

EASY E**MEDIUM** M**ADVANCED** A

CEF level A2

CEF levels B1-B2

CEF levels C1-C2

CEF: European Framework of Reference for Languages

INTRODUCTION

[1] Let's get started! ↗

Sion Dayson: Welcome to Business Spotlight Audio! This time around, we've got loads of great topics to help you to improve your business English. We consider the pros and cons of couples combining their finances, and we question what would happen if public transport were free for everyone. You'll also get the chance to practise language related to numbers and the office. And you'll hear the unusual story of a man who invents languages for a living, too. There's plenty more, but first of all, let's get started with some trending news topics. Are you ready? Let's go!

loads of ifml. ➔ eine Menge

topic ➔ Thema

TRENDS

NAMES AND NEWS

[2] Going the distance ↗

It's often said that business is not a sprint but an endurance race. After completing more than 20 ultramarathons, Thomas Watson, a director

at Deloitte, sees a number of parallels between running and business, like the need to think strategically and break down a task into achievable goals. Focus and mindset are key. Writing on LinkedIn, Watson says: "If you don't win the mental game, you'll never win the physical game."

More and more people are now running longer distances. According to a 2021 report by RunRepeat, participation in ultramarathons increased 345 per cent between 2010 and 2020, while interest in shorter races has stagnated or even declined. Today, there are more ultra runners than ever.

An "ultramarathon" is broadly defined as any race that's longer than the traditional 42-kilometre marathon. They are punishing, even dangerous, but an estimated 10,000 races take place every year — such as the 251-kilometre Marathon des Sables across the Sahara, which takes six days. As to the question of why, Adharanand Finn, author of *The Rise of the Ultra Runners*, thinks the growing popularity of running has led to a natural inflation. "To tell people you've run a marathon is maybe not as impressive as it once was," he told *The Guardian*.

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endurance

➔ Ausdauer

break sth. down

➔ etw. aufgliedern

mindset

➔ Denkweise, Einstellung

decline

➔ abnehmen

[3] Cost and effect M US

George Floyd died while being arrested by Minneapolis police officers in 2020. The mass protests that followed drew the world's attention to the widespread outrage at U.S. police tactics. The anger had been building for years, however, with complaints often settled at taxpayers' expense. The Washington Post has reported that more than \$3.2 billion had been spent over the past decade to settle tens of thousands of disputes over police conduct at 25 of the largest police and sheriff's departments in the country.

Police in America have long resisted pressure to change, but there's one group they can't ignore — their own insurance companies. Where activists and local politicians have failed, the providers of liability insurance to U.S. police departments are demanding changes to dangerous practices, such as high-speed pursuits. As the cost of insurance has risen sharply, reportedly between 200 and 400 percent since 2019, small and medium-sized police departments, in particular, have little choice but to listen.

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outrage ➔ Empörung

anger ➔ Zorn, Wut

settle sth.

➔ etw. beilegen, bereinigen

expense: at sb.'s -

➔ auf jmds. Kosten

billion

➔ Milliarde(n)

conduct ➔ Verhalten

department

➔ Abteilung; hier: Revier

insurance company

➔ Versicherungsgesellschaft

liability insurance

➔ Haftpflichtversicherung

pursuit ➔ Verfolgung

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Should couples merge their finances?

[4] Dialogue and exercise: Merging finances? M

Sion: Listen carefully to the following dialogue between Jennifer and Danielle, two friends who have different opinions about merging their finances with their partners. After you have listened to the dialogue, we'll test your understanding of some of the words and phrases used. Ready? Let's go.

Danielle: How's everything going with Dave?

Jennifer: Things are going fine, but we had an argument last night.

Danielle: What was it about?

Jennifer: Merging our finances. I don't think it's a good idea, but Dave got really offended when I told him that there was more than one person in the relationship, so we should have separate bank accounts.

Danielle: Well, to be honest, I can see where he's coming from. You guys are married, and I think you're less likely to have marital problems if you merge your finances. It shows that you are invested in the relationship and that you are ready to work towards common goals.

Jennifer: We are happily married. I can't see this issue leading to a divorce, but it's definitely bothering me. He's putting me under a lot of pressure to change my mind. At the end of

the day, I have been completely transparent with him about my finances. I have disclosed everything, so I don't see what difference it would make if we opened a joint account.

Danielle: I think it'd make things more practical, not just for everyday spending, but also for the future. Imagine if one of you passed away unexpectedly. I know it isn't nice thinking about these things. But wouldn't it be easier if your funds were all in the same account, so that you didn't have to worry about so much financial admin at a traumatic time like that?

Jennifer: I don't want to base my financial decisions on hypothetical situations. If I had been planning on merging my finances with Dave, I would have got a prenuptial before we tied the knot. I think honest communication is sufficient, to be honest. I also like the financial accountability of having my own account. Then I can keep track of my own spending, and I don't need to justify the way I use my money to anybody. I like getting my nails done, for instance, and I know Dave thinks it's a waste of money. I can't be bothered with stupid arguments about stuff like that.

Danielle: Well, it's your decision, but I do think merging your finances has its benefits. It's certainly made me and Mark more able to talk openly to our kids about finances. We're trying to educate them, so they can be financially transparent with their partners in the future.

Sion: OK, now it's time to test your understanding of some of the words, collocations and phrases used in the dialogue that you've just heard. You will hear a series of sentences based on the dialogue. Then you'll be asked to define one of the words, collocations or phrases used. Are you ready? Here's the first one.

1. Danielle thinks couples are less likely to have marital problems if they merge their finances. "Marital problems" are...
 - a) issues that married couples experience in their marriage.
 - b) issues related to debt and interest rates.
 - The correct answer is a). "Marital problems" are issues that married couples experience in their marriage.
2. Jennifer says that she has disclosed her financial situation to her husband. If someone "discloses information to somebody else", then they...
 - a) choose not to share that information with the other person.
 - b) reveal that information to the other person.
 - The correct answer is b). If someone "discloses information to somebody else", then they reveal that information to the other person.
3. Jennifer doesn't see the point of opening a joint account with her husband. If a couple has a "joint account", then...
 - a) they have a paperless bank account.

b) they have a shared account.

- The correct answer is b). If a couple has a "joint account", then they have a shared account.

4. "Financial accountability" is important to Jennifer. Financial accountability involves...

a) holding yourself responsible for the state of your finances.

b) doing your own accounting without the help of an accountant or a tax adviser.

- The correct answer is a). "Financial accountability" involves holding yourself responsible for the state of your finances.

5. Danielle wants her children to be financially transparent with their partners in the future. If someone is "financially transparent", then they are...

a) completely open about their finances.

b) cautious about sharing financial information with others.

- The correct answer is a). If someone is "financially transparent", then they are completely open about their finances.

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

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marital

► ehelich, Ehe-

invested: sb. is - in sth.

► hier: etw. liegt jmdm. am Herzen

issue ► Problem, Frage

divorce ► Scheidung

bother sb. ► jmdn. stören

disclose sth.

► etw. offenlegen

joint ► gemeinsam

pass away ► (ver)sterben

funds

► (finanzielle) Mittel, Gelder

admin ifml. ► Verwaltungsarbeit; hier: Formalitäten

prenuptial ► vor der Ehe (geschlossen); hier: Ehevertrag

knot: tie the ~ ifml.

► heiraten

accountability

► Verantwortung

keep track of sth.

► den Überblick über etw. behalten

debt ► Schulden

interest rate ► Zinssatz

reveal sth.

► etw. enthüllen, offenlegen

point ► hier: Sinn, Zweck

accountant ► Buchhalter(in); Wirtschaftsprüfer(in)

tax adviser

► Steuerberater(in)

cautious

► vorsichtig, behutsam

WHAT IF?

Public transport

[5] Introduction M

Sion: Can you imagine a world in which public transport didn't cost anyone anything? Would you still drive or cycle to work? Or would you be more likely to take the train, the bus, the tram or the underground instead? And when you went on holiday, would you fly or choose another means of transport? Kolja Rudzio, an economics editor at DIE ZEIT, reflects on this idea in the following article.

merge sth. ► etw. fusionieren;

hier: zusammenlegen

argument ► Streit

offended

► beleidigt, gekränkt

guy ifml. ► Typ

editor ► Redakteur(in)

[6] What if public transport were free for everyone?

Anyone who has stood at a ticket machine in a foreign city is familiar with this: before you can get on the underground or bus, you must go through a crash course in the convoluted fare system. Which ticket is valid for which route? What time? What zone? The search for the right ticket can take longer than the journey itself. Wouldn't it be great if you could just hop on and go?

Less hassle with tickets is probably the weakest argument for free public transport, but there have been calls for this to happen for years: abolish tickets and make buses and trains free for everyone. The reason usually given is that public transport is climate-friendly and reduces traffic congestion in cities. The more people there are on buses and trains, the better!

The idea seems appealing, but is it really? Few places in the world offer free public transport — Luxembourg or Estonia's capital, Tallinn, for example. The towns of Hasselt, in Belgium, and Templin, in Brandenburg, tried it for a while but later gave up on the idea. And last summer, in Germany, there was a ticket that was almost free — for €9, a monthly ticket that was valid throughout the country (as of May 2023, the price is €49 a month).

Travelling people

These projects have had mixed success, but a few patterns have emerged: yes, the free services increase the number of passengers. For the most part, however, it is not car drivers who switch, but pedestrians and cyclists. This happened in Tallinn, for example, where car traffic remained almost unchanged after the introduction of the zero fare. Germany's €9 ticket also led to a big increase in the number of train journeys — by 24 per cent during the week and as much as 105 per cent at weekends, according to the Federal Statistical Office. But, at the same time, road traffic remained unchanged from Monday to Friday, and even increased slightly at weekends. Obviously, the cheap ticket led to many additional journeys, such as more weekend excursions, which would not have taken place otherwise. This is not a bad thing, of course, but it doesn't lead to better climate protection.

Experience also shows that people in rural areas in particular hardly ever switch to buses and trains. Often, there are simply no suitable connections. Getting people to give up their cars requires investment in better connections and more frequent services, but this task won't get easier if a big source of funding for local transport is eliminated. That's why Hasselt and Templin ultimately ended their experiments.

Better local transport is desirable, and it should also be affordable, but free of charge is probably expecting too much.

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- convoluted**
 - kompliziert
- fare system**
 - Tarifsystem
- hassle** ifml.
 - Mühe, Aufwand
- abolish sth.**
 - etw. abschaffen
- traffic congestion**
 - Verkehrsstau
- appealing** → verlockend,
reizvoll

COMMUNICATION

BUSINESS SKILLS

Staff motivation

[7] Essential phrases for motivating your staff M

Sion: Let's now practise some phrases that are useful for motivating your staff. I'll tell you what to say and give you some of the words that 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.

- You want to encourage staff involvement.
 - Use “what”, “key questions”, “need” and “ask”.
 - What are the key questions we need to ask?
 - You want to show recognition.
 - Use “enthusiastic”, “approach” and “much appreciated”.
 - Your enthusiastic approach is much appreciated.
 - You want to emphasize that employees can act independently.
 - Use “can decide”, “how”, “want” and “do it”.
 - You can decide how you want to do it.
 - You want to include your staff in the decision-making process.
 - Use “shall we”, “agree”, “targets” and “next three months”.
 - Shall we agree on the targets for the next three months?
 - You want to emphasize that you are interested in others’ ideas.
 - Use “I’d like”, “hear” “your thoughts” and “this”.
 - I’d like to hear your thoughts on this.
 - You want the company’s premises to be a nice place to work.
 - Use “let’s”, “brighten up” “workspace” and “art”.
 - Let’s brighten up our workspace with art.

Sion: Excellent. Well done!

involvement

- Einbindung, Beteiligung

emphasize sth.

- etw. hervorheben

premises

- Räumlichkeiten

[8] Essential words for motivating your staff

Sion: First, you'll hear a dialogue between Clara and Edwin. Then, we'll test you on some of the words used. OK, first listen very carefully.

Edwin: How are you enjoying your new job, Clara?

Clara: I love it! It feels good to be contributing to a worthwhile enterprise. It also helps that the work is pretty routine and undemanding.

Edwin: That almost sounds too good to be true! What's your manager like?

Clara: I really like her. We have regular team meetings where we discuss and revise our objectives. And every quarter, we agree on the targets for the next three months. I think that really helps keep everyone motivated.

Edwin: So, it's a good team then?

Clara: The best! After working from home for so long, I'm really enjoying office life. We even have a lounge where people can relax, mingle and chat.

Edwin: Sounds like a great environment to work in. Lucky you!

Sion: 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: "enterprise" OR "environment"

Clara: It feels good to be contributing to a worthwhile [beep].

- It feels good to be contributing to a worthwhile enterprise.

2. And here's the next pair of words: "dull" or "routine"

Clara: It also helps that the work is pretty [beep] and undemanding.

- It also helps that the work is pretty routine and undemanding.

3. And here's another pair of words: "objectives" or "objects"

Clara: We have regular team meetings where we discuss and revise our [beep].

- We have regular team meetings where we discuss and revise our objectives.

4. And here's the next pair of words: "purposes" or "targets"

Clara: And every quarter, we agree on the [beep] for the next three months.

- And every quarter, we agree on the targets for the next three months.
5. And another pair of words to choose from: “jingle” or “mingle”
- Clara:** We even have a lounge where people can relax, [beep] and chat.
- We even have a lounge where people can relax, mingle and chat.
6. Here’s the last pair of words: “environment” or “terrain”
- Edwin:** Sounds like a great [beep] to work in.
- Sounds like a great environment to work in.

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

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worthwhile

► lohnend, sinnvoll

enterprise

► Unternehmen; hier auch:
Vorhaben, Unternehmung

undemanding

► anspruchslos
revise sth.
► etw. überprüfen, überarbeiten

objective

► Ziel(setzung)

quarter

► Quartal

target

► Ziel

mingle

► sich (ver)mischen; hier: in
Kontakt kommen

environment

► hier: Umfeld

CAREERS

ODD JOBS

Language for film

[9] Introduction M

Sion: What is the strangest job you have ever heard of? When it comes to unusual jobs, David Peterson’s career as a professional conlanger, an inventor of languages for film and television, might be something that you haven’t heard of before. Let’s find out more about this unique job in the following article.

conlanger

► Person, die Kunstsprachen konstruiert

unique

► einzigartig

[10] The art of inventing language M US

I have been creating languages since my sophomore year in college in California. At the time, I hadn’t planned on a career in language creation, since such a thing wasn’t possible. In fact, I had no interest in languages at all until I was 17. All of a sudden, I became very interested and started to study as many as I could. I still do. I grew up with Spanish and English. In the classroom, I’ve studied German, French, Arabic, Russian, American Sign Language and Middle Egyptian hieroglyphs.

As a student, I planned to be a high-school English teacher, but when the time came to

graduate, I got cold feet. I earned my master's degree in linguistics and taught English at Fullerton College for two years. Then, I quit and didn't really have any other plans.

The opportunity arose to create a language for the TV series *Game of Thrones*. The Language Creation Society hosted a competition among language creators to determine who would get the job. I won and went on to create the Dothraki language for the show. Since then, I've worked on many other shows and have continued to find steady work.

A creative process

First, it's my responsibility to create the language — or as much as I can in the time available. After that, my job is similar to translation work. I receive scripts and translate them. I also record each line, so the actors can hear how it's supposed to be pronounced and imitate it as best they can. Word creation takes a long time, so I target the vocabulary that I'll need. The grammar of a language, however, needs to be at least 90 percent complete before any translation can be done.

I start with phonology — the sounds in the spoken language. Then, I consider the grammar and develop the vocabulary. Sometimes, I spend months working on them, but for television and film, I don't usually have a lot of time. It's always a delight to hear the languages on

screen. When spoken, a language is, in itself, the full artifact. If the language doesn't work, the audience will figure it out. Everyone knows the languages in *Star Wars* are mostly gibberish.

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sophomore

- US
→ Student(in) im zweiten Studienjahr

graduate

- einen Abschluss machen

quit

- ifml. → kündigen

host sth.

- etw. veranstalten

competition

- Wettbewerb

steady

- ständig

target sth.

- etw. anvisieren

on-screen

- hier: im Film

full artifact

- hier: vollständige Kreation
(artifact → Kunstgegenstand)

figure sth. out

- ifml.
→ etw. herausfinden

gibberish

- Kauderwelsch

BUSINESS ADVICE

Key learnings

[11] Interview with Udit Goenka

Sion: Starting your own business is never easy, especially when things have not gone to plan with other business ventures in the past. In the following interview, Business Spotlight correspondent Melita Cameron-Wood spoke to Udit Goenka, the founder of the software-as-a-service marketplace PitchGround and cold emailing service FirstSales.io. In this interview extract, they speak about the valuable lessons that Goenka learned from his father's business and some of Goenka's hiring tips for start-up founders. Listen carefully because we'll test

your understanding of the interview with a short exercise in the next track.

Melita: It's great to have you here, Udit. Now, first of all, I wanted to ask you about the impact your family has had on your business because you told me that business runs in your family. Have you learned any important lessons from any other family members in business?

Udit: So, my father runs his own factory, where he's into like automation of textiles. One of the things that I've realized over there is most of the machines are pretty automated but there are people in the factory who ensure that the machine works properly because that thing cannot be automated.

One thing that I've sort of learned is try to automate as much as you can. You're blessed today. You're living in the best era possible with all the AI, automations and so much software available that you can pretty much, like, automate a good 70 to 90 per cent of your business, and then use the 10 per cent of very high-quality people who can actually use and implement their intelligence and sort of ensure that everything is working smoothly. And the money that you're saving on software can be reinvested back into hiring quality people.

So, this might not reduce your overall cost, but this will improve your overall ROI, because you're not trying to save, but you're trying to in-

vest in the right people who can bring the right ROI for your business. Good quality people know their worth. They know I can deliver this because they're so confident about just delivering results that they know their worth. So, when you pay them their worth, that's when you're able to start building up a better quality team.

Melita: Yeah, I mean that definitely makes sense. And do you have any hiring tips for start-up founders, because I think that can often be one of the key challenges?

Udit: A thing that we often do right now is instead of hiring someone full-time, we also try to see if we can hire a freelancer on a temporary basis because you pay them per job. They get the job completed, and you pay them.

People actually don't work for the entire eight hours — for about only three or maybe maximum of four hours. The rest of the four or five hours that they are working is just sitting in front of computer and sort of wasting time, but the actual productivity throughout the day is only roughly about 20 per cent of the time. The rest of the 80 per cent, you're not very productive. When I'm talking about actually producing results, it's only that 20 per cent of the day, so why not just hire freelancers because anyone who's usually freelancing, either they have a very good project management skill, or they have a very good IQ to actually get things

completed. So, you know that you're paying for a job done.

Melita: I see. Are you also open to hiring fractional workers?

Udit: Yes, I also look for fractional workers, the concept that's really sort of trending up in the United States right now, where you hire quality people for an hour or two hours a week or five hours a month or just ten hours of their time a month, right? Now, when you do that, you're again effectively buying quality time because, again, it's not about whether someone can put in 160 hours a month — it's about what results are they producing in that 160 hours. And people with experience can produce better results in less time, and that's why they get paid more. It's not because they are in the industry for 10–15 years, but because they can do 160 hours' worth of a job maybe in just 40 hours or 30 hours or 20 hours. That's why they are worth that much. So, why do you need to get someone for 160 hours when we know that it's going to get wasted? Plus getting that 20 hours is going to be a lot cheaper because if you're paying someone — let's say \$100 an hour — and if you just get that full 20 hours' worth of their attention and work, that's \$2,000 a month versus if you hire the same person full-time, you'll end up paying ten to \$15,000, plus the 26 or 30 days of leave, plus other benefits, plus insurance,

plus a lot of things, plus a lot of perks on top of that. And for a start-up, that's a big "no" because you're already running on a thin margin.

This is why a lot of these funded companies, they end up going bust, or they end up not making profits, because they don't utilize the cash. Because when you have so much money in the bank, you don't think about improving margins, you think about: how can I burn it so that I can raise more? So, I think those are the lessons that I've learned that have truly helped me to a point where I've been able to build a good, profitable business.

Melita: OK, thank you very much, and I hope you have a good day.

Udit: You, too! Bye!

Melita: Take care. Bye-bye!

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business venture

- unternehmerisches Vorhaben, Unternehmensprojekt

founder ➔ Gründer(in)

cold emailing

- unaufgefordertes Versenden von E-Mails

impact ➔ Einfluss

run in sb.'s family

- in jmds. Familie liegen

run sth.

- hier: etw. betreiben

into: be - sth. ifml.

- hier: in etw. tätig sein

textiles ➔ hier: Herstellung von Textilien

ensure sth.

- etw. sicherstellen

sort of ifml.

- irgendwie, gewissermaßen

blessed: be -

- hier: sich glücklich schätzen (können)

AI (artificial intelligence)

- KI (künstliche Intelligenz)

implement sth.

- etw. anwenden

overall ➔ Gesamt-

ROI (return on investment)

► Kapitalrendite

temporary

► temporär, zeitlich befristet

fractional

► in Bruchstücken; hier etwa:
auf Stundenbasis

industry ► hier: Branche

leave ► Urlaub

benefits ► Zusatzleistungen

perk ifml.

► Vergünstigung

margin

► Gewinnspanne

funded ► finanziert

bust: go ~ ifml.

► pleitegehen

burn sth. ifml.

► hier: etw. ausgeben

overall cost, but this will improve your overall ROI”. “ROI” stands for “return on investment”.

3. According to Goenka, hiring freelancers can be a good solution if you want to get a job done.
- This statement is true. Goenka says that freelancers tend to have good project management skills, and they are good at completing tasks.
4. According to Goenka, the concept of fractional working is not popular in the United States.
- This statement is false. Goenka says that this concept is “trending” in the United States. This means that it is popular.
5. Goenka warns start-up founders to be careful when hiring fractional workers, as they often charge a lot.
- This statement is false. According to Goenka, fractional workers could actually save start-up founders money in the long run, because fractional workers are just paid for the time they spend on the job and do not receive additional employee benefits.

Sion: Well done! Did you get all of the answers right? If not, listen to the dialogue another time and try the exercise again.

1. Udit Goenka thinks that one of the advantages of automating a lot of your business is that skilled workers will be able to use their brainpower more effectively.
- This statement is true. Goenka believes that skilled workers will be able to “use and implement their intelligence” if a large portion of the business they work for is automated.
2. Goenka says that hiring highly skilled workers is likely to reduce the business's overall outgoings.
- This statement is false. Goenka says that hiring quality people “might not reduce your

brainpower

- Intelligenz, Köpfchen

implement sth.

- etw. anwenden

overall ► Gesamt-**outgoings** ► Ausgaben**ROI (return on investment)**

- Kapitalrendite

fractional

- in Bruchstücken; hier etwa:
auf Stundenbasis

founder

- Gründer(in)

long run: in the ~

- langfristig

benefits ► Zusatzleistungen**CAREER COACH****The power of listening****[13] Listen up! **

Sion: Do you prefer speaking or listening? If you answered “speaking”, then maybe it’s time for you rethink your approach to communication. In the following article, career coach Frank Peters considers the importance of prioritizing “professional listening”. Ready? You can practise right now by listening carefully to the following article!

[14] Listen like a professional 

Not long ago, I stumbled over a phrase when I was doing some research for an article about listening. It was mentioned by Julian Treasure, an international speaker who specializes in sound and communication. The phrase was: “Allow the other person to fill you.” That sounds a bit odd, but it made me stop and think. The phrase refers to listening.

Interestingly, Julian’s two most popular TED Talks differ wildly when it comes to

the number of views. One talk, called “How to speak so that people want to listen”, has had more than 53 million views, while the other talk, “Five ways to listen better”, has had just 11 million. This suggests that people are five times more interested in how they can make others listen rather than actually learning how to listen themselves.

I don’t wish to complain. Perhaps it’s natural to be more focused on sending rather than receiving. Humans have a need to be seen, heard and listened to. This is one of the reasons for the enormous popularity of social media.

Speaking is overrated; listening is underrated. Professional or public speaking classes are often booked out. But what about professional listening? The same bias towards speaking over listening can also be found in business environments and in teams. But this is changing, slowly.

An underrated power

In the past, the people who were able to sell themselves and convince their bosses with compelling presentations were generally the ones who got promoted. Today, the ability to listen and empathize is increasingly important to leaders. It’s no longer enough to be a good motivational speaker; you have to be able to listen to your staff.

Listening is one of the most underrated powers of leadership in the 21st century. And it can

have such a positive impact on your team and on your relationship with your employees.

We know that people want to be seen and heard. So, if you really listen to your people, you are fulfilling an important need. That helps to (re-)establish the connection and makes them happy.

Furthermore, if you listen closely to your employees, you might hear some great ideas or learn about a personal issue that may be affecting their performance. You might even hear some deeper concerns about one of your decisions.

Some people may dismiss this as “too simple”, but listening is hard work. We’re not used to it any more. Sometimes, our mind wanders back to whatever we were doing before. Often, we’re already thinking about our reply when somebody is talking to us. Of course, no one wants to appear stupid, so we start thinking about what we want to say. That means we’re not listening properly. Again, Julian Treasure can be of help here: “You can trust your mouth to come up with the right thing when the other person is finished.”

Practise with your team

There are various approaches to listening. One that you’ve probably heard of is called “active listening”. This includes using fillers or affirmations like “hmm” or “OK” to show the

other person that you’re really listening. To be honest, this is not my kind of listening. This just doesn’t feel authentic to me. While you’re busy remembering to say “hmm” or “OK”, you’re not fully listening.

Let me come back to Julian Treasure’s quote at the beginning. To be a good listener, you should “allow the other person to fill you”. If you’re full of things you want to say and do to demonstrate that you’re listening, then filling isn’t possible; listening isn’t possible. (It can’t be a coincidence that SILENT is an anagram of LISTEN.) Thus, it’s beneficial to be “empty” when listening to somebody else. You’ll understand exactly what that means in a minute.

There’s a simple but great exercise you can do to work on your listening skills. It’s based on the concept of “deep listening” that I learned about during an MBSR (mindfulness-based stress reduction) seminar.

The exercise

Get together in pairs. A starts talking about something — how he and the team have developed in the past six months, for example. B is listening. A and B should be facing each other, either sitting or standing up.

Now comes the scary part: B shouldn’t be looking at A. She should turn her head away or close her eyes if she wants. B’s only assignment is: listen and be aware of everything that goes

on inside you while listening to A. Listen closely to A, but also pay attention to what it does to your body, mind and heart:

Body: What sensations arise?

Mind: What thoughts arise?

Heart: What emotions arise?

This is not about getting lost in thoughts or emotions — just becoming aware of them. Do that for five to ten minutes. Then, share your experiences and switch. After that, share again.

The listening effect

It may not sound spectacular, but it was for me and for the many teams I've coached. It's always a great experience in both roles.

Of course, for both roles, the way this conversation is structured is quite unusual. As a listener, I initially thought it was rude not to look at the person talking to me. I also thought I would miss something important by not looking at the speaker. But, actually, that wasn't the case. It was a great experience. I really listened, and thoughts, emotions, sensations arose, exploded like fireworks. Within seconds, my mind found commonalities, similarities, objections to the words I heard, and they resulted in joy, sadness and curiosity. And, yes, I felt a closer connection to that person than before — just from ten minutes of really listening.

Then, I shared my thoughts and emotions with my partner, and she shared hers. My first

concern (isn't that rude?) was eliminated. After I had shared what I experienced, she said that maybe nobody had ever listened to her like that before.

And I understood: by telling her how her words affected me, she understood that I had been fully listening to her. Being that open and sharing all this creates or increases trust and the connection between people.

As eye-opening as this exercise was for me, I wouldn't recommend turning away from your team members and closing your eyes when they speak to you. But perhaps the exercise will give you a new perspective on how your team can practise listening.

So, the next time you feel frustrated that some team members don't have their cameras on while you're talking to them in a meeting, be kind to them and to yourself. Maybe they're just practising deep listening.

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stumble over sth.

► über etw. stolpern

research

► Recherche(n)

odd ► merkwürdig

wildly ► hier: völlig

talk ► Vortrag

overrated

► überbewertet

bias ► Voreingenommenheit;
hier: Tendenz

environment

► hier: Umfeld

compelling

► zwingend; hier: fesselnd

promote sb.

► jmdn. befördern

empathize

► sich einfühlen

impact ► Einfluss, Wirkung

fulfil sth.

► etw. erfüllen

issue ➔ Problem**affect sth.**

➔ etw. beeinflussen, beeinträchtigen

dismiss sth.

➔ etw. abtun

filler ➔ Füllwort**affirmation**

➔ Bestätigung

quote ➔ Zitat**coincidence** ➔ Zufall**thus** ➔ daher**beneficial**

➔ vorteilhaft

mindfulness

➔ Achtsamkeit

scary *ifml.*

➔ beängstigend; hier: verstorend

assignment ➔ Auftrag,

Aufgabe

sensation ➔ Gefühl**rude** ➔ unhöflich**commonality**

➔ Gemeinsamkeit

objection ➔ Einwand**eye-opening**

➔ erhellend

2. The neighbours play music so loudly that you can [beep] it through the wall.

➔ The neighbours play music so loudly that you can hear it through the wall.

3. I'd rather [beep] to my own music.

➔ I'd rather listen to my own music.

4. We don't get on very well, so I never know what to [beep] to him about.

➔ We don't get on very well, so I never know what to talk to him about.

5. I [beep] French quite well, but when I [beep] to French podcasts, I find them a bit hard to follow at times.

➔ I speak French quite well, but when I listen to French podcasts, I find them a bit hard to follow at times.

6. My grandmother pretends she can't [beep] anything, but I think she just can't be bothered to [beep] to what any of us have to say.

➔ My grandmother pretends she can't hear anything, but I think she just can't be bothered to listen to what any of us have to say.

Sion: Did you get all of those right? Let's revise the rules! The verb "hear" is used to talk about when our ears passively receive sound. For example, if someone dropped a glass, you'd hear

[15] Exercise: Don't mix us up!

Sion: Do you know the difference between "hear" and "listen" and "speak" and "talk"? It's time to find out. You will hear a series of sentences with one or two missing words. Replace the beep sounds with one of these four verbs to build meaningful sentences. After you've completed the exercise, you'll hear a short explanation of the difference between "hear" and "listen" and "speak" and "talk". Are you ready? Let's go!

1. Jason's boss needed to [beep] to him about a formal complaint.
2. Jason's boss needed to speak to him about a formal complaint.

the noise of breaking glass. When we use the verb “listen”, a choice is involved. For example, people listen to the radio because they want to listen to it. “Speak” and “talk” are closely related, but “speak” is more formal than “talk”. For example, someone might “speak” to their doctor about a health issue, but “talk” to a friend about their plans for the weekend. When referring to languages, the verb “speak” is used instead of “talk”. If you got any of the answers wrong, then go back and try the exercise again.

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get on well

UK
► sich gut verstehen

bothered: not be - to do sth.

► etw. nicht tun müssen

revise sth.

► etw. wiederholen

issue

► Problem

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH FOR...

The office

[16] Exercise: Tricky translations M

Sion: Now, let's continue by doing a vocabulary exercise on some office-related false friends. 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!

Sion: This word refers to a cardboard or plastic cover that is used to hold loose papers. Translate the following word into English.

German: Mappe

English: folder

Sion: Don't say “map” as this refers to a precise drawing of a place, such as a country or a town, that is used to help people to get from one location to another. Translate the following sentence.

German: Die Mitarbeiter dürfen keine Mappen nach Hause mitnehmen.

English: Employees are not allowed to take home any folders.

cardboard ► Pappe

[17] Exercise: Don't confuse M

Sion: 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 "map" or "folder"—in the singular or the plural—instead of the beep. Then you'll hear the correct sentence again. Ready?

1. We got lost because the [beep] was wrong.
→ We got lost because the map was wrong.
2. Have you seen the red [beep] with the project description in it?
→ Have you seen the red folder with the project description in it?

There are two beeps in the next sentence.

3. He collects [beep], which he keeps in five [beep]—one for each continent.
→ He collects maps, which he keeps in five folders—one for each continent.

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

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SKILL UP!

Numbers

[18] Exercise: Essential number-related words M

Sion: OK, let's "skill up" on our language now with some words that are essential when talking about numbers. First, you'll hear a definition of a word. Then, you'll hear two suggestions for the word that is being defined: a) and b). In the pause, choose the correct option. OK? Here's the first one.

1. The number 100 has three...
a) digits.
b) digitals.
→ a) is right. If you talk about the number of "digits" in a number, then you are referring to how many numerals there are in that number. For example, 30 is a two-digit number. "Digital", on the other hand, is an adjective used to describe electronic technology.
2. You can refer to a part of something in relation to a whole as a...
a) quarter.
b) percentage.
→ b) is right. You can refer to a part of something in relation to a whole as a "percentage". A "quarter" is the same as one fourth or 25 per cent.

3. A number that is expressed as a proportion of a whole number is a...
- a) breakage.
 - b) fraction.
- b) is right. A “fraction” is a number resulting from the division of a whole number. In general, the word “fraction” also refers to a tiny part of something. “Breakage” is the act or result of breaking something.
4. The amount of money that is paid to someone for their services is a...
- a) fee.
 - b) deposit.
- a) is right. A “fee” is the money that is charged for the use of services. The word “fee” is also used for the money that you pay for membership of an organization. For example, gyms have membership fees. A “deposit” can refer to the sum of money that you pay when you begin renting a flat, which is then returned to you when moving out, providing nothing has been damaged. The word “deposit” can also refer to the money you pay into a bank account or the money that you pay as the first part of a larger payment.
5. The total amount of something before taking anything away is...
- a) gross.
 - b) net.
- a) is right. “Gross” refers to a total amount before any deductions. The amount remaining after any other items have been taken away is “net”.
6. The total sum is reached by...
- a) calculating all items.
 - b) adding up all items.
- b) is right. “Add items up” means “put items together to get a total”. “Calculate” refers to the act of using numbers to find out a solution, for example, the total cost of something.
7. If you take something away from a total amount, you...
- a) divide.
 - b) deduct.
- b) is right. For example, to get the net amount of something, you have to “deduct” particular items from the gross amount. “Divide” means “split”.
8. Volume is measured in...
- a) cubicles.
 - b) cubic metres.
- b) is right. “Cubic metres” are the units used to measure the volume of a container. A “cubicle” is a small, separate area of a room, for example a toilet cubicle or a workspace within a larger office.

9. The straight line that crosses from one side of a circle to the other side, going through the centre of the circle is the...

- a) radius.
- b) diameter.
- b) is right. The “diameter” is the straight line that goes from one side of a circle to the other, running through its centre. The “radius” is a straight line between the centre of a circle and any point on its outer edge. The radius is therefore half of the diameter.

10. The surface area of a flat is measured in...

- a) square roots.
- b) square feet.
- b) is right. Floor space is measured in “square feet”. “Square root” is a number that, when multiplied by itself, produces a particular number — for example, the square root of 16 is 4 because 4 multiplied by 4 is 16.

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

[19] Text and exercise: Collocations

Sion: Now, we'll look at some collocations. These are words that frequently go together to form word partnerships. Listen carefully to the following text about registering your new appliance to get a guarantee. Then, we'll do an exercise on it.

Thank you for choosing a SUPERIOR appliance. Please register your appliance to activate your two-year guarantee. You will find the model number and the serial number on the back of your appliance.

If you wish to extend your guarantee to three years for £44.76, please provide your account number and credit card number.

Sion: 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. The number that manufacturers give products so they can identify them is the...
- **model number.** The number that manufacturers give products so they can identify them is the model number.
2. The number showing the position of an item in a series is the...
- **serial number.** The number showing the position of an item in a series is the serial number.
3. To pay an invoice, you have to know the recipient's...

- **account number.** To pay an invoice, you have to know the recipient's account number.
4. If you pay for something online using a Visa card, you have to provide your...
- **credit card number.** If you pay for something online using a Visa card, you have to provide your credit card number.

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

appliance ➔ Gerät;
auch: Haushaltsgut

provide sth.

➔ hier: etw. angeben

manufacturer
➔ Hersteller(in)

item ➔ Artikel

recipient

➔ Empfänger(in)

[20] Dialogue and exercise: Buying an office

Sion: In this final exercise, we'll test your understanding of some of the vocabulary used in the following dialogue between Sanjeev and his business partner, Meera. In this dialogue, they are talking about buying a new office. Are you ready? Listen carefully. Let's go!

Meera: Have a look at this space, Sanjeev. It's in the city centre and less than half a mile from the train station and the Metrolink station.

Sanjeev: How much is it and how big is it?

Meera: It's £850,000 for 5,322 square feet.

Sanjeev: How much is that in square metres?

Meera: That's 494.43 square metres. It's divided up into 14 offices and has a kitchen and toilets.

Sanjeev: Hmm, it's in a good location and for a reasonable price, too, but we don't need that much space.

Meera: We could rent out the offices we don't need.

Sanjeev: True. How much stamp duty would we have to pay?

Meera: Let's see... you pay nothing on the first £150,000, two per cent on £150,001 to £250,000 and then five per cent on the amount above £250,000.

Sanjeev: There must be a stamp duty calculator online. That's too hard to work out! [types] Ah, here we are! [reads] "Please enter a numerical value." So, £850,000. The stamp duty would be £32,000.

Meera: It's newly renovated, so we wouldn't have to spend anything on that. It says there are approximately £30,000 of costs per annum — like service charges, utilities, agent fees, etc. If we rent out some office space, it should easily cover those expenses, leaving us with a nice little net income.

Sion: Now, let's test your understanding of some of the words and phrases used in the dia-

logue that you have just heard. You will hear a series of incomplete definitions. Choose either option **a)** or **b)** to complete each sentence. You will hear the correct answer after the ping sound that follows each question. Ready? Let's go!

1. A reasonable price is...

- a) considered to be a fair price.
- b) considered to be a very high price.
- The correct answer is **a)**. A “reasonable price” is considered to be a fair price.

2. Stamp duty is...

- a) a governmental tax that is placed on legal documents, usually those involved in the transfer of property.
- b) the fee that buyers pay estate agents for helping them to complete the purchase of a property.
- The correct answer is **a)**. “Stamp duty” is a governmental tax that is placed on legal documents, usually those involved in the transfer of property.

3. If you are asked to enter a numerical value on a website, then...

- a) you need to enter both numbers and letters.
- b) you need to enter just numbers.
- The correct answer is **b)**. If you are asked to enter a “numerical value” on a website, then you need to enter just numbers.

4. If you have to pay an amount of money **per annum,...**

- a) this means you have to pay it every year.
- b) this means you have to pay it as a one-off fee.
- The correct answer is **a)**. If you have to pay an amount of money “per annum”, this means you have to pay it every year.

5. If someone is required to pay **approximately £50 for something, then...**

- a) this means they have to pay exactly £50.
- b) this means they have to pay around £50.
- The correct answer is **b)**. If someone has to pay “approximately” £50 for something, then this means they have to pay around £50.

6. In this context, **service charges typically include...**

- a) the cost of property maintenance, repairs and insurance.
- b) the cost associated with the everyday running of the business.
- The correct answer is **a)**. In this context, “service charges” typically include the cost of property maintenance, repairs and insurance.

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

reasonable

► hier: angemessen

stamp duty UK

► Stempel-, Urkundensteuer

calculator

► Taschenrechner;

hier: Rechenautomat

work sth. out

► etw. berechnen, ausrechnen

per annum

► pro Jahr

utilities

► (Wohn-)Nebenkosten

agent fee

► Maklergebühr

place sth. on sth.

► hier: etw. für/auf etw.

erheben

property

► Immobilie(n)

estate agent UK

► Immobilienmakler(in)

purchase

► Kauf

one-off UK

► einmalig

maintenance

► Instandhaltung

insurance

► Versicherung

run sth.

► hier: etw. betreiben

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CONCLUSION

[21] Until next time... ☺

Sion: Thanks so much for joining us for another issue of Business Spotlight Audio. We'll be back again next month with more articles, exercises and interviews for you to enjoy. In the meantime, take care and have fun practising your business English!