

## **BUSINESS STRATEGIES (KEY)**

### **1C – 2B – 3A – 4A – 5C – 6A – 7B – 8B – 9B – 10A**

Most large companies have long been aware that **good training is the key to getting the best out of employees (1C)** and they often invest heavily in professional development. This can include everything from English or computer courses to management skills and team-building activities. Today, standards of excellence at home must be the same overseas. Many business strategies from the English-speaking world, such as regular appraisals or high impact presentations have been adopted, along with the language. However, when Human Resources departments develop courses for company employees, **they should remember that some activities might not be acceptable across cultures (2B)**.

**The main concept of most training programmes**, particularly those aimed at management, **is that people work better when they feel understood and appreciated (3A)**. If the company is interested in the personal growth of its employees, they'll be motivated to help grow the business. Many training programmes involve **outdoor team-building activities (4A)**, where trainees participate in anything from team sports to environmental protection programmes, or even survival games, frequently together with their superiors. The idea is to bring out the strengths of each individual, while promoting collaboration and team spirit.

Another approach is to allow personnel to design their own training programmes. These courses can be partly computer-based, and therefore self-access and interactive, and **participants are encouraged to choose their own career pathway within the company (5C)**. If you have the right characteristics to work in sales, you can choose courses to orient yourself in that direction. If you're a marketing type, you can, with the right preparation, move up in that department. The theory is that, **if you're doing what you're good at, you will enjoy far greater job satisfaction and will therefore work better and harder (6A)**.

What works well in most western countries, however, may not always work across cultures. Even in some western European countries, such as France, the idea of an employee planning his or her future within the company could prove unacceptable. **France has an extremely hierarchical business culture (7B)** and the attitude towards managers is quite formal. It's hard to imagine a young French manager tackling a company boss in a game of rugby! Not only that, but France has one of the highest levels of "Uncertainty Avoidance" in Europe. French people generally try to avoid uncertainty and so **rules and regulations make them feel more secure (8B)**. They prefer to be told what to do by an expert, their boss, for example.

Countries like Russia and China are currently perceived to be attractive places to do business. If we consider that both these countries have even more hierarchical cultures than France, **it is highly unlikely that self-managed training programmes will be easy to introduce (9B)**. China has a highly collectivist culture, where people belong to "in groups" that take care of them in exchange for loyalty. The Chinese tend to think of themselves as "we" rather than "I." **This is good news for team-building activities, as Chinese people are used to collaborating in a group (10A)**, but once again it's bad news for any training programme that invites individuals to determine their own future.