

37

You shouldn't have done that

SECRETARY

Are you reliable? Can you work on your own initiative?

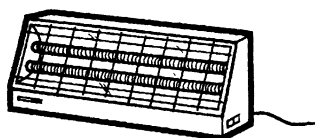
We are looking for an experienced well-qualified secretary for our small but growing machinery hire company. Apply in writing, enclosing a CV and the names of two referees to:

The Director



1

2



PERSON	MISTAKE

You shouldn't have done that

Worksheet

37

NOTE: This activity is unsuitable for pre-service students.

ACTIVITY

Whole class, pairwork and groupwork: reading, listening, writing, speaking

AIM

To talk about business mistakes.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONS

Should/shouldn't have (done)

VOCABULARY

CV, references/referee, to apply, reliable, well-qualified, experienced, on your own initiative, to enclose

PREPARATION

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student in the class.

TIME

20-30 minutes

PROCEDURE

- 1 Tell the students that they are going to hear a story about a mistake which a self-employed businessman/woman made and then do a speaking activity.
- 2 Give out the worksheets.
- 3 Ask the students to read the job advert and check the vocabulary. Some nationalities may wish to compare ways of applying for a job in the UK/USA and in their own country. The practice of giving the names of referees, for example, is not universal.
- 4 Ask if they have any suggestions as to what the connection between the job ad and the electric fire in the illustration might be. Do not tell them if their ideas are right or wrong.
- 5 Tell the class the story which appears below. You can tell it in the first or third person, use the words here or your own as you prefer.

When I advertised for a secretary I really wasn't expecting quite so many applications. There must have been over a hundred. In fact, it took me so long to go through them that in the end the actual selection was rather rushed. The person I finally took on was a woman about fifty years old with a very impressive CV.

We had problems from the beginning. She obviously didn't like having a boss who was younger than her and she constantly questioned my instructions. It almost seemed that she was my boss at times. At the end of the first week I had a few words with her. I told her I wasn't sure that we got on well enough to work together, but that I'd give it another week. She was obviously very upset and angry. I went out to lunch and left her in the office alone.

When I came back an hour later the office door was locked and black smoke was coming from under the door. She'd turned on an electric fire, put it face down on the carpet and gone home, as I discovered after the fire brigade had hacked the door down. I'd never had a chance to check her references when I first took her on, and once the fuss had died down I picked up the phone and rang her last two employers. The first firm had never heard of her. The second remembered her very well. 'Oh, yes' said their MD, 'She's the one who tried to burn the building down.'

- 6 Ask the students to work in pairs and to write two sentences about things the narrator should or shouldn't have done in the spaces provided on the right of the advert. Circulate and check their work.
- 7 Bring the class together as a whole and ask a few people to read out their sentences. Elicit that this was a mistake in the area of human resources (personnel).
- 8 Ask the students to remember a mistake in business which they have made, or which someone they know has made or which they have heard about. It should relate to marketing (e.g. poor sales predictions), production (e.g. over or underproduction), finance (e.g. setting the wrong price), sales (e.g. missed opportunities), or quality control (e.g. poor standards). Give them a minute or two to write a few notes.
- 9 Ask the students to stand up and circulate. They must collect mistakes from the rest of the class or from five other students and write sentences, for example: *Pedro's boss shouldn't have put so much money into coffee futures*
Marie-Nöelle shouldn't have given the hotel the loan'.
- 10 Once again, bring the class together and ask a few people to read out sentences.