

BEC Practice Test – Vantage

Audioscript

Listening Test Part One (Conversation 1)

- M:** Atlas UK. Rob Lowe speaking.
- F:** Hello Rob, Janet here.
- M:** Hi Janet, how are you doing?
- F:** Not so bad, but busy as always. Actually, I'm glad to be coming to the end of a project with TWB, the logistics company. I'll be starting work on a new project soon and I'm looking for an assistant – any ideas?
- M:** Is it the database project?
- F:** No [laughs], it's about developing our brand.
- M:** I see. Do you know what kind of person you are trying to find?
- F:** The person needs excellent qualifications – by the way the job doesn't involve any line-management responsibility. It's more the creative side of things we need the person to be involved in.
- M:** You could give Jack Martin a call. He used to be my boss here but since he's left he's been doing all kinds of consultancy work. Currently he's an advisor to a couple of large companies I believe. I can email you his details if you like.
- F:** Great, thanks.

Listening Test Part One (Conversation 2)

- F:** Hi Ron, Pat here from HR. Could I please check a few details you've put on your July expenses form?
- M:** Of course, go ahead.
- F:** Firstly, you've written £300 for entertainment, but you haven't said what it was for – I presume it was something to do with the visitors from that engineering firm in Margate.
- M:** No, that was later. This was a group of our salespeople that have recently been taken on at the London office.
- F:** I see, and what is the £42 for travel?
- M:** After the meeting with my boss on Friday, he asked me to go and see a customer of ours in Northampton – and after that I went to see a supplier out in Oxford. Simon, in the admin department, was supposed to go but he was sick.
- F:** OK. That's all. Can you submit your receipts to the finance division as soon as you can? Christine can then process your claim.
- M:** OK, thanks.

Listening Test Part One (Conversation 3)

- F:** Morning. It's Jenny here. Do you have a few minutes to talk about next month's edition of 'Business News'?
- M:** Sure. I was going to call you actually, to check you still want it to be about business trends.

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- F:** No, not this edition. I'd like to look at the area of insurance. In fact, I've just set up an interview with Martin Drew.
- M:** You mean, the new Financial Manager at Mannifold.
- F:** I think his title's actually Financial Controller, but, yes, he's the one.
- M:** Hasn't the company just won the Davy Business Prize?
- F:** That's right – in the customer services section.
- M:** So, what is going to be the focus of the article – reasons for the company's success?
- F:** I thought it'd be better to look at where the company's going, about its new London offices, new staff, that kind of thing.
- M:** If you need any help, just let me know.
- F:** I will, thanks!

Listening Test Part Two (Section 1)

- 13** None of us wants to be just another person in the crowd, but at the same time, it's comforting to know that people are alike in some ways. Whether you both like the same sport, book, film or restaurant, it will help you when networking if you can find something you have in common and that you can talk freely about. Don't talk about anything too personal – after all, you're networking in a business context.
- 14** You don't have to race around smiling and telling jokes all day, but some obvious enthusiasm for your job will go a long way! If you look enthusiastic, everyone will want to talk to you, and find out about what you do and your company. There's nothing better than to be asked to talk about something you really want to – and can – talk about.
- 15** Think about what makes your company stand out from the competitors in the field. Do you have more high-quality goods? Do you use organic sources for your food products? Are your staff motivated and well-travelled? Why not make a list of what you think your company is really good at, so that you can make sure you let people at the events know too!
- 16** You may be working, but that doesn't mean you have to talk about business the whole day. People say many useful contacts have come from just chatting with people in the café, in the bar, or wherever. Be yourself and have a good time. If you look relaxed and as if you are having fun, people will want to come and speak to you!

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- 17** Many people attending networking events feel nervous – not everyone's an extrovert, after all. So, what's the best way to get talking to other people? Take a deep breath, smile and approach someone looking as nervous and as uncomfortable as you feel. Introduce yourself warmly, and ask what they do, where they work, and so on. When you've done it once, you can do it again and again.

Listening Test Part Two (Section 2)

- 18** If you are busy, say in a meeting or writing an email, ask the receptionist to deal with your calls, take messages and so on – or put your voicemail on. This means you can concentrate on what you are doing completely. It also gives you time to prepare the calls you need to make. You are now in control of the calls, rather than having to think on your feet when someone calls you.
- 19** Some socialising can be important, for example, in building up a relationship with a new client, but don't let a phone call go on for ages. Get to the point. To help you do this, plan what you want the call to achieve. Ensure you make notes on key points you wish to make during the conversation. Once you have achieved your aims, end the call politely.
- 20** Generally, it's a good idea to answer a ringing phone as soon as possible. But, if you are doing something else at the time, or simply aren't ready to speak to anyone, wait for a few seconds until you feel ready. Getting the call off on the right track in the first 20 seconds is vital. It will enable you to stay in control and ensure that the other person finds you helpful, friendly, and focused on their needs.
- 21** So, you've written down the caller's name, but what else? Their number? Why they called? Or, maybe you forgot all these three things – it often happens! But it certainly doesn't look very professional – either of yourself or of the company. Make sure you have a piece of paper and a pen ready for the next caller and get down all these points.
- 22** It's important to show the caller that you're paying attention to their complaint or whatever, and that you know what they want to do. If you are not sure, ask questions to check information. Make sure that you're not distracted by the noise of the radio or other colleagues chatting when you're on the phone, otherwise you won't be able to give the caller your complete attention.

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Listening Test Part Three

- F:** Business Tip has invited successful independent financial adviser Mark Reilly to the studio today to talk about his career to date and the decisions he's made along the way. Welcome! So, Mark, you must be pleased with the path your career has taken?
- M:** Well, Sandy, I've been very lucky with my career and now, at 35, I feel my working life has been pretty successful. I'm my own boss, I have a great team of staff to support me and clients that return time and time again for my services.
- F:** So, how did it all begin?
- M:** I began working part time for a large insurance company called Laker Insurance while I was at college. This enabled me to gain practical experience working directly with clients while also achieving professional and academic qualifications.
- F:** Did you stay there long?
- M:** I left university part qualified and went to work for Cresta Insurance. But I soon realised that a traditional nine to five job just wouldn't suit me, so after I qualified I left the company six months later. I then founded my own company – at 25 – and also did some freelance work for another company.
- F:** Oh, yes.
- M:** That's where I met Peter Stafford, who has taught me everything I know – he constantly gave me his full support and passed on his professional knowledge. When the company was taken over I went with him to Baltic Services.
- F:** I see.
- M:** I certainly didn't find it easy – all my new colleagues had about ten years' experience, but at that point I had just two and a half. It got better after a few weeks though. I worked at the company with Peter for three years.
- F:** And then what did you do?
- M:** I decided to leave large insurance companies behind and returned to working for myself. It's great – I get to know all of my clients, their business needs, their families, and so on and watch them all develop year by year. However, it did take about two years before I felt like the business was my own.
- F:** I see, and that's changed?
- M:** Yes, in the first years you worry about the business, until one day you realise it can look after itself! I'm lucky. Most of my business has come through friends and colleagues. That's another thing I've been lucky with. I have a great support network of professional people I can call on for guidance.
- F:** All, in all, would you say you're happy with the decisions you've made in your career?
- M:** In my opinion I have only made good decisions. There were times, especially in the early days, when better offers came along, but each time this happened, I took time out to decide if it was really what I

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wanted and, if it wasn't, well, I learnt from the experience and moved on.

F: So, would you also say ...?