

Organisation

OVERVIEW ▼

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“How many people work in your office? About half.”

Anonymous

Starting up

A Discuss these questions.

- 1 Would you like to work in the building in the photo above? Explain why or why not.
- 2 Which people in your organisation have their own office? Do they have their own office because of a) seniority; b) a need for confidentiality; c) the type of work they do?

B How important are the following in showing a person's status in an organisation? Give each one a score from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • a reserved parking space | • having a secretary |
| • an office with a window | • taking holidays when you like |
| • a uniform | • the size of your desk |
| • a personal business card | • more than one seat in your office |
| • your own office | • flying business class |
| • a company car | • a company credit card |
| • your name on your door | • having fixed working hours |

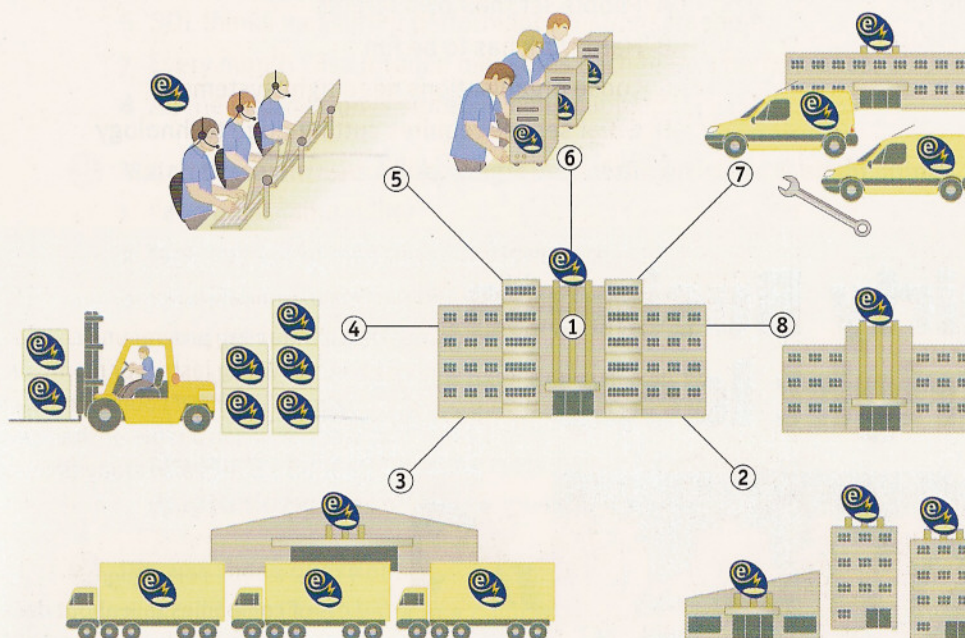
Vocabulary

Company structure

A Match the words and phrases below to the correct place on the diagram.

subsidiary 8
factory / plant
call centre
service centre

head office
distribution centre
warehouse
branches / outlets



B 3.1 Listen to the comments from different places in the organisation and write them down. Then match them to the places shown in Exercise A.

1 Stock levels have been low for two weeks now. – warehouse

C Think about the organisation you work for, or one you know well. How is it organised?

D Discuss these questions.

- 1 Which of the words below can describe:
a) good qualities of an organisation?
b) bad qualities of an organisation?

bureaucratic	caring	centralised	conservative
decentralised	democratic	dynamic	hierarchical
impersonal	market-driven	professional	progressive

2 Can you add any others?

3 Which of the words describe your own organisation or an organisation you know well?

➡ Vocabulary file page 172

Reading

A successful organisation

A Read paragraph 1 of the article and answer these questions.

- 1 Where is SOL located?
- 2 What is unusual about the company?
- 3 What does SOL do?

B Read the article and match the headings below to paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

- A People set their own targets
- B Hard work has to be fun
- C Loose organisations need tight systems
- D Great service requires cutting-edge technology
- E There are no low-skill jobs

Dirty Business, Bright Ideas



By Gina Imperato

1 A headquarters with a difference

Walk into SOL City, headquarters of one of northern Europe's most admired companies, and it feels like you've entered a business playground. Located in a renovated film studio in the heart of Helsinki, the office explodes with colour, creativity and chaos. The walls are bright red, white and yellow; the employees wander the halls talking on yellow portable phones. Liisa Joronen developed SOL Cleaning Service 11 years ago, out of a 150-year-old industrial empire owned by her family. SOL's competitive formula has five key ingredients.

2

Few people dream about becoming a cleaner. But that doesn't mean cleaners can't find satisfaction in their work. The keys to satisfaction, Joronen believes, are fun and individual freedom. Its cleaners wear red-and yellow jumpsuits that reinforce the company's upbeat image. SOL's logo, a yellow happy face, is on everything from her blazer to the company's budget reports. Freedom means abolishing all the rules and regulations of conventional corporate life. There are no titles or secretaries at SOL, no individual offices or set hours of work. The company has eliminated all perks and status symbols.

3

SOL's training programme consists of seven modules, each of which lasts four months and ends with a rigorous exam. Of course, there are a limited number of ways to polish a table or shampoo a carpet. That's why SOL employees also study time management, budgeting and people skills.

4

Lots of companies talk about decentralising responsibility and authority. At SOL it's a way of life. The real power players of the company are its 135 supervisors, each of whom leads a team of up to 50 cleaners. These supervisors work with their teams to create their own budgets, do their own hiring and negotiate their own deals with customers.

5

Liisa Joronen believes in autonomy, but she's also keen on accountability. SOL is fanatical about measuring performance. It does so frequently and visibly, and focuses on customer satisfaction. Every time SOL lands a contract, for example, the salesperson works at the new customer's site alongside the team that will do the cleaning in the future. Together they establish performance benchmarks. Then, every month, the customer rates the team's performance based on those benchmarks. 'The more we free our people from rules,' Joronen says, 'the more we need good measurements.'

6

Laptops and cell-phones are standard equipment for all supervisors at SOL, freeing them to work where they want, how they want. Inside the offices there's almost no room for paper. So the company stores all critical budget documents and performance reports on its Intranet, along with training schedules, upcoming events and company news.

From *Fast Company*

C Which of these statements are true? Correct the false ones.

- 1 Everyone has their own office.
- 2 Liisa Joronen believes cleaners can feel good about their job.
- 3 At the end of the training course there is an exam.
- 4 The training course takes 28 months to complete.
- 5 At SOL giving responsibility to employees is important.
- 6 SOL thinks measuring performance restricts freedom.
- 7 Every month Liisa Joronen measures each team's performance.
- 8 All the information is stored in filing cabinets.

D Match these phrases from paragraph 5 of the article to their meanings.

- 1 keen on accountability
- 2 fanatical about measuring performance
- 3 establish performance benchmarks
- 4 rates the team's performance
- a) assesses how the group have done
- b) extremely interested in judging achievements
- c) interested in people being responsible for what they do
- d) set up standards of achievements

E Discuss these questions.

- 1 Would you like to work in a company like SOL? Explain why or why not.
- 2 Would Liisa Joronen's ideas work in your own company or organisation?

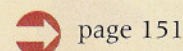
Language review**Noun combinations**

We can combine two or more nouns in several ways.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 's possessive
<i>Julia's desk</i> | 3 phrases with of
<i>Director of Communications</i> |
| 2 one noun used as an adjective
<i>head office</i> | 4 compound nouns forming one word
<i>boardroom</i> |

Match these examples from the article on page 24 with the categories above.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a) <i>customer satisfaction</i> | c) <i>SOL's logo</i> |
| b) <i>way of life</i> | d) <i>salesperson</i> |



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A Find noun combinations in the article on page 24. Write them under these four headings:

's possessive	one noun used as an adjective	phrases with of	compound nouns forming one word

B Underline the most suitable noun combination in each group.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 a) the meeting of today | 3 a) a business card |
| b) today's meeting | b) a card of business |
| c) today meeting | c) a businesses' card |
| 2 a) a letter of credit | 4 a) a data's base |
| b) a credit's letter | b) a base of data |
| c) a letter's credit | c) a database |

C Nouns used as numerical adjectives are singular. For example, *a plan which lasts for 10 years = a ten-year plan*. Change the following phrases in the same way.

- 1 a hotel with five stars
- 2 a budget worth 3 million dollars
- 3 a presentation that lasts 20 minutes
- 4 a contract worth 200,000 pounds
- 5 an industrial empire which is 150 years old

D Match each noun in column 1 to two of the nouns in column 2 to make word partnerships.

1 business	a) virus	b) cards	c) plan
2 management	a) style	b) technology	c) policy
3 sales	a) campaign	b) department	c) trade
4 labour	a) force	b) technology	c) market
5 company	a) house	b) headquarters	c) logo
6 trade	a) union	b) technology	c) fair
7 consumer	a) goods	b) logos	c) awareness
8 research	a) project	b) findings	c) knowledge
9 information	a) technology	b) force	c) desk
10 computer	a) union	b) program	c) virus

E Make sentences with the noun combinations in Exercise D. For example:

*It is common practice to exchange **business cards** when meeting new clients.*

Listening Advising companies



▲ Richard Brown

A 3.2 Richard Brown is the managing partner of Cognosis, a management consultancy in London which advises companies on organisation and change. Listen to the first part of the interview and answer these questions.

- 1 What four approaches does Cognosis use to analyse a business?
- 2 How many different business 'character types' does Cognosis recognise?
- 3 What three things do companies deal with differently, according to Richard?

B 3.3 Listen to the second part of the interview. Tick the sentences below which are true, according to Richard, and correct those which are false.

- 1 The hardest way to change the character of a business is to merge it with another company.
- 2 When Guinness and Grand Metropolitan merged, they wanted to create a business culture which was different from the two companies.
- 3 The senior managers spent a lot of money training staff in the new business methods.
- 4 The new culture was only partly successful.

C 3.4 In the third part of the interview, Richard Brown describes three ways in which successful companies are similar. Complete the description below.

First, they're¹: they have a very clear sense of
². Second, they're³: they invest much time and energy in understanding and⁴. And third, they are⁵. By that I mean that people inside the organisation are very clear about the values that should⁶ and behaviours.

Skills

Socialising:
introductions and
networking

- A** 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 Listen to the three conversations. Choose the correct description from the list for each one.

Greeting someone and talking about the past

Introducing another person

Introducing yourself and giving information about your company

- B** 3.5 Listen to the first conversation again and answer these questions.

1 Which of these expressions do you hear in the dialogue?

a) Nice to see you again.

d) How about you?

b) Fine, thanks.

e) I changed my job last year.

c) Wonderful!

f) I'm in banking now.

2 Who is head of data processing?

3 Who now works in marketing?

- C** 3.6 Listen to the second conversation again and complete the chart below.

Name	Company	Activity
Don Larsen		
Erika Koenig		

- D** 3.6 Listen again and complete this extract from the second conversation.

Don Well, we're basically an¹ business. We supply large companies with various services including payroll,² and human resources.

Erika Is Atsource Solutions a new company?

Don No, we're well established. The company was³ in 1978. It's organised into three⁴. We have over 6,000⁵; we've got our⁶ in Frankfurt and⁷ in over 20 countries – we're pretty big.

- E** 3.7 Listen to the third conversation again and answer these questions.

1 What expression does John use to introduce Miriam?

2 Why could Miriam be helpful to Heinz in his work?

3 What interest do they share?

Vocabulary file page 172

Useful language

Greetings

Hello Nice to see you again.

Hi How are you?

How's everything going?

Introducing yourself

I'm from ... / I'm with ... / I work for ...

I'm in sales / finance / marketing.

I'm in charge of ...

I'm responsible for ...

Introducing someone else

I'd like you to meet Miriam.

Can I introduce you to Miriam?

Robert, have you met Vladimir?

Talking about your company

The company was founded in ...

We make / manufacture / sell / distribute ...

We have subsidiaries / factories / branches in ...

We have a workforce of 2,000.

Our main competitors are ...

Responding

Fine, thanks.

Not too bad, thanks.

Nice / Pleased to meet you.

It's a pleasure.

Talking about common interests

You and Heinz have something in common.

You both like / enjoy / are interested in ...

Networking

We're very interested in ...

Do you know anyone who could help us?

Could you let me have their contact details?

Could I call him and mention your name?

Let me give you my business card.



Background

'We constantly review our business in order to provide customers with excellent service at competitive prices. As part of our major reorganisation, we've been looking at the cost of customer services. We have a range of options. We can make changes in-house, outsource call centres to areas within the UK or outsource off-shore to low-cost countries such as India.'

Graham Hammond, Chief Executive, Auric Bank.

The Chief Executive made the statement above to a group of investors three weeks ago. Auric Bank (AB) lost £1.5 billion last year because it invested in unprofitable areas of business. Since then AB has carried out a major review of its operations. It has concluded that:

- 1 customers believe AB is charging too much for its services;
- 2 AB no longer has the image of a 'caring' bank which is close to its customers and understands their needs;
- 3 the bank needs to reduce costs to boost its profits and share price.

To cut costs and increase efficiency, AB is now considering a number of options concerning the location of its call centres.

The call centres

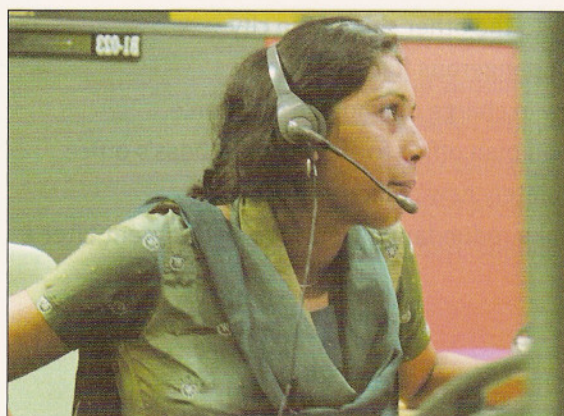
AB has approximately 2,500 employees working in three large call centres located in cities in the South of England. The company's headquarters are in London. There are four options that the directors of the bank are considering.



Task

Work in groups of four. You are directors of AB.

- 1 Choose a role card (pages from 140, 141, 147, 149). Read your role card and prepare for a meeting to consider the four options.
- 2 Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- 3 Try to persuade the other directors that your option is the right one for AB.



Option 1: Keep the call centres in-house

Keep the call centres in their present locations but try to reduce costs by:

- using more part-time employees
- reducing the hours of business of the centres
- increasing the targets for the number of calls handled per hour

Estimated cost of running the centres for the next five years: £16 million. Estimated savings by introducing changes above: £3 million.

Option 2: Outsource the call centres to a company based in South Africa

Use Resource Plc, a Cape Town firm. They can set up the call centres in Cape Town and run them.

- the firm has an excellent reputation for reliability and good service
- it has a lot of experience in running centres

Cost of the contract with Resource Plc to run the call centres for the next five years: £8 million.

Option 3: Outsource the call centres to a company based in Scotland

Use Orion Plc, a Scottish firm

- the firm is new; its managers are young
- it has several contracts with big companies
- it is experienced in running call centres
- some customers have complained in newspapers that the lines are always busy

Cost of the contract with Orion Plc to run the call centres for the next five years: £10 million.

Option 4: Outsource the call centres to a company based in India

Use X-source India, a company based in Bangalore.

- X-source India is expanding fast
- it has contracts with several large US companies
- it has no problems hiring staff and its costs are low

Cost of the contract with X-source India to run the call centres for the next five years: £5.5 million.

Writing

Write a short report to the Chief Executive giving both a summary of the four options and your recommendations.



Writing file page 136