



Staff negotiations

Getting started

Discuss these questions in small groups.

- 1 When a company is considering reorganising its operations, which of these considerations should be foremost in its thinking, and why?
 - shareholders' interests
 - employees' needs
 - customers' interests
 - pressure from the competition
 - public opinion
- 2 Which of these elements should be given the lowest priority?
- 3 How should companies consult staff when, for example, they are thinking of closing a factory or relocating people to offices in other parts of the country?

Travelsafe Insurance

Listening

Travelsafe Insurance is a small insurance company specialising in travel insurance with 450 employees based in Norwich, UK. You will hear Peter Fletcher, a trade-union representative, collecting opinions from staff members before a meeting with managers to discuss working conditions.

1 Work in pairs. Study the staff complaints and demands below and:

- (if you are working) say which ones you think also apply to you
- (if you are studying) discuss which are the most serious complaints, and which are the most reasonable demands.

Complaints

- A I want to be sure I won't be relocated.
- B I'm not trusted enough.
- C I feel I'm not being treated fairly.
- D I'm not being paid a competitive salary.
- E I'd like a more transparent career structure.
- F I would not know what to do in an emergency.
- G I'd like a reduction in my workload.
- H I'm not given enough recognition for what I do.

Demands

- I We should all receive higher salaries for what we do.
- J We should be consulted more by our managers.
- K We should get more recognition for what we do.
- L We need more management support.
- M We need less supervision.
- N Our offices should be better equipped.
- O We should receive incentive payments.
- P We should be given more training.



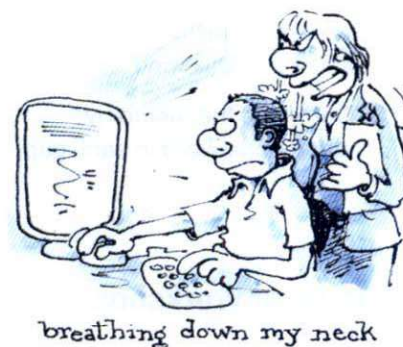
- 10 2 Peter talks to five people. Listen and decide which complaint (A–H) and which demand (I–P) each of the five people makes.

	Complaint	Demand
Wendy		
Demitri		
Naline		
Claudio		
Toya		

Vocabulary

- 10 Match the phrasal verbs and expressions (1–8) with their definitions (a–h). Then check your answers by listening again and reading the transcript for track 10.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 round the clock | a chosen frequently and unfairly to do something unpleasant |
| 2 get hot under the collar | b all day and all night |
| 3 picked on | c become angry about something |
| 4 put their money where their mouth is | d continue doing work |
| 5 passed over | e ignored |
| 6 breathing down my neck | f of an acceptable standard |
| 7 get on with | g show by spending money that they believe in something |
| 8 up to scratch | h watching everything someone does |



Grammar workshop

Variations on conditional sentences 1

Study these sentences from the listening activity and answer the questions below.

- ... if it weren't for us, this company would fold overnight.
- ... had the bosses spoken to us about this possibility, I'd have told them what I thought.
- ... what would we do in the event of a fire?
- I'd be happy to do all this, provided other people were being asked to do the same amount.
- ... if they were to say something, then they'd have to put their money where their mouth is and give us a bonus.

- Which sentences are second conditional (▶ page 44)?
- Which is third conditional (▶ page 44)?
- Which words or phrases are used instead of *if*? Can you think of other words or phrases which can replace *if*? (▶ page 99)
- Which sentence contains the following construction: *if it weren't for* + noun/pronoun?
- Which puts the auxiliary verb before the subject to replace *if*?
- Which sentence contains *were* + infinitive?

▶ page 99 (Variations on conditionals)

Norwich Cathedral

Reading

- 1 Read the memo opposite which the CEO of Travelsafe Insurance sent to all the staff. Briefly discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 If you received a memo like this in your place of work, how would you react?
- 2 What demands would you make to your representatives if you were a member of staff affected in this way?
- 2 Complete the memo by writing one word in each gap.



Memo

To: All staff
From: CEO

As 1 *part* of our expansion plans, and with a 2 to closer contact with our key markets, we are planning to open new offices in Glasgow, Liverpool and Plymouth. 3 decision will involve reducing the size of our Norwich office 4 about 20% during the next 18 months and relocating staff to form a nucleus of experienced staff in the new offices mentioned 5 We hope to achieve our goal of 20% staff reductions 6 Norwich by providing incentives 7 early retirement and, if necessary, voluntary redundancies. Staff wishing to know 8 about our plans and how we aim to reformulate the organisation should consult the company intranet. We shall also be discussing our plans with staff representatives 9 a forthcoming staff-management meeting. If you would like to ask any questions or 10 any comments, please don't hesitate to send me an email.

Many thanks
Frank Mason
Frank Mason
CEO

Grammar workshop

Variations on conditional sentences 2

Several people at Travelsafe Insurance expressed disquiet about the company's plans for relocation.

- 1 Match phrases 1–8 with phrases a–h to make sentences said by Travelsafe's employees.

- 1 Had I known about the company's plans,
- 2 I guess several people in my department would be interested in relocating if
- 3 I'd jump at the chance to move,
- 4 I'd regard this as a great opportunity to go to a big city with more scope
- 5 I'll happily move back to Liverpool,
- 6 I'll only move to Glasgow on condition
- 7 If it weren't for my wife's job,
- 8 In the event of my entire department being relocated,

- a as long as I'm given a section supervisor's job.
- b providing I was offered some sort of permanent contract.
- c I wouldn't have bought a new house here just six months ago.
- d I'd consider moving as a possibility.
- e I'll move with them to stay with the team.
- f if it weren't for the fact that I have all my friends and family in this area.
- g that they give me a generous resettlement package.
- h the company were to offer the right package.

- 11 2 Check your answers by listening to what the speakers actually said.

- 3 Complete these sentences in any way you want. Then compare your ideas with a partner.

- 1 She would have left the company had she ...
- 2 I'll change jobs providing ...
- 3 He wouldn't stay late at the office if it weren't for ...
- 4 Many staff will be made redundant in the event of ...
- 5 I'll go on the training course on condition that ...
- 6 He's happy to accept more responsibility as long as ...

Talking point

Discuss these questions in small groups.

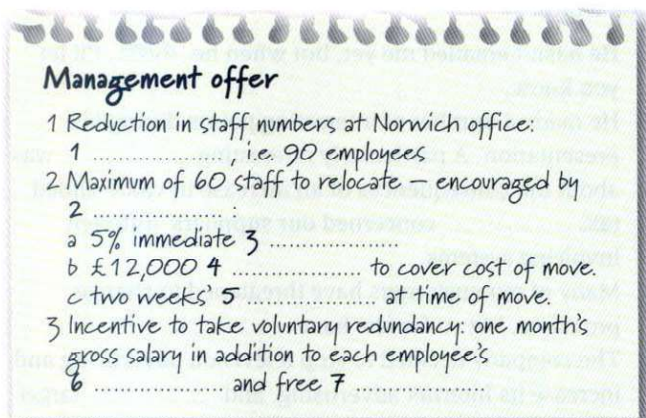
- 1 Would you be prepared to relocate? Under what circumstances?
- 2 Which reasons for relocating / not relocating given in the listening exercise do you think were best?

Horse-trading at Travelsafe Insurance

Listening

You will hear Travelsafe Insurance's CEO, Frank Mason, talking to Peter Fletcher, the staff representative.

- 12 Listen and complete Peter's notes with up to three words or a number.



Management offer

1 Reduction in staff numbers at Norwich office:
1 , i.e. 90 employees

2 Maximum of 60 staff to relocate – encouraged by
2 :
a 5% immediate 3
b £12,000 4 to cover cost of move.
c two weeks' 5 at time of move.

3 Incentive to take voluntary redundancy: one month's gross salary in addition to each employee's
6 and free 7

Talking point

Discuss these questions in small groups.

- 1 How generous is the company's offer?
- 2 What actions can their employees take if they are not happy with the offer?
- 3 What could be the company's next steps if their employees don't accept the offer?

Role-play

You are going to negotiate an agreement between management and staff at Travelsafe Insurance, concerning the relocation of staff to new offices.

- 1 Divide into 2 groups.

Group 1: You represent management. See page 120.

Group 2: You represent staff. See page 120.

- 2 Complete the Useful language box by writing phrases 1–15 in the appropriate spaces.

- 1 Another thing we/our staff want is ...
- 2 For us, the most important thing is ...
- 3 Here's another possibility. How about ...? Why don't we ...?
- 4 Yes, I guess that's acceptable. (However, if ...)
- 5 I'm afraid ... is out of the question. On the other hand, we could ...
- 6 No, I'm afraid we couldn't possibly accept that. What we want is ...

- 7 Now, let's just check I've got this right: what you want is ...
- 8 Yes, that's fine. No problem.
- 9 OK. Let's just make sure we agree.
- 10 That's an interesting possibility. Can we come back to you on that?
- 11 We can't answer that one straight away.
- 12 What we'd like first of all is ...
- 13 We'd have to consult on that one.
- 14 Yes, that would be OK (but only if ...)
- 15 You're saying that if we ...

Useful language

A Introducing demands or proposals

Here's what we suggest:

.....
.....
.....

B Buying time

Well, we'd have to think about that.

.....
.....
.....

C Rejecting offers/making counter-proposals

We're not prepared to accept ... However,

.....
.....
.....

D Agreeing/accepting (with conditions)

I'll have to think about that, but I think it's all right.

.....
.....
.....

E Summarising

So, what you're saying is

.....
.....
.....

- 3 Form groups of four, with two management representatives and two staff representatives. Take fifteen minutes to negotiate an agreement for the relocation of staff. Try to reach an agreement.
- 4 Compare your agreements with those of other groups. Decide who negotiated the best agreement.
- 5 Work in pairs with your partner from your negotiating team and follow the instructions below.
Management representatives: Write a brief memo to the board of directors outlining the agreement you reached.
Staff representatives: Write a memo to all staff summarising the agreement you reached.