

3

On schedule

Unit content

By the end of this unit, students will be able to

- talk about projects
- run update meetings and question decisions
- talk about past or recent actions and achievements.

Context

It is often said that management is based on four stages: assess, plan, do and evaluate. This is certainly true of managing projects. Many projects fail or come up against problems because most emphasis is placed on the 'doing' stage – carrying out the tasks required to complete a project. However, experienced project managers know that equal importance should also be given to the stages before and after in order to ensure project success.

Assessing what is required, followed by a period of planning, will let a manager know how many people, what expertise and how much money will be needed. Afterwards, the manager needs to evaluate how effective the work has been before possibly proceeding to the next part of the project.

Not all of your students will necessarily be managers and they won't always be in charge of major projects, but much of their work will include completing minor projects or being involved in the process. They will also be used to working in teams and collaborating on projects, perhaps with companies in other countries.

The first part of this unit looks at the various stages involved in working on a project, some of the problems which can occur, and presents vocabulary for discussing the progress of projects. Students move on to develop their skills in meetings and focus on the language for giving an update on progress. *Language at work* focuses on the key grammar used for talking about the recent past and giving updates. The *Talking point* allows students to practise the language of the unit within the context of finding solutions to common problems when working on projects.

Starting point

Encourage students to tell the class about any projects they are currently involved in.

PRE-WORK LEARNERS Students could describe a project in their home life, such as redecorating the house or planning an event, or one they're involved in at school or college.

Working with words

Exercise 1

As a lead-in to the exercise, ask students if they have ever been to a theme park, and what they know about the kinds of 'rides' that can be found. Find out about any particularly good or bad experiences they've had.

Students work in groups and use the picture to elicit six stages in such a project.

Exercise 2

Students join with another group, share their stages and add any new ideas to their list. You could put some of their ideas on the board.

Exercise 3

Students then read the article and compare their ideas with those mentioned. Afterwards, discuss the stages and see how they compare with everyone's suggestions in **2**.

Check students understand *to storyboard* – to produce a series of drawings or pictures that show the idea or a plan of how something will work (the term originally comes from the world of film, and planning stories and plots). Also check *to outsource* – to arrange for somebody outside a company to do work or provide goods for that company.

Possible answers

brainstorming, storyboard the ideas, present ideas to project manager with suggestions for time and budget, project gets go-ahead, engineers and other designers are involved, safety testing and assessment, launch date, visitor feedback

Exercise 4

Students work in pairs. They read the questions and then read the text again to find the answers.

Answers

- 1 to survive in this competitive world, and because each year visitor expectations are higher
- 2 not too controlled ('no idea is considered too crazy at this stage as there are no budget constraints')
- 3 the concept, a forecast of the time needed to complete the project and a realistic budget
- 4 in order not to miss the deadline, and because the project will need a wide range of people with specialist skills
- 5 a team falls behind schedule or goes over budget
- 6 by the number of visitors choosing to go on the ride; by monitoring visitor feedback and surveying visitors

Exercise 5

Students match words 1–10 with a–j to make phrases from the article. They can check their answers by finding the phrases in the text in **3**.

Answers

1 e 2 a 3 b 4 d 5 h 6 g 7 c 8 i 9 j 10 f

PRONUNCIATION Ask students to underline the word stress in these words from the text: *realistic, budget, schedule, accurate, forecast, planning, constraints, deadline*

Answers

realistic, budget, schedule, accurate, forecast, planning, constraints, deadline

Exercise 6

Students can work in pairs to decide if they associate the phrases in **5** with being successful, unsuccessful or both.

Answers

Successful (S): upfront planning, accurate forecast, realistic budget, stay on track, make the launch date
Unsuccessful (U): miss the deadline, run into problems, go over budget, fall behind schedule
Both: budget constraints

Exercise 7

Students choose a phrase from **5** with a similar meaning to the words in bold to complete the sentences. Remind students to make sure their choice makes sense within the context of the rest of the sentence. They can check their answers with a partner.

Answers

2 realistic budget
3 budget constraints
4 make the launch date
5 accurate forecast
6 fell behind schedule

PRONUNCIATION Point out that *schedule* can be pronounced in two ways: both /'skedʒu:l/ and /'ʃedʒu:l/ are possible. Ask students to look again at the phrases in **7** and to check which word in each phrase is stressed.

Answers

1 upfront planning
2 realistic budget
3 budget constraints
4 make the launch date
5 accurate forecast
6 fell behind schedule

Exercise 8

Students choose the verb which goes with all three phrases in each group. They can do this in pairs.

Answers

1 run 2 miss 3 stay 4 go 5 make

DICTIONARY SKILLS

A good dictionary will supply more information about these verbs, and many of the phrases and collocations in **5** and **8** will appear. Students could be encouraged to use the dictionary to find and check their answers.

Further practice

If students need more practice, go to *Practice file 3* on page 110 of the *Student's Book*.

Exercise 9

Students work in pairs. They read the notes about the project review. They could put a tick or cross against the different parts to indicate what has gone right and wrong. Encourage them to use phrases from **5** and **8** in their discussion. You could put these phrases on slips of paper, give a set to each pair, and ask them to turn each one over as they use them.

ALTERNATIVE Students could decide in advance which phrases they want to try to use; they could also tick off the phrases in the book as they use them.

Exercise 10

Students work with another pair and compare lists. You could also make this competitive between pairs and see who can use the widest range of expressions for describing the project.

Listen and make notes on any difficulties the students have with any of the phrases from **5** and **8**, and then conclude this section with feedback on pronunciation and use of the words and phrases.

EXTENSION Ask students to compare the successes and failures of this project with their own projects, in or outside work. You could also ask them to come up with a list of suggestions for managing a project successfully.

Photocopiable worksheet

Download and photocopy *Unit 3 Working with words* worksheet from the teacher resources in the *Online practice*.

Business communication

Exercise 1

► **3.1** As a lead-in, ask students to work in pairs. They have two minutes to list all the features they have on their phones, e.g. texting, games, Internet, etc. See which pair has the longest list. Next, give them another two minutes to think of new features they would like manufacturers to add to their phones. Collect their ideas for a 'super phone' on the board. Students read the *Context* about the Tech-Tariff project to understand the background for the listening. Also allow time for them to study the agenda for the meeting. Expect to play the listening twice.

Suggested answers

- 2 has a realistic schedule and extra time has been planned
- 3 booked two weeks ago
- 4 already received offers, most within budget, final choice not made yet
- 5 problem with handset battery life – can run out in six hours
- 6 may have to reschedule

Exercise 2

► **3.1** After students have listened and answered questions 1–3, they can compare their answers with the *Key expressions*. Note that a number of the phrases include the present perfect tense, which is dealt with later in this unit. Refer students to the *Tip* about the word *things* at this stage, since it appears in three of these phrases.

Answers

- 1 How are things with ...? / How's the ... coming along? / How far are you with ...? / How does your side of things look?
- 2 So what do you mean exactly? / So what you're saying is ...? / So the real problem lies with ...?
- 3 Up to now ... / We've set ... / We're on track. / He booked the venue two weeks ago. / I've already ... / I haven't made a final choice yet. / Things aren't running as smoothly as I'd hoped. / We've hit a problem with ...

Exercise 3

► **3.2** Explain to students that they are going to hear the later part of the meeting. Students listen and answer the questions.

You may have to explain the phrase in the answer to question 2. *Their reputation is at stake* means that not saying anything about the poor battery life may affect the good opinion that customers have of the company or brand.

Answers

- 1 It wouldn't help meet the deadlines.
- 2 Their reputation is at stake.
- 3 They will look at what they can reschedule.

Exercise 4

► **3.2** Students listen for the phrases to complete the suggestions. You will probably need to play the listening again for students to note the responses. Note that these responses are negative or show reluctance.

Answers

- a How about finding
Response: I don't think that would help us ...
- b We could
Response: That's possible, but ...
- c Why don't we wait
Response: That's not an ideal solution.
- d would be my proposal
Response: I'm not convinced.
- e If you ask me, we should
Response: I suppose so.

Further practice

If students need more practice, go to *Practice file 3* on page 110 of the *Student's Book*.

Exercise 5

Students will need some time to study their 'To do' lists and notes before making their call. They are going to ask each other for an update on each item on the list, as well as making and responding to suggestions. Encourage them to use as many of the phrases for asking for / giving an update as possible.

Afterwards, ask each pair to report back on what action is still required.

Make notes as students role-play the situation and give feedback on correct use of the phrases.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Ask students to write their own current 'To do' list, including one or two items that are already (partially) completed. Working with a partner, in turn they should ask each other questions about each item on the list, and find out which items on the list have been completed. For anything not done, they should ask more questions to find out why, and when it's expected to be finished. Encourage them to think about time and cost, and other people involved in these tasks. Students should explain to each other any problems they have run into which have caused delays, but avoid trying to blame others.

Photocopiable worksheet

Download and photocopy *Unit 3 Business communication* worksheet from the teacher resources in the *Online practice*.

Practically speaking

Exercise 1

Students read the questions and discuss their ideas with a partner. Try to encourage them to discuss real examples. Elicit one or two comments from the group.

Exercise 2

► **3.3** Before playing the listening, ask students to look at the three topics and to predict what words or phrases they might hear. Students then listen to three conversations and match each to a topic.

Answers

a 3 b 1 c 2

Exercise 3

► **3.3** Students listen again and tick the expressions they hear.

Check students understand the use of *given that* in *given that we're buying* when you consider something; here, you could replace *given that* with *as* or *considering*.

Answers

1 (in conversation 1), 4 (in conversation 2), 5 (in conversation 3)

Exercise 4

Students work in pairs and each makes a list of three decisions. They then tell each other about them and their partner asks questions or comments to make sure they made the right decision.

Remind students that as these are decisions that have already been made, they should be sensitive to criticizing each other: listening carefully and responding in a genuine way, as well as using their voice appropriately (intonation and sentence stress) will help.

Refer students at this point to the *Tip*, for sounding less critical.

When they have finished, find out whether individuals feel they did in fact make the right decision(s), or whether they are now not sure!

Give feedback on use of the phrases in **3**.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Ask students to imagine a new situation at work or in their place of study, e.g. the introduction of a new kitchen/coffee system, providing drinking water or using social media. Students should work in groups of four or five, or as a whole class group. In turn, one student puts forward a decision; the next person responds by questioning the decision, using one of the phrases from **3**. The next student should respond and either support student 1 or adapt the decision. Example:

- S1** As the summer's coming, we're going to provide drinking water and plastic cups on each floor of the office.
- S2** Are you sure that's the best way forward?
- S3** Well, it's important that everyone drinks enough water to be able to work well.
- S4** Sorry, but I'm not sure I agree. And I think it's a waste of plastic.
- S5** We could provide water, but we all use our own cup, etc.

Allow three to five responses, before starting with a new situation.

Language at work

Exercise 1

Students work in pairs to decide which tense is used.

Answers

present perfect: a, b, d, e past simple: c, f

Exercise 2

Students answer the questions in the *Language point* by reading the sentences again in **1**.

Answers

1 b, d 2 c, f 3 a, e 4 already 5 yet

Grammar reference

If students need more information, go to *Grammar reference* on page 111 of the *Student's Book*.

Exercise 3

When deciding which time expressions can be used with each tense, students will find it easier to make complete sentences with the expressions to test their ideas. Also, refer them back to sentences a–f in **1** to note the time expressions used. Students could work in pairs to do this activity so that they can discuss the differences in meaning.

Answers

- 1** last week, a couple of weeks ago, yesterday
- 2** up to now, so far (this week), since our last meeting, to date, just, over the last few months
- 3** The expressions *today* and *this morning* could work with either. The past simple will refer to a finished action: *We spoke this morning*. We could also use the present perfect if the action has occurred this morning or today and it is still recent: *We've worked on it this morning* (and it is still the morning or very recent). *In the last month* could also be used with either. If you are talking on the 30th of the month, you might say *In the last month we've sold 12,000 units*. However, if the month is in the past, we would use the past tense: *2004 was an excellent year, and in the last month we sold 20,000 units*.

Further practice

If students need more practice, go to *Practice file 3* on page 111 of the *Student's Book*.

Exercise 4

Students work in pairs. They read their information in the back of the *Student's Book* and take turns to ask and answer questions about their progress on the project. Before they start their discussions, check they are clear about the progress on their project and what has/hasn't been done.

Check understanding of the following: *to convert* – to change or make something change from one form, purpose, system, etc. to another; *plumbing* /'plʌmɪŋ/ – the system of pipes, etc. that supply water to a building.

Listen in and give feedback on students' use of the two tenses immediately after this role-play, as they will need to use the present perfect or past simple again in the next activity.

Exercise 5

Students now work with a different situation. They read about the context at the back of the *Student's Book* and then decide which items on the 'To do' lists have or haven't been done.

When they are ready, they take turns to ask and answer each other about each one.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

To provide some consolidation of the grammar point and some writing practice, ask students to write an email to their colleague giving an update on what has been done on the 'To do' list.

Exercise 6

Students work with a partner. They each think of five goals or plans they've had recently. These could relate to study, work or personal plans. You could suggest they write them down and include one or two details about when they achieved each goal, or if not, why not.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Ask students to think about their language learning and where they were six/12/24 months ago: Did they have any clear aims and reasons for learning English, and how have they progressed so far? Are there any things they haven't yet achieved? Why might this be? You could encourage them to make short- and long-term plans about what they will be able to use their English for, e.g. next week, in a month, in three months, etc.

Photocopiable worksheet

Download and photocopy *Unit 3 Language at work* worksheet from the teacher resources in the *Online practice*.

Talking point

Discussion

Exercise 1

Ask students to look at the infographic about five common problems and see if they agree. They can discuss this in pairs and add any other problems to the list.

Exercise 2

Students discuss which of the problems they have experienced and what happened in each case. You could elicit some ideas and find out how similar their experiences were.

PRE-WORK LEARNERS Ask students to consider these questions in relation to another project they have been involved in (regardless of whether money was involved), e.g. family projects, moving house, redecorating part of their flat/house, planning a holiday or event, a school or college team project.

Exercise 3

Students discuss what they have learnt and what they now do differently. Elicit from each student one learning point they would like to share with the others.

PRE-WORK LEARNERS Students should consider mistakes made on previous projects they have been involved with (see above, after **2**, for ideas), and discuss what they learnt and what they would do differently as a result.

Task

Exercise 1

Students work in groups to prepare a presentation. Working from the list of problems, they should come up with the five best solutions. You could suggest students make a list of problems and then brainstorm together solutions to prevent the problems.

Students could then choose the best solution for each problem. Make sure each student is clear about the best solution.

ONE-TO-ONE Students use the project problem list to prepare a list of solutions. You could either work together, or each prepare a separate list of solutions and then compare them.

Exercise 2

Regroup students so that there is one person from each group in each of the new groups. In turn, each student presents their previous group's list of solutions. The others should listen and compare the solutions with their own.

When they have finished, find out how similar the groups' suggestions were.

EXTENSION Ask students, in their groups, to decide on the best solution they heard to each of the five problems and to share them with the class.

Progress test

Download and photocopy *Unit 3 Progress test and Speaking test* from the teacher resources in the *Online practice*.

Viewpoint 1

Preview

The topic of this *Viewpoint* is *Learning in business*. Students begin by watching a short introductory video about the Saïd Business School, and compare it to any formal training of their own.

Students then watch an interview, in two parts, with Peter Tufano, the Dean of the Saïd Business School, who describes the types of students who attend and how the school differs from other business schools.

In the final part, students consider different ways of learning and apply these methods to some of their own familiar contexts, deciding which would be appropriate and discussing why.

Exercise 1

Students read the questions and then share their answers with a partner. Open up the discussion with the whole class.

PRE-WORK LEARNERS Students can discuss any recent or current training they are doing. They might also be interested to consider how closely this relates to any work they have in mind, or planned, for the future. Also ask if they plan to do any further training, and whether this is likely to be formal or informal.

Exercise 2

▶ **01** Students read the bullet point list. Check they understand what is meant by *executive education* (education for those already working in higher business positions) and *custom programmes* (programmes which are made specifically for participants' needs). Play the video and ask students to take notes. If necessary, pause after each section to allow writing time. You may need to play the video twice. Students can compare answers in pairs.

ALTERNATIVE With a weaker group, you could elicit or give a possible example for each category first, before playing the video, e.g. Location and age: Manchester, 200 years old; Facilities: lecture hall, 15 classrooms, etc.

Answers

Location and age: Oxford. The school was founded in 1996 (but the university is 800 years old).

Facilities: a 300-seat auditorium; a library with over 11 million printed titles as well as access to digital resources; an outdoor amphitheatre for lectures, theatre performances and musicals. Undergraduate and MBA programmes: undergraduate programme in economics and management, and several postgraduate programmes, such as in law and finance, and the Oxford MBA programmes.

Executive education and custom programmes: for more experienced students who would like specially designed courses (intensively over a few days or for longer study) that can be combined with online learning.

World ranking: one of the top-ranked business schools in the world.

Exercise 3

▶ **02** Students should read the profile of Peter Tufano first. They then read the topics a–e and watch the first part of the interview with Peter Tufano to order the topics. You may need to play the video more than once, pausing after each section.

Answers

a 3 b 4 c 2 d 1 e 5

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Ask students to draw up a table of features of the Saïd Business School mentioned in the first and second parts of the video. This will include those listed under **2** and **3**. Then ask students to note down answers and information according to where they studied or are studying. If students are studying at the same college, they could do this in pairs. Encourage them to include any other aspect not listed which they consider significant.

When they have finished, ask them to discuss with a partner which different features about their own place of study they think are the most relevant, important and/or interesting, and are good selling points for the institution.

Exercise 4

▶ **02** Students read the seven questions and then watch the video again to find the answers.

Answers

- 1 modern and forward-looking
- 2 strategy and accounting, about marketing, about operations and the fundamental building blocks of business
- 3 artificial intelligence, attitudes towards globalization, what's happening in the workplace, demographic change that's changing customer bases
- 4 somewhere between 18 and 21 years old; they're smart, they're motivated, they're ambitious young people
- 5 has five years of experience, late 20s and they come from all over the world
- 6 They might have 10, 15 years or more of experience – experience in the public sector, in the private sector, managing and running just about everything and anything.
- 7 Anything is possible when you sit down next to a Saïd Business School student.

Exercise 5

Students read the questions and discuss them in pairs.

PRE-WORK LEARNERS Ask students not yet in work to think about additional study courses they could take part in to support their current interests and course of study. Alternatively, they could think of a totally different career path they have in mind – perhaps a dream job! – and discuss together how they would learn the necessary skills and what course(s) they could take.

ALTERNATIVE Students may have stories about people they know who have gone back to college, or started new studies later in life and then completely changed careers. Encourage them to share their stories and – if they know – compare any different experiences of studying (online vs face-to-face, different aged students, different nationalities).

Exercise 6

Students read the words and phrases on the left and match them to the definitions. Do one together first.

Answers

1 h 2 d 3 g 4 a 5 f 6 c 7 e 8 b

Check students' pronunciation of the following:

synchronous /'sɪŋkrənəs/; *asynchronous* /eɪ'sɪŋkrənəs/;
pedagogy /'pedəgɒdʒi/; *tutorial* /tʃu:'tɔ:riəl/.

Exercise 7

▶ 03 Students read the questions and then watch the video to listen for the answers.

Answers

- 1 synchronous vs asynchronous, reading vs listening, building and creating vs analysing
- 2 Because people learn differently.
- 3 It's an effective way to analyse a (real) situation, and allows you to imagine yourself in the middle of that situation and make decisions as if you were a business leader.
- 4 It allows slowed-down thinking.
- 5 Because some things are best learnt through direct experience, such as learning how to work with a team, how to deal with failure and how to stay focused on customers.
- 6 All methods work and sometimes it's great to be able to stretch yourself by testing different kinds of learning methods.

EXTENSION Referring back to some of the vocabulary in 6, you could ask students for any brief examples of their own when they have experienced asynchronous as opposed to synchronous learning, or studied using a case method approach.

Exercise 8

Students first read the list of different ways of learning. They will then decide whether it is suitable for the three options, i.e. learning a language, learning a new work skill, or for a hobby.

You could start by brainstorming work skills (e.g. using a new team-working website, storing documents in a corporate filing system, etc.), and other hobbies (e.g. oil painting, golf or another sport, cooking, photography).

Do the first one together and elicit students' ideas. Then let students work alone to work through the list.

Exercise 9

Ask students to work in small groups. For each way of learning, encourage students to clarify and explain their answers and listen to others who may have different experiences.

You could demonstrate the first one with the whole class. Allow students to change their answers if they are persuaded by others' experiences!

When students have worked through the list, encourage them to share other ways of learning which they have experienced and how effective they were.

Finally, ask groups to work on a brief summary of their feelings on the most effective ways of learning; you could ask for a spokesperson to report this information to the rest of the class.

You could open up these ideas for whole-class discussion, especially as this may affect students' approach to language learning during this course.

ONE-TO-ONE You can both work through the list individually in the same way and then discuss and compare your answers, as well as discuss any other effective ways of learning.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Ask students to choose two ideas from the list of ways of learning which they are less familiar with, but would like to try. Give them time to decide how they could try them out, and what they would be learning, e.g. vocabulary; understanding fast English or different accents; learning something new at work; working on their own hobby. Challenge them to try these for a week and report back next time. Students can then share their ideas and experiences and compare notes. Encourage them to evaluate how effective the method was and how they might adapt or use it in future.

Further ideas and video scripts

You can find a list of suggested ideas for how to use video in the class in the teacher resources in the *Online practice*. The video scripts are available to download from the Teaching resources on the Oxford Teachers' Club. www.oup.com/elt/teacher/businessresult