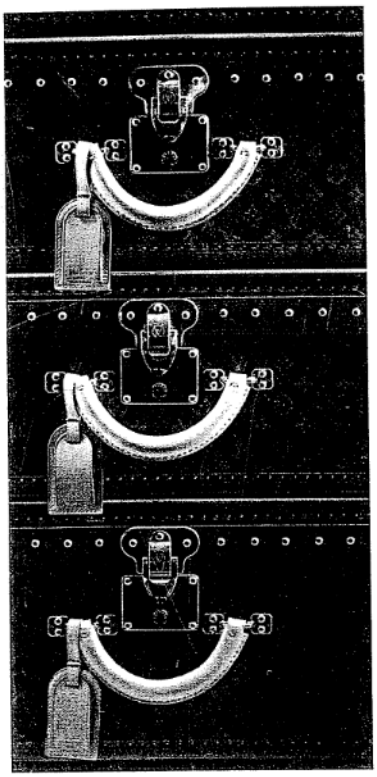
# 3 Quality

- the Japanese approach to quality
- product quality



## 3.1 About business What quality means

### Discussion

**1** **The box below contains factors that influence decisions to buy. Number the factors 1–7, depending on how important they are to you. (1 = most important; 7 = least important).**

design durability environmental friendliness
modernity price quality value for money

**2** **Discuss how the order would change if you were buying:**

- a car
- a washing machine
- an mp3 player
- a packet of breakfast cereal
- a leather bag
- a laptop

### Scan reading

**3** **Read the article opposite. Match the headings a–h with paragraphs 1–7. There is one extra heading.**

a) No survival without quality
b) Reliability is not enough
c) Quality and cost
d) Quality culture
e) Superficial quality
f) Quality in design
g) Closing the gap?
h) Quality for quality's sake

### Reading for detail

**4** **Read the article again and mark these statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).**

1 Western companies have caught up with the Japanese in terms of quality. ☐
2 The Japanese expect things to work properly. ☐
3 Producing reliable products guarantees a strong market position. ☐
4 For a quality programme to succeed, senior management do not need to understand the key concepts. ☐
5 Quality analysis is a sensible way to solve any performance problems. ☐
6 The iPod is not the only Apple® product which has enchanting quality. ☐

**5** **Find words or expressions in the text with the following meanings.**

1 something which suddenly becomes very popular (paragraph 1)
2 try hard to do something difficult (paragraph 1)
3 expect something to be there as normal (paragraph 2)
4 a variety of objects or things (paragraph 3)
5 mistakes you should avoid (paragraph 4)
6 things which are fashionable for a short time (paragraph 4)
7 to make something unsuccessful or unpleasant (paragraph 5)
8 something surprising or impressive (paragraph 6)

### Listening

**6** 1:46 **Industry analyst, Warwick Fender, is speaking about quality in the household electrical goods sector. What products do you think he will talk about? Listen and check.**

**7** 1:46 **Listen again and complete the sentences.**

1 The white goods industry has been accused of designing products to last _____.
2 Consumers today expect to _____ electrical goods more often.
3 Repairing products is expensive due to the cost of _____ and _____.
4 Ethical consumers are reassured that it is increasingly possible to _____ products.

### Discussion

**8** **In groups look at the products in Exercise 2 and discuss the questions. Then present a summary of your group's ideas to the class.**

1 Do the products have taken-for-granted quality, or enchanting quality, or both?
2 Are any of the products designed with planned obsolescence in mind?

**Internet research**

Search for the keywords *planned obsolescence* or *built-in obsolescence* to find examples of this practice and find out why manufacturers need to take it into account when designing new products. List the arguments for and against and report back to the class.