Ten practical activities for business English classes

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Outcome

At the end of this workshop participants will:

➤ have been introduced to 10 activities for business English classes

➤ have had the opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of the activities and their application to their own teaching situations
Activity 1: Course book quiz
Course book and exam quiz: Business Benchmark (book) & Business Vantage (exam)

To get an overview of the book and the exam, answer the following questions:

The course book

1. How many units are in the book? ..............................................................
2. How many main topic areas are in the book and what are they? ..............................................................

3. How many pages is each unit? ..............................................................
4. Do you think you could do one unit per week? If so, how many weeks will we need to complete the book? ..............................................................
5. There is new vocabulary in every unit but what are the four skills that are also practised? ..............................................................

6. Is there any grammar in the book? If so, where is it? ..............................................................
7. Pages 118-206 are known as “the back of the book.” What is contained in these pages and how will they be useful to you? ..............................................................

The exam

To answer these questions you will need to go to: http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-qualifications/business-certificates/business-vantage/

8. What are the components of the exam? Complete the table:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>

9. Can you do the exam online? ..............................................................
10. How do you register for the exam and how much does it cost? ..............................................................

11. Where is your nearest exam centre? ..............................................................
12. Why do you want to take the exam? ..............................................................
Activity 1: Course book quiz

- good for course orientation
- lets you know that students have understood the course structure
- highlights any queries that students may have with the course at the beginning
Activity 2: Stem sentence cards

Talk about...

...your last holiday.

...your current project(s).

...your plans for the future.
## My summer holiday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The best part of the holiday was...</th>
<th>The worst part of the holiday was...</th>
<th>I would (wouldn't) go there again because...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Something that really surprised me about the holiday was...</td>
<td>The journey there was...</td>
<td>When we were there we met...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of our best day excursions was...</td>
<td>I would say the thing I enjoyed most about the holiday was...</td>
<td>If we hadn't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I really like about this holiday destination is...</td>
<td>When I go on holiday I like to...</td>
<td>If I had to sum up the holiday in one word I would say...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something different that we did this time was...</td>
<td>The best part of going on holiday with the whole family is...</td>
<td>The worst part of going on holiday with the whole family is...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2: Stem sentence cards

✓ good for fluency practice and can lead to LOTS of discussion

✓ provide students with useful structures to begin sentences

✓ coloured cards appeal to learners with visual / spatial tendencies
Over to you...

1. Which activity do you like best?
2. Which modifications would you need to make for these activities to work with your students?

Activity 1: Course book quiz

Activity 2: Stem sentence cards
Activity 3: Business Spotlight Head to Head
Have marketers become spies?

Listen to what people on the streets of Norwich, England said in response to the question “Are you worried that companies are collecting too much information about customers?” and complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>because...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Business Spotlight 3/2014*
Activity 3: Business Spotlight Head to Head

✓ good for listening, speaking and reading practice (and writing if you wish)

✓ topical subjects that students usually have their own (sometimes strong!) opinions on

✓ generates focused discussion and debate as students take sides for and against
Activity 4: The Times 100 Business Case Studies
Tarmac

Competitive advantage through diversity

Curriculum Topics:
- HR strategy
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Benefits of diversity

Introduction

In 1901, county surveyor Thomas Hockney noticed a fallen boulder of tar that had spilled on the road. The area had been covered by waste slag from a nearby ironworks. A once Hockney observed that an excellent patch of road surface had been formed. A year later he had taken out a patent for mixing slag with tar and in 1903 formed the company that became Tarmac.

Today Tarmac is still the UK market leader in road surfacing. It is also the country’s largest quarrying company and a key producer of aggregates (gravel), ready-mixed cement and mortar. Tarmac UK is sub-divided into two separate businesses:
- Tarmac Ltd, which focuses on key building aggregates and materials;
- Tarmac Building Products Ltd, which focusses on turning raw materials into products usable by the building sector.

This case study focuses solely on Tarmac Ltd but will refer to it as Tarmac. The company and Tarmac’s brand are to be found on major construction projects all over the country. The new Wembley stadium, the M7 motorway and London 2012 are high profile examples. It also has operations in the Middle East producing crushed rock, sand and gravel, asphalt and contracting activities.

With sales approaching £2 billion in 2010, Tarmac has just over 4,000 UK employees. As a firm in the heavy building materials industry, the company traditionally had a strong male bias in its workforce, but this is changing. Many posts are now open to men and women across a huge range of job roles.

For Tarmac to succeed in a competitive marketplace, people are critical. Tarmac is aware of the importance of diversity and inclusivity and has taken steps to ensure that the company is a great place to work. The Tarmac team is committed to the values and principles that underpin the company’s approach to diversity and inclusion.

Benefits of a diversity strategy

Diversity and Inclusion is a key dimension to HR management. It is also embedded in Tarmac’s overall business strategy. This is driven by a compelling vision “Achieve the Exceptional”. This is achieved through diverse talent and leadership within Tarmac.

Tarmac values its employees for who they are and what they offer. Inclusive diversity and inclusion (D&I) are core values of the company. Tarmac is committed to creating an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all employees, regardless of their background, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Reduce Costs

Valuing all employees for who they are and what they offer increases motivation and improves retention. These are two powerful ways to reduce costs and raise quality. D&I enhances employee engagement, creates a positive work environment, and reduces turnover. Diversity and inclusion help to create a more inclusive workplace and enhance employee engagement.

Manage assets

Diversity builds new networks of communications. Tarmac’s quarries, processing plants and highways contracts typically have a high profile within local communities. A diverse workforce is best able to represent the company in gaining contracts and local approval for investment exercises.

Commit and Invest at Tinsdale

Tarmac has a large cement kiln at Tinsdale near Bolton in Derbyshire. In 2000 the company planned a major expansion that would bring 250 new jobs both in the construction phase and in subsequent operation, before applying for the necessary planning permission. Tarmac ran an extensive consultation with the local community. A visit exhibition explained the plans to local people and gave them the chance to discuss the proposal.

Act Responsibly

Tarmac is committed to accepting social responsibility in all its business activities. This means a high level of concern for all of its stakeholders, including the local environment. The diversity and Inclusion strategy helps support the development of a workforce that is able to engage with stakeholders more effectively. This often leads to winning an informal “license to operate” through local acceptance of even approval of the company.

Quarry at Cayton Bay

Tarmac operates an important gritstone quarry near Shrewsbury in the West Midlands. In 2000 the company wanted to add more than double its site. Local people, many of whom worked at the quarry, were consulted at every stage of the planning process. Tarmac used presentations and a video to keep stakeholders informed. Approval for the project was gained with no objections.

Appropriate: A process to assess the performance of an employee, often based on comparing outcomes with targets.

Social responsibility: Recognition of obligations towards all stakeholders including the community and wider society.

Stakeholders: Parties or groups with a direct interest in the business or behaviour of an organization (e.g., shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, local community).
Competitive advantage through diversity in the workplace

Before you read
1. What is the proportion of males to females in your company? What about at different managerial levels throughout the company?
2. How far does your company try to recruit people from diverse backgrounds? Do you have a policy on discrimination against people's ages, genders, ethnic origins, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, disabilities, etc?
3. What are the benefits of having a diverse workforce? Are there any disadvantages?

Vocabulary
You are going to read a text about diversity in the workplace at a British company called Tarmac Ltd, a company famous in the UK for laying asphalt on roads. First, check the meaning of these technical and businesswords in your dictionary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical vocabulary</th>
<th>Business vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cement</td>
<td>an appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gravel</td>
<td>bullying / harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mortar</td>
<td>competitive advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a quarry</td>
<td>equal opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tar</td>
<td>procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste slag</td>
<td>sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While you read
Read the text and do the following:
1. Underline the points that mention how Tarmac Ltd promotes diversity in the workplace.
2. Prepare to explain why it is important for Tarmac to have a diverse workforce.
3. Find Tarmac's HR Mission Statement and prepare to explain how Tarmac achieves this goal.

After you read
1. How effective do you think such an inclusion policy would be in your company?
2. How does your company keep its staff motivated? How does it ensure that it retains the best people?
3. "Diversity is dynamic" (p104). How can a company ensure that a diverse workforce doesn’t become "stale"?
4. Apply Tarmac’s Diversity Strategy "wheel" (p163) to your company, giving concrete examples of how this works in practice.
Activity 4: The Times 100 Business Case Studies

✓ students learn something 'real' by analysing business practice in other companies

✓ free business theory and lesson materials aimed at business students

✓ case studies of real companies (for £2.29)

Source: http://businesscasestudies.co.uk
Over to you...

1. Which activity do you like best?
2. Which modifications would you need to make for these activities to work with your students?

Activity 3: Head to Head
Activity 4: Business Case Studies
Activity 5: How effective was our meeting?
Reflection: how effective was your meeting?

Think about the meeting you have just had. How effective do you think it was?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The meeting was effective because...</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. the purpose and goals of the meeting were clear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. everyone gave their opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. all participants respected each other and gave each other a chance to speak.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. it was not dominated by one or two people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. it was exactly the right length – not too long and not too short.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. we kept to the topic all the time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. the leader of the meeting had good control of the participants, topic and timing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. we all behaved professionally and didn't make personal remarks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. our knowledge of English was sufficient to understand most of it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Activity 5: How effective was our meeting?

✓ gets students to reflect on what makes a successful meeting using a concrete example

✓ develops skills that can be translated into their real work environment

✓ provides 'closure' on a meeting role play and allows for peer feedback
Activity 6: Write a summary of what was discussed

After discussions, debates and meeting role plays (such as those we looked at in Activities 3–5), ask students to write a summary of what was discussed.

Ask them to send you their summaries before the next lesson so that you can give feedback on them. For example...
Task 3: Head to Head
Summarise the arguments for and against companies collecting personal data. Then state your own opinion.

Task 4: Business Case Studies
Summarise how Tarmac deals with diversity in the workplace. Then state how your company could do the same.

Task 5: Meeting role play
Write the minutes of the meeting.
Activity 6: Write a summary of what was discussed

- practises writing and summarising skills
- allows the teacher to give feedback on students' written work and identify areas to work on in future lessons
- students enjoy doing this focused task and receiving feedback on it (you MUST give fb!)
Over to you...

1. Which activity do you like best?
2. Which modifications would you need to make for these activities to work with your students?

Activity 5: Reflection on our meeting
Activity 6: Write a summary
Activity 7: Speed networking
Speed networking
07.05.2010

When I first started attending business English conferences (notably the annual BESIG conferences held each year in November), I always felt uncomfortable approaching people and trying to strike up a conversation. In training sessions I try to develop my participants' socializing skills in English, yet at events I attend myself, I'm often too shy to put these same skills into practice.

This has become much easier for me since I got into online social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Ning, but my social and professional circle at conferences is still relatively small. For example, at the Sprachen & Beruf conference held in Düsseldorf earlier this week, I knew very few of the participants who were attending, and felt a touch apprehensive at approaching “strangers” and thinking of something remotely interesting to say.

Well, this may be about to change. It seems I'm not the only one suffering from social reticence — many participants from previous Sprachen & Beruf conferences voiced similar opinions, saying they would prefer the conference to offer more opportunities for networking and meeting people. So this year the conference organizers tried out a new socializing tool: speed networking.

Similar to speed dating, speed networking allows a large number of professionals to make contact with each other in a very short space of time. The craze has gained popularity in both the UK and the US, where it is used not only at business conferences, but also by universities in an attempt to match graduates with potential employers.

The system is simple: you talk to someone for three minutes (i.e. each
Activity 7: Speed networking

- develops fluency and confidence, even in learners with low levels of English
- real world skill that students often need to develop for talking about themselves and their work in English
- it's fun (but hard work!)
Activity 8: Filming students' presentations and giving audio feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the reasons for the student choosing this entrepreneur clear?</td>
<td>no, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there evidence of good research and preparation?</td>
<td>yes, but focused on the company more than the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a clear structure?</td>
<td>yes – you gave the structure at the beginning. Perhaps a little too long – keep the focus of your presentation in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the talk about the entrepreneur rather than the company?</td>
<td>both – I think you could have given more focus to Branson himself rather than his company</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of voice: projection, pace, clarity</td>
<td>clearly spoken with good tempo and volume. Your voice shakes a bit which indicates you may be nervous. One way that you can work on this is to practise breathing exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language: gestures, eye contact, movement</td>
<td>good body language and gestures but lost eye contact when reading from the screen. Also, watch the video again and ask yourself what it means when you make gestures such as scratching your nose or rubbing your neck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the audience</td>
<td>see above – maintaining eye contact will keep your audience with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving direction: overview and linking sections</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Visual Aids &amp; equipment</td>
<td>don’t give out materials at the beginning because people read them and don’t listen to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of language: variety of vocabulary and structures, fluency, appropriately academic style, pronunciation</td>
<td>relatively fluent and good use of English, although you stumbled on a few words. Rehearse your presentation to avoid this. Appropriately academic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 8: Filming students' presentations and giving audio feedback

✓ develops students' presentations skills

✓ allows the teacher to give feedback on students' presentations and identify areas for improvement

✓ students really enjoy receiving audio feedback on their presentations!
Over to you...

1. Which activity do you like best?
2. Which modifications would you need to make for these activities to work with your students?

Activity 7: Speed networking

Activity 8: Audio feedback on presentations
Activity 9: Restaurant role play
WURSTSPZIALITÄTEN AUS UNSERER HASEIGENEN METZGEREI

Zwei Stück original Münchner Weißwürste (8) aus der Hofbräuhaus Metzgerei mit süßem Senf 4,90 €

Vier Stück Wiener (2,3,8) mit hausgemachtem Kartoffelsalat 6,90 €

Vier Stück gebratene Schweinswürstl (8) auf Sauerkraut 7,90 €

Zwei Stück gebratene Wollwürstl (8) mit hausgemachtem Kartoffelsalat und Bratensoße 8,90 €

Original Hofbräuhaus Würstleteller mit Schweinswürstl (8), Wiener Würstl (2,3,8) und Pfälzer (2,3,8) auf Sauerkraut 11,50 €

Hofbräuhaus Bratwurst (8) - große gegrillte Schweinsbratwurst auf Sauerkraut 7,90 €

Leberkäs (2,3,8) aus der Hofbräuhaus Metzgerei - ofenfrisch, mit hausgemachtem Kartoffelsalat 7,90 €

Zu den Wurstspezialitäten empfehlen wir unseren Brotkorb
(1 Semmel, 1 Scheibe Hausbrot, 1 Salzstangerl und Pfennigmückerl) 3,90 €

HOFBRÄUHAUS SCHMANKERL

Krustenschweinebraten - frisch aus dem Ofen - mit hausgemachter Natursoße und Kartoffelknödel (2) 9,90 €

Spanferkelbraten - rescher Braten vom bayerischen Spanferkel mit hausgemachter Natursoße und Kartoffelknödel (2) 12,90 €

Schwarzshaxe - eine ganze gebratene Schwarzshaxe mit hausgemachter Natursoße und Kartoffelknödel (2) 13,90 €

Surhaxe - eine ganze gepökkelte Schwarzshaxe (2,3,8), im Gewürzsud gekocht, auf Sauerkraut mit frischem Meerrettich (8) 11,50 €

Bierbratl - resch gebratenes Schweinewammerl mit hausgemachter Natursoße, Bayerisch Kraut und Semmelknödel 9,90 €

Original Hofbräuhaus Braumeistersteak vom Schwein mit Schmelzzwiebeln und Millirahmkartoffeln 9,90 €
Activity 9: Restaurant role play

- good for practising a real life situation of entertaining foreign guests
- students learn how to describe local food specialities in English
- motivational and fun!
Activity 10: PowerPoint© karaoke
INSTRUCTIONS

Before the lesson
Create a PowerPoint presentation using slides containing text and images that are interesting for your students. Set the slides to automatically change after 20 seconds.

In the lesson
1. Review the expressions for talking about slides in a PowerPoint presentation.
2. Demonstrate the activity yourself with the first three slides.
3. Hand over to your students. Listen and make notes for later language feedback.
Activity 10: PowerPoint© karaoke

✓ practises the language of referring to slides in a presentation

✓ helps students become more confident in giving presentations

✓ motivational and fun!
Over to you...

1. Which activity do you like best?
2. Which modifications would you need to make for these activities to work with your students?

Activity 9: Restaurant role play
Activity 10: PowerPoint © karaoke
Summary: 10 practical activities

1. Course book quiz
2. Stem sentence cards
3. Head to Head
4. Business Case studies
5. Reflection on our meeting
6. Write a summary
7. Speed networking
8. Audio feedback on presentations
9. Restaurant role play
10. PowerPoint karaoke
Thank you for your participation!

Contact
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Web: www.helenstrong.de