

37 Discussing options

1 Machine parts manufacturer. The price of steel (your main material) has just gone up by 3%.
Option 1: Pass on the increase to the customer (put up the price of the finished product).
Option 2: Do not increase the price.



2 A law firm. One of the clerks has just retired. He was not a very efficient worker.
Option 1: Replace him with a new member of staff.
Option 2: Give his work to other employees in the department.



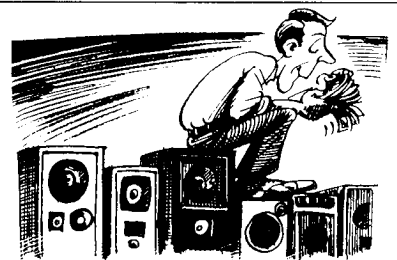
3 A bank. An important customer is nine months late with payments on a loan.
Option 1: Ask for all the money back immediately.
Option 2: Give the customer longer to pay.



4 A furniture retailer. Your warehouse is too full.
Option 1: Reduce your stock.
Option 2: Rent another warehouse.



5 A hi-fi manufacturer. A company in Spain has asked if they can make one of your products under licence.
Option 1: Sell them the licence to manufacture the product.
Option 2: Export the product to Spain yourself, using your own agent to sell it.



6 An insurance company. Car crime has increased sharply in cities.
Option 1: Put all car insurance premiums up by 3%.
Option 2: Put up the premium for people living in the city by 8%.



7 A computer software consultant. A large company has asked you to write an office management system. This will provide enough work for all your staff for 2 years.
Option 1: Share the contract with another company.
Option 2: Take on the whole contract yourself.



Discussing options Worksheet

37

ACTIVITY

Pairwork or groupwork: speaking

AIM

To discuss the consequences of different courses of action and decide which is best.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONSFirst conditional/*should* (for advice)**VOCABULARY**

General: *to pass on/to absorb (the cost), to replace (a person), to rent, to make (a product) under licence, to export, to put up (the price), to share, to take on (work), steel, a clerk, an insurance premium, crime*

PREPARATION

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

TIME

40 minutes

PROCEDURE

- 1 Give a worksheet to each student and focus their attention on the first situation.
- 2 Explain to the students that they are going to look at different situations and decide what they should do, and to think about the consequences of various options.
Model the activity like this:
As you know the price of steel has just gone up by 3%. This puts us in a difficult position. We can either pass on the increase to our customers or we can absorb the increase ourselves.
- 3 Invite students to say what the company should do, and what the consequences of the different options will be. Write some suggestions on the board, so students have a model of the structure you want them to use.
We shouldn't put up the price. If we put up the price the customers will be unhappy.
Encourage the students to use the first conditional construction in their answers.
- 4 Ask the students to work in groups of two, three or four to study the other situations and discuss the consequences of the options mentioned on the worksheet.
- 5 Check the answers with the whole class.
- 6 Ask students to think of another problem for a company, real or imaginary, to present to the rest of the class in the same way.

FOLLOW-UP

Ask the students to write a short memo to their manager, describing one of the problems already discussed, outlining the options and recommending a particular course of action.