

IELTS Listening – Business Project

- Neil Hi, OK. So you are John and Sarah. I'm Neil. You are having some problems with a project you are doing on the marketing module of the business studies course. Is that right?
- John Yes. It's the one where we have to read the case studies of six businesses and assess their marketing, and identify the main problems each one had.
- Neil So what exactly is the problem?
- Sarah Well we've been doing a lot of reading for it. Some of the readings we've looked at are quite difficult but we still understand them and they are interesting, so that's ok. It's taking a lot longer than we thought though so we are wondering if we can have an extension? We have a lot of other assignments too. *Q21*
- Neil Well, extensions can be granted. However, it sounds like you are having issues with the planning of your time. Neither of you are sick or have had an accident, which are the only reasons that extensions are usually granted. The university's scheduling of deadline dates is organised so you can complete things on time. *Q22*
- Sarah Ok, we understand. We thought that would probably be the case.
- Neil Well let's see how you are doing with it. So you were given readings on six different companies – you needed to examine the main weakness of each company with regards to their marketing strategy. What did you find out about each company?
- John Let's start with Stacks Stationary. They were very experienced in marketing as they have been in the stationary market for such a long time. Their profits have generally tended to increase continuously for many years. However, they had issues with their staff because they felt that too much money was being spent on marketing but their wages did not increase for such a long time. *Ex.*
- Sarah Princeton Windows were quite successful initially as their marketing led to an increase in sales of 50%. However, this decreased again after a few months so it just led to profits for a short time. They need to think about how they can sustain any increase in profit for longer periods. *Q23*
- John MK Cars focused on the wrong thing because they didn't really understand who their target market was. Most their buyers of cars are young people but they advertised in newspapers that older people usually read. It would have been better to go for magazines popular with the younger generation. You must learn everything you can about who you are selling to. *Q24*

Sarah Lakeside Golf was probably the most successful of the six companies. They managed to generate a long-term increase in membership over a 3-year period. The only real issue they had was that they weren't ready for the increase in numbers of people coming to play golf so some people started to complain about the service there. Q25

John Bryson's Meats seemed to be a bit of a disaster really all round. They actually saw a drop in their number of buyers, though it seems fairly sure that this was related to other problems outside of the company rather than their marketing. There was a scare about meat during the period we are studying, and that meant that people bought less. So it may not actually be the company's fault. Q26

Sarah Mojo's Music Shop, which sells CDs and DVDs did pretty well. Their sales have been continuously increasing and this is very good as they are in a very difficult market. A lot of people aren't buying music from shops anymore as they download it instead, so to keep going in that situation shows that they had a very successful marketing campaign. They will have to work hard on this though due to the number of websites online providing the same service. Q27

Neil Well, from listening to what you have told me it seems like you have a fairly good understanding. For the assignment you also have to say what you think will happen in the future. Let's choose Mojo's Music Shop. What about you Sarah?

Sarah The company was established many years ago and I'm fairly confident that this company can continue to be successful. As I said, they have shown that they have survived in a very competitive market. They had a very strong advertising campaign and they seem very good at knowing where the market is going and how to change. What about you John? Q28

John Well I'm not so sure actually. There are just so few music shops that manage to survive these days. I do agree that they have been very innovative but too many people want to buy things online as it is so much easier and usually cheaper. Most young people don't even have DVD players these days and just listen to things on their phones. So I think eventually they will cease operating like most others. Q29

Neil That's two very different opinions. It's been said that they have a very good management team, but I'm not sure I agree with that as they are a bit inexperienced. I would disagree with you Sarah and say actually that their advertising campaign, although good, needs to be improved and more original in order to keep sales high. As John says, it's such a competitive market they need to do everything they can. Q30