Business English Frameworks

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The book covers a wide variety of business topics and contains 60 photocopiable frameworks which can be used in groups, pairs, or in a one-to-one teaching situation. The frameworks provide learners with the opportunity to talk about their own work situation in a structured way.

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The book features:
- a wide variety of business topics
- genuinely learner-centred activities
- clear and helpful teaching notes
Introduction

Frameworks

What is a framework?
A framework is a sheet with blank spaces for students to make notes as preparation for a personalized speaking activity. The spaces have headings, diagrams and prompts to provide a framework (structure) for the discussion. In this book the spaces for notes (section 2 of every framework) are preceded by some preparation of vocabulary and ideas (section 1).

Why use frameworks?
- Frameworks generate a lot of known and new language within a clearly defined context. This gives the teacher the opportunity to correct, improve or supply language in a feedback slot.
- In real life, business people would typically write notes as preparation for a discussion or meeting – ideas are expressed more clearly and more fluently after a little preparation.
- Frameworks allow a very high level of personalization and are therefore motivating and enjoyable.
- Frameworks offer great flexibility of classroom management.
- Frameworks give the teacher a lot of business information about the students.
- Frameworks involve minimal preparation.

When can frameworks be used?
- With students who want to talk about their own jobs, companies and professional lives (so most frameworks are not appropriate for pre-experience students in the tertiary sector).
- With all class sizes from groups to one-to-one.
- With all levels from Intermediate to Advanced.

Classroom management

Are the students interested in the topic?
Frameworks are highly student-centred – the language will come from them, not from a coursebook – so for the activity to be a success, students must want to talk about the topic. To help teachers select the frameworks to use, this book contains a photocopiable topics checklist, which gives the framework title (see page 7). Students can indicate the topics they are interested in, but note that it is not necessary for all students to be interested in the same frameworks.

Same framework or different frameworks?

Same framework
Every student can prepare the same framework, with the discussion being in pairs, threes, small groups or with the whole class. This will produce a focused discussion on a topic of common interest.

Different frameworks
Alternatively, different students can prepare different frameworks. If students then work in pairs, there will be an information exchange. Student A will use their completed framework to provide information, explain and clarify, while Student B listens and asks questions. Student B can be given a blank copy of the framework so that he/she sees the structure and can ask appropriate questions. The students then change roles. This is appropriate for groups where students have different interests and backgrounds.

Regrouping pairs
An extension of the previous activity is to regroup the students into new pairs and ask them to explain what their previous partner said. Let the students know you are going to do this at the beginning, as it is a motivating way of ensuring good listening and information checking, and produces a lively classroom atmosphere.

Brainstorming and vocabulary checking
Section 1 of every framework is an activity to prepare vocabulary and ideas for the note-writing in section 2. This is your chance to find out what the students already know and allow them to share this with other students in the group. Unless time is short, ask students to work in pairs or small groups (threes often works well) to think of additional ideas and vocabulary. Circulate and help with vocabulary, then write key words on the board. Remember to include collocations or put the word in a phrase or sentence to show how it is used. Also include word stress where appropriate.

Note-writing in class or for homework?
Completing the notes (section 2 of every framework) can be done in class or for homework. If done in class, the teacher can go round and help with language, and the discussion activity (section 3) will probably follow in the same lesson. If done out of class, the students have more time to think and prepare and will come to the next lesson ready to begin with the discussion activity. The second option is often very successful if students have time to do it.

Discussion in pairs or groups?
Or mini-presentations?
Pairs
Discussion in pairs will mean plenty of free speaking practice for the students – and remember that the two students can have different frameworks (see above). Students sometimes feel that during pairwork no one is there to check their language, and so the presence of the teacher circulating and taking notes for later feedback is important. Try to get students to change partners frequently so that they get a variety of peer interactions.
Groups of three
Discussion in threes often works well as the students are under less pressure, have more time to reflect and formulate questions, and there is always another person to keep the conversation going. Again, it’s important to circulate and monitor the students’ language.

Whole class
Whole-class discussions are usually lively, with a free flow of ideas and information. They are often a favourite with students. Here the teacher is likely to be involved as well, often as a kind of discussion facilitator, and language can be corrected or supplied on the spot. Doing this without stopping the flow of the discussion is a skill that can make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful activity. In general, it is better to write down points and return to them later, supplying a word or correcting a grammar form only when a student stops and asks for it.

Mini-presentations
Another variation is for students to give mini-presentations to the group. If students are using diagrams, they can draw them on the board or photocopy them onto transparencies and use an overhead projector. A good task for the listeners is simply to think of three questions to ask the presenter at the end. Alternatively, they can be given a language task such as ‘write down all the words you hear that you would like to be able to use yourself’. Mini-presentations often work well with more experienced business people who can make connections with what the speaker is saying. They also work well if group members need real-life practice at presenting information to a group.

Repeating the discussion
The Extension section of the Teacher’s notes for most frameworks suggests repeating the activity in a later lesson. This is a very powerful technique for increasing fluency and vocabulary acquisition. Check with the students first if they would like to have another chance to practise speaking about this topic. Point out that in their real jobs they have to talk about topics many times. Then, after a gap of a few days, repeat the activity as pairwork with a different partner. The discussion will nearly always follow a different course and the familiarity with the language and ideas will give a real boost to the students’ fluency.

Feedback
Feedback slot
The Teacher’s notes for each framework have a Feedback slot heading to flag this essential part of the lesson. As a rule of thumb, allow feedback time of at least half the speaking time. For example, in a 60-minute lesson where students have prepared their frameworks for homework and are working in pairs, all the Student As will speak about their frameworks and answer Student Bs’ questions for about 15–20 minutes, followed by 10–15 minutes of feedback. Then the Student Bs will have their turn followed by feedback.

While the students are speaking, circulate unobtrusively, making notes (see Using the feedback sheet below) and speaking only if asked a direct question. Answer questions briefly and quietly and then withdraw eye contact and continue circulating. The students need to keep focused on the discussion and on their partner. If they feel the teacher is giving important information to other students which they are missing, the discussion will stop and may be difficult to restart.

Before the feedback slot allow the students to ‘de-role’ by relaxing and joking for a few moments in class. They will not be receptive for language work immediately following a lively discussion. Then write language points selected from your notes one by one on the board. Give students a chance to supply words or correct mistakes first. Keep the feedback slot fast-paced, covering perhaps 10–15 items over 20 minutes. Use the following guidelines for the choice of language to feed back on:

- variety – a good mixture of vocabulary the students needed, recurrent grammar mistakes, pronunciation difficulties, word order problems, collocation development etc.
- language that is relevant to the class – the need or error may arise from just one student’s output, but choose it for feedback if it will help most of the other students as well.
- useful language – international business English is simple and direct. Avoid ‘authentic’ language that is low-frequency or that other non-native speakers in the real world will probably not understand.
- language at the right level for the group – this includes remedial presentations of structures that the students know but cannot yet produce accurately. Avoid having to present a grammar point for the first time without preparation.
- good language production as well as needs and mistakes – receiving positive feedback is highly motivating for individual students, and also encourages the rest of the group to produce the same item.

Finally, remember this rule for boardwork: always give language in context.

Using the feedback sheet
Business English Frameworks has a photocopiable feedback sheet (see page 9). Teachers can, of course, make language notes on any piece of paper for their own reference, and if feedback is done on the board to the whole group, then the feedback sheet will not be necessary. However, there are situations when teachers want to write individual feedback sheets for students:

- while listening to a one-to-one student.
- while listening to mini-presentations when the teacher has time to make notes for personalized feedback.

In these situations giving a feedback sheet to each student will give a professional touch to the lesson and make it easier for them to review their mistakes out of class. Write good examples of language use in the first
column of the sheet, along with words of encouragement, extra tips, collocations, word building points etc. Write mistakes in the middle column – the actual words that you hear. Draw an arrow across to the third column where you write the correct version. You can do the corrections while listening and give the sheet to the student at the end of the lesson, or you can do them after class and give the sheet in the next lesson. Include comments, usage notes, diagrams, pictures to explain vocabulary etc. Alternatively, give the feedback sheet to the students with the arrows to show that a correction is necessary but with the third column left blank. Ask them to correct their own mistakes and check with you later.

With a one-to-one student you can use the sheets as the basis for a revision session. After several lessons ask the student to give you back all the sheets they have collected in their file, and then test them by saying the mistakes (the words they originally used) and eliciting a correct version. For vocabulary items that the student didn’t know rather than got wrong, elicit the item with a definition, situation etc.

**Four scenarios**

**Teacher A**

Teacher A is working in-company with three students from the same department. Fifteen minutes before the end of a lesson she hands out the same framework to them all. They do section 1 together, and then the teacher asks them to do the note-writing (section 2) before the next lesson. In the next lesson one student has done nothing, one has made a few notes, and one has spent some time making good notes. The teacher asks the latter to begin. The discussion soon takes off, and the teacher takes a back seat, writing individual feedback sheets for each student. There is no board in the room, so in the feedback slot she looks at each sheet in turn and selects a few mistakes that are relevant to the other students. She offers the student who made the mistake the chance to self-correct, then she asks the others, and then she supplies the answer. She adds a few comments about usage and moves on. At one point, she chooses a grammar point for feedback and the students become confused, so she says she will cover it in the next lesson. The teacher comments on this as encouragement.

**Teacher B**

Teacher B has an evening class. There are usually about ten students, young professionals from a variety of backgrounds, but attendance is intermittent. Their grammar knowledge is good, but they lack fluency and want a lot of speaking practice. Using the checklist on page 7 he gives them different frameworks, according to their interests, as a homework task. The students have to check the vocabulary (section 1) in a dictionary and make a few notes in the diagram/table (section 2). In the next lesson some students have done this, some haven’t, and some are new. The teacher matches the students in pairs so that someone who has done the homework works with someone who hasn’t – the former explains their framework and the latter asks questions (using the *Useful language* sheet on page 8 if appropriate). Two new students are put together as a pair and spend a few minutes preparing their frameworks in class before beginning a discussion. The class is too big for individual feedback sheets so the teacher makes notes on a piece of paper and does whole-class feedback on the board at the end. In a later lesson he regroups the pairs and asks students to explain their frameworks again. This time he concentrates mainly on good points in feedback and congratulates the students on their progress in fluency.

**Teacher C**

Teacher C is working with a student one-to-one at their office – the student is very busy, often cancels lessons, and never has time for homework. She gives the student a framework at the start of the lesson, based on the checklist the student has completed on page 7. They work through section 1 together. Then the teacher gives the student a few minutes to look through section 2 and organize his/her thoughts, but in the end the student chooses not to write anything. The teacher turns on a cassette recorder to start recording the student, using section 2 of the framework herself as a structure to ask questions. At the end of the discussion, the teacher rewinds the cassette and plays the recording, stopping at errors or breaks in fluency and giving the student the chance to self-correct. She writes down notes for each point on a feedback sheet as they occur. At the end of the lesson she gives the completed sheets to the student to put in his/her file. Several lessons later they repeat the discussion. The student performs very well without using his/her notes, speaking more accurately and fluently. The teacher comments on this as encouragement.

**Teacher D**

Teacher D is working on an intensive course with a small, mixed nationality group of middle and senior managers. He gives each student the same framework at the beginning of a lesson, and works through section 1 with the group. They brainstorm in small groups and then he writes new ideas and vocabulary on the board as class feedback. He then gives them ten minutes to complete the framework in class, and while they are doing this he plays some quiet music on a tape recorder and corrects their homework. The teacher chooses to ask the students to give mini-presentations to the group rather than work in pairs, just for variety. The first student receives many questions at the end of their presentation and the discussion moves off at an interesting tangent. The teacher keeps out of the discussion and writes individual feedback sheets for all the students (not just the presenter) as they are talking. Then a second student gives a mini-presentation. The teacher decides to have a feedback slot, so he selects a few items from each sheet and does some group feedback on the board. Then he gives the individual sheets to the students for them to put in their files. Other students save their mini-presentations for a later lesson.
# Topics checklist

Put a double tick (✓✓) next to topics you want to discuss. Put a single tick (✓) next to topics you are quite interested in. If you are not interested, write nothing.

### Management
- 1. Organization structure
- 2. What do managers do?
- 3. Use of resources
- 4. Customer needs
- 5. Improving customer relations
- 6. Managing change
- 7. Company strategy
- 8. Small companies and start-ups
- 9. Problems and solutions
- 10. Personal management qualities
- 11. The international manager
- 12. Business ethics: a case study

### Sales and marketing
- 13. SWOT analysis
- 14. Market research
- 15. Product design/R&D
- 16. Product description and features
- 17. Marketing mix: one product
- 18. Marketing strategy
- 19. Constraints on marketing strategy
- 20. Marketing budget

### Finance and accounting
- 21. Profit and loss account
- 22. Balance sheet
- 23. Managing cashflow
- 24. Company analysis
- 25. Investment advice

### Production and operations
- 26. Production process
- 27. Operations growth
- 28. Quality management
- 29. Logistics and transport

### Human resources
- 30. Pay and promotion
- 31. Motivation through job satisfaction
- 32. Recruitment and selection
- 33. Training and team-building
- 34. Industrial relations

### International trade
- 35. Trade and government policy
- 36. Exporting
- 37. Importing
- 38. Manufacturing location

### Economic and social context
- 39. Globalization
- 40. Social responsibility
- 41. The changing workforce
- 42. The future of work

### Information technology
- 43. IT management
- 44. E-commerce
- 45. Using business software

### Cultural awareness
- 46. Cultural values at work
- 47. Cultural values in society
- 48. Working in another culture

### Recent business news
- 49. Discussing news items
- 50. Using an authentic text
Useful language

Leading the discussion

Introducing an idea
The main issue here is ...
In my company, the most important thing is ...

Developing an argument
Firstly, ... secondly, ...
Also, ... / In addition, ...
The thing is, ... / Actually, ...
Of course, ... / Obviously, ...
So, ... / Therefore, ...
As regards ... / As far as ... is concerned, ...
In general, ... although ...
It’s true that ... but on the other hand ...
So basically, ... / To put it simply, ...

Confirming
That's right.
Exactly.

Checking other people understand
Do you follow?
Do you see what I mean?
Are you with me?

Rephrasing if people don’t understand
Sorry, what I meant was ...
Let me put it another way.

Keeping control of the conversation
So you see ...
Anyway, ...
And as you probably know ...
Well, as I was saying ...

Finishing what you want to say
Sorry, can I just finish?
I’ll come to that in a moment.

Not answering
That’s not really my area, I’m afraid.
Sorry, I don’t have that information to hand.

Giving the conversation to another person
Is it the same in your company?
Do you find the same thing?

Participating in a discussion

Saying you don’t understand
Sorry, I don’t quite follow you.
Sorry, I’m not sure what you mean.

Clarifying: asking for repetition
Sorry, can you go back?
I’m sorry, I didn’t catch that.
Sorry, could you explain that again, please?

Clarifying: asking for more information
Could you be a little more specific?
Can you give me an example?

Clarifying: using your own words to check
So, in other words, you think that ... Is that right?
Are you saying ...?

Showing interest
Really?
Right. Sure.
Mhm. Uh-huh. Yeah.
That’s interesting.
Yes, of course.
Do you?
‘echo’ questions e.g. five hundred? all over the world?

Interrupting
Can I just ask something?
Sorry, could I stop you for a moment?
There’s a question I’d like to ask.

Questions to continue the discussion
Could you say a bit more about ...?
I’d be interested to know ...
So what happens when ...
So why do you ...

Typical ‘business’ questions
So how is that financed?
How many people are involved?
What are the staffing/financial implications of that?
What are the implications for other departments?
How do you arrive at that figure?
What section of the market are you aiming at?
Does that involve much planning?
How does that compare with your competitors?
Is that a recent development?
What are your plans for the future?

Making notes
Can you give me a moment while I make a note?
How do you spell that?
## Feedback sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Good use of language</th>
<th>Mistakes</th>
<th>Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


2 What do managers do?

1 Brainstorm.
As a manager, I ...

- motivate people, control/forecast costs, take decisions, deal with suppliers,
- give presentations, liaise with colleagues in other departments,

2 Complete the ideas map with your own management responsibilities.

3 Discuss.
20 Marketing budget

1 Prepare.

1 What different types of promotion are there? Add to the ideas.

- In-store: endorsements, sponsorship, point-of-sale displays, merchandising,
- Media: newspapers and magazines, TV, Internet, street posters, posters on buses and taxis, competitions, special offers, mailshots,
- Special promotions: brochures, catalogues, leaflets,
- Printed materials: leaflets, brochures, catalogues,
- Other: research and development of new products, market research, ...

2 Apart from promotion, what other things might be paid for from the marketing budget? Add to the following list.
- Research and development of new products, market research, ...

3 Fill in the missing vowels in these words and then check the meaning.
   to dinner / p / _t / s / _p / nd / _ncr / _s / r / d / _c / _x / _d / k / _p / w / _th / _n
   a budget (for something)

2 Write notes.

1 Think about the marketing budget of your company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of total budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who decides? How is the decision taken?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose four areas where you spend your marketing budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who decides? How is the decision taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Think of an example from your own experience where a marketing budget was used badly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happened?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Action taken?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3 Discuss.

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39 Globalization

1 Brainstorm.

- Market forces driving globalization
  - Evidence in my market
  - Impact on my company
  - cheaper goods and services for consumers
  - rapid development possible for poorer countries
  - employment problems in richer countries
  - wages everywhere forced down because of competition
  - access to other ideas and cultures
  - domestic competition
  - global brand development
  - competitors merging and making alliances

- Cost factors driving globalization
  - Evidence in my market
  - Impact on my company
  - differences in labour and manufacturing costs
  - global sourcing and logistics
  - mobile communications and mobile business
  - the Internet and e-commerce
  - differences in productivity

- Technology driving globalization
  - Evidence in my market
  - Impact on my company
  - mobile communications and mobile business
  - the Internet and e-commerce

2 Write notes.

1 How is globalization affecting your business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market forces driving globalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence in my market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on my company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost factors driving globalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence in my market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology driving globalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence in my market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on my company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 What is your personal view of globalization? List two good things and two bad things.

1 ____________________________ 1 ____________________________

2 ____________________________ 2 ____________________________

3 Discuss.

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44 E-commerce

1 Check the vocabulary and concepts. Can you add anything?

The benefits of e-commerce
1 cost reduction
2 speed
3 personalization
4 global reach
5 measurement

Impact of e-commerce on general business activity
1 impact on products: price and product range
2 impact on costs (particularly IT costs)
3 impact on order processing, stock management and fulfilment
4 impact on customer service and after-sales
5 impact of e-commerce systems on other IT systems

Issues in website management
1 Front-end/design issues: site map, choice of text and graphics, links, ease of navigation, ease of ordering
2 Back-end/technical issues: content management system for updating and managing data on the site, monitoring traffic on the site, security
3 Promoting an on-line presence: promoting the web address, registration with search engines and directories, banner ads and pop-up windows on other sites, on-site promotions, e-mail promotions

2 Write notes.

1 Write about e-commerce in your market/company.

Background: history of e-commerce in my market/company

Future of e-commerce in my market/company

2 Are you involved in website management? What issues are important at the moment?

3 Discuss.
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