

Day 41

Vocab Review

Fill in the blanks.

1. An expert negotiator was brought in to f_____ate the discussion.
2. Management will be c_____ing a supplementary report at the budget meeting.
3. The group has booked the popular 1000-seat v____e for its annual sales conference.
4. He refuses to let others speak and d_____es every meeting.

4 Meetings/ Discussions



Module 4.3 Cross-cultural understanding (4) Styles of decision-making



Reading

Read the following text about cross-cultural differences in decision-making and answer these questions.

- a) What are the three key words of communitarian decision-making?
- b) What are the two salient features of individualistic decision-making?
- c) Do you agree with what the writers say about different styles of decision-making?

Individualism versus communitarianism (the conflict between what each of us wants as an individual and the interests of the group we belong to) in international business

Individualism encourages individual freedom and responsibility, while communitarianism encourages individuals to work for consensus¹ in the interests of the group.

Decision-making

Communitarian decision-making typically takes much longer and there are sustained² efforts to win over everyone to achieve consensus. Voting down the dissenters³, as often happens in English-speaking western democracies, is not acceptable. There will usually be detailed consultations with all those concerned and, because of pressures to agree collective⁴ goals, consensus will usually be achieved. If the group or HQ is not consulted first, an initial "yes" can easily become a "no" later. The many minor objections raised are typically practical rather than personal or principled and the consensus may be modified in many respects. Since, however, those consulted will usually have to implement⁵ the consensus, this latter phase of implementation typically proceeds smoothly and easily. The time "wasted" (from an individualist's perspective) is saved when the new procedures operate as envisaged⁶. The Japanese ringi process, where proposals circulate and are initialed⁷ by agreeing participants, is the most famous example of communitarian decision-making, but it can lead to very lengthy delays.

A Japanese company had a factory built in the south of the Netherlands. As usual, this was carried out with acute attention to detail. In the designing phase, though, it discovered that it had not considered one restriction. The legal minimum height for workshops was 4cm higher than the design. A new design, which needed extensive consultation with many people at the head office in Tokyo, took one full month per centimeter for approval.

It is far too easy for North Americans and north-west Europeans, used to individualism, to jeer⁸ at such delays. The decision-making process in individualistic cultures is usually very short. However, saving time in decision-making is often followed by significant delays due to implementation problems.

The individualist society, with its respect for individual opinions, will frequently ask for a vote to get all noses pointing in the same direction. The drawback to this is that within a short time they are likely to change again. The communitarian society will intuitively⁹ refrain from voting because this will not show respect to the individuals who are against the majority decision. It prefers to deliberate¹⁰ until consensus is reached. The final result takes longer to achieve, but will be much more stable. In individualistic societies there is frequently disparity¹¹ between decision and implementation.

Adapted from Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner 'Riding the waves of culture' (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1997)

1 agreement 2 continuing for a long time 3 persons that disagree 4 shared by every member 5 carry out 6 imagine 7 signed
8 laugh rudely 9 instinctively 10 ponder/ think carefully 11 difference



Writing

Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from the above text.

1. The/ from/ will/ communitarian/ voting/ refrain/ society/ intuitively
2. Communitarian/ longer/ takes/ decision-making/ much
3. The/ in/ is/ very/ process/ individualistic/ short/ usually/ cultures/ decision-making
4. Communitarianism/ of/ in/ for/ to/ group/ the/ the/ individuals/ work/ encourages/ consensus/ interests
5. A/ had/ built/ of/ in/ company/ a/ the/ the/ factory/ Japanese/ Netherlands/ south
6. The/ in/ to/ for/ for/ with/ society/ direction/ the/ pointing/ individualist/ its/ opinions/ will/ get/ respect/ same/ ask/ a/ all/ individual/ frequently/ vote/ noses/

<GRAMMAR REVIEW> Causative verbs in English

Causative verbs in English are used to express the idea that "X" causes "Y" to do something.

- The causative verb 'have' is used to express the idea that "X" requests "Y" to do something.
- I must have my car checked by the mechanic. = I must have the mechanic check my car.
- I'm going to have my hair cut tomorrow by my hairdresser. = I'm going to have my hairdresser cut my hair tomorrow.

There are two forms: 'passive' (having something done by someone = have + noun + past participle) or 'active' (having someone do something = have + noun + bare infinitive).

Someone in these cases usually indicates 'someone who is naturally doing that job. For example, a mechanic, whose job is to repair cars, checks your car or a hairdresser cuts your hair.

Note that 'by someone' is added only when it is necessary to mention who did the action. We normally omit it when it is obvious.

Other causative verbs include 'get', 'make', 'let', etc.

Exercise

Complete the sentences with the correct verb form.

1. We had our landlord (a. to fix b. fixing c. fix d. fixed) the broken window.
2. Instead of buying a new bicycle, why don't you have your old one (a. to fix b. fixing c. fix d. fixed)?
3. We had the computer guy (a. to install b. installing c. install d. installed) the new software for us.

Match each definition (A – E) with today's vocabulary word (1 – 5)

DEFINITIONS

- A. to laugh rudely or shout insults
- B. someone who disagrees
- C. to think carefully
- D. agreement
- E. difference

1. deliberate (v)
2. disparity
3. jeer
4. dissenter
5. consensus

Fill in the blanks.

1. The people at the back of the hall j_ _ _ _ ed at the speaker.
2. One of her priorities will be to eliminate pay d_ _ _ _ _ ity between men and women for equal work.
3. The committee has d_ _ _ _ _ _ ated the question at great length.