

# 10.4 How did you get on?

## READING Age no barrier

- 1 Work in pairs. Do you think age is an issue when looking for a job? At what point do you think employers worry about employing someone 'older'? Is this reasonable?
- 2 Read the extract from the article. Answer the questions.
  - 1 How did Barbara Beskind find the job with IDEO?
  - 2 What do you think made Barbara Beskind particularly suited to the job?
  - 3 Discuss how you could finish Barbara Beskind's final sentence. Then compare your answers with the answer on page 177.



## Age no barrier

Eight decades after her first invention – a hobby horse made out of old car tyres – 91-year-old Barbara Beskind landed her dream job as an inventor at top design firm IDEO in Silicon Valley. Her appointment, the result of a speculative application, was something of a triumph in an industry characterized by the youthfulness of its staff. Earlier in life, Beskind had been advised against pursuing a career in engineering as not being 'a suitable path' for a woman and instead followed a career as an occupational therapist.

Now, every Thursday, she takes the bus from her retirement home to IDEO's offices where she sits on a couch developing her designs. Using first-hand experience, she specializes in designing practical aids for the elderly, like the modified ski poles that she herself uses to help her walk. She has also developed a new kind of magnifying device to help those with poor eyesight to read. Asked what she brings to IDEO's party, Beskind said, 'I think the beauty of being 91 is that ...'

## LISTENING Looking for a job

- 3 44 Listen to a conversation between an elderly couple who are looking for jobs. What success has each person had?
- 4 44 Look at the questions in the Useful language box. Then listen to the conversation again.
  - 1 Tick (✓) the questions you hear. Complete the questions where necessary.
  - 2 Write the answer the speaker gave to each question.

## TALKING ABOUT SUCCESS

### Asking about success

Did you have any luck (with ...)?  
How did it go (at / in / with ...)?  
Did you get anywhere with ...?  
How did you get on with ...?  
Did you manage to ...?  
(Did you have) Any problems / trouble ...-ing ...?

### Responding

It all went / seemed to go smoothly.  
It was a great success.  
It's (all) sorted now.  
We're getting there. / We made some headway.  
As well as could be hoped / expected.  
It could have been better / worse.  
I made a (bit of a) mess of it.

## Pronunciation Elision

- 5a 45 Listen to the short conversations. Look at the underlined words and notice how they are said. Then listen again and repeat.
  - 1 A: Did you have any luck with the bank?  
B: Yes. It's all sorted now.
  - 2 A: How did it go, the interview?  
B: Not bad. It could have been better.
  - 3 A: Did you manage to park outside?  
B: No. I couldn't find a space.

- 5b Work in pairs. Practise saying the conversations.

## SPEAKING Talking about success

- 6 Work in pairs. Each think about occasions when you had to do two of the things (1–6) listed on page 115. What happened exactly? Were you successful or not? Ask your partner questions to find out as much as you can. Use the expressions in the Useful language box to help you.

- 1 You had an interview for a job.
  - 2 You had to find a special present for a friend.
  - 3 You had to travel to a place but your transport failed.
  - 4 You had to speak up in a difficult situation.
  - 5 You had to find your way out of a misunderstanding with someone.
  - 6 You had an emergency in a foreign country.
- 7 Work with a new partner. Describe the story and outcome from Exercise 6 that most impressed you.

## WRITING A formal report

- 8 Read the report. How does the age of the company's workforce compare to other companies in the insurance sector? What reasons are given for this?

### REPORT – AGE IN THE WORKPLACE

The following is a preliminary report of the 'Age in the Workplace' group, established <sup>1</sup> **at the request of** the executive committee on 5th April 2015, to survey the average age of employees and the positions held within each age group. It should be noted that these results are <sup>2</sup> **subject to** verification: a full report will be published at the end of September.

The demographic of the current workforce at AFT breaks down as follows:

20–29 age group:	24%
30–39 age group:	35%
40–49 age group:	20%
50–59 age group:	15%
60+ age group:	6%

Benchmarking against other companies is still <sup>3</sup> **in progress**, but initial results show that <sup>4</sup> **in comparison with** the rest of the insurance sector, AFT has a relatively young workforce. This may <sup>5</sup> **to some extent** be a side-effect of a high turnover of staff, or it may have other causes. However, it must be pointed out that there is no formal policy within the company of recruiting younger candidates.

The distribution of ages <sup>6</sup> **in relation to** positions of responsibility <sup>7</sup> **is in line with** norms for the industry. 82% of those in senior management positions are aged 45+ and 67% of those in the lowest grade jobs are in the 20–29 age group. One aim of the study was to find out whether the various age groups feel there is adequate job mobility within the company. <sup>8</sup> **At the time of writing**, not all the employee questionnaires had been returned, but the final report will include results of this question.

<sup>9</sup> **On behalf of** the HR department, we would like to thank everyone who has helped in carrying out this study.

- 9 Work in pairs. The report has five paragraphs. Summarize the function or central idea of each section.

### Writing skill Phrases in report writing

- 10a Look at the phrases (1–9) in bold in the report. Match the phrases with the correct synonym (a–i).

a continuing	f compared to
b speaking for	g having been asked by
c matches	h partly
d currently	i dependent on
e relative to	

- 10b Complete the sentences with an appropriate phrase in bold from the report. Then compare your answers with a partner.

- 1 I am writing \_\_\_\_\_ our director, Charlene Taylor, who expresses our firm's support for your research, and \_\_\_\_\_ the board's approval, we would like to offer some financial assistance.
- 2 The possibility for training and learning new skills is a factor which is \_\_\_\_\_ overlooked by employers. \_\_\_\_\_ other companies in the area, we offer excellent training opportunities.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ writing this report, work on the new research labs is still \_\_\_\_\_.

### 11 21st CENTURY OUTCOMES

Read the message from a colleague. Write a formal report with the preliminary findings. Use the report in Exercise 8 to help you. Use the ideas in the message and add your own ideas. Write 200–250 words.

As you know, the owners are a bit concerned about the high turnover of staff at the hotel (61%), even though it's similar to the rest of the industry (58%). We will be writing a proper report, but in the meantime, can you send the owners an update. Please include how turnover breaks down by activity (kitchen staff, restaurant, room service, cleaning, reception, management, etc.) and some explanation of the numbers – pay, anti-social hours? Thanks.

- 12 Work in pairs. Exchange your reports. Use these questions to check your partner's report.

- Does the report cover the necessary points?
- Is it written in an appropriate tone?
- Does it follow an appropriate framework?
- Are phrases for report writing used correctly?