

S: So, what you're saying is that we're going to have to produce financial statements more often, is that right?

A: Yeah. To be precise, every month.

S: I see.

A: Now, we need to iron out some issues on the IT side, too, David. But, I reckon we're gonna have to set up a separate meeting to take stock of things, 'cause we don't really have time today, OK?

David: Sorry, Alice. You've lost me. We need to do what?

A: Well, in other words, we need to deal with some IT problems. And to do that, first we need to take stock ... erm ... see where we are at the moment. Do you see what I mean?

D: Yes, that's clear now. I could set up a meeting tomorrow morning at half past eight.

A: OK. That's great. So, can we go over what we've decided? We're going to standardize the financial reporting, and David and I will meet tomorrow to discuss the IT problems. Does everyone agree with that?

S: Yes, that's fine.

A: OK. Now, I don't know about you guys, but I didn't have time to grab breakfast this morning and I'm starving - very hungry - so what do you say if we go eat?

S: Good idea, Alice. Just thinking about monthly reporting has made me hungry.

D: Let's go!

7.5 Writing: Minutes

2:35

Part 1

Enzo: OK, François. Thanks for those statistics on late payers. I can see why management want us to cut late payment time by at least fifteen working days. Any ideas on how to do it? Alice?

Alice: Well, it's pretty clear to me, Enzo. We have to put more pressure on the slow payers much sooner than we do at present - I think François will back me on that?

François: Absolutely, Alice. In my opinion, we need to do two things. We need to reword our standard chasing emails to make them sound more threatening and ...

E: Threatening, François? I don't really want chasing emails sounding like that!

F: OK, let's say more assertive or persuasive. Anyway, they've got to show the customer that we require prompt payment. And the second thing is, we need to send the first reminder out earlier.

E: Right, so let's make the chasing email more assertive and send the first reminder out more quickly. Erm, François, could you look after redrafting the standard email? And Alice, perhaps you could review the current schedule of when we send each chasing email and see how we can reduce the whole timescale. Can you both report back at our next meeting in two weeks?

A: Fine, yeah, erm, OK.

2:36

Part 2

Dylan: So, to put it briefly, covering for absent colleagues instead of just leaving their work until they get back is not just a question of efficiency. It will also improve the department's image both inside the company and with our customers and suppliers. Of course, it will mean slightly more work at certain times, but I'm convinced the effort will be worth it.

Alice: I see your point Dylan, but I'm not sure that the end of the year is the best time to run a major project like this. Staff

will need training to be able to do their colleagues' work and you know that the end of the year is always our busiest time.

Enzo: Alice is right, Dylan. Why don't we give ourselves more time on this point.

D: Oh, I'm quite happy to have more time. If you like, I'll draw up a training schedule for February next year and show it to you at our first meeting in January. How's that?

E: Sounds great, Dylan. We'll look forward to hearing your conclusions in the New Year.

2:37

Part 3

François: Let me see. What else? ...

Electricity saving measures, toner and ink cartridge recycling, reductions in the use of paper, proper sorting of waste into plastics and paper, and ... I think that's about it.

Enzo: Hm, well I think this brainstorming session has been very useful. It's certainly thrown up a whole lot of good ideas. But I get the feeling that we need some outside help on this if we really want a lasting reduction in waste.

Alice: You're right, Enzo. We should get in touch with an environmental consultant or something for some basic advice.

E: Fine, well, I'll deal with that, if you like. I don't think I'll be ready in two weeks so I'll come back to you on it in October, OK?

7.6 Case study: Car-Glazer

2:38

Nina: Hello. Accounts.

Emily: Oh, hello. Is that Nina Kovar?

N: Speaking.

E: Good morning, Nina. This is Emily Wyatt from Car-Glazer in Prague. Robert Smid asked me to call you. It's about an outstanding bill from July.

N: Ah, yes, well, in fact, can I put you through to Mr Miler? I think he'd like to talk to you about this himself.

E: Well, yes, of course.

Jakob: Miler speaking.

E: Good morning, Mr Miler. Emily Wyatt from Car-Glazer. I was calling about the outst ...

J: Yes, yes, I know why you're calling, Ms Wyatt. Look, I'm sorry to sound so rude, but this whole matter has made me rather angry. It's that Sales Manager of yours, Filip Novak!

E: Filip Novak, our Sales Manager for the East? I'm sorry, Mr Miler, I'm not sure I follow you.

J: Yes, well, let me explain. He brought his BMW in to the garage to be ...

E: Sorry to interrupt, Mr Miler. You said his BMW?

J: That's right.

E: But our Sales Managers drive company Volkswagens!

J: Well, that explains a lot. Anyway, he brought the car in to be repaired at the beginning of July. He'd had an accident and we had to do a lot of work on it. He told us you knew all about it and that Car-Glazer would pay the bill. Here in Brno we trust people. We simply sent you the bill with our normal July claim - for about 81,000 koruna, I believe - and thought no more of it. But we still haven't been paid the 378,000 koruna for the work we did on his car. And that's why we haven't paid you. It seemed like the only way of being paid what your Mr Novak owes us! I've been trying to call him for the last three weeks but had no luck.

E: Well, I see what you mean, Mr Miler, and I can understand why you're annoyed. I'll need to talk to my boss, Artur Nemeč, about this, but I'll get back to you as soon as I can. I think Filip Novak owes everybody an explanation!

2:39

Artur: Well, that was our friend, Filip Novak! He's just landed us the biggest deal we've ever made. We're going to be the preferred glass replacement company for the number one insurance company in the Czech Republic! So, where do we go from here?

Unit 8 Fair trade

8.1 About business: Fair trade or free trade?

2:40

Oh, yes, hello. This is Margaret, from Cheltenham. I'm phoning to comment on the article 'Why fair trade is a bad deal' which appeared on your website. I just wanted to say that fair trade supporters are not as misguided as the article suggests. It's rather surprising that the writer himself has forgotten to mention that free trade and globalization are all about the survival of the fittest. Free trade is a jungle! It may be true that big producers who sell to Starbucks™ and Caffè Nero can improve their productivity and command higher prices, but what happens to the small farmers? They're forced out of business altogether. Fair trade may never make small coffee farmers rich, but at least it lets small farmers make a living! And on a larger scale, free trade is dangerous because it encourages unbalanced economies. Take Mr Singleton's example of Mexico. With free trade, Mexico might decide to stop growing coffee, corn, or rice. All their farmers would only grow chilli peppers because it's more profitable, and they would make enough profit to be able to import everything else. But what would happen if the world market for chilli suddenly collapsed? With fair trade, you spread the risk and you give everybody a chance to make a decent living.

8.2 Vocabulary: Contracts and corporate ethics

2:41-2:48

Speaker 1: Well, talking about unethical behaviour, do you remember the name Victor Lustig? He was the man who sold the Eiffel Tower - twice!

Speaker 2: You must know the story about the American CEO who sold her company shares only days before the share price crashed? She said it was 'an unfortunate coincidence!' I wonder how many people believe that!

Speaker 3: Paying government officials to avoid red tape is well-known, but did you know that music companies have been paying radio DJs to play their music since the nineteen fifties? That might explain why some number one records are so bad!

Speaker 4: Did you hear about the mayor of that small town in Italy? He used his position and influence to get local contractors to build him this enormous castle in the mountains - for nothing! Incredible!

Speaker 5: And there was this Korean scientist, a top researcher, a really famous guy. Anyway, it turned out that he'd been using government research funds to pay for luxury hotels, restaurants and even a round-the-world cruise for his wife!