use conditionals to talk about past, present or future consequences.

Example: Last year, your company outsourced its catering services. Now the quality of food in the cafeteria has declined, and fewer employees are eating there.

➔ *If we hadn't outsourced catering, the cafeteria would still have good food.*

1. Your company is losing money. It must reduce expenses to avoid going bankrupt.
2. The government is thinking about increasing interest rates, but they are worried about the impact on consumer spending.
3. Your team hired an ineffective manager. Since he started, three employees have quit.
4. You picked the wrong career. You feel unmotivated and dissatisfied with your job.
5. Some employees will be transferred to Berlin (you might be included). You have friends there.
6. Your yearly pay review is approaching. You'd like to travel to the Caribbean, but it's currently beyond your budget.

5. YP fitness studio is having its yearly review meeting. Tell your teacher what happened and the future plans.

YP Fitness Studio Yearly Review Meeting - Last Year

1. Past action/inaction and past results

- Invested in new equipment → Able to increase membership fees
- Failed to develop a competitive January special offer → Lost potential customers to competition

2. Past action/inaction and present results

- Failed to address HR crisis and recruit new personal trainers → Only three personal trainers, all overworked; several customers on waiting lists
- Developed a partnership with a local school → Overweight teenagers now participating in a fitness program

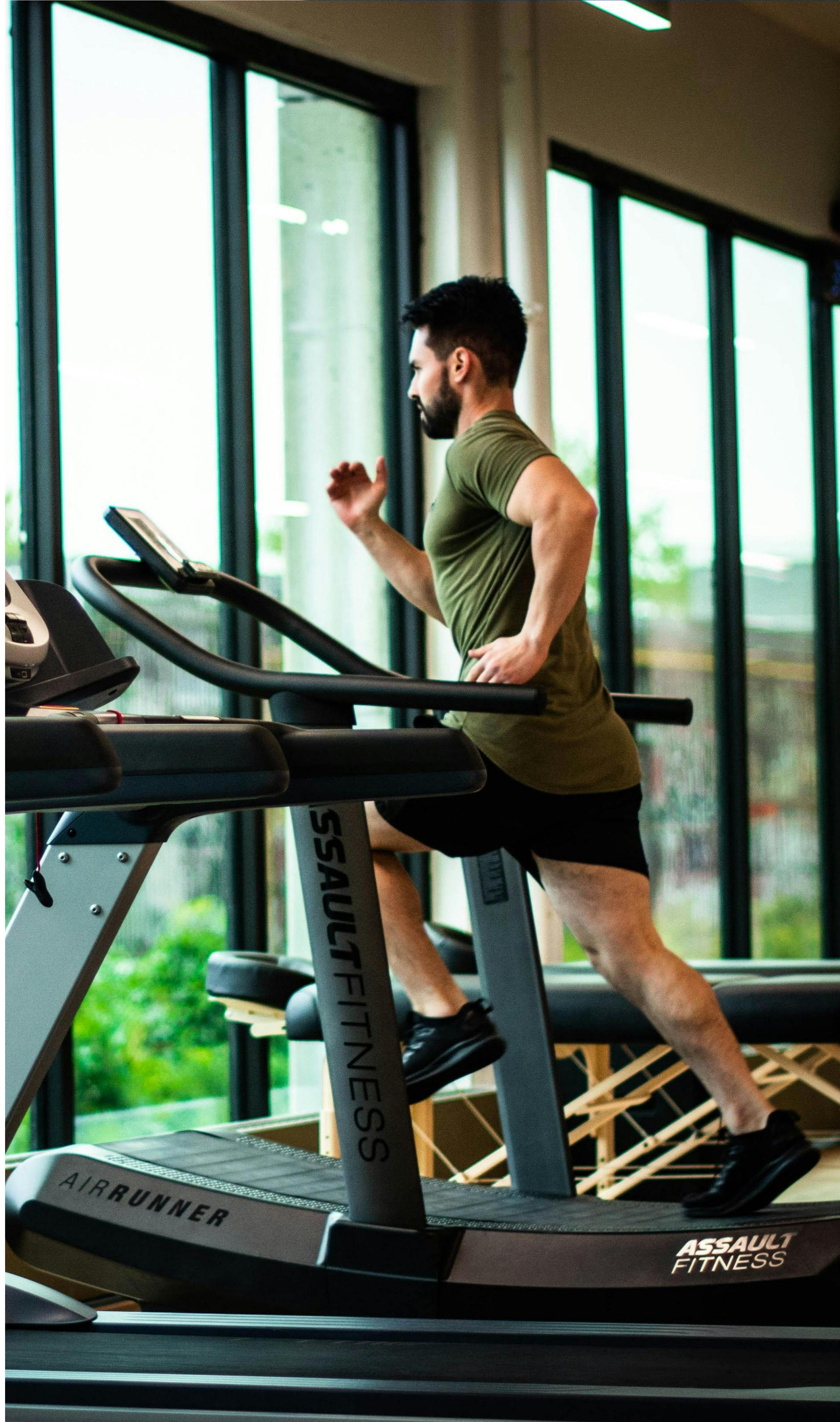
Next year

3. Suggestions/predictions for next year plus results

- Develop new membership packages → Increase number of members
- Start more initiatives with teenagers → Improve gym reputation and attract new young members
- Employ more trainers → Provide more personalized programs for customers and increase profits
- Renovate the pool area → Enhance reputation, raise swimming prices

6. Think about the past year in your company, department or team. Take notes about what happened and add some suggestions for next year using headings (1-3) below.

1. Past action / inaction and past results
2. Past action / inaction and present results
3. Suggestions / predictions for next year and the results



Practically Speaking | Dealing with misunderstandings

1. Listen to five conversations and answer the following questions. In which conversation(s) does the person react to the misunderstanding ... ?

1. in a polite way
2. in a less polite way

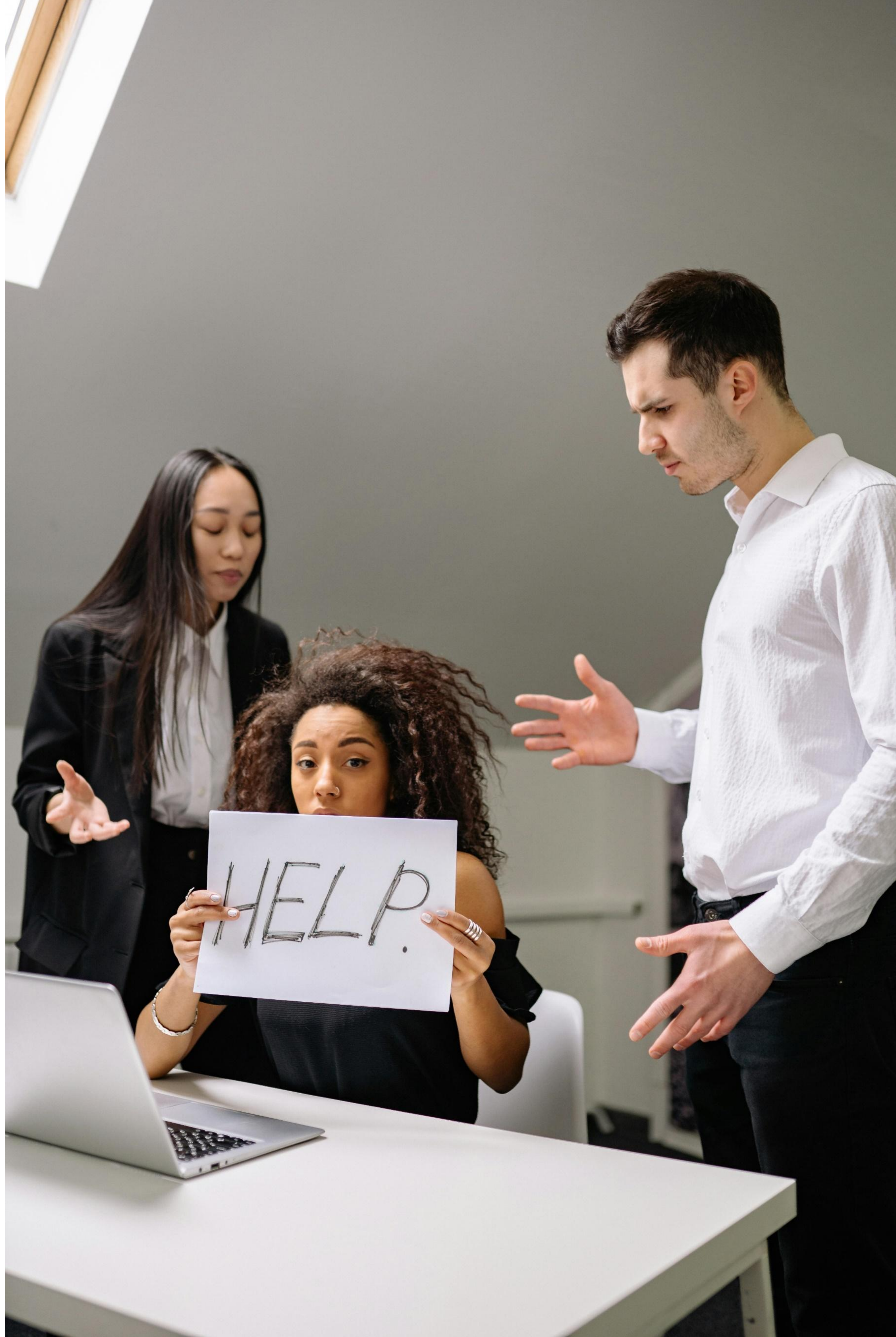
Audio 9.6

2. Listen again. In which conversation (1-5) do you hear phrases a-l?

a. ... can I put this straight? ___
b. I didn't mean that! ___
c. I don't know what you're talking about. ___
d. I was thinking more along the lines of ... ___
e. Look, you've got it wrong. ___
f. No, that's not exactly what I'm saying. ___
g. No, that's not right. ___
h. Sorry if I didn't make that clear. ___
i. That's not really what I meant. What I actually wanted to say was ... ___
j. The amount may seem ..., but actually ... ___
k. What do you mean? ___
l. What I meant was ... ___

3. Answer the following questions (1-3).

1. Which phrases in *2* are direct (*D*) and which are less direct (*L*)?
2. Which words and structures are used to make the message less direct?
3. When might you want to be less direct or more direct?



4. Change the phrases 1-5 to make them less direct using words from the list.

exactly - actually - really - sure - mean - quite

1. What do you mean? ________________________________
2. No, that's not right. ________________________________
3. I don't know what you're talking about. ________________________________
4. That's not what I mean, I said ________________________________
5. I didn't mean that. ________________________________

5. Look at situations 1 and 2 below. Have short conversations with a colleague. In turns deal with the misunderstanding using the phrases in *2*.

Situation 1: Employee and employer discussing an employment contract

- **Employee:** understands bonuses are paid each year
- **Employer:** corrects information - bonuses paid depending on performance

Situation 2: Salesperson and customer discussing prices

- **Customer:** thinks the 5% discount is fixed
- **Salesperson:** corrects information - if the customer opens an account with them, 1.5% is offered immediately plus a quantity discount

6. Role-Play. Make the complaints/suggestions below to your colleague and deal with any misunderstanding.

Student A:

- Make a complaint about a new system at work.
- Suggest an idea for your colleague's next holiday.

Student B:

- Make a complaint about your colleague's work.
- Suggest a task for your colleague to do at work.

Culture Question

- In your own language do you normally use direct or indirect language when informing someone they have misunderstood?

- How would you feel if someone corrected your English during a meeting?

- Would you be more direct in a meeting with native English speakers or with non-native English speakers? Why?

Viewpoint 3 | Business education

myngle

Focus

Preview
In this video lesson, you will watch an interview about business education with Kathy Harvey, the Associate Dean of Saïd Business School. Then you will watch a series of interviews with people working for and studying at the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, which is part of Saïd Business School.

1. The speakers in the videos use the following words and phrases. Match (1-9) to definitions (a-i).

1. **framework**
2. **multifaceted**
3. **on the hoof**
4. **social impact**
5. **social venture**
6. **spark off**
7. **time out**
8. **transformational**
9. **up and running**

a. a new business with the aim of helping certain groups of people in some way
b. a relatively short period during a busy life to stop and consider what you are going to do next
c. a system of ideas or beliefs that is created to help planning and decision-making
d. able to produce huge changes and/or improvements
e. having many parts
f. help to create or generate
g. informal expression meaning you do something while doing something else without giving it 100% attention
h. the effect something has on society and/or a group of people
i. to describe when something new (usually a new business or a new project) has started and is now operating

2. Fill in the following questions with some of the words and phrases in 1.

1. In brainstorming or creative meetings, what are some ways you use to _______ new ideas?
2. Would you say that your business has a _______ and has had a _______ effect on the lives of others?
3. What new projects do you currently have _______?
4. In what ways do you take _______ from day-to-day work or home life to reflect on your career and your own future?
5. How often do you have to make decisions _______? Why?

3. Pair up with a partner and take turns asking each other the questions from section 2.

How Education can Transform Business

Profile

Kathy Harvey is the Associate Dean at Saïd Business School. She is responsible for graduate programmes and academic colleagueship.

Glossary
alumni (n) past students from a particular school, college or university

hard core-learning side of things refers to learning hard skills like subject-based knowledge (e.g. finance) as opposed to soft skills (e.g. communicating effectively)

kick-start (v) get something started very quickly (e.g. a new business idea)

4. Watch Kathy Harvey answering three different questions A-C. Number the questions in the order she answers them (1-3).

Video 01

a. What's an example of an executive education transforming people's lives?

b. What are some of the best approaches to learning in executive education?

c. What can business people get from a formal executive education?

5. Watch the interview again and answer questions (1-6).

1. When somebody comes to an executive education course, what are they trying to do?
2. What do people need 'time out' to think about?
3. What different methods of learning does Kathy Harvey mention?
4. Who does Kathy Harvey say executives learn from? Why is it 'vital'?
5. Kathy Harvey gives an example of students working in a group. What kind of business did they put together?
6. What was transformed as a result of the project?

6. Answer the following questions.

1. Have you ever done any formal business training or executive education?
2. What methods of learning were used?
3. Was it transformational in any way?

The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship

7. Read about the Skoll Centre in the Profile. Then watch short interviews with four Skoll Centre employees. Listen and note the answers to the questions.

Video 02

Profile

An important educational asset at the Saïd Business School is the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship. It focuses on teaching and research in the areas of social ventures and creating social impact. It organizes various global events that unite influential thinkers and major figures from business and government to improve social impact.

Georgia Lewis *Marketing and Design Lead*	1. What is the Skoll Centre?
Lydia Darley *Events and Administrative Coordinator*	2. How does the Skoll Centre support social entrepreneurs?
Nazia Ali *Programme Manager (Developing Talent)*	3. What is one of the courses that you run?
Breanne Svehla *Programme Manager*	4. What is the Skoll Scholarship?

Studying at the Skoll Centre

8. Now, watch interviews with four Skoll Centre students. Note their answers.

Video 03

Ahmed Abu Bakr *Bangladesh*	1. Why do you use the Skoll Centre?
Sophie Kin Seong *Canada*	2. How does the Skoll Centre support social entrepreneurs?
Ana María Ñungo *Colombia*	3. What two social impact projects are you currently working on?
John Walugembe *Uganda*	4. What social impact project have you set up in Uganda?

A Pitch for the Skoll Centre

9. Imagine you need to promote the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and its scholarships to potential students. Prepare a brief two-minute pitch using information from the videos.

10. Optional for group classes. Give your pitch. When you are listening, make notes for the following questions and give feedback to the speaker afterwards.

- What did you find appealing about the pitch? Do you have any ideas on how it could be improved?
- Did it cover all the essential points, or would you have added something else?