



A software project for a logistics company

1) Read the short description of a project team and answer the questions which follow.



Sean Riley joined Softsolutions Ltd two years ago, after an IT course at university. Since then he has worked as a team

member on software projects. When he started on his first project, he was still a trainee. After his first year at Softsolutions he went on a team management course, and was promoted to subteam leader. He has just been promoted to project manager of project number 2001/54/L to provide

software for Eurotrans Ltd, an international logistics company. The contract was signed and work began on Tuesday 18 June. The customer wants to be able to automate as many processes as possible in warehousing and despatch. Sean has already worked with Eurotrans. He has known the IT manager of

Eurotrans for two years, and he has already met the managing director.

The project team consists of four subteam leaders, all working under Sean, and each in charge of a workgroup. The workgroups will be set up later, when the project is running. Rajid Singh is res-

ponsible for systems analysis. He has worked for the company for four years, and had expected to manage this project. He is an excellent systems analyst, but is not very good at talking to customers or at managing people. Di Brown is responsible for testing the software at all

stages, and Ian Jones is in charge of documentation. Ian has been employed by the company for several years.

Sean has arranged a meeting with the group leaders, and he has had preliminary talks with the customer.

Notes: trainee: sb who is learning a job. Most trainees in England are not school-leavers, they have first done a course at a university • promotion of a person: an increase in the salary, rank and responsibility of the employee • to despatch (dispatch) goods: to send goods to a customer • to warehouse goods: to keep them in a store or warehouse

Comprehension

- How long has Sean worked for Softsolutions Ltd?
- Where did he work before?
- How many people make up the project team?
- What is Rajid Singh in charge of?
- Why could there be a problem between Rajid and Sean?
- Why do you think Sean and not Rajid was promoted to project manager?
- What exactly does an "international logistics company" do?
- Who will be responsible for writing the program manual and the help program?



Non-native speakers often pronounce English first names incorrectly. Sean sounds like "shorn", not "seen". Consult the table for other correct pronunciations.

Name	Pronunciation	Phonetic Script
Sean	sounds like "shorn"	[ʃɔ:n]
Hugh	sounds like "you"	[hju:]
Ian	to rhyme with "she an"	[iən]
Diana (Di)	to rhyme with "Hi, Anna"	[daɪ'ænə]

2) Copy the chart and fill it in using the information from the text.

Project no	Customer	Description of task	Date of contract	Project manager	Subteam leaders	Current stage
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A project team meeting



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1) Listen to / Read the dialogue which took place at the kick-off meeting, then answer the questions below.

- Sean** Hi Rajid, hello Di, morning Ian. Well, let's get started straight away. Did you manage to print out the agenda I e-mailed the day before yesterday? Sorry it was so late, but you know what it's like at the start of a project. First point, let's agree on methodology. There is nothing worse than having a team which cannot function because everyone is going in a different direction! I suggest we use the company's own project management program, and stick to its procedures, OK?
- Di** That means we cannot take any short cuts! In my opinion, that wastes time.
- Rajid** No, I think you are wrong. I agree with Sean. Short cuts sometimes end up losing both time and money.
- Sean** Plan, what do you think?
- Ian** It does not really make much difference to my area of work, but it seems logical to use the proper tools, especially as our company makes them!
- Sean** OK, that is agreed then. We use our own PM program. – Item two. We need to agree on staff requirements. This is only a skeleton team. I've got a form here to fill in for the personnel department, asking for staff to work on the project. Can you each give me an idea of how many working hours per week you will need, and when?
- Rajid** I need a qualified assistant full-time as soon as possible if you want the first module ready on schedule. And we must have some top programmers on the project. It is no good just asking people to do bits and pieces, they need to get the feel of the whole project.
- Sean** I'll ask for an assistant for you as from now, Rajid, and I am sure you are right, we will need at least three programmers full-time, as soon as we get to the design stage. – Now to you, Di. What are your needs?
- Di** I will need a small team of experienced people for quality tests. But I don't need them until there is a system to test.
- Ian** The same goes for me. I will follow all developments at all stages, of course, but I do not need to work full-time on the documentation yet. In the final stages I will need at least one assistant full-time, and some part-time helpers.
- Sean** So, let me recap; we require an assistant for Rajid asap, three programmers from the end of the month, and further staff will be required at a later stage. – Next point. Progress report. Well, Rajid and I have already got the answers to some questions after our recent meeting with Eurotrans. We told them they needed to buy new bar code readers and printers. They agreed, so that problem is solved. And the list of features they "must have" was attached to the e-mail with the agenda.
- Rajid** There is one problem. They want the system to record the "loading aids" used. What do they mean by "loading aids"?
- Sean** So far as I know, pallets, crates and so on. The different containers that they put goods in for transport. You are right. We must have a complete list. Can you contact Tessa and ask for that, Rajid?
- Rajid** Yes, sure.
- Sean** And there's something else. The customer's IT people want to be involved in all tests, right from the start. Can you liaise with Tessa Hughs on that, Di? She's the head of IT at Eurotrans, you know. I'll give you her number and e-mail address.
- Di** Well, I do not much like having customers working with me in the early stages, you know. It can waste a lot of time, and ...
- Sean** Sorry about that, Di, but we had to accept that condition. Rajid can take over that liaison function, if you prefer.
- Di** Oh no, I don't think that would be a good idea. I ...
- Sean** You prefer to do it yourself, do you, Di? Fine, I think that is a better solution, too. Now to you, Ian. Some of Eurotrans' key customers do not speak English. Can you find out if they are going to want full translations of the documentation, and if so, into which languages?
- Ian** OK. I'll e-mail Eurotrans' sales office to find out. And if they want translations, I'll see if I can find a translation agency who can do them.
- Sean** Thanks, all of you. Well, that is all for the moment. Could you report back at the next meeting, which will be in two weeks time, same time and place? And Ian, would you have time just to make a short report of the meeting? Thanks a lot.