ENGLISH FOR YOUR WORK AND LIFE

🎧 **AUDIO**

Business
Spotlight

Business Skills

Writing
bad news
in an email

INTRODUCTION
[1] Let's get started! E

James Phoon: Hi, everyone. It's great to have you with us.

Sion Dayson: This issue, we explore a wide variety of topics, from universal basic income to telling someone bad news via email.

James: We also hear from Harry Grocott, the CEO of Treeconomy, a nature-based carbon-removal start-up. And Lauren Psyk, a Brighton-based photographer and copywriter, tells us about her first day at her first-ever job.

Sion: There's lots more, too, so we'd better get started. Ready?

James: Let's go!

NAMES AND NEWS
[2] Are we ready for meat from a lab? Ē

James: The meat industry has a big <u>impact</u> on the environment. People have been looking for more environmentally friendly solutions for some time now. Although it isn't the norm yet, one day soon, your chicken nuggets and steaks might come from a laboratory.

<p align="center">***</p>

With the high environmental cost of farm animals, food scientists have been looking for other ways to give us protein. Some say plant-based alternatives are the future, but others have been growing meat in laboratories. <u>Lab</u>-grown meat, or "cultivated protein", uses real animal cells but, rather than being part of a living animal, the cells are grown in a bioreactor. In Singapore in 2020, chicken nuggets made by the US start-up Eat <u>Just</u> became the first lab-grown meat to be sold commercially.

However, despite big investments, cultivated-protein start-ups are struggling. Eat Just's <u>CEO</u>, Josh Tetrick, told the *Financial Times*: "If your interest is maximizing profitability in the early years, you should never start a cultivated-meat company." The problems include unclear regulation in many countries, technology challenges and high production costs. And then, there's the question of what consumers think. Awareness of the product is still low, but Tetrick is optimistic, saying he wants to make lab-grown meat "the boring, everyday meat we all consume".

CEO (chief executive officer)
► Geschäftsführer(in)
impact
► Auswirkung(en)

just
► *hier*: gerecht
lab(oratory)
► Labor

[3] The bank that speaks Spanish M

Sion: Does your bank speak your language? Communication with your bank can be difficult at the best of times, but it is even harder in a foreign language. Seis, a bank designed for Spanish speakers in the US, is putting its customers first and making banking easier and less intimidating.

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When managing personal finances, it's helpful to be able to speak freely with the bank. However, for many of the 44 million Spanish speakers in the United States, opening a bank account can be a confusing and intimidating experience. That is why a new bank, called Seis, has been created specifically for them. Seis has employees from the US but also from Mexico, Colombia and many other Latin American countries, and all interactions with customers are in Spanish.

The bank's founder, Trevor McKendrick, told CNN, since the US has so many Spanish speakers, "they deserve their own banking and that's why we started Seis. We're able to build something really specific to them, whereas a big bank operates on kind of a one-size-fits-all mentality and ends up not really prioritizing our customers."

It's not just about the language barrier, either. At Seis, immigrants can open a checking account with only a passport — no social security number or minimum balance, which are normally required. McKendrick wants to help his customers understand American finance. "They're on their own American dream," he says. "And so, we view ourselves as helping them along that path."

balance ➤ *hier*: Bankguthaben
checking account US ➤ Girokonto
design sth. ➤ etw. konzipieren
founder ➤ Gründer(in)
intimidating ➤ einschüchternd
kind of *ifml.* ➤ eine Art
one-size-fits-all ➤ *hier*: Gleichbehandlung
prioritize sb. ➤ jmdm. Priorität einräumen

[4] Excellent at education M

James: The <u>founder</u> of Guild Education, Rachel Romer Carlson, has found a way of combining education and <u>equity</u>. Let's find out more about what she has <u>achieved</u> so far.

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Rachel Romer Carlson has a lot of experience of education, both as a learner and a provider. The 34-year-old has an <u>MBA</u> from the Stanford University <u>Graduate School</u> of Business as well as a master's <u>degree</u> in education and a bachelor's degree in political science. She's also the <u>CEO</u> of Guild Education. The company helps employers <u>design</u> and implement education-as-a-benefit programmes, which give employees the chance to get a university degree while helping companies keep qualified workers.

What's unusual about Guild Education is who owns it — all 1,000 employees own <u>shares</u>. Carlson's ownership, which was 95 per cent when she started the company in 2015, is now about 15 per cent — after several <u>funding</u> rounds and giving away shares to her employees.

"I had a less-than-ideal early experience as an employee where no one explained to me really what equity was or how to exercise it," she told *Forbes* magazine. "I just felt like I could do something different in my own company and teach everyone the value of equity. Now, all employees have a position of $15,000 or greater."

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achieve sth. ➤ etw. erreichen

CEO (chief executive officer) ➤ Geschäftsführer(in)

degree ➤ Abschluss

design sth. ➤ etw. konzipieren

equity ➤ Beteiligungskapital

founder ➤ Gründer(in)

funding ➤ Finanzierung

graduate school ➤ Graduiertenfakultät, Hochschule für Aufbaustudien (nach Erlangen eines BA)

MBA (Master of Business Administration) ➤ höher Abschluss in BWL

share ➤ Anteil, Aktie

INNOVATION
Robotics and seasteading
[5] Prime slime E

Sion: Could the Magnetic Slime Robot change our understanding of what robots really are? It might not be the sort of robot you have seen in sci-fi movies, but this slimy robot could be very useful.

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Not all robots look very high-tech. This ball of slime was developed by scientists at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Thanks to magnetic particles inside, it can be moved and controlled with a magnetic field. And, because it has the consistency of custard, it can squeeze into small, hard-to-reach spaces as narrow as 1.5 millimetres. However, it can also grasp and carry small objects, and repair broken circuits inside machines, for example.

In the future, it's even possible that the Magnetic Slime Robot could be used in human internal medicine — perhaps to catch objects that people have swallowed by accident. "Because this is a gel-like material, it's very soft and there are no sharp edges," Li Zhang, a professor in the mechanical and automation engineering faculty at CUHK, told the website CNET.com. There are already elastic robots that can grasp things, and fluid-based robots that can squeeze into small spaces. This little slime ball combines both qualities in one. *Business Spotlight 9/2022, p. 11*

circuit ► Strom-, Schaltkreis
custard ► Eiercreme
fluid ► Flüssigkeit
grasp sth. ► etw. greifen
mechanical and automation engineering ► Maschinenbau- und Automatisierungstechnik

slime ► Schleim, Glibber
slimy
► schelimig, glibberig
squeeze into sth.
► sich in etw. hineinzwängen
swallow sth.
► etw. schlucken

[6] Creating worlds on water M

James: From power plants to farms, floating constructions are becoming more common. "Seasteading" is the practice of creating permanent floating structures at sea. Let's hear more about this trend.

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A lot of the world is covered by water, and there are many ways to make use of that space. Rotterdam, for example, has a floating dairy farm — a way to bring fresh agricultural produce closer to cities. There are also floating power plants that can be transported to disaster zones to generate power for people in need. Will we one day see entire cities built on water?

This is the aim of "seasteading" — "homesteading" on the sea. Some see this as a way to save the people of low-lying island countries from rising sea levels. "Long before we get to Mars, we're going to see floating nations on the ocean," Joe Quirk, president of the non-profit Seasteading Institute (STI), told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. STI has active projects in places like Brazil, Singapore and the US.

Seasteading is also being promoted as a better alternative to land reclamation, which requires enormous amounts of sand, for example. Neil Davies, of the University of California, Berkley, says of floating cities: "If they were located right, if they were designed right, they could be done and would have a low impact or even possibly some beneficial impact — certainly a beneficial impact economically."

agricultural produce ➤ landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse

beneficial ➤ positiv

dairy farm ➤ Milch erzeugender Betrieb

design sth. ➤ etw. konzipieren

floating ➤ schwimmend

homesteading ➤ hier: Schaffen von Wohnstätten

land reclamation ➤ Landgewinnung

low impact: have a ~ ➤ (nur) geringe Auswirkungen haben

power plant ➤ Kraftwerk

sea level ➤ Meeresspiegel

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Universal basic income
[7] Dialogue: Universal basic income M̲

Sion: Is <u>universal basic income</u> a good idea or a bad idea? Listen to this dialogue between two friends who have different opinions on this <u>topic</u>.

Sandra: [*for*] I am sick of working so hard and barely <u>making ends meet</u>. I wish the UK government would introduce universal basic income. My finances have been making me really <u>anxious</u> recently, and universal basic income would make me feel less stressed.

Nick: [*against*] In theory, it might sound like a good idea, but I am not convinced. I think it would reduce people's <u>incentive</u> to work. Even if they just started working part-time instead of full-time, that could have a serious <u>impact</u> on the economy.

Sandra: Well, the current UK <u>benefits</u> system needs to be improved. At the moment, it sanctions people when they start paid work. That makes people less likely to look for work in the first place. Universal basic income would offer people in need a <u>safety blanket</u> and some <u>peace of mind</u>. It would not be an anti-work measure. If people did do less paid work, then many of them would probably be studying or looking after their children — and <u>let's face it</u>, those are just types of unpaid work.

Nick: I see where you are coming from, but I still disagree with the idea of universal basic income. I don't think it would be good for people's <u>mental</u> health or self-esteem. Receiving money for doing nothing would make people <u>disregard</u> their skills and become lazy. It's also a massive expense for the state, but I don't really see the <u>return on investment</u>. I read that it would cost 10 per cent of the US <u>GDP</u> to introduce universal basic income of $3,000 per adult and $250 per child.

Sandra: I believe that it would make good political sense, though. When people are not struggling and living from hand to mouth, they are more likely to <u>come up with</u> successful business ideas that could change the world for the better. Financial security leads to more innovation.

Nick: I don't think we <u>see eye to eye on</u> this one. I mean where would the money even come from? Imagine if they took it out of the <u>pension fund</u>. That would be terrible. There will always be people in need, but giving them <u>handouts</u> is not the answer.

Sandra: Well, I suppose we'd better agree to disagree. Shall we change the subject?

Nick: Yes, there's no <u>point</u> having an <u>argument</u> about it. It's a <u>contentious</u> subject, after all.

anxious: make sb. ~
➤ jmd. beunruhigen

argument ➤ Streit

benefit
➤ *hier*: (Zusatz-)Leistung

come up with sth.
➤ auf etw. kommen

contentious
➤ strittig, kontrovers

disregard sth.
➤ etw. nicht berücksichtigen

GDP (gross domestic product)
➤ BIP (Bruttoinlandsprodukt)

handout ➤ *hier*: Almosen

impact ➤ Auswirkung(en)

incentive ➤ Anreiz

let's face it *ifml.*
➤ *hier*: seien wir ehrlich

make ends meet
➤ über die Runden kommen

mental ➤ *hier*: psychisch

peace of mind
➤ innerer Frieden

pension fund ➤ Pensions-kasse, Rentenversicherung

point: be no ~
➤ keinen Sinn machen

return on investment
➤ (Kapital-)Rendite

safety blanket
➤ Schutzdecke

see eye to eye on sth.
➤ bei etw. einer Meinung sein

topic ➤ Thema

universal basic income (UBI) ➤ bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen (BGE)

[8] Exercise: Check your understanding M

Sion: Now, it's time to check your understanding of some of the vocabulary and expressions used in the dialogue you have just heard. Listen to the words and phrases in context and then choose the correct meaning.

1. **Sandra:** I am sick of working so hard and barely making ends meet.
- Choose the correct meaning for the expression "to make ends meet".
a) to make just enough money to live on
b) to have enough time outside of work to do what you want to do
- The correct answer is **a)**. If you "make ends meet", then you make just enough money to live on.

2. **Nick:** In theory, it might sound like a good idea, but I am not convinced.
- People use the expression "I am not convinced" when they…
a) have not been persuaded by an argument.
b) are not prepared to do something.
- The correct answer is **a)**. If you are not convinced, then you have not been persuaded by an argument. You remain unsure about the idea.

3. **Nick:** I don't think it would be good for people's mental health or self-esteem.
- The expression "self-esteem" means…
a) personal priorities.
b) feeling of self-worth.

- The correct answer is **b)**. "Self-esteem" is another way of saying "self-worth". If someone has low self-esteem, then they have a low opinion of themselves. But if someone has high self-esteem, then they have a high opinion of themselves.

4. **Nick:** There will always be people in need, but giving them handouts is not the answer.
- In this context, the word "handout" refers to…
a) a piece of printed information, like a worksheet.
b) financial aid given to a person by the state.
- The correct answer is **b)**. In this context, the word "handout" refers to financial aid given to a person by the state. In a classroom context, the word "handout" refers to a piece of printed information, like a worksheet, however.

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

aid ➤ Hilfe

START-UP
Treeconomy
[9] Carbon farming — growth and renewal M

James: Trees aren't just pretty — they can also be a source of income. Treeconomy is a start-up that focuses on connecting landowners and businesses to help companies to offset the carbon they release into the atmosphere. *Business Spotlight* correspondent Melita Cameron-Wood spoke to the CEO of Treeconomy, Harry Grocott, via Zoom. He took the call from The Microsoft Reactor, in London, as the team was participating in a hackathon at the time. Calls don't always have optimal conditions in real life, and the background noise could happen on any call, so listen carefully because we will be testing your understanding in the following track.

Melita: If you had to sum up the company concept in one or two sentences, could you sort of give me a little concise summary of it?
Harry: Yeah. So, we're a carbon removal company, first and foremost, like that's our objective. The intent is to use carbon finance to fund nature restoration. We plant trees, monitor the carbon those trees capture and then sell those carbon credits. We're making nature valuable, basically, if that makes sense.

Melita: Yeah, yeah. OK, yeah, that's a nice little summary there. And what were the challenges when you were first starting up your start-up? I said start too many times, then.
Harry: [*laughs*] That's fine. I mean, like everything's a challenge. I mean every single step is quite difficult, especially when you're trying to do something a little bit different. Like, we're not just an app that either does some marketing or like a classic VC (venture capital) start-up piece, some kind of ethereal, like thin layer on the top. We're trying to do something quite tangible and physical. So there was the climate science piece: like, do we actually know how to calculate carbon? How do we do this with, like, tech stuff. You know, is it drones? Is it satellites? Is there a machine learning? The technical stuff was quite difficult.

Then there's actually building a business model and doing the finances on that kind of thing. So, how do we actually figure out how it monetizes? We started and were quite early, like in terms of the overall market. A lot of our conversations to start with, we'd actually have to explain the whole market piece to begin with and then say what we did within that, which then often made the pitch quite extended and slow. It wasn't like a "Bang! Everyone understands what we're talking about!"

So, there was that kind of knowledge transfer, education piece, I think, as well with it, which

has always been quite hard. And then the whole kind of funding and team-building piece is just a nightmare. Like the first step is just almost impossible. It has taken us kind of 18 months to finally get in a position where we were actually able to build something on top.

Melita: How did you find the actual funding then?
Harry: Erm, so, I mean, obviously, the other difficult bit was that we were doing all of this during lockdown and Covid. So, that was the other piece as well. But the good side of that was there was a fair amount of funding that was coming for that green recovery piece.

The first real funding came from something called the Sustainable Innovation Fund. So, it was a UK government thing, designed to fund green recovery from Covid. So, we applied for three of those, lost the first two, but finally were successful with our third attempt. And that gave us just over £100,000 of funding to go and prove the concept, build a bit of team and test the technology.

Melita: And you connect rural landowners to the global carbon offset market. So, could you explain that in a little bit more depth?
Harry: Sure, yeah, OK. I'll start with, I guess, the carbon market side of that to begin with. So, there's really two carbon markets. You have

the compliance market, which is the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. And then, you've got the voluntary market. And the voluntary market is where we work, and that's things like offsetting.

So, if you fly from London to Valencia, and you emit carbon, you could go and offset that. And companies are now taking action to reduce and then remove their own emissions. So every company is looking to set a net-zero target. And the "net" part of that "net zero" sort of implies that they're not going to get to absolute zero emissions. They will still be emitting a certain amount, but the target is to have that neutralized to zero. So, basically, you have to offset that final part. So, you've got this huge kind of movement on the demand side.

Now, the issue is where do these carbon credits come from and how are they generated? So, you've got this huge imbalance on supply. So, really, for our company, the idea is to go and find the people that own land. So, in the UK, that's private landowners, but we're starting to talk to public entities and also asset managers and investors. And basically, we say you can transition your current land use from, let's say, sheep farming — where you're extracting a commodity — meat or wool, or whatever that may be, which is often emitting CO_2. You can transition that to something that captures carbon, and you're going to get paid for it as well.

So, it's kind of finding this alternative land use, the idea being that you can have land and you can have multiple different income sources from that, which is fairly passive. If you're looking at tree planting, you put them in the ground and make sure they're still standing, but largely, it's quite passive. So, then, you can become a carbon farmer, basically, is the idea. We help landowners kind of create these projects and then connect those projects into these big companies because, at the moment, there's no stock exchange for carbon. It's trying to connect the dots, basically, as part of our role.

Melita: Brilliant. Well, thank you very much.
Harry: No, not at all.

Melita: Take care. Bye.
Harry: Bye-bye.

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apply for sth.
➤ etw. beantragen

asset manager
➤ Vermögensverwalter(in)

brilliant UK *ifml.* ➤ genial

capture sth.
➤ etw. einfangen; *hier*: binden

carbon
➤ Kohlenstoff; *auch*: CO_2

carbon credits
➤ CO_2-Guthaben, -Gutschrift

CEO (chief executive officer)
➤ Geschäftsführer(in)

commodity ➤ Rohstoff

compliance
➤ Einhaltung (von Vorgaben)

concise ➤ kurz, knapp

designed: be ~ to sth.
➤ für etw. vorgesehen sein

dot ➤ Punkt

drone ➤ Drohne

emit sth. ➤ etw. ausstoßen

ethereal ➤ ätherisch

extended
➤ verlängert; *hier*: langwierig

extract sth. ➤ etw. gewinnen

figure sth. out
➤ etw. herausfinden

fund sth. ➤ etw. finanzieren

imply sth.
➤ etw. bedeuten, beinhalten

in terms of ➤ hinsichtlich

monetize ➤ zu Geld werden

monitor sth. ➤ etw. überwachen, kontrollieren

net zero
➤ CO_2-neutral, klimaneutral

nightmare ➤ Albtraum

objective ➤ Ziel(setzung)

offset (sth.)
➤ Ausgleich; etw. ausgleichen

overall ➤ Gesamt-

pitch ➤ Präsentation

public entity
➤ öffentliche Einrichtung

release sth.
➤ etw. freisetzen

restoration
➤ Wiederherstellung

rural
➤ ländlich; *hier*: auf dem Land

stock exchange ➤ Börse

sum sth. up
➤ etw. zusammenfassen

summary
➤ Zusammenfassung

sustainable ➤ nachhaltig

tangible ➤ greifbar, konkret

target ➤ Ziel

tech stuff *ifml.* ➤ technisches Zeug, technische Dinge

VC (venture capital)
➤ Risikokapital

voluntary ➤ freiwillig

13

[10] Exercise: Comprehension M

James: How well did you understand the interview that you have just heard? Listen to the following statements and decide whether they are true or false. You will hear the answers after the beeps.

1. Treeconomy is a start-up that helps companies to grow their own trees.
- This statement is false. Treeconomy puts companies in touch with landowners to allow businesses to offset their carbon emissions and to fund nature restoration. The companies do not grow the trees themselves.
2. One of the challenges was that they had to educate potential investors about what they were trying to achieve, which made the pitch quite long.
- This statement is true. First, they had to explain the carbon market and then what they wanted to achieve within it. The pitch was long as a result.
3. Lockdown and Covid were big disadvantages for the start-up.
- This statement is false. More funding was available to aid green recovery after Covid.
4. Carbon farming is a way for landowners to generate income without having to do very much.
- This statement is true. Once the trees have been planted, this source of income is fairly passive.

James: Well done. If you got any of those answers wrong, then go back and try the exercise again.

achieve sth.
➤ etw. erreichen

aid ➤ Hilfe

carbon ➤ Kohlenstoff;
auch: CO_2

funding ➤ Finanzierung

offset sth.
➤ etw. ausgleichen

pitch ➤
Präsentation

restoration
➤ Wiederherstellung

[11] Exercise: Carbon-emissions vocabulary M̲

Sion: OK, let's do an exercise now on some words that are used when talking about carbon emissions. You'll hear a description of a situation and two suggestions, **a)** and **b)**, for the appropriate word. In the pause, choose the correct option. OK? Here's the first one.

1. Carbon dioxide is the most significant…
a) greenhouse gas.
b) glasshouse gas.
➤ **a)** is right. Carbon dioxide — in short, carbon, or CO_2 — the chemical compound of a carbon atom and two oxygen atoms, is the greenhouse gas with the strongest impact on global warming.

2. If you separate carbon dioxide from power-plant exhaust gases before they enter the atmosphere, you…
a) grip carbon.
b) capture carbon.
➤ **b)** is right. "Capture carbon" refers to the process of separating and storing carbon before it can harm the atmosphere.

3. If a company that produces carbon emissions invests in projects that reduce these emissions by the same amount somewhere else, it…
a) equals carbon emissions.
b) offsets carbon emissions.
➤ **b)** is right. "Offset carbon emissions" means that carbon emissions produced in one place are reduced in another place.

4. The quantity of carbon dioxide a company is allowed to release is measured in…
a) carbon tickets.
b) carbon credits.
➤ **b)** is right. A "carbon credit" is the ownership of one metric ton of carbon dioxide. They can be traded by their owners, selling them to those companies which have already used up their own carbon credits.

5. If we manage to produce no more CO_2 than the amount we remove from the atmosphere, we reach…
a) net zero.
b) point zero.
➤ **a)** is right. "Net zero" is reached if the quantities of CO_2 produced and absorbed are balanced.

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

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compound ➤ Verbindung	**impact** ➤ Auswirkung(en)
exhaust gas ➤ Abgas	**power plant** ➤ Kraftwerk
greenhouse ➤ Treibhaus	**release sth.** ➤ etw. freisetzen

COMMUNICATION

BUSINESS SKILLS
Bad news via email
[12] How to write an email with bad news
M

James: Writing emails is part of day-to-day work, but some emails are easier to write than others. If you have to tell someone something that you know they don't want to hear, then that could be hard. Listen to these useful tips for telling someone bad news via email. They could be useful one day.

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Whether you're the boss or an employee, you will almost certainly have to give bad news to someone at some point. Obviously, delivering bad news is not fun, but it is a fact of life. There are many reasons why you might have to do this — including minor things, like reminding a colleague about something they've forgotten, or informing a customer that they can't have what they want, but also very stressful situations, like telling someone they're going to lose their job.

In March 2022, the boss of a British ferry operator fired 800 employees, without notice, via video call. The media called him "the most hated man in Britain". Clearly, some ways of delivering bad news are better (or should I say "worse"?) than others.

How to do it
When you're giving someone bad news, first decide whether email really is the best way. Maybe a face-to-face meeting is more appropriate, even if it's harder. Sending an email has the advantage of creating a written record of the exchange, however, and it gives you time to gather your thoughts and express them in the right way.

Imagine you must inform a customer that you cannot complete an order by the specified deadline because of a technical problem in production. We'll create an appropriate email step-by-step.

Before you start, make sure you have all the relevant facts and details to hand. You want the message you send to be accurate, and you want to be able to answer any questions from the customer. Next, decide on the tone. How well do you know the person you are writing to? How formal or informal should you be? In this case, we've never met Mr Jones, the purchaser, in person, so the tone will be quite formal. Let's now follow a six-point plan for the email itself.

1. Start with the bad news
Be upfront. Make sure the recipient knows immediately what the situation is. If you leave the bad news to the end, it could be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Order no. 789076
Dear Mr Jones
I'm afraid it will not be possible to <u>dispatch</u> the above order in time to meet the May 17th deadline.

2. Explain the context

Tell the customer how and why the problem <u>occurred</u>. Normally, technical details won't be necessary — just a <u>brief</u>, simple description of the situation.

We have had some technical problems with our <u>production line</u> that have caused the delay. The problems have now been <u>resolved</u> with the installation of new equipment.

3. Apologize when necessary

If you or your organization is <u>at fault</u>, now is the moment to <u>apologize</u> professionally. Do not use overemotional language. Simply say you're sorry and that steps have been taken to make sure it won't happen again.

I'm very sorry about this. I have been <u>assured</u> by our technical people that this will not happen again.

4. Offer a resolution

Try to find some kind of <u>resolution</u> to the situation or, at least, something to minimize the <u>impact</u> of the bad news.

We would be able to arrange delivery of your order on May 21st. Please let me know if this is acceptable.

5. Provide a quick contact option

Even if the customer knows your contact information, include the quickest way to reach you for any <u>follow-up</u>.

The best way to contact me is on my <u>mobile</u>: 07765 84635.

6. End positively

Try to end with a few positive words. This may help reduce the stress of the situation and might even help keep the business relationship intact.

Our recent investment in <u>state-of-the-art</u> production equipment will <u>ensure</u> that any future orders will be trouble-free.

Here's another example of an email with bad news. In this scenario, the recipient is a client who has requested information from a <u>management consultancy</u>.

Dear Ms Mason
Thank you for your email requesting the detailed results of our <u>research</u> into the commercial applications of blockchain technology.

I'm afraid the information you have asked for is <u>confidential</u> and for our internal use only. This means that I cannot provide you with the full report.

The participants in the research were promised total anonymity and that only a general <u>summary</u> of the research would be published.

I'm sorry if this causes you some <u>inconvenience</u>.

I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the generalized summary of the blockchain technology report if you think it would be of help.

Please give me a call on my direct number, which you have, if you wish to discuss this further.

<u>Best regards</u>

When delivering bad news, it is important to be clear, so there can be no misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Honesty <u>goes a long way</u>, too. Accept fault and apologize when necessary.

accurate ➤ korrekt, präzise

apologize
➤ sich entschuldigen

appropriate ➤ angemessen

assure sb. sth.
➤ jmdm. etw. versichern

at fault: be ~ (for sth.)
➤ die Schuld (für etw.) tragen

best regards
➤ mit freundlichen Grüßen

brief ➤ kurz

confidential ➤ vertraulich

dispatch sth.
➤ etw. versenden

ensure sth.
➤ etw. sicherstellen

face-to-face ➤ persönlich

ferry operator
➤ Fährenbetreiber(in)

follow-up
➤ Weiterverfolgung

go a long way
➤ viel bewirken

impact
➤ Auswirkung(en)

inconvenience
➤ Unannehmlichkeit(en)

management consultancy
➤ Unternehmensberatung

mobile UK ➤ Handy

occur ➤ auftreten

production line
➤ Fertigungsstraße, Fließband

purchaser
➤ Käufer(in)

recipient
➤ Empfänger(in)

record ➤ Aufzeichnung

research ➤ Recherche(n)

resolution ➤ Lösung

resolve sth.
➤ etw. lösen

state-of-the-art
➤ auf dem neuesten Stand der Technik, hochmodern

summary
➤ Zusammenfassung

upfront ifml. ➤ direkt

without notice
➤ ohne Vorankündigung, fristlos

[13] Exercise: Writing an email with bad news M

James: Now, let's practise some phrases that are useful for writing emails that contain bad news. I'll tell you what to say and give you some of the words you'll need. In the pause, form the necessary 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 start with the bad news.
- ■ Use "sorry", "have to tell", "not possible", "meet" and "deadline".
- ➤ I'm sorry to have to tell you that it is not possible to meet the deadline.

2. You explain the context.
- ■ Use "background", "to this", "lack" and "skilled workers".
- ➤ The background to this is a lack of skilled workers.

3. You apologize.
- ■ Use "very sorry" and "inconvenience".
- ➤ I'm very sorry for the inconvenience.

4. You offer a resolution.
- ■ Use "might", "possible", "for us", "deliver" and "similar device".
- ➤ It might be possible for us to deliver a similar device.

5. You provide a quick contact option.
- ■ Use "simplest way", "contact me" and "on my mobile".
- ➤ The simplest way to contact me is on my mobile.

6. Finish in a positive way.
- ■ Use "let's", "keep" and "touch".
- ➤ Let's keep in touch.

James: Excellent. Well done!

[14] Dialogue and exercises: Writing an email with bad news ꟿ

James: In this exercise, you'll first hear a dialogue between Trudie and George. Then, we'll do an exercise in which we'll test you on some of the words used. OK, first listen very carefully.

Trudie: I have to write an awkward email this morning. A customer ordered an item three months ago, and we still haven't been able to dispatch it.

George: Are you writing to apologize?

Trudie: Yes. The problem is I can't even assure them that they'll get the item soon. I have no idea when we'll receive the microchips we're waiting for.

George: Are you going to offer them a refund?

Trudie: Yes, I'll have to. They've been very patient so far. I'll write a short summary of the problem, say we're sorry for the inconvenience and offer them a full refund.

George: I suppose that's all you can do, really. But you might want to give them a call as a follow-up. Let them know we care.

Trudie: Yes, you're right.

James: OK, now we'll give you two alternative words, and then you'll hear one of the sentences from the dialogue again — this time, with a beep where one of the words belongs. In the pause, choose the right word to complete the sentence. Then, you'll hear the full sentence again.

Repeat the sentence, trying to copy the speaker's pronunciation and intonation. Ready?

1. Here's the first pair of words to choose from: "dispatch" OR "mismatch"

Trudie: ..., and we still haven't been able to [*beep*] it.

➤ ..., and we still haven't been able to dispatch it.

2. And here's the next pair of words: "apologetic" or "apologize"

George: Are you writing to [*beep*]?

➤ Are you writing to apologize?

3. And here's another pair of words: "assure" or "insure"

Trudie: The problem is I can't even [*beep*] them that they'll get the item soon.

➤ The problem is I can't even assure them that they'll get the item soon.

4. And here's the next pair of words: "summarize" or "summary"

Trudie: I'll write a short [*beep*] of the problem,...

➤ I'll write a short summary of the problem,...

James: Well done. Did you get all the words right? If not, go back and listen to the dialogue again.

CAREERS

MY FIRST DAY
First impressions
[15] Interview with Lauren Psyk A

Sion: First days at work don't always go to plan. It is normal to be nervous before starting a new job because people want to make a good impression and be seen as a good addition to their team. Lauren Psyk, a headshot photographer and copywriter based in Brighton, UK, spoke to Melita Cameron-Wood about her memories of her first day at her first-ever job after university. Now, Psyk helps people to make a good impression on their websites, but making a good first impression didn't always come easily to her.

Melita: Can you just run me through sort of how old you were, where you were living and what type of company it was?

Lauren: So, I was 22. I'd just recently graduated from university. I went to university in Reading, and I was applying for jobs nearby, so it was near Reading in a place called Marlow. It was a vehicle leasing company. They were called Lex Vehicle Leasing, but they've since been bought by a big bank. I think it's like part of Lloyds Bank now. We were dealing with, like, corporate car fleets, so when people have a big fleet of cars, places like the BBC and quite big clients who need a fleet of cars. And I was the marketing executive there, and it was, yeah, my first day in my first sort of proper job out of uni.

Melita: And can you just sort of run me through what happened in your own words? So, from the moment you arrived in the car park to then when they found out what was happening to your car.

Lauren: I'd got a brand-new car as well to start my first proper job. My parents had bought me a car. So, I was super proud of my new car. So, I arrived in the car park, and I thought, you know, "I really want to look after this car, so I'm going to be super careful about it being stolen and things."

So, I attached the steering lock across the steering wheel to, you know, prevent theft, which, looking back, is, you know, pretty silly, really, because it was a staff car park, so it's not really that likely that the car would be stolen, but yeah, I decided to be extra careful, so I left it there. All was fine when I left the car, went in, signed in, you know, was met for my first day. And that's sort of the last I heard about it until about an hour later, when people were, you know, running around the office frantically looking for me to try and identify who owned this car. Because shortly after I'd left the vehicle, somehow, the steering lock had, like, slipped and pressed itself on to the car horn. And it was just like, you know, constantly letting off the

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car horn noise like a solid, like, horn noise. And obviously, you know, because it was my first day, they didn't have my, you know, the registration details in the, you know, staff book and things. So, they had no idea whose car this was. So, it was like an hour before they could find me and I was like, in my induction meetings and things up on the second floor and they were going round the building, "Who's car is this? Is this your car? Is this your car?", asking everyone. And then they found me. And it was just very embarrassing to be told that my car horn had basically been going off for the last hour on the first day.

So, by the time I got down to rescue my car, you know, and they said, "Could you come down?", the horn had like shrunk down to a little sort of just very pathetic sound. It's like a sort of, you know, farting noise. And my poor horn was just completely worn out, like I had to go and buy a new one after that. So, yeah, welcome to the first day in a new job, basically.

Melita: So obviously at work, you can have embarrassing situations. What do you think of the best way of navigating embarrassment at work is for you?
Lauren: I think now, now as an older person, I think the best way of dealing with it is to sort of laugh at yourself and sort of go along with the joke. But, age 22, I didn't see it that way.

I was absolutely mortified. I was completely embarrassed and humiliated and didn't really see the funny side of it at the time. So, I think it's only now, as an older person, I can sort of look back and see how it how funny it was.

Melita: All right, well, thank you very much.
Lauren: Lovely to speak to you.

Melita: Yeah, lovely to meet you. Thanks again.
Lauren: Bye
Melita: Bye-bye.

apply for a job ➤ sich für eine Stelle bewerben

based in... ➤ mit Sitz in ...

car park UK ➤ Parkplatz

copywriter ➤ Werbetexter(in)

corporate ➤ Firmen-

embarrassing ➤ peinlich

farting *if ml.* ➤ pupsend, Furz-

fleet ➤ Flotte

frantically ➤ hektisch, fieberhaft

go off ➤ losgehen

graduate ➤ seinen Abschluss machen

headshot ➤ Porträt

horn ➤ *hier:* Hupe

induction ➤ Einführung

marketing executive ➤ Marketingleiter(in)

pathetic ➤ erbärmlich

run sb. through sth. ➤ etw. mit jmdm. durchgehen; *hier:* jmdn. (kurz) über etw. informieren

shrink down ➤ schrumpfen; *hier:* schwächer/leiser werden

sign in ➤ sich anmelden

slip ➤ *hier:* ver-, wegrutschen

steering lock ➤ Lenkradschloss

steering wheel ➤ Lenkrad

vehicle ➤ Kraftfahrzeug

worn out: be ~ ➤ abgenutzt sein; *hier:* an Lautstärke verloren haben

CAREER COACH
Decision-making
[16] Decisions, decisions M

James: Decisions are part of everyday life, but some are easier than others. Career coach Frank Peters explores decision-making processes and the importance of reaching a final decision, in the following article.

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The former US president Theodore Roosevelt once said: "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next-best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing." I love this quote for several reasons. It points out that the worst thing you can do is make no decision at all. In business, millions of decisions are made every day: minor and major, easy and difficult decisions. Sometimes, millions of dollars or people's jobs may be at stake. Many decisions involve more than one person — meaning a team. Should we assume that, if teams make lots of decisions, they're also good at it? I would love to say yes, but in my experience, the answer is no. When I work with a team, we inevitably come across the question of the decision-making process within the team. It could be a minor thing ("Where shall we go for our next team lunch?") or a more important issue ("What are the core values and principles that lead our daily work as a team?") — and, yes, for some, lunch is a major

issue, too. With most of the teams I work with, I like to do the following exercise. It's quick, insightful and fun. And, interestingly, it's also a meta exercise. This means the team learns about decision-making methods and works on its decision-making skills at the same time.

How it works

I start by presenting three types of information:
• Three categories of decision-making methods
• Seven types of decision-making methods
• Seven pro/con pairs (= one for each method)

The team now has one task: to assign each pro/con pair to the right method and each method to the right category. To give you a better idea of how hard or easy that task is, here are the categories and methods I'm talking about:

Categories

1. One person decides
2. Everybody votes
3. Inclusive

Methods

1. Majority vote: the proposal with the most votes is accepted.
2. Top-down: the leader decides.
3. Consensus: everyone must agree, otherwise no decision is made.
4. Consent: a subgroup of the team comes up with a proposal. The whole team can ask questions or raise concerns. The subgroup revises the proposal, and the team votes on whether the revised proposal should be implemented.

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5. Systemic consent: for each proposal, everyone is asked to give their level of resistance (0 = no resistance; 10 = very strong resistance). The proposal with the least resistance is accepted.

6. Dedicated group: a group of team members is given the task of asking all stakeholders for their perspective and finally decides for the team.

7. Empowered expert: one team member with the relevant experience and expertise gets the job of deciding for the team.

The task begins

I write the three categories on a pinboard, the methods and pro/con pairs are written on cards or sticky notes scattered all around the board. Next, I start the timer (ten minutes), and the team starts to move the cards. Before I start the timer, I provide one important hint: "When you want to make a decision, it's helpful to agree on a decision-making method first." Everybody hears my hint, but they all forget it within seconds — maybe because of the time pressure. Or maybe they think they know better. Sometimes, after a minute of chaos, someone will ask if they shouldn't first discuss how they make their decisions. Often, this question remains unheard.

As the team works on the solution, many decisions are made within the ten minutes. The way teams move forward varies a lot. Some discuss each card and put it in its place only when everyone agrees (consensus). In other teams, one team member takes the cards and places them without discussion (top-down). Sometimes, there's one team member who says: "I have an idea. Let me do it. If you disagree, let me know" (mixture of empowered expert and consent). Other teams distribute the cards and let each team member decide where to put them. Then, the group decides if they want to change anything (mixture of dedicated team and consent).

It's in these ten minutes that the magic happens. The team is working on decision-making methods and applying various methods as they do the exercise. Most teams switch from one method to another, and back again. Of course, I could just put up a PowerPoint slide to explain the different methods and their pros and cons, but that wouldn't have a lasting effect. Participants would forget the information as soon as they left the room. It's much better to experience it. For example, the consensus teams (who move a card only when everyone agrees) always run out of time. This is a clear disadvantage of that method. On the other hand, the decisions they do make are robust. Other participants experience for themselves that a top-down method is fast but also frustrating, or they see that an empowered expert must enjoy a high level of trust within the team.

After ten minutes, we look at the results and I provide feedback. Here's where Theodore Roosevelt comes in: it's better to make a wrong decision than no decision, because there is no feedback for cards that haven't been assigned. In other words: if you make no decision, you can't learn from it. Most of the time, after a second round, the teams are happy with the result and proud of what they've <u>achieved</u>. I love this exercise because people not only experience and learn a lot about decision-making in a team, but also learn where there's room for improvement <u>in terms of</u> cooperation and trust. And I have a better idea of what to work on next.

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achieve sth.
➤ etw. erreichen

assign sb./sth. (to) sth.
➤ jmdm./etw. etw. zuweisen

assume sth.
➤ etw. annehmen

at stake: be ~
➤ auf dem Spiel stehen

come across sth.
➤ auf etw. stoßen

come up with sth.
➤ sich etw. einfallen lassen; *hier*: etw. vorbringen

core ➤ *hier*: zentral

dedicated ➤ zweckbestimmt; *hier*: speziell

empowered ➤ mit Handlungsvollmacht, autorisiert

expertise
➤ Sachkompetenz

hint ➤ Hinweis

implement sth.
➤ etw. umsetzen

inevitably ➤ unweigerlich

insightful ➤ erkenntnisreich

in terms of ➤ im Hinblick auf

issue ➤ Frage, Problem

magic happens: the ~
➤ *hier*: die Wirkungsweise zeigt sich

meta ➤ *hier*: übergeordnet

point sth. out
➤ auf etw. hinweisen

pro/con ➤ pro und kontra

quote ➤ Zitat

raise concerns
➤ Bedenken äußern

revise sth. ➤ etw. überarbeiten

robust
➤ solide, bestandsfähig

run out of time
➤ in Zeitnot geraten

scattered ➤ verstreut

slide ➤ Folie

stakeholder
➤ Projektbeteiligte(r)

sticky note ➤ Haftnotiz

top-down ➤ hierarchisch (von oben nach unten)

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH FOR...
Quitting your job

[17] Exercise: Tricky translations M̲

Sion: Now, let's continue by "skilling up" on our vocabulary. The German word *Kündigung* is translated into English differently, depending on the context. Mixing up these translations could cause misunderstanding. In this exercise, we'd like you to translate this German word and sentences that use it into English. Be careful to avoid confusion. Ready?

1. The first meaning of the German word *Kündigung* refers to someone's job. Translate this word and sentence, please.

- **notice**

German: *Er hat seine Kündigung eingereicht, weil sein neuer Arbeitsweg zu lang ist.*

English: He handed in his notice because his new commute is too long.

Sion: The English noun "notice" is also used for the German word *Kündigung* in the context of housing. Please translate this sentence.

German: *Sogar langjährige Mieter haben die schriftliche Kündigung des Investors erhalten.*

English: Even long-term tenants got the investor's written notice.

2. **Sion:** Another meaning of *Kündigung* refers to finishing a contract or agreement. Please translate this word and sentence now.

- **termination**

German: *Die Kündigung des Vertrags ist ungültig.*

English: The termination of the contract is invalid.

Sion: Well done! If you got any of those wrong, then repeat the exercise.

SKILL UP!
Insurance
[18] Exercise: False friends M

James: Let's continue "skilling up" on our vocabulary by looking at a false friend related to the topic of insurance. False friends are pairs of words that sound similar in German and English. But their meanings are very different, so they can cause confusion and misunderstanding. In this exercise, we'd like you to translate a German word and sentence into English, being careful to avoid the false friend. Let's begin.

James: Our word is used for writing your name at the bottom of a document. Translate this word.

German: *unterschreiben*

English: sign

James: Don't say "underwrite", which means that you take responsibility for an insurance policy and will pay money for damages. The German word *unterschreiben* is "sign" in English. Please translate this sentence.

German: *Bitte unterschreiben Sie mit ihrem vollen Namen.*

English: Please sign your full name.

James: Well done.

[19] Exercise: Don't confuse! M̲

James: In this exercise, we'll practise the use of the false friend in the previous track. First, you'll hear a sentence with a beep. In the pause, decide whether you need "sign" or "underwrite" instead of the beep. Then you'll hear the right sentence again. Ready?

1. Insurance companies won't [*beep*] policies for houses that are built on the banks of a river.
- Insurance companies won't underwrite policies for houses that are built on the banks of a river.

2. The policy is only valid if you [*beep*] it at the bottom of each page.
- The policy is only valid if you sign it at the bottom of each page.

James: There are two beeps in the next sentence.

3. The supplier promised to [*beep*] a cargo policy but then he didn't [*beep*] the document.
- The supplier promised to underwrite a cargo policy but then he didn't sign the document.

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

[20] Dialogue and exercise: Collocations
M

James: For our final Skill Up! exercise, we'll look at some collocations. These are words that frequently go together to form word partnerships. Listen carefully to someone reading out an advert for an insurance company. Then, we'll do an exercise on it.

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At Advantage Brokers, our dedicated team of experienced **insurance advisers** are here to assist you with all aspects of personal insurance. We'll help you decide what type of insurance you need. We'll also tell you if you're already **covered by** your existing **insurance policies**, and make sure you get the best deal by **shopping around for policies**.

Should you want to cancel an insurance policy you've just **taken out**, you have a 14-day cooling-off period, during which you can **cancel** the policy for any reason. Your adviser will also make sure that your policy is not **renewed** when you don't want it to be.

If you need to **make a claim**, our experts will do everything they can for you so that you don't have any hassle and worry.

Advantage Brokers: always by your side!

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James: OK, in this exercise, you'll hear the beginning of a sentence describing a situation. In the pause, complete the sentence using a collocation with the correct term from the text that you have just heard. Then, you'll hear the correct answer. OK, here's the first sentence.

1. Someone providing advice on insurance matters is an…
- **insurance adviser.** Someone providing advice on insurance matters is an insurance adviser.
2. A document containing the terms and conditions of a contract of insurance is an…
- **insurance policy.** A document containing the terms and conditions of a contract of insurance is an insurance policy.
3. If you demand something that is covered by your insurance contract, you…
- **make a claim.** If you demand something that is covered by your contract of insurance, you make a claim.
4. If you compare insurance premiums, you…
- **shop around for policies.** If you compare insurance premiums, you shop around for policies.
5. If you sign a contract of insurance, you…
- **take out a policy.** If you sign a contract of insurance, you take out a policy.
6. If a policy expires and you extend it, you…
- **renew a policy.** If a policy expires and you extend it, you renew a policy.

7. If you terminate a contract of insurance, you...
- **cancel a policy.** If you terminate a contract of insurance, you cancel a policy.

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

cooling-off period
- Bedenkzeit

dedicated
- gewidmet; *hier*: engagiert

CONCLUSION

[21] Until next time... E

James: It's time to say goodbye, but it won't be long until we're back with more exercises, articles and interviews for you to enjoy.
Sion: We hope you enjoyed this issue. Thanks, everyone.
James: Bye-bye!

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