

Name: _____

READING

Leading L'Oreal

A Write 2 things you know about L'Oreal.

B Read the article quickly to check if any of your points were mentioned.

Father of the feel-good factory

by Jenny Wiggins

Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones does not like being photographed. 'Do I have to smile?' he says gruffly. He exudes the air of a man who has done this many, many times before.

Such expertise derives from the fact that Sir Lindsay is frequently photographed with models, girls far taller than he is, who wear lipstick, eyeshadow and nail polish made by L'Oréal, the company he has worked for since 1969. For nearly 20 years, he was Chief Executive of L'Oréal, the world's biggest beauty company and owner of brands such as Maybelline, Redken, Lancôme and Vichy.

Although he stepped back from the day-to-day running of the company two years ago, handing over the job to Jean-Paul Agon, he remains Chairman.

Sir Lindsay, who turns 62 this month, has spent the better part of his life trying to convince women and men that buying L'Oréal's lotions and shampoos will make them feel good.

L'Oréal is a curious destination for a man who had 'no intention' of taking a job in the consumer goods industry. Yet he was drawn to the beauty company. 'It was still quite a small company, but was thought to



be going places and was considered a great example of creative marketing and original advertising campaigns. Cosmetics is a business of intuition. Consumers don't tell you what they need; you've got to guess.'

He credits his predecessor, François Dalle, with teaching him basic business sense while he was working his way up the ranks of L'Oréal.

'He single-handedly ran this company and did every marketing job for every brand, all at the same time. But he was a genius. I think one of the reasons I got responsibility so young was that I could interpret the things he said, which often were the opposite of what he actually said literally. So when I got the job as Chief Executive, it came totally naturally to me that my priority was going to be to write L'Oréal in the sky of every country in the world.'

Under Sir Lindsay's leadership, L'Oréal did just that. Annual sales rose from a few million euros to more than €17bn as the company acquired foreign cosmetic groups such as Shu Uemura in Japan, Kiehl's in the US and the Body Shop in Britain.

Sir Lindsay harboured international ambitions even as a child. 'My mother dreamed of parties at Monte Carlo and the bright lights. She transmitted to me the idea that excitement and fun was being international and travelling and speaking languages. It was easy as a teenager in a slightly grim 1950s Britain to see the cars going into Monte Carlo and to say, "Wow, one day I'm going to be there."

C Read the article again and match the descriptions below **(1-10)** to these four people. Two of the descriptions are not mentioned **(NM)** in the article.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| a) Lindsay Owen-Jones | c) François Dalle |
| b) Jean-Paul Agon | d) Lindsay's mother |

- 1) Had international ambitions from a very young age. _____
- 2) Runs L'Oreal. _____
- 3) Is Chairman of L'Oreal. _____
- 4) Was attracted to L'Oreal before it became very successful. _____
- 5) Relaxes by sailing and skiing. _____
- 6) Was attracted by the lifestyle of the rich and famous. _____
- 7) Ran the company on his own. _____
- 8) Likes going to concerts and reading. _____
- 9) Climbed the career ladder at L'Oreal. _____
- 10) Dreamed of parties at Monte Carlo. _____

D Complete the gaps with prepositions.

- 1 Such expertise derives _____ the fact that Sir Lindsay is frequently photographed.
- 2 Although he stepped _____ the day-to-day running of the company two years ago, handing _____ the job _____ Jean-Paul Agon, he remains Chairman.
- 3 He credits his predecessor, François Dalle, _____ teaching him basic business sense.
- 4 _____ while he was working his way _____ the ranks of L'Oreal.
- 5 My mother dreamed _____ parties at Monte Carlo.

E Discuss the questions.

- 1) Would you like to work for Sir Lindsay? Why? / Why not?

- 2) What kind of leader would you like to work for?

- 3) Who is the worst leader you have come across?

LISTENING

Qualities of Leadership

A Listen to Elizabeth Jackson, Managing Director of Director Bank, an executive recruitment company. Which five areas does Elizabeth think are important for a good business leader?

- ☐ A sense of direction
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Courage
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Respect
- ☐ Emotional intelligence
- ☐ Confidence

B Listen to the second part and answer the questions.

1 What qualities do natural born leaders possess?

2 Can people who have acquired leadership skills beat natural born leaders?

Always

Not usually

Never

B Listen to the final part and decide if these statements about Elizabeth Jackson's husband are true (T) or false (F).

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) He is younger than her. | T | F |
| 2) He used to be a boxer. | T | F |
| 3) He is a natural leader. | T | F |
| 4) He is a creative thinker. | T | F |
| 5) He is a strategic thinker. | T | F |