

3 Listen to a conversation between Klaus Bohn, the personnel manager of a global company in Cologne, and Jason Hughes, the industrial relations manager of their plant in the U.K.

Which statements in each group below best describes the situation they are discussing?



- 1
 - a A 3% increase has been turned down.
 - b A 5% increase has been agreed.
 - c A 5% review was given a year ago.
- 2
 - a There may have to be some redundancies worldwide.
 - b There may have to be some redundancies in the U.K.
 - c There may have to be some redundancies in Amsterdam.
- 3
 - a White-collar staff have had salaries frozen for 5 years.
 - b White-collar workers' salaries were last reviewed 2 years ago.
 - c White-collar workers have no chance of a salary review.
- 4
 - a Workers at the plant are on strike.
 - b Workers at the plant are dissatisfied with the proposed wage increase.
 - c Workers at the plant are concerned about safety issues.
- 5
 - a Workers at the plant have heard rumours of closure.
 - b Workers at the plant have heard rumours wages may be reduced.
 - c Workers at the plant have heard rumours that jobs may be transferred to Poland.

4 Listen to the dialogue again and complete the questions with the words in the box below. Then use the information in the dialogue to answer the questions.

counter • behind • freeze • tactics • fail • rumours • agreement

- 1 What's _____ the union's rejection of the pay deal?
- 2 What exactly was Jason's _____-argument?
- 3 Why did the union representatives and their members _____ to reach _____?
- 4 Why did they _____ the salaries of white-collar staff two years ago?
- 5 What are the _____ going around the plant?

It looks as if there could be a long and difficult negotiation with the union representing the workers at the British plant. How can companies avoid situations like this?

5 Which phrase in each pair matches the definition (1–6)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 to reject a proposal or suggestion | 4 a response to another suggestion |
| a to make a counter-offer | a a counter-argument |
| b to fail to reach agreement | b a negotiation |
| 2 workers on the production line | 5 the place where the goods are produced |
| a blue-collar workers | a the plant |
| b white-collar workers | b the shop floor |
| 3 a general fall in orders across many business sectors | 6 to stop pay for a certain period |
| a when productivity is down | a to freeze salaries |
| b an economic downturn | b to negotiate a new pay deal |

AUDIO



8 Before you listen to Jason Hughes and Klaus Bohn negotiating with the union representatives, among them Helen Barker and Bob Cage, match the following verbs, nouns, and definitions that appear in the negotiation.

verbs

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 to work out | 5 to face |
| 2 to reject | 6 to reach |
| 3 to contain | 7 to put |
| 4 to threaten | 8 to post (something) |

nouns

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a a compromise | e costs |
| b something on the notice board | f a solution |
| c closure | g industrial action |
| d the offer | h your cards on the table |

definition

- to refuse a suggestion
- to say you intend to strike
- to agree to meet in the middle
- to confront the consequences of shutting down (part of the company)
- to solve by reasoning
- to hold expenses within a fixed limit
- to declare one's position
- to display information for everyone in the company to read

Now listen to the negotiation to check your answers.

Listen again and decide whether the following statements about the negotiation are true or false.

- 1 Things will get worse in the next 6-9 months as the economic outlook is worsening.
- 2 Overtime is only allowed on the night shift.
- 3 If the workers don't get more money, they will go on strike.
- 4 The area where the plant is located has high unemployment.
- 5 The management can't promise anything positive.
- 6 Sales have been getting worse at the Dutch plant.

9 After the meeting, Jason writes the following email to the management committee. Complete the gaps with the correct form of the verbs below.

- not be • be • give • meet • not be • receive • transfer • accept

Dear Management Committee

As you know, Klaus Bohn and I _____¹ with the union representatives last night to discuss their rejection of the pay offer of 3%, effective 1 March and the threat of industrial action. Apart from the fact that white-collar workers _____² 5%, there _____³, as I suspected, strong rumours going round that we're closing the plant and _____⁴ work to Poland.

We _____⁵ the union representatives our assurances that this _____⁶ the case and agreed the 3% increase from 1 March, followed by a further 1½% in nine months, as long as there _____⁷ a substantial fall in sales and provided that there is no industrial action. They _____⁸ the offer on behalf of their members.

We feel this is a successful conclusion to the negotiations.

Best wishes
Jason Hughes

What types of negotiations have you been involved in? Describe your experiences to your colleagues.