



Intelligent Business

Coursebook

Intermediate
Business English



PEARSON
Longman

| Tonya Trappe | Graham Tullis |

The
Economist

Pearson Education Limited
Edinburgh Gate
Harlow
Essex CM20 2JE
England
and Associated Companies throughout the world.

www.longman.com

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First published 2005

Third impression 2007

ISBN-13: 978-0-582-84796-5

ISBN-10: 0-528-84796-6

Set in Economist Roman 10.5 / 12.5

Printed in Spain by Mateu Cromo, S.A. Pinto (Madrid)

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank our editors, Ian Wood and Stephen Nicholl, and the following people and organisations for their assistance: Kris Neymarc, Régis Faucon, Julien Griffon, Laurence Baierlein, Gilles Béguin, Henriette Tullis, Sarah Hamberg, Anne Attanasio, Olivier Dexheimer, Jean Pierre Masson, Michel Foucré, Insead Fontainebleau and Harvard Business School. We would also like to thank the students and staff at ESIEA Paris, Pôle universitaire Léonard de Vinci and L'université de Paris XII.

The publishers would like to thank the following people for their help in piloting and developing this course: Irene Barrall, UK; Richard Booker and Karen Ngeow, University of Hong Kong; Louise Bulloch, Intercom Language Services GmbH, Hamburg; Steve Bush, The British Institute Florence; William Cooley, Open Schools of Languages, Madrid; Peter Dunn, Groupe ESC Dijon, Bourgogne; Adolfo Escuder, EU Estudios Empresariales, University of Zaragoza; Wendy Farrar, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza; Andrew Hopgood, Linguarama, Hamburg; Ann-Marie Hadzima, Dept of Foreign Languages, National Taiwan University, Taiwan; Samuel C. M. Hsieh, English Department, Chinese Culture University, Taipei; Laura Lewin, ABS International, Buenos Aires; Maite Padrós, Universitat de Barcelona; Louise Pile, UK; Jolanta Korc-Migon, Warsaw; Giuliete Aymard Ramos Siqueira, Sao Paulo; Richmond Stroupe, World Language Center, Soka University, Tokyo; Michael Thompson, Centro Linguistico Università Commerciale L. Bocconi, Milan; Krisztina Tüll, Európai Nyelvek Stúdiója, Budapest.

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Photograph acknowledgements

Al Pix for pages 20, 80, 94 top right; Ace Stock for pages 71, 74; Apple for pages 27, 127, 131 top right, cover centre; Alamy for pages 43 inset, 55 right, 56, 94 top left, 124; Alessi/Wier Willats Associates for pages 128 bottom, 129 top; Art Directors & TRIP for page 115; Associated Press for page 131 top left; Bellagio for page 75; Britvic Soft Drinks Ltd for page 50 (Pepsi); Camera Press for pages 125, 140 bottom; Corbis for pages 9, 10 top left, 14, 22, 26, 41, 42, 43 right, 46, 47, 51, 85 (Reuters), 86, 97, 101, 103, 128 top middle left, 131 bottom left, cover left and right; Tim Cottingham for page 99; DK Picture Library/Bellagio for pages 76, 77, 82; eBay Inc for page 95 bottom; easyJet Airline Company for page 10 bottom left and bottom right; The Economist for page 43 left; Ecoscene/Barry Hughes for page 144 top left; Empics/Neal Simpson for page 17; Energizer for page 54; Ferretti for page 49; Freeplay/Splash Communications for page 131 top middle and bottom middle; Getty for pages 33 (Illustration Works), 52 (Stone), 94 bottom left (Stone), 123 (Image Bank), 128 top right (Hulton Archive); Image Source for pages 117, 133; Image State for pages 78, 106; J C Mandarin Hotel, Shanghai for page 28; Jaguar Cars for page 50; L'Oreal for pages 50 (Garnier) and 54; OK Magazine for page 92 top; PA Photos for pages 10 top right, 35, 36, 38, 54 (Apple), 67, 69, 72, 87, 90, 102, 104, 108 right, 126, 138 bottom, 144 bottom left, 144 bottom right; Panos Pictures/Fernando Moleres for page 60; Pearson Education for pages 55 left and middle, 94 bottom right and 131 bottom right; Photofusion for page 91; Philips Electronics Ltd for page 31; Picture Desk/Columbia/Kobal Collection for page 30; Powerstock for pages 11, 12; Punchstock/Digital Vision for pages 100, 122, /Image 100 for pages 39, 65, 134, /PhotoDisc for page 34 left; Reporters Archives, Belgium for page 70; Reuters for page 95 top; Rex Features for pages, 15, 25, 45, 62, 66, 88, 92 bottom, 94 middle, 108 left, 118, 129 bottom, 137, 140 top, 144 top right; A. Salah for page 6; Science & Society Picture Library for page 128 top middle right (Science Museum) and top left (National Museum Photography Film & TV); South American Pictures/Tony Morrison for page 48; Sporting Pictures for page 16; Stockbyte for page 34 right; Regis Sultan for page 64; Telegraph.co.uk for page 138 top; Zefa for page 107.

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Front cover images supplied by Corbis (left and right) and Apple (centre).

Picture Research by Hilary Luckcock.

Illustration acknowledgements

Kevin Gallagher for 7, 53, 54, 59, 95, 119 and 121; John Stainton for 23 and 111.

Designed by Luke Kelly and Wooden Ark



Company structure

A matter of choice

The world of lifetime employment in large hierarchical and bureaucratic organisations may be dead, but where is the modern company taking us? A new generation of online companies and networked entrepreneurs is forcing the survivors of the industrial age to merge into giant companies as powerful as nation states. But in an uncertain world only the fittest will survive. **Page 9.**



Fear and management

Terrorising the talent

The football dressing room may be the last refuge of old-style management techniques, but when Britain's most beautiful and skilful footballer was photographed with a wound above his eye inflicted by his manager, the nation asked 'Does fear really motivate?' **Page 17.**

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Marketing brands

Seducing the masses

Once a simple guarantee of quality, brands now appeal to emotions and represent aspirations of a better lifestyle. In the new global economy they represent a huge portion of the value of a company, but are increasingly cynical and brand-weary customers seduced by this approach? **Page 51.**



Learning to write well in a foreign language is one of the most difficult challenges facing the language learner. This pocket-sized style guide will help you find the right words, use an appropriate style and write effectively. **See inside the back cover.**

Bookmap

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	Reading	Language	Vocabulary	Career skills	Dilemma & Decision
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Fair trade

Of celebrities, charity and trade

It is not every day that US finance ministers spend time in African slums discussing development economics with rock stars. Politicians may not always do what voters want but the trip to Uganda by US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill shows they certainly listen to public opinion. So if charities want politicians to be nice to Africa, they must persuade voters to demand this. And to attract voters' attention, it helps to have a few celebrities. **Page 103.**

From the authors

As business English teachers, we know how important it is to learn the key business language necessary to participate in an increasingly international work environment. We also recognise the need to learn about business concepts, developments in business and how business works in different cultures. We are therefore delighted to have written *Intelligent Business* in partnership with The Economist magazine, a unique resource of insights into news and business throughout the world.

Key business concepts

When selecting topics we were very aware of the need to include not only general business areas such as company structures and marketing but also more serious and complex issues such as logistics and finance. We also chose controversial issues such as executive pay and counterfeiting and topics with a wider economic perspective such as lobbies and the developing economies. The result, we feel, is a unique overview of business today that gives students both an opportunity to see key language in context and to expand their business knowledge and horizons.

Language development

The exercises developed around the central theme of each unit give ample opportunities to review and practice important grammar and vocabulary in both spoken and written contexts. Furthermore, the career skills syllabus develops the key communicative language and strategies necessary to succeed in today's work environment. All of these are then put to use in the end of unit problem-solving task.

The *Intelligent Business* intermediate Coursebook is accompanied by a separate Workbook that provides comprehensive self-study language practice along with a complete Cambridge BEC Vantage practice exam. There is also the *Intelligent Business* intermediate Skills Book: a task-driven intensive course that practises key language from the *Intelligent Business* syllabus through authentic business tasks. All of these components are covered by a single Teacher's Book.



Both the Coursebook and the Skills Book can be supplemented with the *Intelligent Business* intermediate video: a drama illustrating the key language and business skills common to both Coursebook and Skills Book. In addition, there is the www.intelligent-business.org website which contains further information on the course, downloadable resources, teacher support and premium content from the www.economist.com website.

Our intention when writing *Intelligent Business* was to make a truly contemporary world of business accessible to learners of business English – whatever their level of world and business knowledge. We hope you will find that it does so. If it is both enjoyable and beneficial to users we will have completed our task.

We wish you every success in your future English-speaking working lives!

Tonya Trappe
Graham Tullis

Unit 1 Companies

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A matter of choice

PAGE 9

Present simple and continuous

PAGE 11

Career skills: Talking about your job

PAGE 13

Dilemma: The virtue of necessity

PAGE 14

Survival of the fittest

Keynotes

There are many different types of companies. Most large corporations are public limited or **joint-stock** companies, which means that **shareholders** who wish to invest in the company can buy and sell parts of the company on the stock exchange. Many are **multinationals** with **subsidiaries** and **assets** in various different countries and they generally engage in **mergers** with other companies and **acquisitions** in order to expand. However, the large corporation is increasingly under threat from the growing number of **dotcoms** set up by **entrepreneurs**.



Types of company

1 Which of the following types of companies would you prefer to work for? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working for each one?

- a large multinational corporation
- a small or medium-sized family business
- a trendy new high-tech corporation

2 Read the list of developments that threaten the survival of the traditional company. What are the positive or negative impacts on companies of each one?

- developments in technology
- growth in the power of consumer groups
- expansion of e-business
- increase in shareholder power
- financial scandals
- transfer of money and jobs to cheaper countries
- weakening trade unions

Job losses to India

STOLEN JOBS?

Stock market crashes

The end of the tycoon?

Parmalat, accounting scandal

Company structure

Reading

1 Read the text on the opposite page and say why the author thinks 'choice' will play a major role in determining the structure of tomorrow's companies.

2 Read the text again and answer the following questions.

- 1 What were the characteristics of US corporations in the past?
- 2 What changes have occurred to those corporations?
- 3 What is meant by 'shifting from high-volume to high-value'?
- 4 What different types of future companies does the author mention?
- 5 Why does he believe there is not one definite type of future company?
- 6 What does he believe to be the key to survival for companies in future?

Speaking

Would you prefer to be a freelance worker or employed with a fixed salary? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each situation?



Company Structure

A matter of choice

That reliable workhorse of capitalism – the joint-stock company looks surprisingly durable. But pressure on it is increasing.

In 1967, John Kenneth Galbraith's *The New Industrial State* argued that the USA was run by a handful of big companies who planned the economy in the name of stability.

These were hierarchical and bureaucratic organizations making long runs of standardised products. They introduced “new and improved” varieties with predictable regularity; they provided their workers with lifetime employment and they enjoyed fairly good industrial relations with the giant trade unions.

That world is now dead. The US's giant corporations have either disappeared or been transformed by global competition. Most have shifted their production systems from high-volume to high-value, from standardised to customised. And they have flattened their management hierarchies. Few people these days expect to spend their lives moving up the ladder of a single organization. Dramatic changes are taking place. But where exactly are they taking

us? Where is the modern company heading?

There are three standard answers to this question. The first is that a handful of giant companies are engaged in a “silent takeover” of the world. The past couple of decades have seen a record number of mergers. The survivors, it is maintained, are far more powerful than nation states.

The second school of thought argues almost the opposite: it says that big companies are a thing of the past. For a glimpse of the future, look at the Monorail Corporation, which sells computers. Monorail owns no factories, warehouses or any other tangible assets. It operates from a single floor that it leases in an office building in Atlanta. Freelance workers are designing the computers while demand is still low.

The third school of thought says that companies are being replaced by “networks”. Groups of entrepreneurs form such a network to market an idea. They then sell it to the highest bidder and

Glossary

durable long-lasting

decade 10 years

tangible assets buildings, machinery, etc.

BrE vs AmE English

-ise / -ize

standardise (BrE)

standardize (AmE)

move on to produce another idea and to create another firm, with the money being supplied all the time by venture capitalists.

Another way to look at the future of the company is to focus on the environment that will determine it. That environment is dominated by one thing: choice. Technology and globalisation open up ever more opportunities for individuals and firms to collect information and conduct economic activity outside traditional structures. While the age of mass production lowered the costs of products at the expense of limiting choices, modern “flexible” production systems both lower costs and increase choice. Consumers have more choice over where they spend their money. Producers have more choice over which suppliers to use. Shareholders have more choice over where to put their money. With all that choice around, future companies will have to be very flexible in order to quickly adapt to the changing environments if they are to survive ■

Vocabulary 1

1 Find the words in the text to describe people who:

- 1 work independently or on short-term contracts
- 2 are willing to take risks
- 3 are willing to invest in new and/or risky business projects
- 4 express a wish to buy something
- 5 make goods
- 6 own part of a company

2 Match the words with the definitions.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--|
| 1 bureaucracy | _____ | a goods of the same quality and design |
| 2 flattened hierarchy | _____ | b inflexible system of administration |
| 3 standardised products | _____ | c rent a building on a temporary basis |
| 4 lifetime employment | _____ | d more middle than senior managers |
| 5 merger | _____ | e buildings and machinery a company owns |
| 6 customised | _____ | f permanent jobs |
| 7 tangible assets | _____ | g made for a particular user |
| 8 lease | _____ | h when two companies become one |

3 Which of the following types of company do the words from exercises 1 and 2 refer to?

Corporations of the past

bureaucracy

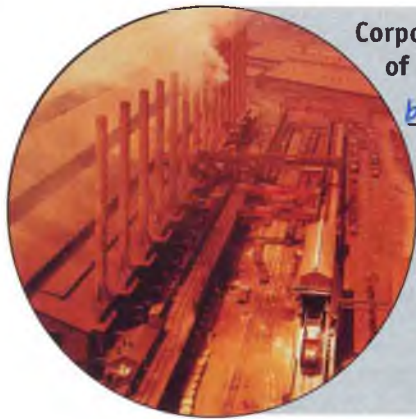
Today's multinationals

freelancer

All of them

Online companies

entrepreneur



Speaking

Can you think of examples of these company types?

Present simple and continuous

1 Complete the rules below with *simple* or *continuous*.

The present _____ describes

- a facts that will not change
- b regular events and processes
- c a scheduled event

The present _____ describes

- d things happening now
- e temporary situations
- f future arrangements

Note: The continuous is usually not used with the following:

- ownership (*have, want, need, etc.*)
- sense (*look, sound, feel, etc.*)
- emotion / opinion (*like, love, hate, think, believe, etc.*)
- routines (*usually, always, sometimes, etc.*)



For more information see page 157.

2 Match the following examples with the rules a-f.

- 1 The first answer isn't a very positive one. *simple (a)*
- 2 Dramatic changes are taking place in company structure.
- 3 They then sell it to the highest bidder and move on to a new idea.
- 4 Business doesn't start on the stock exchange until tomorrow at 9 am.
- 5 Freelance workers are designing the computers while demand is low.
- 6 Is he meeting the shareholders on Monday?

Practice

Complete the text below with the appropriate form of the present simple or continuous.

Will the corporation survive?




Since the corporation was invented it has been widely accepted that bringing activities together into one large company (¹lower) lowers 'transactional' and communication costs, and that suppliers and manufacturers (²have) _____ market power due to their knowledge of markets. However, nowadays the internet (³eliminate) _____ the physical costs of communication. As a result it (⁴become) _____ more

profitable to outsource many activities. Power (⁵shift) _____ to the customer who could be either another business or the end-user. All this raises two burning questions. Firstly, (⁶it / mean) _____ that the supplier will no longer be the seller but become the buyer for the customer? Secondly, (⁷diversification / change) _____ the structure of companies? The answer to both questions at the moment, is *yes* for

many business sectors. Some of the US's largest pharmaceutical companies (⁸not / manufacture) _____ drugs themselves anymore. During this transition period, they (⁹wholesale) _____ every other kind of pharmacy product as well. At the annual conference for managers in the pharmaceutical sector, which (¹⁰take place) _____ next month, the main topic will surely be what to outsource to smaller companies next.

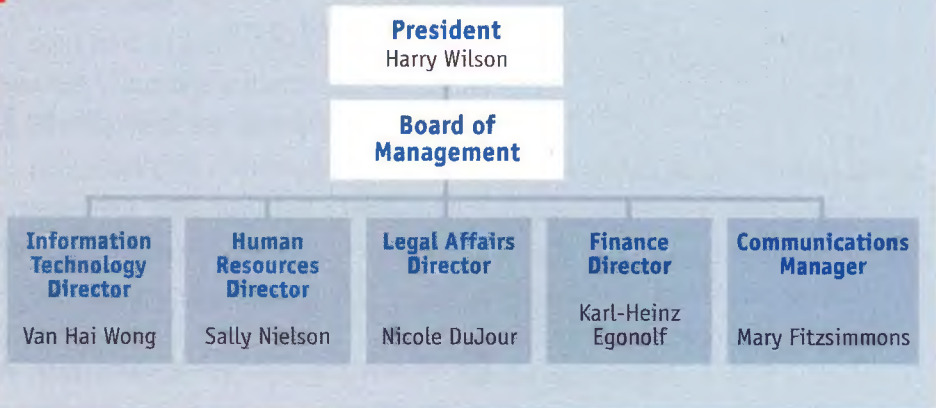
Speaking

Work in pairs. Find out about a typical day at work/the weekend for your partner and what he/she has planned for next week.

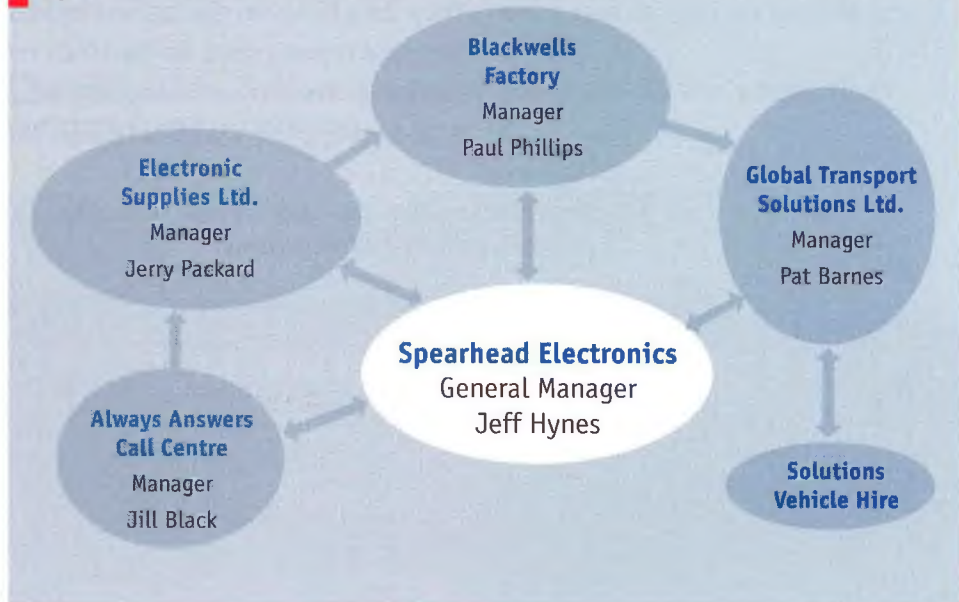
 Study the two very different company structures below. Which type of company, mentioned in the text on page 9, does each of these structures represent?



Transatlantica, Inc.



Spearhead Electronics Ltd.



 Look at the structures again and answer the questions.

At Transatlantica, Inc., which division or department deals with

- 1 computer programming and software?
- 2 trade unions?
- 3 new accounting principles?
- 4 patents for new products?

At Spearhead Electronics Ltd.,

- 5 which company provides parts to another?
- 6 what is the name of the company in the logistics sector?
- 7 which companies are in the services sector?
- 8 who is in charge of the manufacturing company?
- 9 which company is a subsidiary?

Career skills

Talking about your job

When meeting people for the first time in both professional and social situations it is common to exchange information about your job. The following phrases are useful for describing what you do.

My job entails/involves ...

I'm in charge of ...

I'm responsible for ...

I report to ...

I work for/under ...

I manage ...

Listening

Listen to several people from the companies on the opposite page talking about their jobs and complete the following table. Which of the above phrases do you hear?

	name	duties	no. of workers	phrases used
1	Jeff Hynes	liaising /dealing with other companies	5 project managers	my job involves ...
2				
3				
4				
5				

Writing

Look at the job profile below. Write similar profiles for the people in the listening activity above.

Name: Van Hai Wong

Present position: Director of Information technology at Transatlantica, Inc.

Present responsibilities: In charge of a team of 25 people, who purchase and maintain all company IT hardware and services.

Speaking

Using the profiles, take it in turns to role-play introducing yourself and talking about your job.

Culture at work

Hierarchy

Some cultures prefer steep hierarchies with many levels of management, clear roles and very powerful senior managers. Others prefer flat hierarchies with more equality and flexibility. What is common in your country? Which would you prefer to work in? Why?

Dilemma & Decision

Dilemma: The virtue of necessity

Brief

A serious safety problem is threatening the future of Transal, a pipeline company. Hundreds of yearly accidents have led to high absenteeism, causing lost time, low morale, unsatisfactory efficiency levels, falling profits and a falling share price. Press articles about the company's lack of concern for its employees are having a very negative effect on customers, shareholders and staff. If the company is to survive it must develop a 'safety conscious culture'. The question is: how?

Task 1

Look at the three options open to Transal and discuss the potential benefits and disadvantages of each one.

1 The International School of Industrial Engineering

Send all technical staff members on an intensive 'safety awareness' course run by a high-profile school of engineering. The course is very expensive but has an excellent reputation. This will be emphasised at a press conference organised to announce the new company plans. On their return, the managers will train their teams. The forecast is to have improved safety conditions by this time next year.

2 Stanford, Traynor & Weldon Associates.

Bring outside consultants into every subsidiary to organise training schemes for all employees over a period of six months. This would be more expensive but would give low-level workers an opportunity to speak to experts and to point out problems. The results should be almost immediate and the experts would be on hand to talk to the press.

3 Safety Charity Challenge

Offer to give a sum of money to a community charity of the workers' choice every time they eliminate a safety hazard. An untested idea suggested by the communications department. If successful, it could lead to a lot of positive publicity and be very cost-effective. However, it relies on the employees' willingness to take part in such a scheme. There is no knowing how long it might take to improve conditions.

Task 2

Choose the best option and present your arguments to the class.

Write it up

Write a brief email to the Transal board recommending the best option and giving reasons for your decision. (See Style guide, p18.)

Decision:

Turn to page 141 and see what happened when a famous British company was faced with the same dilemma.



Unit 2 Leadership

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When to terrorise talent

PAGE 17

Articles

PAGE 20

Career skills: Getting things done

PAGE 21

Dilemma: Mission: Impossible?

PAGE 22

Terrorising the talent



Keynotes

The role of a leader is to **inspire** and **motivate** staff and to **develop talent** within an organisation. The **management style** of leaders varies: some prefer to **delegate** responsibility to **subordinates** whereas others prefer to use their **authority** to control operations directly.