

EASY E

CEF level A2

MEDIUM M

CEF levels B1–B2

ADVANCED A

CEF levels C1–C2

CEF: European Framework of Reference for Languages

INTRODUCTION**[1] Let's get started!** **E**

Sion: Do you want to practise your English while learning more about today's world of business? Well, listen up! This is exactly what you can do with *Business Spotlight Audio*. We'll explore a range of topics, from after-work drinking to making and dealing with complaints at work. And you'll also hear some strategies for problem-solving as a team — which could come in handy if you receive some complaints that cause you problems! On top of this, we'll give you some useful conversation starters to help you talk to colleagues who have just come back from a business trip. Sounds like a pretty full agenda, right? Let's get started with some trending news topics.

topic ▶ Thema**come in handy**

▶ sich als nützlich erweisen

agenda

▶ Tagesordnung;

hier auch: Programm

NAMES AND NEWS**[2] Not coming back** **A** **U**

The coworking company WeWork was founded in 2010 to revolutionize the way people go about doing their jobs. But the man who started

it, Israeli-American entrepreneur Adam Neumann, was fired by his own company, in 2019, after racking up large debts. When WeWork declared bankruptcy, in 2023, the 45-year-old Neumann announced that he wanted to try again and attempted to buy back control. The company's major creditors had other ideas, and perhaps that's for the best — former CEOs who return have a very mixed record.

Travis Howell, assistant professor of management and entrepreneurship at Arizona State University, told the BBC: “These boomerang CEOs, once they come back, tend to perform worse in general. But the founder CEOs who come back performed especially worse.” There are some notable exceptions, such as Steve Jobs at Apple, but in general, it seems, what didn't work the first time won't work the second time either.

Neumann, who grew up in a kibbutz in Israel and moved to New York City in 2001, is still an entrepreneur and a tech billionaire. In 2022, he founded a new real-estate start-up called Flow, valued at over \$1 billion, with the idea of renting out branded apartments. Some have speculated that Neumann now wants to do the same thing for residential living that WeWork was supposed to do for offices.

*Business Spotlight 8/2024, p. 8***go about doing sth.**

▶ sich daranmachen, etw. zu tun

rack sth. up

▶ etw. ansammeln

debts ➤ Schulden

declare bankruptcy

➤ Insolvenz anmelden

creditor ➤ Gläubiger

record ➤ hier: Erfolgsbilanz

boomerang

➤ hier: zurückkehrend

notable

➤ bemerkenswert, denkwürdig

kibbutz

➤ Kibbutz (ländliche Siedlung mit kollektiver Wirtschaft und Lebensweise in Israel)

real-estate ➤ Immobilien-

rent sth. out

➤ etw. vermieten

branded apartments (US)

➤ Wohnungen mit einheitlichem Design- und Servicekonzept

[3] Vinyl's revival

One of the tasks of Britain's Office for National Statistics (ONS) is to measure price growth. To do this, the agency records the prices of more than 700 goods and services that are considered to be things that consumers typically spend money on. For this reason, the collection of goods and services, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), offers an interesting insight into British society at any given time.

Hand sanitizer, for example, was added to the CPI during the pandemic. An update in early 2024 showed consumer preferences for healthier food, with the inclusion of pumpkin seeds and gluten-free bread, while the addition of energy-efficient air fryers suggests a response to higher electricity bills. However, it's not always new trends that appear in the CPI. Back in 1992, vinyl records were dropped from the list and replaced by CDs. Now, three decades later, vinyl is back, showing the renewed interest in this old technology. Matt Corder, of the ONS,

told the *Financial Times*: "The return of vinyl records shows how cultural revivals can affect our spending."

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agency ➤ Behörde

goods ➤ Waren

Consumer Prices Index (UK)

➤ Verbraucherpreisindex

insight

➤ Einblick

at any given time

➤ zu jeder Zeit

hand sanitizer

➤ Händedesinfektionsmittel

pandemic ➤ Pandemie

pumpkin seed ➤ Kürbiskern

air fryer ➤ Heißluftfritteuse

vinyl record ➤ Schallplatte

affect sth.

➤ etw. beeinflussen

[4] Fair or unfair?

When a business trains a new employee, is it fair if that same employee leaves to work for a competitor? This situation led to the rise of noncompete clauses in work contracts. These force a skilled employee to wait, often for a year or more, before taking another job or starting a business in the same market.

"Noncompetes" are common in the U.S. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) estimates that 20 percent of American workers, about 30 million people, are affected by them. They've become more important, as the most valuable business assets tend to be knowledge and ideas, not property and equipment. Noncompetes make sense in certain cases — sometimes, an ex-employee could seriously damage a business.

However, noncompetes have become so common that they can limit job mobility. So, in 2024, the FTC decided that most of them cannot be enforced. It says this change could increase wages by up to \$300 billion a year by allowing workers to change jobs freely. However, critics say that noncompetes help protect trade secrets and encourage employers to invest in their people. The contest over noncompetes is just beginning.

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noncompete clause

(US) ► Wettbewerbsklausel

work contract

► Arbeitsvertrag

Federal Trade Commission

(US)

► Bundeshandelskommission

affected ► betroffen

business assets

► Unternehmenskapital

enforce sth.

► etw. durchsetzen

billion ► Milliarde(n)

trade secret

► Betriebsgeheimnis

contest ► hier: Kampf

METROPOLITAN MAYHEM

[5] Is after-work drinking still acceptable today? 🇺🇸

Sion: How would you react if your colleagues suggested going for an alcoholic drink together in a pub after work? Would you enjoy speaking to your co-workers in a more informal setting? Or would you quickly find an excuse? Some people might see after-work drinking as normal, but others view it as an unhealthy, old-fashioned practice. Listen to the following dialogue

between colleagues Michelle and Doug at Metropolitan Mayhem, our fictional London advertising agency. Michelle asks Doug to join her for a drink after work. Listen carefully because we will test your understanding of the dialogue afterwards.

Michelle: Good morning, Doug. I don't know about you, but I have already got that Friday feeling!

Doug: Well, it's only 9.30, so don't get too excited yet. You've got a full working day ahead of you.

Michelle: I've only got one meeting, and I'm hoping to leave by five today anyway. Do you fancy joining me and Davina for an after-work drink to kick off the weekend? We're going to The Old Hound — they have a two-for-one deal on all cocktails on Fridays.

Doug: Thanks for the offer, but I'm teetotal.

Michelle: Since when? We drank together at the Christmas party and shared a cab because we were both over the limit.

Doug: I'm a changed man, Michelle. My wife convinced me to do dry January, and I haven't had a drop of alcohol since then. To be honest, I don't miss the hangovers at all.

Michelle: You know they do mocktails, right? I wouldn't want you to miss out on the fun.

Doug: I know, but I'll give it a miss. I find mocktails and cocktails overpriced, to be honest. In general, since I've stopped drinking, I've noticed a real increase in my disposable income. I didn't

realize how much I was spending on **booze**.

Michelle: That's a good **point**. Alcohol has really gone up in price. When I eat out, I usually try to find places with a **BYOB** policy, so I only have to pay for **corkage**. Anyway, next time, we'll go for an after-work smoothie or a milkshake instead.

Doug: Great, I'd like that. I like **mixing with** colleagues in different environments. It's **amazing** how the hierarchy between people just melts away when you are outside of the office.

Michelle: Yes, but sometimes, **boundaries** can be overstepped. Particularly, when people have had a few drinks. I like going for an after-work drink with colleagues I choose to meet up with, but at staff parties, there have been moments when I thought it would have been better if certain people had stuck to the orange juice.

Doug: Yes, without naming anyone, I think we can agree that we've both seen some colleagues acting **inappropriately** after a few drinks. I think management should make some staff events where drinking is encouraged **non-compulsory**.

Michelle: Yes, that would prevent some uncomfortable situations.

setting ➤ Umfeld

fancy sth. (UK)

➤ auf etw. Lust haben

kick sth. off (jfm.)

➤ etw. beginnen

teetotal ➤ abstinent

cab ➤ Taxi

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dry ➤ hier: alkoholfrei, ohne Alkohol

hangover ➤ Kater

mocktail ➤ alkoholfreie Entsprechung eines alkoholhaltigen Cocktails (Wortschöpfung aus „mock“ (= nachahmen) und „cocktail“)

miss out on sth.

➤ etw. verpassen

disposable ➤ verfügbar

booze ➤ Alkohol, Schnaps

point ➤ hier: Argument

BYOB ➤ bring your own

booze

corkage ➤ Korkengeld

mix with sb.

➤ mit jmdm. verkehren

amazing ➤ toll, fantastisch

boundary ➤ Grenze

inappropriately

➤ unpassend

non-compulsory

➤ nicht zwingend

[6] Check your understanding

Sion: OK, let's test your understanding of the dialogue you have just heard. Listen to the following statements and decide whether they are true or false.

- Doug now drinks tea instead of alcohol.
 - This statement is false. Doug says that he is “teetotal”, which means he does not drink alcohol.
- Doug's wife encouraged him not to drink alcohol in January.
 - This statement is true. Doug's wife convinced him to do “dry January”, the tradition of not drinking alcohol in the first month of the year.
- At the staff Christmas party, Doug and Michelle both consumed too much alcohol to drive legally.
 - This statement is true. Michelle says that they shared a “cab”, another word for “taxi”, as they were both “over the limit”, which means they had drunk too much alcohol to drive legally.
- Doug doesn't miss hanging around waiting for taxis after a night out drinking.

- This statement is false. Doug doesn't miss "hangovers", which is the feeling you get the day after drinking too much alcohol. Hangovers usually involve feeling tired and they may include headaches and sickness.
- 5. Doug has more money to spend now that he no longer drinks alcohol.
 - This statement is true. Doug has more "disposable income" or, in other words, money to spend, than he did before he stopped drinking.
- 6. Michelle likes to go to restaurants that have a great wine list.
 - This statement is false. Michelle likes to go to restaurants with a "BYOB policy". "BYOB" is short for "bring your own booze". "Booze" is an informal word for "alcohol". She likes restaurants that allow diners to bring their own alcohol and just pay for "corkage", that is, a fee to open a bottle of wine.
- 7. Doug enjoys spending time with colleagues outside the office, but he doesn't think that staff events involving alcohol should be mandatory.
 - This statement is true. He likes mixing with colleagues in different environments. If you "mix with people", you spend time with them in social contexts. But he thinks staff events where drinking alcohol is encouraged should be non-compulsory.
- 8. Michelle and Doug both think that drinking at staff events can lead to unsuitable behaviour.

- This statement is true. Michelle says that "boundaries can be overstepped", meaning that people can do or say things that make others feel uncomfortable. Doug also mentions colleagues acting "inappropriately" after drinking. If someone acts inappropriately, they act in a way that is not suitable for the situation.

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mandatory ➤ zwingend
environment ➤ hier: Umfeld
encourage sth.
 ➤ hier: zu etw. anregen

non-compulsory
 ➤ nicht zwingend
unsuitable ➤ unpassend

[7] Opinions: Are after-work drinks outdated?

Sion: We asked one Business Spotlight editor and one Spotlight editor to answer the following question: Are after-work drinks outdated? Listen to what they had to say on this topic. This will help you to express your own opinion on this question. Ready? Let's hear what they had to say.

Rachel Preece, Business Spotlight editor: I am British, and there's nothing I enjoy more than a Friday night trip to the pub with colleagues. It's a way to decompress, to network and simply to talk about topics outside of work and get to know your colleagues as human beings. However, the concept of after-work drinks is not

inclusive. For those not ordering a pint because of religious reasons or because of pregnancy, it can become an uncomfortable situation. Perhaps there are alternatives to pub culture, team lunches, or simply coffee and cake, situations that don't take up people's free time and are less exclusionary.

Owen Connors, Spotlight Audio editor: Promoting a culture that revolves around drinking can actually pressure employees to engage in behaviours that they may not be comfortable with or that may be detrimental to their health. And there's also the issue of drunken behaviour and language. Alcohol can lower inhibitions and lead to unprofessional behaviour or inappropriate comments, and this can damage relationships or create an uncomfortable work environment. This is really concerning considering the impact on work dynamics. What happens during after-work drinks can spill over into the workplace, affecting teamwork and professional interactions.

So, given these considerations, many companies are actually rethinking the tradition of after-work drinks. Instead, they are looking for more inclusive and health-conscious ways to foster team bonding. Alternatives like team-building activities, wellness events and social gatherings that do not centre around alcohol are becoming more popular. These alternatives ensure that all employees can par-

ticipate and feel included, regardless of their personal choices or circumstances.

So, while after-work drinks are not necessarily outdated, they are increasingly being seen as just one of many options for socializing with colleagues. As workplaces become more diverse and inclusive, it's important to consider a variety of activities that cater to all employees, promoting a healthy and inclusive work culture.

Sion: Now, try answering the question yourself: Are after-work drinks outdated in your opinion?

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editor	▶ Redakteur(in)
outdated	▶ veraltet, überholt
topic	▶ Thema
decompress (ifml.)	▶ sich entspannen
network	▶ sich vernetzen
pregnancy	▶ Schwangerschaft
exclusionary	▶ ausgrenzend
detrimental	▶ schädlich
issue	▶ Problem
inhibition	▶ Hemmung
inappropriate	▶ unangebracht
environment	▶ hier: Umfeld

concerning	▶ besorgniserregend
impact	▶ Auswirkung(en)
spill over into sth.	▶ auf etw. überschwappen
affect sth.	▶ sich auf etw. auswirken, etw. beeinträchtigen
foster sth.	▶ etw. fördern
bonding	▶ Bindung, Beziehung
gathering	▶ Zusammenkunft
ensure sth.	▶ etw. sicherstellen
cater to sb.	▶ auf jmdn. eingehen

TRAVEL

[8] Getting a conversation started 

Sion: Imagine your colleague Susanne has just got back from a business trip to Edinburgh. You'd like to talk to her about her trip. You've never been to Edinburgh and you're curious to find out more about the destination. Listen to the following conversation starters to help you talk to your colleague about her trip.

- First, welcome Susanne back to work.
- Hey, Susanne, it's good to have you back in the office.
- Then mention her business trip and ask if she has been there before.
- I heard you were on business in Edinburgh. Was it your first time there?
- Ask her about her leisure time there.
- Did you manage to see much of Edinburgh while you were there?
- What were the highlights of your trip?
- Show interest in the destination.
- I'd love to visit Edinburgh. Do you have any recommendations for me?
- Ask about the Scottish climate.
- What was the weather like while you were there?
- Ask about Scottish food.
- What did you think of the Scottish cuisine?
- Find out whether Susanne has any future trips planned to Scotland.

➤ Will you be going back to Scotland anytime soon?

Sion: You can adapt these questions to talk about different destinations. Now, listen to this track again and use the questions to practise talking to another learner of English about an upcoming business trip.

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destination ➤ Reiseziel

leisure time

➤ Freizeit

cuisine ➤ Küche, Kochkunst

upcoming

➤ bevorstehend

STREAMING

[9] Dialogue: Is streaming an expensive waste of time? 

Sion: Do you stream films and series online? Have you noticed that the cost of this service has gone up? Listen to the following dialogue between Dave and his daughter Tanya about streaming services. We'll test your understanding of it afterwards, so listen carefully. Let's begin.

Tanya: I just can't get enough of that new crime series on Netflix.

Dave: You went to bed really late last night. Binge-watching series isn't a great use of your time, you know?

Tanya: I know, Dad. But these series are so addictive. Every episode ends on a cliffhanger, so you just can't help clicking on "next episode".

Dave: Watching films and series for hours is an expensive hobby, though. The subscription

fee for all the platforms we use keeps going up. Streaming platforms originally got wider audiences by offering cheap rates. And now that they've got everyone hooked, they are increasing their prices because they know that people don't want to give up their services.

Tanya: Well, actors need to be paid fairly, Dad. Actors and writers took to the pickets to improve the residuals that they receive for their work on streaming platforms. Recent strikes could be a reason for the price hikes. Besides, if people have a problem with the prices, they don't have to choose the premium plan — they can go for the one with adverts instead.

Sion: OK, now let's check your understanding of what you have just heard. Complete the following sentences by choosing option a) or b).

1. "Binge-watching" is...

- a) the activity of watching back-to-back episodes of a series or multiple films in one sitting.
 - b) the activity of watching a film or episode of a series late at night.
- The correct answer is a). "Binge-watching" is the activity of watching back-to-back episodes of a series or multiple films in one sitting. This can happen at any time of day.

2. An "addictive series"...

- a) is a series that is difficult to stop watching.
 - b) is a series about drug abuse.
- The correct answer is a). An "addictive series" is

a series that is difficult to stop watching. When something is "addictive", it is something that you want to continue doing and that is difficult to stop.

3. A "cliffhanger" is...

- a) a dangerous situation that the characters in a series or film find themselves in.
 - b) a strategy used at the end of an episode of a series to make you want to keep watching.
- The correct answer is b). A "cliffhanger" is a strategy used at the end of an episode of a series to make you want to keep watching.

4. A "subscription fee"...

- a) is the money you pay on a monthly basis to access services and content.
 - b) is the money you pay on a monthly basis to access facilities, like the gym or a swimming pool.
- The correct answer is a). A "subscription fee" is the money you pay on a monthly basis to access services and content. For example, you could have a magazine subscription or a subscription to a streaming platform. But you would pay a membership fee to access facilities, like the gym or a swimming pool.

5. Actors and writers...

- a) picked the shows that were better paid and chose not to participate in shows that did not pay fairly.
- b) went on strike to improve the fee they receive in addition to their original compensa-

tion, for example when shows are distributed more widely than initially planned.

► The correct answer is **b**). Actors and writers went on strike to improve the fee they receive in addition to their original compensation, for example when shows are distributed more widely than initially planned. These payments are called “residuals”. The phrase “go to the pickets” means to “go on strike”.

6. “Price hikes” are...

a) increases in price.

b) instalments, meaning the fee can be paid gradually.

► The correct answer is **a**). “Price hikes” are increases in price.

Sion: Well done. Did you get all those answers right? If not, go back and try the exercise again.

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binge-watch sth. (ifml.)

► eine Folge nach der anderen ansehen

addictive

► süchtig machend

cliffhanger ► Cliffhanger

(spannende Situation am Ende einer Episode)

subscription ► Abonnement

fee ► Gebühr

hooked: get sb. ~ (ifml.)

► jmdn. süchtig machen

pickets: take to the ~

► streiken

(picket ► Streikposten)

residuals

► Rückstände;
hier: Wiederholungshonorar(e)

hike ► hier: Erhöhung

advert (UK) ► Werbespot

back-to-back

► fortlaufend

abuse ► Missbrauch

access sth.

► Zugang zu etw. haben

facility ► Einrichtung

gym ► Fitnessstudio

compensation ► Vergütung

instalment ► (Zahlungs-)Rate

BUSINESS SKILLS

[10] Conversation: Is it easier to make complaints or receive them?

Sion: Complaints can be tricky, whether you are the one making them or receiving them. Listen to two members of the *Business Spotlight* and *Spotlight editorial* teams answering the following question: Is it easier to make complaints or receive them? Do you agree or disagree with what they say? After listening to their responses, try answering the question yourself.

Melita Cameron-Wood, *Business Spotlight*

editor: Is it easier to make complaints or receive them? I think “it depends” is a valid answer here. I think it’s easy to make complaints if you don’t know the people on the receiving end. I know that if I buy a product and something isn’t working, I find it quite easy to write an email complaining about the defects and about how disappointed I am. And, erm, I probably would be more likely to use stronger language in written communication with people I don’t know. Now, that isn’t necessarily something I’m proud of, but I definitely think making those sorts of complaints is a lot easier than making complaints to people you know personally and work with. If you can see how people react to your words, that obviously makes it a lot harder. People might take things the wrong way. So, I think I would be more likely to choose my words carefully, which would be more of an

effort. In terms of receiving complaints, I think that can be difficult because you have to take a moment and process what's being said and not react immediately. 'Cos I do think if you react immediately, there is the danger of saying something that you don't want to say. And once you've said it, you can't really take it back. But I do think if the complaints you receive involve constructive feedback, then that can actually be a really positive thing, so it's really worth listening to complaints that you receive and thinking about where they come from and what you can do to change things moving forward. So overall, I think it is harder to make complaints, particularly if you're making those complaints to people you work with or know directly.

Owen Connors, Spotlight Audio editor: Making a complaint might seem easier at first glance because it involves expressing dissatisfaction or pointing out issues. It gives the person a sense of taking action to address a problem. However, it also requires a level of courage and diplomacy. Making a complaint effectively means balancing honesty with respect and sensitivity. You want to ensure that your message is clear and constructive, aiming for a resolution rather than causing conflict.

On the other hand, receiving complaints can be challenging because it involves listening to criticism, which can be uncomfortable. It re-

quires patience, openness and a willingness to understand the other person's perspective. The key to handling complaints well is to remain calm, avoid defensiveness and focus on finding a solution. It's an opportunity to learn and improve, which is crucial for personal and professional growth.

In a business setting, both making and receiving complaints are important skills. Employees need to feel empowered to voice their concerns, and managers need to be adept at handling feedback to foster a positive and productive work environment. Companies that create a culture of open communication tend to thrive because they address issues promptly and effectively, leading to continuous improvement and greater employee satisfaction.

Ultimately, whether it is easier to make complaints or receive them can depend on the individual and the context. Some people may find it easier to speak up, while others may excel at listening and responding to feedback. Both skills are valuable and necessary for healthy business relationships and successful organizations.

Sion: Now, it's your turn. Is it easier to make complaints or receive them? Answer the question in your own words.

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tricky ▶ schwierig
editorial ▶ Redaktions-

in terms of ▶ hinsichtlich
overall ▶ insgesamt

issue ➤ Problem**sensitivity**

➤ Einfühlungsvermögen

ensure sth.

➤ etw. sicherstellen

crucial ➤ entscheidend**setting** ➤ Umfeld**empowered**

➤ ermächtigt, befugt

adept: be ~ at doing sth.

➤ im Umgang mit etw. erfahren sein

foster sth.

➤ etw. fördern

environment

➤ hier: Umfeld

thrive

➤ florieren, Erfolg haben

promptly ➤ umgehend**ultimately** ➤ letztendlich**speak up** ➤ sich äußern**excel at sth.** ➤ in etw.

hervorragend sein

[11] The art of complaining E

Sion: OK, now let's listen to an article on making and dealing with complaints by Business Spotlight **contributor** Ken Taylor. It includes helpful advice and useful language to help you to formulate and receive negative feedback. Ready? Listen carefully.

contributor ➤ Mitarbei-

ter(in); hier auch: Autor(in)

[12] Making and dealing with complaints M

How should we make a **complaint** when deliveries are late, bills have not been paid or our software doesn't do what it's supposed to do? And how should we deal with complaints about our own organization? In both cases, we want something to change — ideally, without damaging the business relationship.

It is very easy to get angry when things go wrong, but emotions are usually **counterpro-**

ductive. When we're **worked up**, we have a tendency to generalize, saying something like: "You never get the orders right." However, such statements make the other person defensive, which only **hampers** their ability to take positive action for change.

Instead, start with the idea that a constructive complaint helps a service provider. It can make them aware of what they're doing and offers them a chance to make improvements.

Separate the person from the problem. **Tackle** the problem **dispassionately** rather than attacking any people involved. Knowing the **adage** that it costs five times as much to gain a new customer than to keep an old one, most organizations want to deal with reasonable complaints **promptly**.

A good complaint

Here are a few suggestions on how to complain in a clear, **straightforward** way:

- **Be descriptive.** Provide a clear picture of the situation and context. Explain what exactly happened, when and how. Avoid being **evaluative**. You don't want a discussion; you just want to put the other person into the picture.
- **Be specific.** Explain the negative consequences of what happened and remind the other person of any contracts or agreements. Avoid drawing general **conclusions** based on this one problem.

- **Be realistic.** Know what you want to achieve with the complaint. Do you want changes to a process? Compensation? A simple apology? Make concrete suggestions as to the next steps. Be pragmatic and clear about what you expect.
- **Be positive as well as negative.** (Try to) find something positive to say. Perhaps mention previous good service or the positive overall relationship, for example.

Complaints are best made in writing or in person. An email creates a written record, while an in-person complaint is much harder to ignore. Use the phone if you know the other person or when it's urgent.

A good response

Studies on technical assistance show that some 90 per cent of unhappy customers will never use your services again if you don't address their complaints. Here are some guidelines for doing that.

- **Accept responsibility.** You are the face of your organization, at least for the person complaining. Take personal responsibility and immediately start the process of dealing with the problem.
- **Accept the complaint.** Rule 1: The customer is always right. Rule 2: If the customer is wrong, see rule 1! Ultimately, if the customer feels something has gone wrong, then it has gone wrong. Ask questions to find out why

the customer is unhappy. Get as many details as you can. Rather than trying to explain or justify what's happened, concentrate on the facts.

- **Apologize and empathize.** Make it clear that you understand the inconvenience that's been caused. Show concern and a desire to put things right.
- **Act immediately.** Whatever you can do to rectify the situation, do it right away. If it's not possible to fix things immediately, provide a timeframe of what will be done. Get agreement on whatever you propose.
- **Compensate.** Even a small token may be enough to satisfy an unhappy customer. It shows you value the relationship and want it to continue.
- **Say thank you.** Surveys suggest that, for every customer who complains, there are 26 "silent sufferers". You should be grateful for the feedback, as it can highlight weaknesses and gives you the chance to rescue the situation.

If you complain or respond to a complaint quickly and in the right way, it could even strengthen a business relationship.

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complaint ➤ Beschwerde
counterproductive
 ➤ kontraproduktiv

worked up
 ➤ aufgebracht, verärgert
hamper sth.
 ➤ etw. behindern

tackle sth. ► etw. angehen

dispassionately

► hier: objektiv

adage ► Spruch

promptly ► umgehend

straightforward ► direkt

evaluative ► wertend

conclusion: draw a ~

► eine Schlussfolgerung ziehen

compensation

► Entschädigung

apology ► Entschuldigung

previous ► früher

overall ► gesamt

in person ► persönlich

guideline

► Vorgabe, Richtlinie

empathize ► sich einfühlen

inconvenience

► Unannehmlichkeit(en)

rectify sth.

► etw. verbessern, berichtigen

timeframe

► zeitlicher Rahmen

token ► hier: Geste

survey ► Untersuchung

suggest sth.

► etw. vorschlagen;

hier: nahelegen

[13] Exercise: Essential phrases for dealing with complaints E

Sion: In this exercise, you'll practise some phrases that are useful for dealing with complaints. I'll tell you what to say and give you some of the words that you'll need. Remember: you will need to add some words, such as articles or prepositions, where necessary. In the pause, form the phrase. Afterwards, you'll hear the correct version. Don't worry if your phrase is slightly different from ours. Then repeat the correct version. Ready? Here's the first one.

1. You accept personal responsibility.

- Use "I'll see to it", "that", "this", "dealt with" and "immediately".

► I'll see to it that this is dealt with immediately.

2. You accept the complaint.

- Use "there's", "clearly", "been" and "mistake".

► There's clearly been a mistake.

3. You **apologize** and **empathize**.

- Use "I'm", "so sorry", "for", "difficulty", "you" and "faced with".

► I'm so sorry for the difficulty you were faced with.

4. You act immediately.

- Use "I'll get", "our", "technician", "round", "you" and "by 12".

► I'll get our technician round to you by 12.

5. You **compensate**.

- Use "we", "can offer", "you", "discount", "five per cent" and "as compensation".

► We can offer you a discount of five per cent as compensation.

6. You say thank you.

- Use "thank you", "getting", "back" and "us".

► Thank you for getting back to us.

Sion: Excellent. Well done!

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 34–36

apologize

► sich entschuldigen

empathize ► sich einfühlen

compensate

► entschädigen

BUSINESS JARGON

[14] Text and exercise: Words in action E

Sion: Listen to Business Spotlight audio editor Melita Cameron-Wood's anecdote about an email she recently received. It contains some phrases that you might not have heard be-

fore. She'll explain them, and then you'll get a chance to practise using them yourself. Ready?

Melita Cameron-Wood: I recently received this email: "Thanks for your message. I just wanted to let you know that the upcoming deadline is on my radar. Please keep me in the loop regarding any important updates before the delivery date. Let's touch base on Thursday to check on the progress of this project before we submit on Friday."

Now, this email had a few phrases in it that could be referred to as business jargon. Let's break them down. The phrase "something is on my radar" means that the speaker is aware of something. In the context of the email I received, my colleague was telling me that he knew about the upcoming deadline. This phrase is another way of making it clear that you have not forgotten something. The second phrase is "keep me in the loop". If someone asks you to keep them in the loop, they want you to send them updates, so that they are aware of any progress that has been made. And finally, we have the phrase "touch base", which means "contact someone" or "get in touch". In the email my colleague sent me, he makes it clear that he wants to talk to me before we submit the work.

Sion: Now, choose the correct expression to complete the response in each of these sce-

narios. The options are: "be on my radar", "keep someone in the loop" and "touch base". Remember that you might need to make some changes to the expressions to make the responses grammatically correct. Ready? Let's start.

1. Have you heard from the client yet?
No, but he's going to [beep] with me by the end of the day.
➤ The correct answer is: "No, but he's going to touch base with me by the end of the day."
2. I just wanted to remind you that the staff party is this Friday.
Don't worry, it [beep].
➤ The correct answer is: "Don't worry, it's on my radar."
3. I'm going to visit our client today.
Great, [beep]. I'd love to know what he thinks of the plan.
➤ The correct answer is: "Great, keep me in the loop. I'd love to know what he thinks of the plan."

Sion: Well done. Did you get all those right? If not, go back and try the exercise again.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, p. 37

editor

• Redakteur(in)

upcoming • bevorstehend

deadline • Frist

loop: keep sb. in the ~

• jmdm. auf dem Laufenden halten

touch base (with sb.) • sich mit jmdm. in Verbindung setzen

check on sth.

• auf etw. überprüfen

submit (sth.)

• (etw.) abgeben, abliefern

break sth. down

• etw. zerlegen

CAREER COACH

[15] Teamwork

Sion: When things are going well, it's easy for teams to get on, but how good is your team at solving problems together? Can you remember the last time you had to work closely with your teammates to turn a bad situation into a good one? Listen to this article by *Business Spotlight* career coach Frank Peters for some practical advice on how to develop your problem-solving skills as a team.

[16] Solving problems as a team

Is your team able to solve problems efficiently and effectively? When I ask this question, I often get a knee-jerk reaction: “Yes, of course! We always help each other.” This is great on an individual, interpersonal level, but how does it work for the team as a whole? When I mention situations in which the entire team works together, the response is often: “No, we don't have time for that.”

Most of the teams I meet have lots of untapped potential for joint problem-solving. I'm not blaming them. It's understandable if there's little time for the entire team to devote themselves to one problem. But it's also true that teams might not see the benefit in doing this just because they've never tried it.

All together now

There are methods to get the entire team working on a problem. One, called Reflecting Teams, was originally developed for family therapy. In this case, there's not just a therapist and a family, but also a team of experts observing the session from behind a one-way mirror. This provides a wider variety of perspectives.

Of course, in a business setting, people might not feel comfortable with the comparison to therapy, but the method can be easily adapted. Let's assume a team member has an issue they feel they need some help with. It might even be a conflict they have with someone outside the team.

Let's call this person the “coachee”. You need someone to be the coach or moderator, who guides the coachee through the problem and towards the solution. This could be someone from the team or another trusted person. Then, you also need the eponymous “reflecting team”, which typically consists of three people, but can be more — as long as there's enough time for everyone to express their thoughts.

How does it work?

The coach and coachee sit at a slight angle, so they can see each other but the reflecting team can see their faces. The team sits in a semicircle a few metres away. You don't need a mirror but you should ensure there's no interaction (not

even eye contact) between the coach and coachee, on the one hand, and the reflecting team, on the other. This is important as neither the coach nor the coachee should hesitate to speak or hold back in any way because of a verbal or non-verbal reaction of the reflecting team.

The coach explains the rules, then the conversation begins. The coachee describes their problem and what they expect from this session (a specific solution or a few good ideas, for example). The coach provides support by listening, asking questions and formulating hypotheses. The reflecting team, meanwhile, listens and remains silent.

After some time, the coach can pause the conversation and involve the reflecting team. Good questions to ask are:

- What did you observe?
- Which patterns did you recognize?
- Which points of view did you hear (or not hear)?
- Are there any potential solutions you want to share?

Now, the reflecting team should openly discuss their perspectives, thoughts and feelings about the conversation they've just heard. It's important that this discussion happens in an appreciative manner. The coach and coachee listen closely, without intervening. This might feel strange, not joining in the discussion, but it will be worth it.

After the reflecting team have shared their views, the coach and coachee continue their conversation. Now, they can (explicitly or implicitly) address what the reflecting team discussed. From this point, it's an open process: everyone can interact with each other freely.

It's good to set time limits for this exercise to help everyone stay focused on the topic. When time is up, allow the coach and coachee to have the final word. Of course, there should be a follow-up round with all participants to discuss what they experienced and learned. Believe me, everyone will benefit!

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 38-40

knee-jerk reaction

➤ hier: automatische/spontane Antwort

untapped ➤ nicht genutzt

joint ➤ gemeinsam

devote oneself to sth.

➤ sich etw. widmen

one-way mirror

➤ Einwegspiegel

setting ➤ Umfeld

assume sth.

➤ etw. annehmen

issue ➤ Problem

eponymous

➤ gleichnamig;

hier: namensgebend

angle: sit at an ~

➤ sich schräg gegenüber sitzen (angle ➤ Winkel)

semicircle

➤ Halbkreis

hesitate ➤ zögern

hold back

➤ hier: sich zurückhalten

pattern

➤ Muster

appreciative

➤ wertschätzend

explicitly ➤ direkt

implicitly

➤ indirekt

topic ➤ Thema

follow-up round

➤ hier: Abschlussrunde

[17] Exercise: Essential phrases for solving problems as a team **M**

Sion: Often, problem-solving is about asking other team members for help. This is an exercise on phrases that are useful for solving problems as a team. First, you'll hear two words and then a sentence with a beep. In the pause, decide which word you need instead of the beep. Then you'll hear the correct sentence again.

1. "assist" OR "assistance"
Could I ask you to [beep] me with resolving this issue, please?
- **assist.** Could I ask you to assist me with resolving this issue, please?
2. "manner" OR "matter"
May I ask you for your assistance with this [beep]?
- **matter.** May I ask you for your assistance with this matter?
3. "appreciate" OR "approve"
I would [beep] your support in finding a solution to this problem.
- **appreciate.** I would appreciate your support in finding a solution to this problem.
4. "help" OR "helping"
Would you mind [beep] me out with this?
- **helping.** Would you mind helping me out with this?
5. "stumbling" OR "struggling"
Could you give me a hand with a problem I've been [beep] with?

➤ **struggling.** Could you give me a hand with a problem I've been struggling with?

6. "could" OR "would"

I [beep] use a little help here. Do you mind?

➤ **could.** I could use a little help here. Do you mind?

Sion: Well done. Did you get all the phrases right? If not, go back and try this exercise again.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 38–40

issue ▶ Problem

ENGLISH FOR...

[18] Vocabulary exercise: The business of hiking **M**

Sion: Hiking is a big business. Just think of all the equipment that you need before going on a hike, the structures that exist to increase accessibility and the businesses that rely on hikers. Test your understanding of the following hiking-related words by completing the definitions with option **a)** or **b)**.

1. "Hiking boots" are...

a) sturdy shoes that can be used to walk on challenging terrain.

b) boats used to transport hikers across rivers and streams.

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. "Hiking boots" are sturdy shoes that can be used on challenging terrain. "Sturdy" is another word for "strong" or "hard to break".

2. “Mountain guides” are...
- a) professionals who are familiar with certain areas and hiking routes.
- b) mobile applications that can be downloaded to help you find a good route.
- The correct answer is a). “Mountain guides” are professionals who are familiar with certain areas and hiking routes.
3. “Cable cars” are...
- a) four-by-four vehicles that can be driven on rugged terrain.
- b) capsules suspended on a cable that carry passengers up mountains.
- The correct answer is b). “Cable cars” are capsules suspended on a cable that carry passengers up mountains.
4. “Mountain huts” are...
- a) hats designed to keep out the cold in the mountains.
- b) accommodation for hikers in the mountains.
- The correct answer is b). “Mountain huts” are accommodation for hikers in the mountains.
5. “Hiking poles” are...
- a) used to maintain balance while hiking.
- b) used to show hikers which direction to walk.
- The correct answer is a). Hiking poles are used to maintain balance while hiking.
- Sion:** Did you get all those right? If not, go back and try the exercise again.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 42–43

hiking ▶ Wandern

hike ▶ Wanderung

accessibility

▶ Zugänglichkeit

rely on sb.

▶ auf jmdn. angewiesen sein

hiker ▶ Wanderer/Wanderin

sturdy ▶ robust

terrain

▶ Gelände

rugged ▶ zerklüftet

capsule ▶ Kapsel

suspended: be ~ on sth.

▶ an etw. aufgehängt sein

accommodation

▶ Unterkunft

[19] Exercise: False friends related to hiking

Sion: This exercise will focus on a false friend related to the topic of hiking. False friends are pairs of words that sound similar in two different languages, but their meanings are different, so they can cause confusion and misunderstanding. The German word *Vorsicht* is “care” or “caution” in English. It is not “foresight”, which translates to *Weitblick* or *Voraussicht*.

First, you’ll hear a sentence with a beep. In the pause, decide whether you need “caution” or “foresight”. You’ll hear the correct answer after the “ping” sound. Ready?

- The hikers who got caught in the torrential rain without the appropriate clothing lacked [beep].
- The hikers who got caught in the torrential rain without the appropriate clothing lacked foresight. “Torrential rain” is very heavy rain. “Foresight” is the ability to imagine a possible future event.

2. It is best to proceed with [beep] on uneven terrain.

➤ It is best to proceed with caution on uneven terrain. “Uneven terrain” is ground that is on different levels, which increases the risk of accidents. “Caution” means “care” or “close attention”, and usually comes up in the context of minimizing risk.

3. There are two beeps in the next sentence.

In the mountains, [beep] and [beep] are needed if the weather forecast predicts strong winds.

➤ In this sentence, both “caution” and “foresight” are used. In the mountains, caution and foresight are needed if the weather forecast predicts strong winds. Or: In the mountains, foresight and caution are needed if the weather forecast predicts strong winds.

Sion: Did you choose the right words to complete the sentences? If not, go back and try this exercise again.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 42–43

topic ➤ Thema
hiking ➤ Wandern
hiker ➤ Wanderer/Wanderin
torrential rain ➤ Starkregen
appropriate ➤ geeignet

uneven ➤ uneben
terrain ➤ Gelände
predict sth.
 ➤ etw. vorhersagen

SKILL UP!

[20] Exercise: Essential words and phrases for retirement and pensions E

Sion: In this language exercise, we'll practise some words and phrases that can be used to talk about retirement and pensions. First, you'll hear a definition of a word or phrase. Then, you'll hear two suggestions for the word or phrase that is being defined: **a)** and **b)**. In the pause, choose the correct option. OK? Here's the first one.

1. The abbreviation “OAP” stands for...

a) old-age pensioner.

b) over-average pension.

➤ **a)** is right. In British English, “OAP” is short for “old-age pensioner”.

2. Someone who has stopped working because of their age is a...

a) retiree.

b) retiree.

➤ **b)** is right. “Retiree” refers to a person who has stopped working because they have reached retirement age.

3. Someone who has the right to get paid a pension is...

a) entitled to a pension.

b) justified for a pension.

➤ **a)** is right. If someone is “entitled to a pension”, they have the right to receive a pension.

4. If someone, in addition to their regular con-
tributions, pays an extra amount into their
pension account, they...

a) top up their pension.

b) update their pension.

➤ a) is right. “Top up a pension” means that someone decides to contribute more money to increase the pension they’ll receive when they retire.

5. The pension that is paid to people who are unable to work because of health problems is called...

a) a disability pension.

b) an invalid pension.

➤ a) is right. A “disability pension” is paid to people who are permanently or temporarily unable to work because of a disability.

6. An amount of money that is paid as a single sum at one time is a...

a) lump sum.

b) retirement bonus.

➤ a) is right. “Lump sum” refers to an amount of money that is paid as a single sum at one time.

Sion: Well done. Did you get all those words right? If not, go back and try the exercise again.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 44–47

contribution ➤ Beitrag

[21] Text and exercise: Collocations **M**

Sion: This exercise is on collocations with the word “pension”. Collocations are words that frequently go together to form word partnerships. Listen carefully to the following short text about how to find out the amount of money you will receive when you get your pension. We’ll then do an exercise on it.

Can you afford to retire?

Find out the current value of your monthly or annual pension with our free pension calculator.

In a few easy steps, you’ll see if your workplace and state pension will meet your retirement goals. Our online calculator will tell you your estimated pension and help you predict what you’ll get when you retire.

Many people decide to take out a personal pension to top up their predicted pension. Our pension advisers can help you choose the best private pension for your needs and income and to plan for a worry-free future.

Sion: In this exercise, you’ll hear the beginning of a sentence describing a situation. In the pause, complete the sentence using the matching collocation with “pension” from the text that you have just heard. Then, you’ll hear the correct answer. OK, here’s the first sentence.

- The amount of money that is regularly paid to a retired person by the government is a [beep].
 - **state pension.** The amount of money that is regularly paid to a retired person by the government is a state pension.
- The amount of money that an employee regularly receives from their company upon retirement is a [beep].
 - **company pension** or **workplace pension.** The amount of money that an employee regularly receives from their company upon retirement is a company pension or workplace pension.
- A pension that someone organizes for themselves with an insurance company and receives in addition to a state pension is a [beep].
 - **personal pension** or **private pension.** A pension that someone organizes for themselves with an insurance company and receives in addition to a state pension is a personal pension or private pension.
- The amount of money that a person will probably receive upon retirement is their [beep].
 - **estimated pension** or **predicted pension.** The amount of money that a person will probably receive upon retirement is their estimated pension or predicted pension.
- The total sum of money that a retired person receives from the government and/or a private company is their [beep].

- **annual pension.** The total sum of money that a retired person receives from the government and/or a private company is their annual pension.
- The amount of money that the government and/or a private company regularly pays to a retired person is their [beep].
 - **monthly pension.** The amount of money that the government and/or a private company regularly pays to a retired person is their monthly pension.

Sion: Well done. If you didn't get all those collocations right, listen to the text again and try the exercise once more.

Business Spotlight 8/2024, pp. 44–47

free pension calculator

► kostenloser Rentenrechner

meet sth.

► etw. entsprechen

predict sth.

► etw. vorhersagen

take sth. out

► hier: etw. abschließen

top sth. up (UK)

► hier: etw. aufbessern

income

► Einkommen

[22] Dialogue and exercise: retirement

Sion: Listen to the following dialogue between Irene and Andy at their colleague George's workplace retirement party. Listen carefully because we'll check your understanding of some of the words and phrases used afterwards.

Andy: I'm going to miss George. I do hope he'll get a decent pension.

Irene: He should do. He deserves to have a comfortable retirement after nearly 40 years at the company.

Andy: Really? He's been here since the 80s?

Irene: Yes, and when he started, he negotiated a pretty substantial golden handshake upon retirement. He's going to use it to travel around Europe.

Andy: Good for him. What about you? How do you plan to spend your retirement?

Irene: I've only been back at work full-time since my divorce four years ago and I haven't paid enough contributions into the company pension pot. The state pension won't give me enough to live on so, unfortunately, I'll have to carry on working for a while yet.

Andy: Aren't you entitled to some of your ex-husband's pension? After all, you were married for 20 years.

Irene: In theory, yes. But my ex had his own business and didn't put any money aside for his retirement. Not that I know of anyway. And what about you?

Andy: Funnily enough, I've just requested a detailed pension forecast. I tried out an online pension calculator, and the results said that I should set up a private pension plan as who knows what the financial situation will be by the time I retire.

Irene: Do that. You don't want to end up like me. I'll probably still be here when I'm 80, or

until I fall over at my desk. Maybe I should have married George...

Sion: Now, decide whether the following statements based on the dialogue are true or false.

- George made an agreement that means he will receive a large payment upon retirement.
 - ▶ This statement is true. George "negotiated a pretty substantial golden handshake upon retirement".
- Andy doesn't trust digital services that help you to work out what your pension will be.
 - ▶ This statement is false. Andy used an online pension calculator to help him work out what his pension will be.
- Irene's ex-husband saved up money for retirement, but he doesn't want to give anything to Irene.
 - ▶ This statement is false. Irene's ex-husband had his own business and "didn't put any money aside for his retirement".
- Irene thinks she'll have to work until she is elderly as she won't have sufficient funds for day-to-day life otherwise.
 - ▶ This statement is true. Irene thinks she will still be working at the company when she is 80 because the state pension won't give her "enough to live on".

Sion: Great, well done. Did you get all those right? If not, why not try the exercise again?

decent

▶ anständig, angemessen

negotiate sth.

▶ etw. verhandeln, aushandeln

substantial

▶ erheblich, beträchtlich

upon sth. ▶ bei etw.;

hier: bei Eintritt in etw.

full-time ▶ Vollzeit

divorce ▶ Scheidung

after all ▶ schließlich

elderly ▶ älter, alt

CONCLUSION**[23] Until next time... ㊦**

Sion: Thanks so much for joining us and taking the time to practise your business English. We hope you enjoyed our selection of articles, interviews, dialogues and exercises. Keep up the good work!

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