

Lesson 6: Moving premises

Group size: any, also one-to-one
Level: pre-intermediate upwards
Lesson focus: moving premises, working from home and outsourcing
Language focus: the advantages and disadvantages of a home office and the factors that make it possible to work from home; equipment and support for home workers; services that can be outsourced; inviting a tender.
Materials: a set of Business Top Trump cards; a copy of the worksheet for each student

premises NOUN [PLURAL] /'premɪsɪz/
the buildings and land that a business or organization uses

outsourcing NOUN [UNCOUNTABLE] /'aʊt, sɔ:(r)sɪŋ/
an arrangement in which work is done by people from outside your company, usually by a company that is expert in that type of work

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This lesson plan looks at moving office to a smaller space. The consequence of this move means the company needs to explore the idea of employees working from home and / or outsourcing certain departments. The worksheet includes tasks on decision making, vocabulary related to outsourcing and discussion questions.

1. Due to the move to new and smaller premises, there have to be some changes made at the Top Trumps company. This task has many stages. The students' first job after reading the instructions is to look at the cards and decide by reading the texts:

a. Which of the roles could be carried out by working from home.

Key (possible answers):

Frank the R&D Manager; Dina the Purchasing Assistant; Jolene the HR Manager; Philippe the HR Officer; Angela the Accounts and Pay-roll Clerk; Vince the Sales Representative; Bob the Managing Director; Andi the Technical Designer

b. After deciding, they should make notes about the advantages and disadvantages of working from home in general. These might include: advantage, no need to

get dressed in formal office clothes; disadvantage, loss of team-spirit, etc.

c. Requires the students to look at the roles on the cards again. Students should decide which jobs can't be carried out from a home office.

Key (possible answers):

Holly the Receptionist - she needs to be in the reception area;

Norman the Security Officer - he needs to be on the premises;

Bernard the Painter - he needs to be in the paint shop; Doris the Office Assistant - she wouldn't have anything to do at home;

Marco IT Support - he probably needs to be where the hardware is. He may be able to access the system from home but this might raise security issues;

Ivy the Canteen Supervisor - she needs to be where the food is cooked and served;

Murat the Plant Foreman - he needs to be in the plant;

Dave the Maintenance Manager - he needs to be on site;

Valerie the PA to MD - she needs to be where the MD is;

Su Lin the Quality Control Manager - she needs her lab;

Yuri the Machine Operator - he has to be where the machine is;

Lee the Fork-lift Truck Driver - he needs to be on site;

Jasmine the Customer Services Supervisor - she needs to be with her team;

Joy the Cleaner - she needs to be on site;

Ralf the Warehouse Manager - he needs to be on site;

Albert the Truck Driver - he needs to be where his truck is;

Nicole the Assembly Worker - would only be possible if she was assembling very small pieces that she could take home;

Jason the Apprentice - he needs to be on site

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d. Students should concentrate on the information in the texts on the cards and decide which employees might prefer to work from home and why.

Key (possible answers):

Angela the Accounts and Pay-roll Clerk - because she is pregnant;

Vince the Sales Representative - as it might make it easier for him to start his trips from home;

Jolene the HR Manager - as it might allow her family situation to change in the way she'd like it to;

Bob the Managing Director - as it might take some pressure off him (professionally and personally);

Frank the R&D Manager - it might relieve his migraines (it might also make them worse!)

e. Once the students have identified who might be able to work from home, they should then discuss what that person might need in the way of equipment and support.

f. Lastly in this task, they should think about what incentives could be offered to encourage people to work from home who might be reluctant to do so.

2. An alternative to having some employees working from home would be to outsource some positions and jobs. Task 2 looks at outsourcing in general.

a. The first parts of this second task move away from looking specifically at the Top Trumps company and look at outsourcing work to contractors and operators. Students are asked to discuss the tasks listed and give examples from their own personal experience and knowledge.

b. Here, they should talk about any other jobs that could be outsourced.

c. They will probably have noticed that some of the jobs and positions at the Top Trumps company are already outsourced.

The Top Trumps outsourced positions are:

Jonathan the Lawyer

Joy the Cleaner

Albert the Truck Driver

These are marked in yellow on the organogram - see Lesson 2.

3. It is possible that instead of working from home, some employees might choose to take a redundancy package or look for another job. In this situation, the work which still needs to be done could be put out to tender.

a. The students should look at the Top Trumps cards and choose which service, position or department they think could be outsourced.

b. They should complete the announcement inviting tenders for this service or department using words from the 'Useful language' box, plus ideas of their own.

THE BUSINESS
TOP TRUMPS
COMPANY

We are currently in the process of outsourcing our [department / position / service decided upon by students]. Tenders are invited from contractors / suppliers who are able to provide the following services: [students' own text].

Please complete and submit the tender form which can be downloaded from our website.

The closing date is [students' own text].

Tenders submitted after this date cannot be considered.

Extension

Here, students write a covering email from a potential contractor stating their interest in submitting a tender.

4. These questions open up the topic to a general class discussion into which students can bring their own opinions and experience.

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c. Look at the Top Trumps cards. Which of the employees would not be able to work from home? Why?

Lined writing area for question c.

d. Which of the employees on the Top Trumps cards might prefer to work from home? Why?

Lined writing area for question d.

e. What equipment and support might they need in order to work efficiently from home?

Lined writing area for question e.

f. What further incentives could you offer the Top Trumps employees to encourage them to work from home?

Lined writing area for question f.

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2 Outsourcing services

outsourcing NOUN [UNCOUNTABLE] /'aʊt,sɔ:(r)siŋ/

an arrangement in which work is done by people from outside your company, usually by a company that is expert in that type of work

Also: **outsource** verb /'aʊt,sɔrs/

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a. Which of these departments might be outsourced by a company? Give examples from companies you know.

cleaning	maintenance	reception	transportation of goods	payroll
legal	catering	sales	production	personnel management

b. Can you think of any other services that might be outsourced?

Handwriting practice area with three horizontal lines and a vertical margin line on the left.

c. Look at the Top Trumps cards, which positions are already outsourced?

Handwriting practice area with three horizontal lines and a vertical margin line on the left.

3 An invitation to tender

Situation: Another space-saving option for the Top Trumps company would be to outsource certain positions, departments and services.


a. Look at the Top Trumps cards and decide which service, position or department you think should be outsourced and why.

Handwriting practice area with three horizontal lines and a vertical margin line on the left.

Useful language:	<i>request for tender (RFT)</i>	<i>cost-cutting</i>
<i>request / submit / invite a tender</i>	<i>premises</i>	<i>space-saving</i>
<i>a contractor</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>hot-desking</i>
<i>an agency</i>	<i>conveniently situated</i>	<i>work from home</i>
<i>an agency worker</i>	<i>services</i>	

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b. The announcement below will be placed on the company's website inviting tenders for the service you have decided to outsource. Use words from the 'Useful language' box, plus ideas of your own to complete the announcement.



We are currently in the process of outsourcing our
..... Tenders are invited from who are able to provide the
following services:
.....

Please complete and submit the tender form which can be downloaded from our website.

The closing date is

Tenders after this date cannot be considered.

Extension: Write an email stating your interest in submitting a tender and saying why the Top Trumps Company should consider your tender.

4 Discussion

- Have you ever worked from home?
- Would you be able to do your job from home? Why / Why not?
- If you could work from home, what equipment and support would you need?
- Have you ever invited or submitted a tender?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working for an outside contractor or agency?