

EASY E

CEF level A2

MEDIUM M

CEF levels B1–B2

ADVANCED A

CEF levels C1–C2

CEF: European Framework of Reference for Languages

[1] Let's get started!**Introduction****EASY**

Sion Dayson: Welcome to Business Spotlight Audio. This time, we're taking you on a journey to Japan. We'll be talking about the matcha industry and its supply-chain issues. Then, we'll hear from three international professionals who have done business with Japan. What was their experience like? And what did they learn about Japanese workplace culture?

You'll also have a chance to check your understanding of language related to natural disasters, delegating and insurance. And, in the roundtable discussion, our editors will talk about the topic of work-life balance and how the pandemic impacted their working patterns. There's a lot more, too, but I won't give it all away. Let's get started with an exercise on the language used in news reports.

supply chain ▶ Lieferketteissue ▶ Problemeditor ▶ Redakteur(in)topic ▶ Themaimpact sth.

▶ sich auf etw. auswirken

pattern ▶ Muster, Modellgive sth. away

▶ etw. verraten

[2] Exercise: Find the mistakes in the news report

Names and News

MEDIUM

Sion: Listen to this news report. It has five language mistakes in it. Can you identify them? I will tell you the answers and explain why they are mistakes after the report. First, listen carefully.

Here in Tokyo, big crowds is gathering for the yearly cherry blossom festival. It's a big tourist distraction, drawing people from far and close. Local officials express their concern that climate change could im pact this important event for the city in the future. This year, the blossoms appeared later than expected — a reason of great distress for the local tourism board.

Sion: Did you hear the five mistakes? Let's listen once more. If you have already found the mistakes, try to correct them. You might need to change a verb conjugation, a tense or a word choice, for example.

Here in Tokyo, big crowds is gathering for the yearly cherry blossom festival. It's a big tourist distraction, drawing people from far and close. Local officials express their concern that climate change could impact this important event

for the city in the future. This year, the blossoms appeared later than expected — a reason of great distress for the local tourism board.

Sion: OK. If you want to compare notes with a partner, now is the time to pause the track. If not, I will tell you the mistakes in the order they were made.

- ▶ The first mistake is “big crowds is gathering”. The noun is in the plural, so it should be “big crowds **are** gathering”.
- ▶ The second mistake is “tourist distraction”. This is the wrong word choice. It should be “tourist **attraction**”, which means “something that is of interest to tourists”.
- ▶ The third mistake is “from far and close”. The correct set expression is “from far and **wide**”, which means “from a long way away”.
- ▶ The fourth mistake is “Local officials express”. The correct tense here is either the present perfect (“**have expressed**”) or the simple past (“**expressed**”), depending on whether the connection to the present situation or a specific moment in the past is the focus.
- ▶ And finally, the fifth mistake is “a reason of”. The correct phrase here is “a **cause of**”. The noun “reason” goes with the preposition “for” not “of”, and it explains why something is the way it is. “Cause”, on the other hand, is something that has an effect on something else

distraction • Ablenkung

impact sth.

• sich auf etw. auswirken

distress • Misere

tourism board

• Fremdenverkehrsverband

[3] Using the right prepositions when talking about data

Facts and Figures

EASY

Sion: Talking about facts and figures can add credibility to your writing and presentations. But one of the biggest problems for learners is knowing which prepositions to use with different types of data. This exercise will help you to practise how to use prepositions in phrases about data and facts. You will hear a series of sentences with a beep where a missing word should be. Choose the correct option to fill the gap. Let's get started.

- Sales decreased [beep] 12.5 per cent this year.
 - in
 - by

➤ The correct answer is **b)**: "Sales decreased by 12.5 per cent this year."
- The current rate of growth stands [beep] five per cent per year.
 - at
 - on

➤ The correct answer is **a)**: "The current rate of growth stands at five per cent per year."
- There are two beeps in the next sentence. We have seen an increase [beep] sales this year, but they've only increased [beep] a mere 0.5 per cent.

- in; by
 - of; at
- The correct answer is **a)**: "We have seen an increase in sales this year, but they've only increased by a mere 0.5 per cent."
- Our gross revenue climbed [beep] €3.5 million this year.
 - on
 - to

➤ The correct answer is **b)**: "Our gross revenue climbed to €3.5 million this year."
 - There are two beeps in the next sentence. The number of users on our platform rose sharply last year — [beep] 500 [beep] 5,000.
 - from; to
 - to; from

➤ The correct answer is **a)**: "The number of users on our platform rose sharply last year — from 500 to 5,000."

Sion: Now, let's focus on the grammar. You will hear a series of situations describing how a preposition is used in context when talking about data. Then, you'll hear an example sentence with one or two missing prepositions. Choose the correct option. You will hear the answer after each question. Ready? Let's begin.

- This preposition is used to show how much an amount has changed. For example, "The value of my shares increased [beep] €10,000 overnight."

- a) in
b) by
➤ The correct answer is **b)**. You say something has changed “by” a certain amount. This is also true of changes in percentage: “The value of my shares increased by ten per cent overnight.”

7. This preposition is used to introduce exact figures. For example, “The apartment was valued [beep] €260,000.”

- a) at
b) on
➤ The correct answer is **a)**. To introduce a fixed figure, use the preposition “at”. Verbs that are often used in this context are “estimate”, “peak”, “stand”.

8. These prepositions are used to talk about a range between values. For example, “The value per unit rose [beep] £200 [beep] £2,000.”

- a) from; to
b) in; to
➤ The correct answer is **a)**. The prepositions “from” and “to” are used to introduce a range between values.

9. This preposition is used to introduce a figure after nouns describing a change in value. For example, “We’ve seen a profit increase [beep] €11,000 per annum.”

- a) of
b) in
➤ The correct answer is **a)**. The preposition “of”

is used to introduce a figure after nouns describing a change in value.

10. This preposition is used after a noun describing a change in value and before a noun that shows what has changed. For example, “We didn’t expect a drop [beep] sales this year, but that’s the reality.”

- a) in
b) of
➤ The correct answer is **a)**. If you wanted to add a percentage to this sentence, you could do so by adding it before the word “drop”. For example, “We didn’t expect a 15 per cent drop in sales this year, but that’s the reality.”

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 10-11

credibility ➤ Glaubwürdigkeit

gap ➤ Lücke

decrease ➤ zurückgehen

mere ➤ lediglich, bloß

gross revenue

➤ Bruttumsatz(erlös)

sharply ➤ stark

share ➤ Aktie

peak

➤ einen Höchststand erreichen

drop ➤ Rückgang

[4] Dialogue: Preparing for a natural disaster

Climate

MEDIUM

Sion: Listen to the following dialogue between the HR manager and the CEO of a food packaging company in Kyoto. They have just updated the staff guidelines for what to do in case of a natural disaster, such as an earthquake. They are checking the document together before sending it out to the heads of department to share with their respective teams.

Daphne: I've just finished the first draft of our new staff guidelines on what to do in case of an earthquake. Shall we take a look at the document together?

Carl: Yes, hopefully, we won't need to put any of this into practice, but better safe than sorry, right? Unfortunately, seismic activity is pretty common here in Japan.

Daphne: Yes, it's always best to be prepared. So, firstly, I remind everyone not to use lifts in the event of an earthquake.

Carl: Very sensible advice. I'd include a line about using the stairs to evacuate, but only if necessary. Hmm, I think the first point should probably be about what to do while the tremor is actually happening. Let's move the point about dropping to the floor and taking cover up

to the top.

Daphne: The order makes more sense like that. Now, I've also included some designated assembly points, which were recommended by the earthquake specialist who visited the plant recently.

Carl: Great. We should mention where the first-aid kits are located, too.

Daphne: I mentioned that on the next page.

Carl: Hmm. I think we need a big, clearly marked graphic of the floor plan with all the assembly points and first-aid-kit stations. That way, they will be easy to locate.

Daphne: You're right. I think visuals would work better than bullet points for those two elements. I'll put that together this afternoon.

Carl: Great. You can also include the evacuation routes on the graphic.

Daphne: Will do. Oh, and I forgot to mention: I've included the details of the emergency coordinator for each department in the document.

Carl: Good. It would be worth including the names and contact details of the deputy emergency coordinators for each department, too — just to be on the safe side.

Daphne: I hadn't thought of that: I am glad I ran this by you. Once I've entered those edits, I will send you the document for a final review.

HR (human resources)

• Personalwesen

CEO (chief executive officer)

• Geschäftsführer(in)

earthquake • Erdbeben

department • Abteilung

draft • Entwurf

sensible • vernünftig

tremor • Beben

take cover • Schutz suchen

designated

• gekennzeichnet

assembly point

• Sammelplatz

plant • Werk

first-aid kit • Verbandskasten, Erste-Hilfe-Koffer

floor plan • Grundriss

visuals • Bildmaterial

bullet point • Gliederungs-, Aufzählungspunkt

evacuation route

• Fluchtweg

emergency • Notfall

deputy • stellvertretend

run sth. by sb. • etw. mit jmdm. kurz besprechen

edit • Überarbeitung

review • Überprüfung

[5] Exercise: Natural disasters?

Climate

EASY

Sion: OK, now, let's test your understanding of the dialogue you have just listened to. Decide if the following statements based on the dialogue are true or false. You will hear the answers after the sound that follows each statement.

1. Daphne has already sent the draft of the guidelines to the department heads for feedback.
 - This statement is false. Daphne wants Carl to check the guidelines before she sends them out to the department heads.
2. Carl doesn't think it will be long before the guidelines will need to be followed in the real world.
 - This statement is false. While Carl mentions that "seismic activity" is "common" in Japan, he doesn't say anything about expecting an earthquake anytime soon.
3. The first point in the guidelines was originally about avoiding elevator usage.
 - This statement is true. Daphne told people not to use the "lifts" in the event of an earthquake. "Elevators" is the US English equivalent of "lifts".
4. Carl just wants the final document to include a bullet-point list of the assembly

points, the location of the first-aid kits and evacuation routes.

- This statement is false. Carl wants all this information to be displayed visually, in a graphic.
5. After entering Carl's requested changes, Daphne will send the guidelines to Carl for one last check.
 - This statement is true. Daphne says she will send the guidelines to Carl for a "final review" after making the changes.

Sion: Great work. Did you get those right? If so, well done. If not, just listen to the dialogue again and try the exercise once more. You can do it!

[6] Interview: The matcha industry

Food Industry

ADVANCED

Sion: Do you enjoy a cup of matcha in the morning? Well, you are not alone. In 2025, the BBC reported that the world's thirst for matcha was drying up global supplies. This Japanese tea, which is immediately recognizable due to its bright green colour, became more popular thanks to the increase in tourism to Japan after the Covid-19 pandemic. And online, the hashtag "Matcha Tok" has generated tens of millions of views. These days, the product can be found in everything from pastries to drinks.

Business Spotlight editor Rachel Preece spoke to Katherine Swift, the founder of OMGTea, a business that specializes in top-quality organic matcha. Swift started the business in 2014, before the beverage was widely known. Her principle interest in the drink was its health benefits.

Swift's mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer and she wanted to find her an antioxidant-packed, healthy, energizing drink. In this first interview extract, Swift explained her personal connection to the drink. In her response, she mentions "EGCG", which stands for "epigallocatechin gallate". Don't worry, even I found that hard to say — and I don't expect

you to remember it. The chemical compound EGCG has lots of health benefits, ranging from improving your metabolic rate to promoting brain health. She also mentions "L-theanine", an amino acid found in matcha tea. It's quite the science class today. Anyway, let's hear what Katherine said.

Katherine Swift: So, I wanted Mum to drink the green tea with the most EGCG in it. Matcha has about 140 times the EGCG of regular green tea. So, I just started buying matcha from Japan for personal use for me and Mum. We started drinking it. I'm like, "This stuff's amazing." We're taking a bit of control back. But it was making us feel really good as well because of this unique combination of caffeine and L-theanine. And I just thought, "I've got to spread the word about this amazing powder." Because it wasn't well known at all at that stage.

Sion: Katherine then spoke about the difficulties she had in the early stages of the business.

Katherine: When I first set the business up, I was doing farmers' markets locally, that type of thing. And, literally, I would say, 99 per cent of the people had no idea what matcha was. So, there was a massive sort of education piece around it. It was difficult, you know. Most people didn't know what it was. Mainstream retailers: it was just so not on their radar. So, my listings initially started with a couple of local health-food stores.

Sion: In recent years, matcha has become more popular. Katherine spoke about the impact of this on her business.

Katherine: I won't say that we're not seeing issues with supply because we are, because the demand has literally tripled in the last year. There's only a certain amount of matcha at the moment that Japan can produce. And the global demand is massively outstripping that.

We've been getting really big demands off customers, like, you know, "Have you got ten tonnes?" Literally that amount of matcha. And we've had to turn people down because we just can't. We haven't got that, you know — particularly the higher grades as well. There's a finite amount of matcha farmers. There's a finite amount of matcha stone mills.

And also, with global warming, it's been like a bit of a perfect storm because the harvests have been affected from extreme heat in the summer and then the cold in the winter. So, last year, for example, when obviously this massive growth in demand happened, the harvest was the worst it'd been in like 20 years, and the yield was like 25 per cent less than it would have been. I never thought I'd be in this position where, you know, we'd be stressing about not being able to get enough.

Sion: Katherine then spoke about the producer she works with, Aiya Japan, and how they became an investor in her brand.

Katherine: The producer that I identified as the best quality, that was going to provide me consistently good matcha, was Aiya Japan. They're the biggest producer of quality matcha in Japan. They've been around since 1888. I've only ever worked with them. They're a family-run business. I've been on trade missions to Japan to try and find, you know, alternative suppliers if I needed them. And I've really struggled to find anybody that was able to provide me the quality and the consistent quality. I knew every harvest that my triple-A grade was going to be triple-A grade the next harvest. The customer was always going to be happy with OMGTea's offering because that's so important to us. But anyway, they contacted me in 2023 and said, we've watched you grow over the last nine years and we want to get involved. So, they're now major investors in my business. So, that's really protecting me from what's gone on.

Sion: And finally, Katherine spoke about how she envisions the evolution of the matcha market.

Katherine: Matcha is just going to continue to grow. I think it's almost a category on its own now. I think this global trend in health and well-being is not going away. I think Japan are going to crank up production. I think they need to. You know, they're implementing new farming techniques. They're encouraging new farmers into matcha farming. They're improving the

sort of production and processing capabilities.
So, it's going to continue to grow without a doubt.

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 28–29

dry sth. up

► etw. versiegen lassen

supplies

 ► Vorräte

pastry

 ► Backware; Pastete

editor

 ► Redakteur(in)

compound

 ► Verbindung

amazing

 (jfm.)

► toll, fantastisch

unique

 ► einzigartig

literally

 ► buchstäblich

retailer

 ► Einzelhändler(in)

health-food store

► Reformhaus

triple

 ► sich verdreifachen

outstrip sth.

► etw. übertreffen

off; get sth. ~ sb.

 (non-stand.)

► etw. von jmdm. bekommen

turn sb. down

► jmdn. abweisen

grade

 ► Güteklasse

finite

 ► begrenzt

stone mill

 ► Steinmühle

perfect storm

 ► Verkettung unglücklicher Umstände

harvest

 ► Ernte

affected

 ► betroffen

yield

 ► Ertrag

consistently

► gleichbleibend

trade mission

 ► Handelsreise

supplier

 ► Lieferant(in)

envision sth.

► sich etw. vorstellen

crank sth. up

► etw. ankurbeln

[7] Exercise: The matcha industry

Food Industry

MEDIUM

Sion: OK, now let's test your understanding of the interview you have just listened to. You will hear a series of extracts from the interview. Each one is followed by a question. Choose the correct response: **a)** or **b)**. Ready? Let's start.

1. "Matcha has about 140 times the EGCG of regular green tea." What point is Katherine making?
 - a) Matcha has a richer flavour than regular green tea.
 - b) Matcha has higher levels of a beneficial chemical compound.
 - The correct answer is **b)**. Matcha contains high levels of the chemical compound EGCG.
2. "I've got to spread the word about this amazing powder. Because it wasn't well known at all at that stage." What was the problem when Katherine first set up her business?
 - a) There was a gap in consumer awareness.
 - b) The health benefits hadn't been established.
 - The correct answer is **a)**. The problem was that not many people knew about matcha, so there was a "gap in consumer awareness".
3. "Mainstream retailers: it was just so not on their radar." What does Katherine mean by
 - "not on their radar"?
 - a) they hadn't considered it
 - b) they hadn't researched it
 - The correct answer is **a)**. Katherine meant they hadn't considered matcha or weren't aware of its existence.
4. "There's only a certain amount of matcha at the moment that Japan can produce. And the global demand is massively outstripping that." What does Katherine mean by "outstripping that"?
 - a) surpassing the amount of matcha being produced
 - b) reducing the quality of the matcha being produced
 - The correct answer is **a)**. The demand "surpasses" what is being produced or, in other words, "is more than" what is being produced.
5. "There's a finite amount of matcha farmers. There's a finite amount of matcha stone mills." What does "finite" mean?
 - a) growing
 - b) limited
 - The correct answer is **b)**. The word "finite" means "limited".
6. "I've been on trade missions to Japan to try and find, you know, alternative suppliers if I needed them." What is a "trade mission"?
 - a) a trip to explore business opportunities and partnerships

- b)** a trip to sell products abroad
- The correct answer is **a)**. A “trade mission” is a trip to explore business opportunities and partnerships. It isn’t always abroad, but in this case it was.
7. “I think Japan are going to crank up production.” What does Katherine mean by “crank up production”?
- a)** increase production
 - b)** diversify production sites
- The correct answer is **a)**. “Crank up” means “increase”.

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 28–29

establish sth.

• hier: etw. nachweisen

research sth.

• etw. erforschen

[8] Roundtable: Finding balance at work

Work Life

MEDIUM

Melita Cameron-Wood: Hello, listeners. This is *Business Spotlight Audio*, and this month, we're talking about all things work-life balance. I'm here today with our editor-in-chief, Judith Gilbert. Hello, Judith.

Judith: Hi, Melita.

Melita: And I've also got Richard More, our language editor. You all right, Richard?

Richard: Hi, Melita. I'm fine, thanks.

Melita: I don't know about you, but during the pandemic, things changed for a lot of people, and the world doesn't really feel the same as it used to. Would you agree with that? Do you think that work-life balance really changed a lot during the Covid-19 pandemic? Did you feel that impact personally?

Judith: Well, I was working freelance at the time, so that enabled me to be a lot more flexible. I think it would have been a greater change if I'd been employed at a company and used to going into an office. But I worked when I could, and it enabled me to spend more time with my family, which was a nice thing. So, for me, it was, not as big of a change as it might have been for other people.

Richard: I went from 100 per cent working in

an office to 100 per cent working from home. And I actually remember it was Friday the 13th when the managers came around and told us all to take our laptops and go home. Working from home was nice in many ways, because you were very flexible. But I did notice that these usually clear boundaries of work time and home time started to blur. So, you know, you don't stop work at five o'clock necessarily. Or you go back to your desk after dinner and look at something. And that happened. The longer we were at home, the more that happened, which, I guess, has advantages and disadvantages. You know, sometimes, I did a load of washing in the afternoon, or went for a walk, or that sort of thing.

Melita: Yeah, I think because it was a new situation, there was a level of mistrust in a way. People didn't know, "Oh, is my employer going to trust me to work from home and do everything I'm supposed to do?" So, I definitely felt like some people I knew were going above and beyond and working late, just to show that they were really pulling their weight, whereas others said, "Oh, this is great that we've got so much flexibility." If you had flexible working hours, and it didn't matter so much when you were doing your tasks, then it freed up time during the day if you wanted to go to the gym and you could come back and do your tasks later on. So, I think a lot of it depended on the type of company you were working for. Also, the level of

trust in that company culture as well. Now it's 2026, we're no longer in the middle of a global pandemic, but would you say that you still see the knock-on effects in your work-life balance today? Do you typically work outside of normal working hours?

Judith: I very often find myself writing a lot of emails very early in the morning. I certainly would never expect anybody to answer at that time. Not so much really late at night. When I close down my laptop in the evening, I'm glad to keep it closed, and I certainly avoid working on the weekend, except maybe answering a mail or two. I've got it all on my phone. I'll see something come in and check, and if it's just as easy to answer, then I will answer then, or if something occurs to me, I'll write it down. But I'm pretty good at managing my time. The only time that I really feel I could get better managed is lunchtime. Lunch for me is often rushed. Today was a great example of that; sitting at my desk, camera off and eating my lunch during a meeting. But for the rest of it, I'm pretty good at that. Richard, what about you?

Richard: I have to admit, I've worked at all of these times — at early mornings or late at night or at the weekends — but not all the time, only occasionally. And I generally only do things that I enjoy doing at that time. So, you know, sometimes, you have an idea, you just have to pursue it right away and write things down, otherwise,

you might forget.

Melita: I think sometimes there is a sense of urgency, particularly in what we do, where a lot of our projects are ideas-based. Sometimes, you get inspiration after doing something and you think, "Oh my goodness, this would be a great article, or this would be a great podcast episode." I think there's quite a lot of emotions involved in time-keeping as well, because sometimes we feel guilty if we are taking time out. Sometimes, there's an element of self-doubt, where people try to prove to everyone that they can do what they've set out to do. And I think in certain cultures as well, there's a lot of peer pressure, where people try to outdo their peers. And I don't think that's necessarily that healthy, but people sometimes get motivated for the wrong reasons.

Judith: Cultural differences really do play a role in that. You know, in the United States, people live to work. They don't work to live. That was always my sense of the work culture there, that if you're not doing a lot of work, then that's making a bad impression. That's one thing I enjoy about living in Europe.

Richard: But I think things are changing in two opposing directions, almost. On the one hand, there's more awareness of work-life balance and mental health and the importance of looking after yourself, but at the same time, we're seeing work trends coming from China: like "9–

9–6” is starting to spread around the world. So, you work 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. six days a week. And in China, that’s been normal for a long time, and now you’re starting to hear this phrase more often, also in Western economies, people are talking about it at least. But we’ll see, because young people are known for questioning this sort of slavish attention to your job.

Melita: I don’t think that people are necessarily going to be as willing to accept stipulations from the past. Do you think work-life balance is quite different when you talk to people from different generations? Is it a generational thing?

Richard: When you talk to young people now, you hear a lot of them questioning, you know, why should I work so much? And are these work emergencies really as bad as people make out? On the other hand, that might change when they get older, and they have more bills to pay. You might find that their attitude changes. But I know my parents’ generation were different. My dad worked very hard, and he identified so strongly with his job that he had a hard time when he came to retire, because he didn’t have that central thing in his life any more. But later in life, he sort of changed his attitude. He told me, “Work to a certain extent, but don’t go too far, otherwise, it’ll let you be unhappy in a greater level of comfort.” So, at some point it’s just not worth it any more.

Melita: Yeah, I think in a way, overworking

can kind of strip you of your identity, if your identity then just becomes what you do for a living.

Judith: Going back to what I said before about the work ethic in the States, I always used to think, if somebody woke up the average American in the workforce in the middle of the night, out of a deep sleep, and said, “Who are you? What are you?” they’d give you their job title. I think that tends to happen less here. As much as I love my job, I’d like to think I’m more than that.

Melita: Yeah, absolutely. And I think, sometimes, it’s easy to feel like we need to be producing 24/7, otherwise we’re not worth anything. But that is a false narrative.

Judith: That’s true.

Melita: But there are ways that we can improve our work-life balance. It might be taking a bit of time out for yourself. It might involve planning your schedule so you have a bit of time within your day where, maybe, you don’t have any meetings. These little adjustments can go a long way. Do you guys have any tips as to how to improve work-life balance?

Judith: Set priorities. Ask yourself, “What is the most urgent thing I have to do?” And “What is the most important?” Those two things aren’t always the same. And, of course,

“What will go away by itself if I don’t do it?” And “Is this going to matter in two weeks’ time? Is it going to matter in two years’ time?” I think that can give you a structure for prioritizing and managing your work and life.

Richard: Yeah, I think structure is the key here, both to structure your day and to structure individual tasks, so that you can break them down into manageable steps. Then, they don’t feel so big any more.

Melita: Yeah, I think that’s key, isn’t it? To fight overwhelm, to not let all of your tasks make you feel like you’re losing control. The main message is probably pace yourself, look after yourself. You are not just a worker, even if you work.

So, listeners, if any of this has resonated with you, and you think “I’ve got some great tips that haven’t been mentioned...”, then it would be great if you could get in contact with us and share them. And you can do that by contacting us on one of our socials.

You can find us on LinkedIn @business-spotlight, Instagram @business.spotlight_official and Facebook @BusinessSpotlight. We look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, take care. Bye.
Judith: Bye.

Richard: Goodbye.

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 30–32

editor-in-chief

► Chefredakteur(in)

impact ► Auswirkung(en)

boundary ► Grenze

blur ► sich verwischen

load of washing: do a ~
► eine Maschine Wäsche waschen

above and beyond: go ~

► mehr als seine Pflicht tun

pull one’s weight

► seinen Beitrag leisten

knock-on effect (UK)

► Folgewirkung

occur to sb. ► jmdm. einfallen

pursue sth.

► etw. weiterverfolgen

feel guilty

► sich schuldig fühlen, ein schlechtes Gewissen haben

set out to do sth.

► sich vornehmen, etw. zu tun

peer ► Kollege/Kollegin

outdo sb. ► jmdn. übertreffen

mental health

► psychische Gesundheit

stipulation

► Bedingung, Regelung

emergency

► hier: Ausnahmezustand

make sth. out as sth.

► hier: etw. als etw. empfinden

attitude

► Haltung, Einstellung

strip sb. of sth.

► jmdm. etw. nehmen

do sth. for a living

► etw. beruflich machen

schedule ► Zeitplan

long way: go a ~

► viel bewirken können

break sth. down

► etw. aufgliedern

manageable ► überschaubar,

leicht zu handhaben

overwhelm ► Überhäufung

pace oneself

► seine Kräfte einteilen

resonate with sb.

► bei jmdm. Widerhall finden

look forward to doing sth.

► sich darauf freuen, etw.

zu tun

[9] Exercise: Balance is key

Work Life

MEDIUM

Sion: Now, you'll hear a series of extracts taken from the roundtable discussion you have just heard. Each one has a missing word. Choose the correct option, **a)** or **b)**, to complete the sentence.

1. "Working from home was nice in many ways, because you were very flexible. But I did notice that these usually clear boundaries of work time and home time started to [beep]."

a) melt
b) blur

➤ The correct answer is **b)**. The verb "blur" means to "become less clear". The verb "melt" describes the transition from a solid to a liquid state.
2. "You know, sometimes, I did a [beep] of washing in the afternoon, or went for a walk, or that sort of thing."

a) load
b) pile

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. A "load" of washing is the amount you can fit in a washing machine. A "pile" of washing would just be a heap of clothes that need to be washed.

3. "I think because it was a new situation, there was a level of [beep] in a way."

a) disgust
b) mistrust

➤ The correct answer is **b)**. "Mistrust" is a lack of trust, which happens when you have no confidence in someone or something.
4. "If you had flexible working hours, and it didn't matter so much when you were doing your tasks, then it [beep] up time during the day if you wanted to go to the gym and you could come back and do your tasks later on."

a) freed
b) sped

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. The phrasal verb "free sth. up" means to "make sth. available that previously was not".
5. "The only time that I really feel I could get better managed is lunchtime. Lunch for me is often [beep]."

a) crushed
b) rushed

➤ The correct answer is **b)**. "Rushed" means "done quickly under time pressure".
6. "So, you know, sometimes, you have an idea, you just have to [beep] it right away and write things down, otherwise, you might forget."

a) prime
b) pursue

➤ The correct answer is **b)**. The verb "pursue" means "follow" or "chase".

7. “And I think in certain cultures as well, there’s a lot of peer pressure where people try to [beep] their peers.”

a) outdo

b) offset

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. The verb “outdo” means “do better than” and it is used in a competitive sense.

8. “Young people are known for questioning this sort of [beep] attention to your job.”

a) lavish

b) slavish

➤ The correct answer is **b)**. The adjective “slavish” means “submissive”.

9. “I don’t think that people are necessarily going to be as willing to accept [beep] from the past.”

a) stipulations

b) celebrations

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. “Stipulations” are “regulations” or “conditions”.

10. “My dad worked very hard, and he identified so strongly with his job that he had a hard time when he came to [beep].”

a) retire

b) rent

➤ The correct answer is **a)**. The verb “retire” means to “stop working”, usually having reached the usual age to do so, although this can happen earlier or later in some cases.

Sion: Well done! Did you get those right? If not,

go back and try this exercise again.

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 30–32

disgust ➤ Ekel, Abscheu

crushed ➤ zerquetscht

prime sb. ➤ jmdn. vorbereiten, fertig machen

offset (sth.)

➤ (etw.) aufwiegen

lavish ➤ aufwendig, üppig

submissive

➤ unterwürfig; hier: sklavisch

[10] Vox Pop: Intercultural business with Japan

Society

MEDIUM

Sion: Doing international business is as much about understanding each other's cultures as it is about logistics. *Business Spotlight Audio editor*, Melita Cameron-Wood, asked three business-people who either work or worked with Japanese business partners or colleagues to answer the following question: "What have you learned about Japanese workplace culture and communication styles from doing business with Japan?" The first person you will hear from is Tommy Crooks, the owner of The Edinburgh Natural Skincare Company. Listen carefully because I will test your understanding of what he said afterwards.

Tommy Crooks: Japanese business culture isn't entrepreneurial, like Western entrepreneurship. It's more about exactness and diligence. Every component is examined in the tiniest detail. All the data is taken into consideration. Everything is highly crafted. And every aspect of the business is run according to ancient Japanese traditions. For example, *kaizen*, which is a concept of continual improvement, is simply the norm in Japan, so rigorous quality-control

requirements are to be expected.

Actually, in China, where I also do business, there's even a manufacturing standard called "Japanese standard". This standard demands perfection. If they order 100 units of a product, the Japanese will expect 100 perfect units. They closely examine every single item we make to ensure compliance.

Every single component is looked at. There's a Japanese word *saitekika*, which means "optimization". And that concept is also essential in business over in Japan. They're always asking themselves, "How can this be optimized further?" Business in Japan isn't just about continual improvement, it's also about constant optimization.

Sion: OK, now decide if the following statements are true or false based on what Tommy said.

1. According to Tommy, Japanese companies tend to be less focused on creating new ventures than their Western counterparts.
 - ▶ This statement is true. Tommy describes Japanese business culture as being less "entrepreneurial" than Western business culture.
2. Tommy says that the Japanese concept of optimization ends with the delivery of the finished units.

► This statement is false. Tommy talks about the concepts of *kaizen* (continual improvement) and *saitekika* (optimization) as an ongoing process. It does not end with the delivery of finished products.

Sion: OK, now, you'll hear from Lynn Power, the founder of MASAMI, a premium haircare brand that uses Japanese ocean botanicals in their products. Lynn spoke to *Business Spotlight* about her experience of doing business with a Japanese seaweed company, which she has personally visited several times.

Lynn Power: We work with a Japanese family-owned seaweed company in Iwate. We've been working with them for about six years. And what I noticed about working with them in particular is, first of all, it's much more long-term-relationship focus and not as transactional. Secondly, they're very transparent about their sourcing, their relationship with the fishermen, their products. And then third, they took time to get to know us and to establish a relationship.

Sion: Decide whether the following statements based on what Lynn said are true or false.

1. After working with a Japanese seaweed company for around half-a-dozen years, Lynn concludes that the company focuses

on business relationships that withstand the test of time.

► This statement is true. Lynn says she's been working with the company for "about six years". She also says the company has a "much more long-term-relationship focus".

2. Lynn would have liked the company to have given her more information about where the seaweed comes from.

► This statement is false. Lynn praises the company for being "transparent about their sourcing" or, in other words, "honest about where their produce comes from".

Sion: And now, you'll hear from our final interview partner, Méli^sa Carvigant. Méli^sa used to work as a UX/UI designer for Rakuten, a Japanese financial technology company. She worked at their Barcelona office, but she regularly collaborated with Japanese colleagues and even had to travel to Japan on business once. In this extract, she refers to the polite suffix *-san* that is added to people's names as a sign of respect in Japan.

Méli^sa Carvigant: Something that really surprised me was that Japanese people are very thorough and organized. They document a lot — everything that they do, for example, any kinds of meeting minutes or decisions. And the reason for that is also so that they can

get organized internally and have their hierarchy systems work best because hierarchy and respect are very important.

So, there is a certain way to address your boss or your boss's boss. There is also a way to address your colleagues. So, for example, we know that even though we are not based in Japan, we address our colleagues in Japan with first name, *-san*. So, people would call me, for example, "Mélissa-san", and I would call people in Japan their first name and *-san*.

- Notes taken in meetings would be uploaded on to an internal database.
 - This statement is false. Mélissa says that, in her experience, the Japanese documented a lot, but she doesn't mention an internal database, even though she does mention "meeting minutes", which are notes taken during meetings.
- There are discrepancies between how the Japanese would address a colleague, their boss or their boss's boss, according to Mélissa.
 - This statement is true. "Discrepancies" are differences. Mélissa says there is a certain way to address each one of these people.

Sion: Did you get those right? If so, great job. If not, don't panic. Just try the exercise again.

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 36-39

editor ▶ Redakteur(in)

entrepreneurial

▶ unternehmerisch (denkend)

crafted ▶ gefertigt

run sth. ▶ etw. ausführen

manufacturing

▶ Herstellung

item ▶ Artikel

ensure sth.

▶ etw. sicherstellen

venture ▶ Projekt

counterpart ▶ Pendant

founder ▶ Gründer(in)

brand ▶ Marke

seaweed ▶ Meeresalgen

sourcing ▶ Beschaffung

conclude ▶ schlussfolgern

test of time: withstand the ~

▶ die Zeiten überdauern

produce ▶ Erzeugnisse

collaborate with sb.

▶ mit jmdn. zusammenarbeiten

minutes: the ~ ▶ Protokoll(e)

address sb. ▶ jmdn. anreden

[11] Exercise: Dividing up what needs to be done

Business Skills

EASY

Sion: This is an exercise on phrases that are useful when delegating tasks. First, we'll describe a situation, and you'll hear two words or phrases and then a sentence with a beep. In the pause, choose the word or phrase that you'll need instead of the beep. Then, you'll hear the correct sentence. Let's start!

1. You identify which tasks to delegate. Complete the sentence with "adjusted" OR "appropriate".
 - John has the most [beep] skill set for carrying out this task.
 - John has the most appropriate skill set for carrying out this task.
2. You pay someone a compliment in the hope of getting their help. Complete the sentence with "valuable" OR "variable".
 - Your expertise in sales would be really [beep] for this project.
 - Your expertise in sales would be really valuable for this project.
3. You set clear expectations. Complete the sentence with "equipment" OR "measure".
 - The goal is to have the new [beep] installed

and have the staff trained to use it.

- The goal is to have the new equipment installed and have the staff trained to use it.
4. You set a clear deadline. Complete the sentence with "last" OR "latest".
 - I'll need all the deliverables by EOB Monday at the [beep].
 - I'll need all the deliverables by EOB Monday at the latest.
 5. You provide support. Complete the sentence with "adjusting" OR "equating".
 - Think about [beep] the timeline for the external contractors.
 - Think about adjusting the timeline for the external contractors.
 6. You give feedback. Complete the sentence with "tweets" OR "tweaks".
 - I've just taken a look at the file and have a few minor [beep].
 - I've just taken a look at the file and have a few minor tweaks.
 7. And here's another phrase to give feedback. Complete the sentence with "deal" OR "deliberate".
 - You managed to [beep] with the delivery delays really well.
 - You managed to deal with the delivery delays really well.

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

appropriate

• geeignet, passend

expertise • Sachkompetenz

deliverables • Ergebnisse

EOB (end of business)

• Geschäftsschluss

contractor

• Auftragnehmer(in)

tweak • Verbesserung

[12] Translation exercise: *Tablett* vs “tray”

English for...

MEDIUM

Sion: False friends are pairs of words that sound similar in two languages, but their meanings are different, so they can cause confusion and misunderstanding.

The German noun *Tablett* is “tray” in English. It is not “tablet”, which is translated as *Tablette*. A “tablet” can also be a “tablet computer”, *Tablet* in German.

First, you’ll hear a sentence with a beep where the missing word should be. In the pause, decide whether you need “tray” or “tablet”, in the singular or plural, instead of the beep. You’ll hear the correct answer after the “ping” sound. Ready?

1. Take one [beep] with a glass of water before breakfast.
 - Take one tablet with a glass of water before breakfast.
2. The delivery robot’s yellow [beep] is for dirty cutlery; the blue one for dirty dishes.
 - The delivery robot’s yellow tray is for dirty cutlery; the blue one for dirty dishes.
3. There are two beeps in the next sentence. In some hospitals, [beep] in small white boxes are served to patients on a [beep] by robots.

- In some hospitals, tablets in small white boxes are served to patients on a tray by robots.

Sion: Did you choose the right words to complete the sentences? If not, go back and try this first part again. If you did, continue with the second part, which focuses on the English translation of a German word that you may have come across when talking about robotics.

The German noun *Bedienung* is translated differently, depending on the context: “Service” refers to providing something to people. “Waiter”, “waitress” and “server” are used for the person who serves customers food and drinks. “Operation” refers to the way of using technology. And “remote control” is *Fernbedienung*.

First, you’ll hear a German sentence. In the pause, translate it into English using the right English word for the German word *Bedienung*. You’ll hear the correct English sentence after the “ping” sound. Ready?

4. *Die Bedienung in der neuen Pizzeria ist furchtbar.*
 - The service in the new pizzeria is terrible.
5. *Die Bedienung des Industrieroboters erfordert spezielle Schulungen.*
 - The operation of the industrial robot requires special training.
6. *John studiert Robotertechnik, und in seinen Semesterferien arbeitet er als Bedienung in einer Kneipe.*
 - John studies robotics, and in his university holidays, he works as a waiter in a pub.

7. Der Roboter wird über eine Fernbedienung gesteuert.

► The robot is controlled via a remote control.

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

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 42–43

delivery robot

► Lieferroboter

cutlery ► Besteck

served: be ~ to sb.

► jmdm. gereicht werden

[13] Exercise: Insurance collocations

Skill Up!

MEDIUM

Sion: This exercise is on collocations with the words “insurance” and “liability”. Collocations are words that frequently go together to form word partnerships. Listen carefully to someone reading out a report to the board of directors of an insurance company. We’ll then do an exercise on it.

Report to the board of directors
Following our annual risk assessment, we recommend updating key insurance cover such as commercial-property insurance and stock insurance. We also suggest increasing business-liability insurance and third-party liability insurance to mitigate the cost of external claims. Finally, the growing digital threat means cyber insurance should be reviewed and updated regularly.

Sion: In this exercise, you’ll hear a sentence with a beep describing a situation. In the pause, complete the sentence using the matching collocation with “insurance” or “liability” from the text that you have just heard. Then, you’ll hear the correct answer. Here’s the first sentence.

- [beep] protects the physical assets of a company, such as buildings and equipment, against the risk of damage caused by fire, floods or other disasters.
 - **commercial-property insurance.** “Commercial-property insurance” protects the physical assets of a company, such as buildings and equipment, against the risk of damage caused by fire, floods or other disasters.
- [beep] protects companies against damage to their inventories.
 - **stock insurance.** “Stock insurance” protects companies against damage to their inventories.
- [beep] relates to the legal responsibility of a company and protects against the risk of external claims arising from disregarding such responsibility.
 - **business-liability insurance.** “Business-liability insurance” relates to the legal responsibility of a company and protects against the risk of external claims arising from disregarding such responsibility.
- [beep] refers to the legal responsibility of an individual or organization and covers external claims arising from neglecting such responsibility.
 - **third-party liability insurance.** “Third-party liability insurance” refers to the legal responsibility of an individual or organization and covers external claims arising from

neglecting such responsibility.

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

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 44–47

board of directors

- Vorstand

annual ▶ jährlich

risk assessment

- Risikoabschätzung, -bewertung

mitigate sth.

- etw. begrenzen, gering halten

claim ▶ Anspruch, Forderung

review sth.

- etw. überprüfen

physical assets

- Sachanlagen

inventory ▶ Lagerbestand

disregard sth.

- etw. nicht beachten

[14] Dialogue and exercise: Insurance

Skill Up!

EASY

Sion: Leni and Felix have their own vintage-clothing shop. They are talking while opening the shop. Listen to their conversation carefully because we'll test your understanding of what they speak about afterwards. Ready? Let's start.

Felix: Do you remember Jude, who worked here last summer?

Leni: Oh, you mean the girl who wore those crazy shoes that made her fall down the stairs?

Felix: That's her. Well, we have a letter here saying that she's suing us for damages.

Leni: What! Why?

Felix: She's claiming that she slipped on a wet step and sustained an injury.

Leni: Unbelievable! She just couldn't walk properly in those shoes. There's no way we should admit liability.

Felix: It'll be her word against ours. I'm glad we took out that additional legal cover. We'll need it for our legal fees, but whatever happens, it will probably increase our premiums next year — especially after we had that little accident with the customer whose phone got damaged.

Leni: Yes, right. That was my fault, but I've

learned my lesson: No more drinks at the cash desk. Actually, he came in again last week and was really nice about it. He said that our insurance company had paid out compensation really quickly.

Felix: Well, that's some good news, which is always nice.

Sion: OK, now let's do an exercise to check your understanding of what you have just heard. Decide whether the following statements based on the dialogue are true or false.

1. Jude is making the store liable for her accident.
 - This statement is true. Felix says, "Well, we have a letter here saying that she's suing us for damages."
2. Jude argues that she fell down because there was a box on the step.
 - This statement is false. Felix says, "She's claiming that she slipped on a wet step and sustained an injury."
3. Leni thinks that the reason why Jude fell down was that she was wearing the wrong shoes.
 - This statement is true. Leni says, "She just couldn't walk properly in those shoes."
4. Leni and Felix are underinsured.
 - This statement is false. Felix says, "I'm glad we took out that additional legal cover."
5. The customer came to the store again be-

cause he was angry that he had not been compensated for the damage to his phone so far.

- This statement is false. Leni says, "He said that our insurance company had paid out compensation really quickly."

Business Spotlight 5/2026, pp. 44–47

sue sb. ➤ jmdn. verklagen

damages

- hier: Schadenersatz

claim sth.

- etw. behaupten; hier: etw. (der Versicherung) melden

slip on sth.

- auf etw. ausrutschen

sustain sth.

- hier: sich etw. zuziehen

injury ➤ Verletzung

liability ➤ Haftung

legal cover (UK)

- Rechtsschutz (versicherung)

legal fees ➤ Anwaltskosten

cash desk (UK)

- Kasse(ntisch)

liable ➤ haftbar

argue sth. ➤ etw. behaupten

[15] Until next time...

Conclusion

EASY

Sion: Thanks for joining me for this edition on Japan. If you would like the latest on all things Business Spotlight, then you can follow us on our socials. You can find us @business-spotlight_official on Instagram or @business-spotlight on LinkedIn. If you have any feedback, don't hesitate to get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.