

Unit 5 - Resources



The objectives for this unit are:

- vocabulary: learn words and phrases for talking about resources.
- communication: practise discussing options and reaching decisions.
- grammar: study the use of conditionals.

Unit 5 - Resources – Vocabulary I

The following words and phrases appear in the text you are going to read in this section:

pledge formally promise to give or do something
The government pledged their support for the plan.

deploy use something effectively
Small companies can often deploy resources more freely.

embrace accept an idea or proposal with enthusiasm
It is unlikely that these countries will embrace capitalist ideas.

enhance increase or improve quality
This is an opportunity to enhance the reputation of the company.

nurture help something to develop and be successful
It's important to nurture a good working relationship.

secondment a temporary transfer of a worker to another position, department or employment
He spent six months on secondment to the HR department.

green credentials proof of acting in an environmentally-friendly way
Their green credentials have won them lots of customers.

cynic a person who believes that people only do things to help themselves rather than for sincere reasons
Don't be such a cynic! I'm sure they're doing it for all the right reasons.



Responsibility and business

Ask anyone in the UK what Marks and Spencer plc stands for and you'll get a range of answers. This is because the company has had to refocus several times in an attempt to retain its competitive advantage. In today's business world companies have to accept that corporate accountability is now fundamental to company strategy. Businesses now need to ensure that they deploy all resources in a responsible way. M&S has embraced this challenge.

Being a responsible employer

M&S knows that with its staff it commands a huge knowledge base that it needs to protect and enhance, therefore it has recognized its responsibility to nurture current employees and to offer employment opportunities to the wider community. As a result, resources have been allocated to various HR projects, including staff secondment to charities, and providing up to 2,600 work experience placements in stores.

Respecting customer opinion

Marks and Spencer also listened to its customers, something it has an excellent track record for, and ensured its resources were being maximized by creating a new, all-embracing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. It realized that one critical success factor for CSR was transparency, so it set out to consult customers about the issue of social responsibility. It became clear that public awareness of the sustainability of resources was on the increase. Mike Barry, head of CSR explains, 'Four years ago 50% of customers said it mattered to them that Marks and Spencer was a responsible business. By last year that proportion had grown to 97%', proving its customers supported a company with green credentials that would also optimize its use of resources.

Becoming a more responsible company

Marks and Spencer plc responded by pledging to introduce a range of changes. It began by analysing the utilization of existing resources with the intention of running a greener business. Some small-scale changes include recycling coat hangers, discouraging the use of plastic bags, and allowing its own-brand chickens more room to roam.

Just a PR tool?

Cynics might say that such well-publicized HR and CSR projects are simply a way to enhance the company's image. There's no doubt these projects allow Marks and Spencer to publicly demonstrate how both company and natural resources are being put to good use, rather than being squandered or mismanaged. However, it's also clear that many areas of society can benefit.

Talking about resources: Complete the sentences

Complete the noun phrases from the text. You must only write one word in each space. The first letter of each word is given.

- 1 c [] accountability
- 2 o [] resources
- 3 knowledge b []
- 4 mismanage r []
- 5 critical s [] factor

- 6 a [] resources
- 7 track r []
- 8 put resources to good u []
- 9 c [] advantage
- 10 s [] resources

Talking about resources: Match the phrases to the definitions.

Read the text again and match the phrases to the definitions.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 use resources in the best possible way | squander resources |
| 2 the skills and expertise of a company's employees | track record |
| 3 deal with or manage resources badly | corporate accountability |
| 4 a company's obligation to justify its actions | mismanage resources |
| 5 a standard that measures how well a project is | put resources to good use |
| 6 use resources for a particular purpose | allocate resources |
| 7 how well someone has achieved something over time | competitive advantage |
| 8 use resources for a clear purpose | knowledge base |
| 9 a factor that makes a company more successful than its competitors | optimize resources |
| 10 waste resources in a stupid or careless way | critical success factor |

Unit 5 - Resources – Vocabulary II

The following words and phrases appear in the recording from the online course

equity the value of a company's shares

Equity in the telecommunications sector is going up and up.

sound reliable and sensible

She gave me some very sound advice.

intangible something that does not exist as a physical thing is still valuable

Reputation is a highly undervalued intangible.

feasibility possibility or likelihood of achieving something

I doubt the feasibility of the plan.

Talking about resources: Match the phrases with the definitions.

Match the words and phrases with the definitions.

1	loss of money, time, energy, etc.		cost-benefit analysis
2	profit from capital		return on investment
3	profit a company makes		bottom line
4	price at which something can be sold		quantifiable data
5	useful or valuable things or people		long-term viability
6	monetary gain in the near future		market value
7	comparison of price against reward		assets
8	ability to continue far into the future		short-term profit
9	measurable information		drain on resources

Talking about resources: Practice.

Complete the sentences by writing one word in each space.

- 1 The long-term _____ of this software is questionable.
- 2 Our shareholders will be pleased. The _____ line is much better this year than a year ago.
- 3 The cost-benefit _____ suggests we need to think about this project a bit more.
- 4 You don't have any quantifiable _____ to back up your claims.
- 5 All of our company's key _____ are in the form of property.
- 6 The sales push has been a big _____ on resources.
- 7 I'm not getting any _____ on my investment - I wish I hadn't put money into the company.
- 8 The _____ value of the property has fallen during the crisis.

Unit 5 – Resources - Communication

Key words from the unit related to giving to communicating in meetings:

Setting the context / discussing strategy	Discussing feasibility / evaluating options
Looking at the situation from a long-term perspective ...	There's no point in ... -ing, if we don't / can't ...
We need to develop a clear strategy to ...	Provided we ..., I'm convinced we can ...
I think we need to look at the bigger picture.	I'm not sure that would work.
We have to bear in mind the long-term viability of ...	Realistically, would we be able to finance this strategy?
	Assuming we decided to ..., we could also ...
Stating / discussing options	Reaching agreement
We have a number of options.	So, the general consensus is that ...
I think our options are quite clear here.	Are there any other points to consider?
How would it work if you / we ...?	Right. So we're decided.
Basically, we don't have much choice ...	
We can either ... or we (accept that) ...	
We're in a really strong position to ...	

Discussing options and reaching decisions in meetings: Categorize the phrases

Decide if the phrases are used for **setting the context**, **discussing options**, or **reaching agreement**.

- 1 We need to develop a clear strategy to move the business forward.
- 2 Well, we have a number of options.
- 3 OK, that's all very positive, but I think we need to look at the bigger picture.
- 4 I think our options are quite clear here.
- 5 How would it work if you took on some younger people?
- 6 ... I think we're in a really strong position to find new staff.
- 7 We have to bear in mind the long-term viability of a commitment like this.
- 8 So the general consensus is that long-term we have ...
- 9 Are there any other points to consider?
- 10 Right, so we're decided.

Decide if these phrases are focusing on **positive results** or are focusing on **negative results**.

- 1 Provided we check out the feasibility of these options thoroughly, I'm convinced we can find a system upgrade that will work for us.
- 2 I mean, there's no point in investing in a system upgrade if we don't have the space, the personnel, or the finances to carry it through.
- 3 I'm not sure that would work.
- 4 Realistically, would we be able to finance this strategy?
- 5 Assuming we decided to commit to the full amount, we could also look at ways to save money in other areas.

Discussing options and reaching decisions in meetings: Practice

Read the text and write the missing words. You must only write one word in each space.

Looking at the situation [] a long-term perspective, it's obvious we need to develop a clear [] to tackle the fall in sales. We have a [] of options. Firstly, because of our long-established competitive [], we are in a [] position to launch promotions and special offers, but there is no [] in doing that if we don't also cut costs. So, [] we decided to do promotions, we could [] look at changing our suppliers to bring costs down. But we would have to look at the long-term [] of this strategy. Are there any other points to []?

Unit 5 - Resources – Grammar: Using conditionals

Zero conditional

1 Use zero conditionals when the relationship between the situation and result is always true or always the same; there is no element of doubt.

If we hit our targets, we get a bonus.

2 We can also use two past tenses, to talk about something that always used to be true.

We got time off if we worked weekends.

3 We can use a zero conditional informally, instead of a first conditional.

If we lose the contract, we're in trouble.

First conditional

1 Use the first conditional when a situation is very likely to have the result given.

If you arrive late, you'll miss the first part of the meeting.

2 The present continuous and present perfect are possible in the *if*-clause.

If Jenny's working on this project, she'll learn a lot of useful stuff.

If Amit's broken his leg, you'll have to give the presentation.

3 Other modal expressions such as *can*, *may*, *be going to* are possible in the result.

If we don't gain market share, we may be in a sticky situation.

I'm going to change distributors if Kikibo don't get their act together.

Second conditional

1 Use the second conditional when a situation is hypothetical or imagined.

If taxes rose, we would consider relocating.

2 The second conditional is also useful to make suggestions, offers, warnings, etc. more polite.

If you arrived at meetings on time, we'd get much more done.

3 *Might* and *could* are also possible in the result.

We could save hundreds of hours if we adopted the new system.

Third conditional

1 Use the third conditional to talk about past situations that did not happen, to express regret, or for criticisms.

If you'd given him the job, you would have regretted it.

If I'd left earlier, I wouldn't have missed my train.

2 *Might* and *could* are also possible in the result.

We could have saved hundreds of hours if we had adopted the new system.

Type	Situation	Result
zero	<i>If</i> + present	present
	If you hand in work late,	you make a bad impression.
first	<i>If</i> + present	<i>will</i> + infinitive
	If we lose the contract,	we'll be in trouble.
second	<i>If</i> + past tense	<i>would</i> + infinitive
	If we lost the contract,	my job would be on the line.
third	<i>If</i> + past perfect	<i>would have</i> + past participle

Mixed conditional

1 We can use a second conditional *if*-clause with a third conditional result.

If you *cared* more about your work, you *would have been promoted* years ago.

(General hypothesis with an imagined past result.)

2 More often we use a third conditional *if*-clause with a second conditional result.

If I *had got* the job, I *would be commuting* for four hours a day.

(Imagining something that didn't happen in the past.)

Passives

Passive forms are possible in all types of conditional sentences, in either clause.

If the contract *is lost*, we'll be in trouble.

If we adopted the new system, hundreds of hours *could be saved*.

Other words instead of *if*

1 In many conditional sentences, *when* can replace *if*. This makes the situation sound more likely. The same is true of *every time*.

When we hit our targets, we get a bonus.

Every time we hit our targets, we get a bonus.

2 In zero, first, and second conditionals, we can use *unless* to mean 'except if' or 'if not'.

Unless we keep our contract with Zimierz, we'll be without a Polish partner company.

3 Participles such as *providing*, *provided*, *assuming*, and *supposing*, and phrases such as *on the condition that* and *as long as*, can also replace *if*.

Providing the building goes well, our new offices will be ready in May 2018.

As long as the pound stays strong, our projections will be realistic.

Using conditionals: Practice

Match the beginning of each conditional phrase with its ending.

- 1 If we don't keep the staff happy,
- 2 If I want you to come,
- 3 If they hadn't taken professional advice,
- 4 If I had known he was going to be so angry,
- 5 If I hadn't taken the course,
- 6 In Japan, if your boss ever makes a suggestion,
- 7 If everyone turns off their TVs at night,
- 8 If I wanted you to come,
- 9 If the factory hadn't closed,
- 10 If I didn't look for them,

I would never have disagreed with him.

I'd never have had these new opportunities.

they wouldn't be looking for new jobs.

I'd tell you.

they will reduce their carbon footprint.

they wouldn't have reduced their carbon footprint.

they will start looking for new jobs.

I wouldn't have new opportunities.

I'll tell you.

never disagree with him directly.

Using conditionals: Read the extracts and identify the conditional type.

Read the extracts and decide if they are **zero**, **first**, **second**, **third**, or **mixed** conditionals.

- 1 If the IT system is updated, you'll be more efficient in terms of your customer admin.
- 2 Provided we check out the feasibility of these options thoroughly, I'm convinced we can find a system upgrade that will work for us.
- 3 There's no point in investing in a system upgrade if we don't have the space, the personnel, or the finances.
- 4 If we'd invested in our production facilities five years ago, we would have knocked down the old building and had one purpose-built.
- 5 If we made them our key users, we could gradually train up the rest.
- 6 If you'd recruited more young employees at the start, they would have had some IT knowledge from school.
- 7 If we only had a couple of people initially who could use the system, how could they cope with the extra work?
- 8 If we hadn't invested in the system, we'd be way behind the competition.
- 9 If we work more efficiently with the customers, our reputation can only improve too.