

UNIT 11

Critical incidents

▼ AGENDA

- ▶ 3rd Conditional
- ▶ *should have (done)/shouldn't have (done)*
- ▶ Culture file. Confusing words. Dictionary skills (3)
- ▶ A tough choice
- ▶ Business correspondence

Language focus

1 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What cross-cultural problems do companies face when they work with companies from other countries?
- 2 Can you give any examples of cross-cultural problems from your own experience, either at work or when visiting other countries?

2 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What problems could there be in these three situations?
 - a a parent company investigating a serious mistake by an employee at one of its subsidiaries in another country
 - b two companies of different nationalities competing for a sales contract in a third country
 - c a foreign employee who, by chance, meets his boss shopping with his family at the weekend
- 2 Match situations a–c above with case studies 1–3.

CASE STUDY 1

A British company and a Swedish company were competing for a sales contract in Argentina. The British sales team knew their product was superior. They went to Argentina, gave a very good modern presentation, and returned to the UK the next day, confident that they had won the contract. The Swedish sales team spent a week in Argentina and didn't talk about the product for the first five days. Instead, they used the first five days to get to know the Argentinian company. It was only on the last day that they introduced their product. Even though it was less attractive and slightly higher-priced than the British product, they got the contract. The disappointed leader of the British sales team later asked, 'What did we do wrong?'

CASE STUDY 2

An Australian employee was working in Germany. One Saturday, he saw the German Director of the company in a car showroom in the city centre. The Director was with his family and was trying to buy a car. He was having some problems deciding which model to buy. The employee knew about that particular car because he had just bought one himself. He had only met the Director once before and was keen to make a good impression, so he walked into the showroom, smiled, and said 'Hi, Mr Langer. Is this your wife and children? Nice to meet you. I can see you're having a few problems. Perhaps I can help. The important thing to know is how many kilometres you need to drive in an average week.' The Director didn't look pleased, and after a quick 'Thank you', he walked out with his family following behind. The amazed Australian later asked, 'What did I do wrong?'

CASE STUDY 3

An American boss was sent to look into a serious mistake made by a Japanese worker. The mistake happened at the Japanese subsidiary of a US multinational company. During production, a machine component had been inserted upside down and the entire batch was lost. The cost of this was very high. The boss insisted on finding out exactly which worker had made the mistake. The Japanese production manager said he didn't know but that the entire team would take responsibility. Despite this, the American boss continued her enquiries until eventually she discovered the individual responsible. She gave a public warning to the worker and made sure that he was closely monitored in future. 'If I hadn't done this,' she explained, 'the rest of the workforce would have thought it's acceptable to make mistakes, and production would have become less efficient.' However, as a result of her actions, production actually got worse, not better. The frustrated American boss later asked, 'What did I do wrong?'

- 3 What do you think they did wrong in each situation? What advice or explanation would you give to the British team leader, the Australian employee, and the American boss?

- 4 11.1 Listen to an expert on cross-cultural communication giving his advice and analysis.

- 1 Match analyses a–c with case studies 1–3.
- 2 Do you agree with his advice?

- 5 11.1 Listen again and complete extracts 1–3.

- 1 The Australian employee _____^a a little more formal, and he _____^b to be introduced to the Director's family. Also, he _____^c that he knew more than his boss about cars, especially in front of his family. If _____^d for the Director to speak to him, he _____^e for his opinion. That way, he _____^f a good impression.
- 2 She _____^a the worker in public. It _____^b if she _____^c the facts, expressed her concern, and then let them deal with it themselves. The Japanese production team _____^d the worker responsible, and made sure he didn't make mistakes in the future.
- 3 They _____^a more time to get to know the company. They _____^b so quickly to the business side of things. Also, perhaps they were over-confident. If they _____^c a good personal relationship with their potential clients, the British sales team _____^d the contract.

3rd Conditional

Read the examples and answer the questions.

- If he'd waited for the Director to speak to him, he **might have asked** for his opinion.
- It **would have been better** if she'd just found out the facts.
- If they'd **built up** a good personal relationship with their potential clients, the British sales team **would have won** the contract.

- 1 What time does the 3rd Conditional refer to, present or past?
- 2 Which tense is used in the *if* clause?
- 3 Which form of the verb follows *would have/might have* in the result clause?
- 4 What is the difference in meaning between *would have* and *might have*?

Pocket Book pp. 4–5

should have (done)/shouldn't have (done)

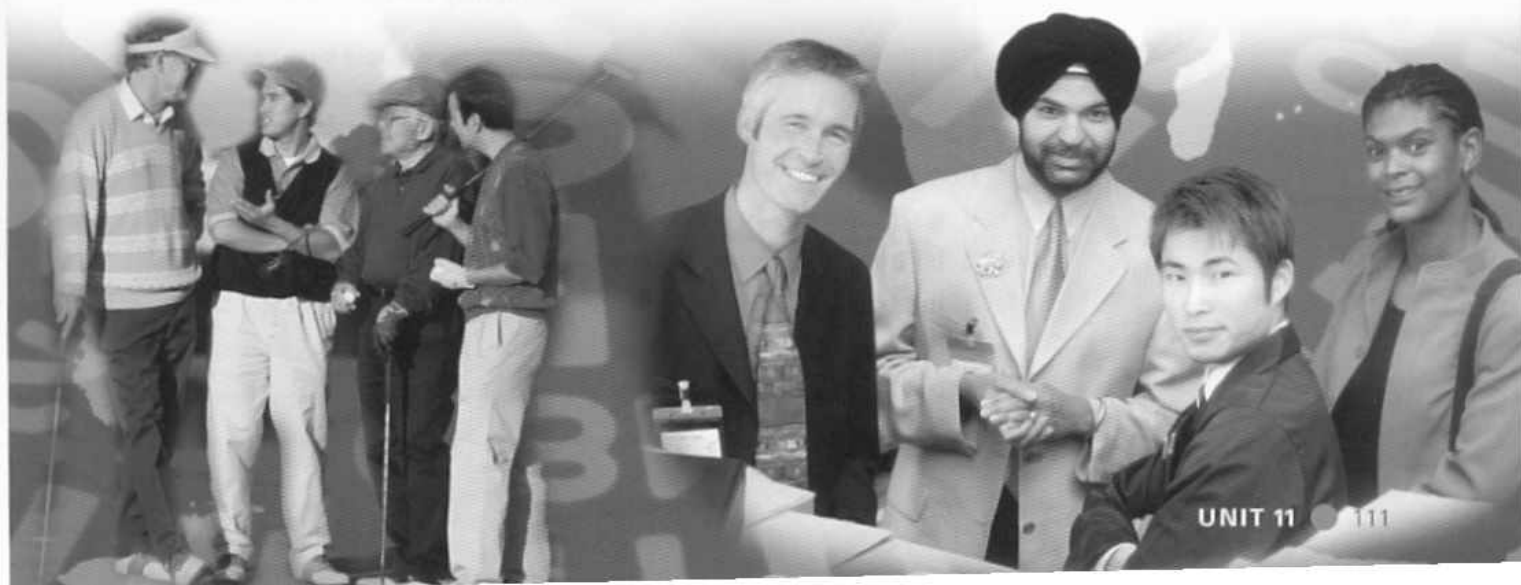
Read the examples and answer the questions.

- He **should have waited** to be introduced.
- 1 Did he wait to be introduced?
 - 2 Did he do the right thing?
- She **shouldn't have criticized** the worker in public.
- 1 Did she criticize the worker in public?
 - 2 Did she do the right thing?

Complete the rules.

- We use _____ and the _____ form of the verb when something was the best thing to do, but the subject didn't do it.
- We use _____ and the _____ form of the verb when the subject did the wrong thing.

Pocket Book p. 16



Practice 1

Work in pairs. What did these people do wrong? Write sentences using *should have* and *shouldn't have*. Give a reason why you think the action was wrong.

- 1 A businessman visiting a company in Saudi Arabia offered his business card with his left hand.

Example *He shouldn't have offered it with his left hand.*
He should have used his right hand.
The left hand is considered unclean.

- 2 A tourist didn't take his shoes off when he went into a temple in India.
- 3 A tired businesswoman travelling on the metro in Seoul yawned loudly without putting her hand over her mouth.
- 4 A British boss scheduled dinner for a visiting Spanish delegation at 6 p.m.
- 5 A Chinese visitor with a cold kept sniffing during a meeting in the US.
- 6 A woman sat next to a Buddhist monk on a crowded bus in Thailand.
- 7 A hotel guest in Finland went into the hotel sauna wearing shorts and a tee-shirt.
- 8 A European diner in Japan left his chopsticks sticking up out of a bowl of rice when he'd finished eating.



Pronunciation

- 1 11.2 Listen to these two sentences from the expert's advice in 4 again. Note the pronunciation of *should have* and *shouldn't have*.

- a He should have waited to be introduced.
- b They shouldn't have rushed so quickly.

- 2 Repeat the sentences. Practise the other *should* sentences in 4 (11.1 on p. 141).

- 3 11.3 Listen to this 3rd Conditional sentence. Note the stressed words and the rhythm.

If they'd built up a good relationship, they would have won the contract.

- 4 Practise saying these sentences.

- 1 If they'd done more research, they wouldn't have made the mistake.
- 2 If they hadn't been over-confident, they wouldn't have lost the contract.
- 3 If they'd spent longer in the country, they would have understood the culture.

- 2 Complete the sentences. Say what you *would* or *might have (done)*.

- 1 If I'd had a day off last week, _____.
- 2 If I'd got a bonus last month, _____.
- 3 If I'd chosen a different career, _____.
- 4 If I hadn't decided to learn English, _____.
- 5 If I'd been born a different nationality, _____.
- 6 If I'd known about _____.

- 3 Read the memo and the article about the company Comptek. What mistakes did the company make? What should they have done?

Example *Comptek didn't follow their own advice.
They should have followed their own advice.*

MEMO TO ALL STAFF

I saw this story in a magazine.
Can you believe it?!

Karl Svensson

IT Operations Manager

The computer distribution company that got its IT security wrong

Comptek were responsible for advising their clients on aspects of computer hardware and software, including security and anti-virus protection. But it turns out the company weren't following their own advice.

For a start, they didn't have a proper firewall to protect their own servers. They hadn't even installed some of the basic anti-virus software they stocked themselves. On top of this, they had a relaxed attitude to staff sending personal emails, and downloading files and programmes from the Internet. As a result of this, the system

crashed regularly, operational time was slowed, and orders were lost.

But the real disaster struck with the latest international 'worm' virus. Within seconds of an employee opening the attachment on one of his emails, the whole system was down, the main database was destroyed, and the virus was being sent out to all the addresses on the Comptek mailing lists. Luckily for most of the recipients, they had already installed the correct protection. It was too late for Comptek however – they went out of business overnight!



- 4 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Make 3rd Conditional sentences with *would* and *might* about Comptek.

Example *If they had followed their own advice, they might have avoided the damaging effects of the 'worm' virus.*

- 2 Have you ever made any mistakes when using computers, such as forgetting to make a back-up copy of a document? What were the consequences?

- 5 Work in pairs. Ask and answer questions about important decisions you've made in your life, e.g. about your studies, career, etc. Say how your life would have been different if you had made different decisions.

Culture file. Confusing words. Dictionary skills (3)

- 1 Work in pairs. Which of the types of culture listed below do you think influences you most?

Types of culture

When we use the word *culture* we do not just mean national culture, but the whole range of different types of culture. These include:

- corporate culture (for example, the culture of Microsoft)
- professional culture (for example, the culture of lawyers or doctors)
- gender (the different cultures of men and women)
- age (the different cultures of young, middle-aged, and elderly people)
- religious culture (for example, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam)
- regional culture (for example, Northern and Southern Italy)
- class culture (working class, middle class, and upper class)

From *International Business Communication* by Robert Gibson 2002

- 2 Read the dictionary extracts and complete the sentences with the correct word or phrase.

cul-tural /'kʌltʃərəl/ *adj.* [usually before noun] 1 connected with the culture of a particular society or group, its customs, beliefs, etc.

cul-ture /'kʌltʃə(r)/ *noun* 1 [U] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group

'culture shock *noun* [C, U] a feeling of confusion and anxiety that sb may feel when they live in or visit another country

cul-tured /'kʌltʃəd; NAmE -tʃərd/ *adj.* 1 (of people) well educated and able to understand and enjoy art, literature, etc.

multi-cul-tural /ˌmʌlti'kʌltʃərəl/ *adj.* for or including people of several different races, religions, languages and traditions

- 1 A lot of problems in international business are caused by _____ differences and misunderstandings.
- 2 She's an extremely _____ woman and knows a lot about literature and art.
- 3 As a journalist on the new magazine for teenagers you'll need to have a good understanding of youth _____.
- 4 I come from a _____ city with lots of people from different countries and different religions.
- 5 When I first went to China, I suffered from _____: everything was so different.

(Extracts based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 7th edition 019 431 6068 ©2005)

- 3 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Have you ever experienced *culture shock*?
- 2 Do you think of yourself as a *cultured* person?
- 3 Is the city or country where you live *multicultural*?
- 4 How would you define the culture of
 - your country?
 - your age group?
 - your region?
 - your place of work or study?

- 4 Work in groups. Do you think that the place where you work has a corporate culture? Discuss these questions. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of the underlined words and phrases.

- 1 Is your working environment open-plan, or are there separate offices and work-stations?
- 2 Does the management operate an open-door policy?
- 3 Are most policy decisions made by individuals at senior level, or are they collective, with consultation of all staff?
- 4 Is there an organigram of your company and staff structure? Does it show a hierarchical approach?
- 5 Do you work mainly in teams or as individuals?
- 6 Does your company employ secretaries or administrators?
- 7 Are you encouraged to see new tasks as problems or challenges?
- 8 Is there a dress-code or a dress-down day?

- 5 Describe the main features of your corporate culture to students from other groups. Compare the differences.

Confusing words

- 1 Choose the correct word.
 - 1 The meeting started promptly because there was a long *agenda/itinerary/schedule* to get through.
 - 2 Halfway through, we *adjourned/cancelled/postponed* the meeting for coffee.
 - 3 Sorry, I can't make 10 o'clock tomorrow. I've got a doctor's *meeting/appointment/arrangement*.
 - 4 My colleagues were arguing so much that I had to *intercept/interfere/intervene*.
 - 5 Have you seen the weather *forecast/plan/prediction*?
 - 6 I've got an exam tomorrow, so I need to *review/rehearse/revise* tonight.
- 2 Write sentences using the words you didn't choose in 1. Use a dictionary to help you.
- 3 In the sentences below, one word is not correct. Identify the word and replace it with the correct word.
 - 1 He was so angry with the decision that he retired immediately.
 - 2 I had to work hardly to get the job finished on time.
 - 3 She makes a good counsellor because she's so sensible to people's problems.
 - 4 After we'd got on the train, the inspector controlled everyone's ticket.
 - 5 The directors accused the bad exchange rate for the fall in profits.
 - 6 Despite losing some of our best sales staff, we still reached our targets.
 - 7 His raise from the position of Sales Assistant to Chief Executive in less than five years was spectacular.
 - 8 There's an opportunity that I might be asked to go to Hong Kong for a conference.
- 4 Work in groups. Choose two of these word groups and discuss the questions.
 - a salary, wage, earnings
 - b recruit, employ, apply
 - c student, trainee, pupil
 - d answer, feedback, reply
 - e staff, workforce, employees
 - f make redundant, dismiss, lay off
 - 1 What is the difference between each of the three words? Use a dictionary to help you.
 - 2 Write sentences to show the difference.
 - 3 Explain the differences between the words to students from another group.
- 5 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.
 - 1 Have you ever confused any of the words in this section?
 - 2 What other words have you confused during this course? Look back at some of the previous units.
 - 3 Are there any words in your own language that seem similar to English words but have a different meaning ('false friends')?
 - 4 Are there any English words which are used in your language? Is the meaning different from the meaning in English?



A tough choice

- 1** Leah Pattison was recently awarded the title of 'Woman of the Year' for her charity work in India with women who have leprosy. Before you listen to an interview with her, discuss these questions.
- 1 What do you know about leprosy?
 - 2 How do you think women suffering from leprosy in India are regarded?
 - 3 What help do they need?
- 2** **11.4** Listen to the first part of the interview with Leah Pattison. Check your answers to **1**.
- 3** **11.4** Listen to the first part again. Answer the questions.
- 1 What is the name of the charity Leah has co-founded?
 - 2 Can all victims of leprosy be cured?
 - 3 Why do many women with leprosy hide their condition?
 - 4 What did Leah study before she went to India?
 - 5 What job did she go to India to do?
 - 6 What was her initial reaction to the leprosy patients, and how did it change?
- 4** **11.5** Listen to the second part of the interview. What happened to Leah? What tough choice did she have to make?
- 5** **11.5** Listen to the second part again and tick T (True) or F (False).
- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Leah was worried she might catch leprosy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Leprosy is a difficult disease to catch. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Leah decided to return to the UK for treatment. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Leah found it a very tough choice to make. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Her friend caught leprosy at the same time. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Leah made a full recovery. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 At first, the women patients are often difficult to communicate with. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 The interviewer thinks Leah's decision was very brave. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 6** Work in groups. Discuss the questions.
- 1 What is your reaction to Leah Pattison's story? Do you think you would have done the same as her? Would you have stayed and had the treatment in India?
 - 2 What other charities do you know that help disadvantaged people? What are the needs of the people who the charities are trying to help?
 - 3 Have you ever had to make a tough choice that affected a close friend or your family, either in a positive or a negative way?



- 1 Work in pairs. Do the correspondence quiz. Look at the letters and fax on pp.117–118 to help you.

Correspondence quiz

- 1 How many of the letters have a letterhead? What information does it contain?
- 2 How do you close a letter that begins *Dear Sir or Madam*?
- 3 How do you close a letter that begins with the recipient's name, e.g. *Dear Claire*, *Dear Ms Lanson*?
- 4 When do you use *Ms* before a woman's name?
- 5 What do the following abbreviations mean?
a encs b no c plc d pp e Rd f St
- 6 Which expression is sometimes used to a business contact before closing?

Ms R Lanson
Project Director
Network Multimedia Productions
Network House
30 Portland Terrace
London W1A 6RU

31 Aylston Rd
London NW6 5PR

23 March 2005

Dear Ms Lanson

Thank you for your letter of 17 March. I apologize for not replying sooner but I have just returned from holiday. I would be delighted to act as consultant for the *Food and Drink in Spain* programme in your new video project. The project sounds extremely interesting, and I will be very pleased to help you in any way I can.

I am afraid I will not be able to meet you next week owing to prior commitments, but I will be available during the first week of April.

I enclose a copy of my book *A Taste of Spain*, which I hope you will find useful.

I look forward to meeting you and Eric next month.

Yours sincerely

María Ferrando

María Ferrando

ets

Executive Travel Services
28 Chiltern St
London W1M 2LH

Tel 020 7486 9740 • Fax 020 7487 4432
enquiries@ets.com

Ms C Hallan
Network Multimedia Productions
Network House
30 Portland Terrace
London W1A 6RU

25 April 2005

Dear Claire

Please find enclosed airline tickets for Ms R Lanson and Mr E Carlin.

Would you kindly check the tickets to make sure all the bookings are correct?

Unfortunately, the hotel you requested in Barcelona is fully booked due to an international convention taking place at that time. I am awaiting confirmation of a booking at the Hotel Feria Palace. Please let me know if you require any information on hotels in Valencia.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Jan Tate

Jan Tate
encs

NMP
NW

13 May 2005

Dear Sr Pérez

It was a pleasure meeting you in Jerez last week. Mr Carlin and I would like to thank you for a very interesting and informative visit, and for giving us so much of your time.

We are delighted that you have agreed to a further interview, to be filmed for inclusion in our programme *Food and drink in Spain*. We will contact you shortly to finalize arrangements for filming the interview.

Please give our kind regards to Señor Corzón.

Mr Carlin and I very much look forward to meeting you again soon.

Your sincerely

Rosa Lanson

Rosa Lanson
Project Director

NMP | Network House, 30 Portland Terrace, London
Tel 020 7243 2673 | Fax 020 7243 0531 | enquiries@nmp.co.uk

Welco+
Pharmaceuticals plc

Redwood Park
Maidenhead
Berks SL7 2RL
messages@welcophar.com

Fax cover letter

To: NMP

From: G Burnett

Subject: Video order

Date: 17 June 2005

No of pages: 1

Dear Sir or Madam

Further to our telephone enquiry, would you please send us the following video training courses?

No of copies	Code	Title
1	NMP 601	Communication skills at work
1	NMP 603	Doing business in other cultures
3	NMP 608	Motivating your workforce


We would appreciate it if you could send us information about new training courses as they become available.

Yours faithfully

J McLaren

pp G Burnett
Human Resources Manager
Welco Pharmaceuticals plc

- 2** Look at the standard phrases from business correspondence. Find more examples of standard phrases in the letters and fax on pp. 117–118. Use them to complete the table.

Explaining the reason for writing I am writing to enquire about ... inform you that ... confirm ...	Giving good news I am pleased to inform you that ... I am delighted to tell you that ...
Making reference With reference to your letter of ... It was a pleasure meeting you ... _____ _____	Giving bad news _____ _____
Apologizing I am sorry about ... _____	Enclosing documents _____ _____
Requesting We would appreciate it if you could ... _____ _____ _____	Closing remarks Please pass on my best wishes to ... _____ _____
Agreeing to requests I would be delighted to ... _____	Referring to future contact We very much look forward to meeting you again ... Please contact us again if we can help in any way. _____
Explaining reasons This is the result of ... due to ... _____	 Pocket Book pp. 17–18

- 3** Work in pairs. Choose two of the following.

- Write a fax to the Hotel Majestic, Passeig de Gràcia 70, 08007 Barcelona, Fax: +34 93 215 77 73, confirming a reservation for Ms Lanson and Mr Carlin from 8–10 May.
- Write a letter to Mme Martine Granget, 95 Gloucester Place, London W1A 5SP, asking her if she would be willing to act as a consultant for the programme *Food and drink in France*. Describe briefly the aim and content of the series of programmes. Suggest a meeting to discuss the matter in more detail.
- Write a letter to Piet van Els and Rosa Lanson. Offer to act as a consultant for a programme about the food and drink of your country.
- Write a typical letter you may need to send out in your own work or studies.