

Progress Test 3 (Units 9–12)

Listening

Three young people, who were students together, want to start their own business. Lucy is from the USA, Ben from Ireland, and Tobias from Germany. As they have no capital of their own, they need to raise finance. They are each in their respective countries looking for potential investors. They hold a conference call to discuss progress. Listen to the discussion and complete the notes below that Lucy made about the call (1–10). You will hear the call twice.

16th August
Call to discuss financing

- Ben reported that he had contacted¹ venture capitalists, but most of them were not interested because we are² and have³.
- Tobias reported that the same was true in Germany. However, he spoke to one investor by phone, who gave two pieces of advice. One was to get funding from⁴ in order to bridge the gap; and the other was to focus on⁵.
- Tobias and I were in favour of⁶, but Ben pointed out that he had already tried this and didn't think it was a feasible option.
- I suggested that we should try to⁷ the amount we're asking for.
- Ben agreed and pointed out that that we could save costs by⁸.
- One disadvantage of persuading venture capitalists to invest in our business is that they would⁹.
- Ben feels strongly that we should keep¹⁰ for ourselves if we want to make money in the future.

Vocabulary

A Online business

Complete the sentences below (11–18) using words from the box.

abandonment back-end checkout conversion fulfilment
repeat returns user-friendly

- 11 The process of supplying things that have been ordered is known as order
- 12 systems are used to manage order processing, payment and dispatching of goods.
- 13 It is important for e-tailers to design a website so that customers find it easy to navigate and are encouraged to shop.
- 14 We say that the sales- rate is low when a lot of people visit the website but few people buy from it.
- 15 The online process needs to be easy, because many customers will give up if it takes too many clicks to complete the purchase.
- 16 A 50-per-cent rate means that half of customers who start a shopping cart give up before completing their purchase.
- 17 E-commerce companies need to have a good system for handling customer, i.e. goods that are sent back when they fail to meet the customer's requirements.
- 18 Companies want to encourage customers: people who come back to buy from them again.

B Project management

Complete each gap in the text below (19–28) with a suitable word from the box. You will not need all of the words.

assets	back-up	benchmark	breakdown	deadline	goals
measures	milestone	moderator	oversee	response	
resources	setback	track			

A successful project needs to have a clear aim, so the first step in the planning process is to set¹⁹. In addition, a good project plan needs to include a number of components:

- a summary of the²⁰ available (budget, manpower, etc.);
- a²¹ of tasks to be carried out, including whose responsibility they are and a²² for when each task must be completed;
- a plan for contingencies that will enable you to make a rapid²³ in the event of a crisis (this is important, as there is often a lack of direction following any kind of²⁴);
- a system of tracking²⁵ for evaluating progress.

Any project involving more than a couple of people will need a project manager who will²⁶ the whole process and make sure that everything stays on²⁷. The project manager may act as a²⁸ if there is any disagreement among the stakeholders of the project.

Language**A Noun phrases**

Choose one word from each column, A and B, to complete the three-word noun phrases and match them to the definitions below (29–36).

A	B
capital	border
competitive	bottom
cross	entry
medium	intensive
one	management
post	off
rock	pricing
start	sized
stock	up

- o a company that is neither very large nor very small: a *medium-sized* company
- 29 a project that requires a lot of capital: a project
- 30 customers who buy only once from a company: customers
- 31 help given to new companies: support
- 32 the acquisition of one company by another in a different country: a takeover
- 33 measures that prevent competitors from imitating your idea once it is commercialised: barriers
- 34 a database used to track stock levels: database
- 35 a strategy where a company aims to undercut its competitors' prices: a strategy
- 36 a price that is as low as it can possibly be: a price

B Cleft sentences

Rewrite these sentences (37–44), starting with the given words.

- 37 The staff-shortage problem was solved by hiring temporary workers.
It was
- 38 We moved production to the Philippines because we needed to save costs.
The reason why
- 39 During the training programme, everyone worked in different teams, which made it very interesting.
What made it interesting
- 40 John Macdonald is the Sales Manager – you need to speak to him.
The person
- 41 Download the information from the web – that's all you have to do.
All
- 42 We launched the new product on the same day as our anniversary.
The day of our anniversary
- 43 Women – and ethnic minorities as well – are finding it hard to get into senior management.
It's not just
- 44 Next, he opened up new stores in three neighbouring towns.
What he

C Giving examples

In the sentences below (45–51), replace the words in *italics* with an appropriate alternative from the box. Use a different idiom in each case.

A case in point is	a typical case	alone	for one	like	such as
to name but a few					

- 45 Many of the world's most famous brands lost value between 2000 and 2004: Microsoft, McDonalds and Disney, *for example*.
- 46 There is concern that supermarkets are growing too big and powerful. *An example is* Tesco, which has a turnover of £37 billion, and is larger than many national economies.
- 47 The company has received 257 export orders so far this year. Orders from the US, *which is just one example*, account for more than \$80,000.
- 48 Venture capital firms now account for more than 50 per cent of all M&A activity. Private equity firms, *for example* Barclays Private Equity, own an increasing proportion of retail and leisure companies.
- 49 Companies are attracting more importance to 'soft skills' when recruiting new staff: qualities, *for example* good communication skills and the ability to work in a team, are now vital to a job applicant's success.
- 50 The business looks set to fail and I, *being just one example*, refuse to give it any further backing.
- 51 Many new businesses fail because they have done insufficient market research: Nico's is *an example*.

Skills

Below is an extract from a question-and-answer session following a presentation. Complete the gaps (52–61) with appropriate words.

Presenter: So that⁵² to the end of my presentation. Does anyone have any questions?

Questioner 1: Yes, I'd like to⁵³ you anticipated the fall in sales last month.

Presenter: We didn't. As I⁵⁴ in my talk, it came as a complete surprise to everyone.

Questioner 2: I'd be⁵⁵ more about your plans for promoting the new product.

Presenter: Do you mind⁵⁶ to that later? My colleague will be covering that in his presentation shortly.

Questioner 3:⁵⁷ us precisely what the figures were for sales of the LD1 last month?

Presenter: I'm afraid I don't⁵⁸ to hand. But I can certainly find out for you and let you know.

Questioner 4: I was⁵⁹ what you thought about the China situation.

Presenter: I'm not sure I⁶⁰. Are you referring to competition from China?

Questioner 4: Yes. What I⁶¹ – could you tell us what strategy you have in mind to fight off competition from China?

Reading

A Read the article below and choose the best answer, a, b, c or d, for the questions (62–71) on the next page.

All consumer problems solved

by Michael Skapinker

One of these days, I will summon up the courage to telephone my broadband service provider to find out why I am unable to read my office e-mail from home. I am not looking forward to it; my last call was answered by someone who clearly could not wait to get rid of me.

Why is everything so difficult? We can now buy a huge range of electronic products at ever-lower prices. We can read independent consumer reviews, compare prices online and have goods delivered to our door. And we can **do all that** in the certain knowledge that what arrives will not work.

At least I know I am not alone in these problems. James Womack and Daniel Jones in the March issue of the Harvard Business Review, ask: 'Why does consumption – which should be easy and satisfying – require so much time and hassle?'

The answer to all these problems, they say, is lean consumption. Their idea is an extension of lean production, as first practised by Toyota, the Japanese car manufacturer. Toyota employees were encouraged to eliminate faults during the manufacturing process. Workers who saw faults occurring could stop the assembly line to ensure they were corrected. Toyota workers used the information from the shutdowns to solve the faults permanently, which meant that the assembly line had to be stopped less frequently as time went by.

Toyota also adopted a different attitude to suppliers. Instead of drawing up specifications for components, asking potential suppliers to bid and then selecting the cheapest, Toyota has developed deep relationships with suppliers. The company

took the same attitude with dealers. Toyota's close ties with retailers – and their links, in turn, with customers – have helped the company forecast demand.

Mr Womack and Mr Jones argue that the same principles can be applied to solve consumers' problems today.

How would it work? Take helplines, for example. At present, they try to solve problems after they have occurred. They do not do it very well, either. Helpline workers are rewarded for their 'efficiency', in other words how many callers they deal with – which is why they are so eager to move on to the next one. Helplines should do more than help people with problems, **the writers** say. The helpline staff should use the calls to identify common problems, which can then be solved – the equivalent of the stopping of the Toyota line.

Companies such as Toyota rely on a smaller number of suppliers than their competitors, using **those** that understand their needs best. 'This same concept can be applied to the process of consumption,' the writers say. 'For example, why can't a single provider solve your computation and communication problems by evaluating your specific needs and then determining the best equipment, software and services? The provider could then obtain, install, maintain, upgrade and replace the required items for a standard fee, with no unpaid work or hassle for you.' The integrators they are advocating could improve the processes, eliminate problems and lower the cost of consumption. Let us hope **it** happens soon.

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- 62 The author doesn't want to call his broadband service provider because ...
a) it will take a long time.
b) he doesn't expect them to be helpful.
c) it will be difficult to explain the problem.
d) he is afraid they will think he is stupid.
- 63 According to the author, the main problem facing consumers nowadays is ...
a) there is too much choice.
b) it is difficult to make comparisons of different products.
c) delivery is often delayed.
d) products and services are often unreliable.
- 64 The author refers to an article in Harvard Business Review. Does this article ...
a) support the author's point of view?
b) contradict his point of view?
c) neither support nor contradict his point of view?
- 65 What is the meaning of *hassle* (line 18)?
a) annoying problems
b) disagreement about a problem
c) thought
d) planning
- 66 How did Toyota deal with manufacturing faults?
a) Workers were told to criticise each other's mistakes.
b) The assembly line was shut down more and more often.
c) Problems were identified and corrected during the production process.
d) Faults were dealt with after manufacturing.
- 67 Which sentence best describes Toyota's relationship with its suppliers?
a) The supplier offering the lowest price is chosen.
b) Toyota is constantly looking for new suppliers.
c) The company uses more suppliers than other manufacturers.
d) It is a long-standing relationship.
- 68 What kind of relationship does Toyota have with its dealers?
a) The company dictates to dealers which models they should stock.
b) Dealers provide little feedback on customer needs.
c) They work together to find out what customers want.
d) Dealers have a high degree of independence.
- 69 What is the author's opinion of helplines?
a) They are ineffective in solving recurrent problems.
b) Helpline staff are badly trained.
c) They do an efficient job.
d) They are too slow.
- 70 Lean consumption means ...
a) buying fewer material things and leading a simple life.
b) buying products according to specification.
c) buying only reliable products that will last a long time.
d) buying related products and services from one supplier.
- 71 The author believes that lean consumption would ...
a) only benefit the manufacturers.
b) make life easier for consumers.
c) result in consumers spending more.
d) be more time-consuming for the customer.

B Answer these questions (72–76) about cohesion.

- 72 What does the author mean by *do all that* (line 11)?
- 73 What does he mean by *took the same attitude* (line 36)?
- 74 Who are *the writers* (line 50)?
- 75 What does *those* refer to (line 57)?
- 76 What does *it* refer to (line 69)?

Writing

You have been asked to write the text for the home page of the Mills Training website. Mills Training has given you the introduction to their brochure to work from (see the text below). Rewrite this text so that it is appropriate for a web page.

Guidelines

- Reduce the text to a maximum of 150 words.
- Organise the ideas into short paragraphs.
- Change to a more informal style.

Mills Training is the number-one training institute in Ireland and has been a leading provider of in-company training since 1988. Our years of experience in the field have enabled us to build up a deep understanding of the changing training needs of organisations and their staff. The staff of an organisation are its most important asset, and their training and development are therefore vital in today's competitive market. Mills Training is well placed to help companies stay ahead of the competition by getting the best out of their people. In-company training is the perfect solution for companies that have a number of people with the same training need. This option provides companies with the opportunity to work with our specialist in-company training team and highly experienced trainers to produce a training solution that meets their exact needs. We are able to deliver any of our advertised programmes specifically tailored to the client's needs, modifying elements of courses, adding new components or even combining two or more courses into an integrated programme. The result is high-quality, flexible and organisation-specific training. We work hard to achieve good value for money. Arranging in-company training is an effective method of making the most of the company training budget. Training programmes are priced by the day rather than by the participant, enabling companies to achieve substantial cost savings. A further factor is that running training at the client's own premises means that travel and accommodation costs can be saved.

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(244 words)