

Putting people above profits – Advanced Teacher's notes

Title of the lesson: Putting people above profits

Level: Advanced (C1-C2)

Time: 90 minutes +

Groups: One-to-one, small groups, whole class

Business topics: Business, profit, values

Business language focus: Collocations, vocabulary related to business and industries

Skills: Reading, speaking, writing

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student

Overview: This lesson is based on an authentic article from a trusted news source. The article is about how, despite the public having shown appreciation for work done under extreme circumstances and pressure all over the world, companies and managers still have a long way to go in making sure their employees are truly valued. The author suggests that this pandemic could be used as an opportunity to make radical changes, and properly reassess value within companies.

1. Warmer

- a. Tell the students to look at the pictures of the people and ask the class which occupations they think they have (food delivery cyclist, fast food worker, package delivery driver). Note that two of these people are wearing masks and working during the pandemic. Ask them what kinds of challenges this situation could present for these jobs. Then, ask them to consider what their employers could do to help them face these challenges and succeed.

2. Key words and expressions

- a. Students complete the definitions with the words from the box. Remind them that they can use the section numbers to find the words in the article.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>rainforest</i> | 7. <i>deadlines</i> |
| 2. <i>rigour</i> | 8. <i>buckling</i> |
| 3. <i>quarantine</i> | 9. <i>gig economy</i> |
| 4. <i>lockdown</i> | 10. <i>algorithm</i> |
| 5. <i>backlash</i> | 11. <i>clapping</i> |
| 6. <i>tweak</i> | 12. <i>unprecedented</i> |

3. Understanding the text

- a. Have students work in pairs to decide and tick the statements that are supported by information from the text.

Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. ✓ | 7. ✓ |
| 3. ✓ | 8. ✓ |
| 5. ✓ | 10. ✓ |

4. Business Language – Collocations

- a. Students make collocations by combining the words. Make sure they understand the meaning of all the collocations before starting the next activity.

1. working conditions
2. climate change
3. extreme circumstances
4. fall into [the] trap
5. global warming
6. stripping [someone] of
7. time limits

- b. Ask the students to read the text and then use the collocations to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. *climate change / global warming*
2. *global warming / climate change*
3. *extreme circumstances*
4. *working conditions*
5. *time limits*
6. *fall into [the] trap*
7. *stripping [him] of*

5. Business Language – Vocabulary for industries

- a. Students put the words and expressions from the wordpool in the correct column in the table. Make sure the students understand the difference between the industries.

Technology	Financial	Environmental	Medical
algorithm	central banker	climate change	healthcare
automatons drone	credit	global warming rainforest	pandemic

6. Discussion questions

- a. Put students into small groups and have them read and discuss the questions. Once all groups have completed the discussion, encourage further discussion with the whole class. Ask the students to describe public acts of appreciation and kindness during the pandemic – do they know of any other acts to thank health services or has a particular figure made a big impact on public morale? Encourage several answers before moving on to the next task.

7. Wider business theme – Supporting autonomy

- a. Explain that students will work in pairs to do a role play, with one of them playing the role of a manager and the other their subordinate. The aim of the role play is to practise negotiation of responsibilities and delegation of tasks, with role B demonstrating autonomous ability. Divide the class into A and B roles and then put them in pairs. If there is an odd number, work with the remaining student. Consider providing a scenario to get the role play started if necessary: B walks into the office and sees their manager is sitting alone... Observe the pairs and choose a good example to perform their role play in front of the class at the end. Consider further discussion – ask the students if they found negotiation to be challenging and how they might approach a situation like this differently in their own jobs. How would they advise others to negotiate for more autonomy at work?