

Vocabulary

Verbs and prepositions

- A** Verb and preposition combinations are often useful for describing skills and personal qualities. Match the verbs 1 to 7 with the prepositions and phrases a) to g).

A good manager should:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1 respond | a) <i>in</i> their employees' abilities. |
| 2 listen | b) <i>to</i> a deputy as often as possible. |
| 3 deal | c) <i>to</i> employees' concerns promptly. |
| 4 believe | d) <i>with</i> colleagues clearly. |
| 5 delegate | e) <i>with</i> problems quickly. |
| 6 communicate | f) <i>in</i> regular training courses for employees. |
| 7 invest | g) <i>to</i> all suggestions from staff. |

- B** Which do you think are the three most important qualities in Exercise A?

- C** Some verbs combine with more than one preposition. For example:
'He reports to the Marketing Director.' (to a person)
'The Sales Manager reported on last month's sales figures.' (on a thing)
 Say whether the following combine with *someone* or *something*.

	Someone	Something
1 a) report to	✓	
b) report on		✓
2 a) apologise for		
b) apologise to		
3 a) talk to		
b) talk about		
4 a) agree with		
b) agree on		
5 a) argue about		
b) argue with		

- D** Complete these sentences with suitable prepositions from Exercise C.

- I agreed *with* her that we need to change our marketing strategy.
- I talk my boss every Monday at our regular meeting.
- We argued next year's budget for over an hour.
- He apologised losing his temper.
- We talked our financial problems for a long time.
- The Finance Director argued our Managing Director over profit sharing.
- I apologised Paula for giving her the wrong figures.
- Can we agree the date of our next meeting?

- E** Write three questions using some of the verb and preposition combinations above. Then work in pairs. Ask each other the questions.

Reading

Managing across cultures

A Many US managers are sent abroad to work; some find it difficult to adapt to local conditions. What do you think the figure is?

- 1 approximately 1 in 7
- 2 approximately 1 in 5
- 3 approximately 1 in 3

Now read the article and check your answer.

B Answer these questions about the article.

- 1 Why has the number of people working abroad increased?
- 2 Who did the following – the German manager in England or the American manager in France?
 - a) He made staff stay inside the building at lunchtime. *German manager*
 - b) He gave staff targets.
 - c) He had meals with each member of staff.
 - d) He stopped staff drinking during working hours.
 - e) He seemed to be watching his staff.
 - f) He worked harder than other staff.
- 3 What are the differences in the way the two managers managed their staff?

The international manager

IN RECENT YEARS, many companies have expanded globally. They have done this through mergers, joint ventures and co-operation with foreign companies. Because of this globalisation trend, many more employees are working abroad in managerial positions or as part of a multicultural team.

Although it is common nowadays for staff to work abroad to gain experience, many people have difficulty adapting to the new culture. The failure rate in US multinationals is estimated to be as high as 30% and it costs US business \$3 billion a year.

Two typical failures have been described in the journal *Management Today*. The first example concerns a German manager with IBM who took up a position as product manager in England. He found that at most lunchtimes and especially on Fridays, many members of staff went to the pub. 'I stopped that right away,' he says. 'Now they are not allowed off the premises. It didn't make me very popular at the time but it is not good for efficiency. There is no way we would do that in Germany. No way.'

The second example is about an American manager who came to France on a management assignment. He was unable to win the trust of his staff although he tried all kinds of ways to do so. He set clear goals, worked longer hours than everybody, participated in

all the projects, visited people's offices and even took employees out to lunch one by one. But nothing seemed to work. This was because the staff believed strongly that the management were trying to exploit them.

The German manager's mistake was that he hadn't foreseen the cultural differences. IBM had a firm rule about drinking during working hours. It was not allowed. He didn't understand that staff in other countries might be more flexible in applying the rule.

The American manager used the ways he was familiar with to gain the staff's trust. To them, he seemed more interested in getting the job done than in developing personal relationships. By walking around and visiting everyone in their offices, perhaps he gave the impression that he was 'checking up' on staff. His managerial approach strengthened their feeling of exploitation.

When managers work in foreign countries, they may find it difficult to understand the behaviour of their employees. Moreover, they may find that the techniques which worked at home are not effective in their new workplace.

From *Managing Across Cultures*
by Schneider and Barsoux

C Match words from each column to make common word combinations. For example, *adapt to a new culture*. Then check your answers in the article.

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 1 adapt to | a) rules |
| 2 take up | b) relationships |
| 3 set | c) goals |
| 4 apply | d) a position |
| 5 develop | e) a new culture |