

# 1 Disaster

## In this unit we practise:

- ◆ business vocabulary – responsibilities and personnel
- ◆ business language – talking about careers
- ◆ cross-cultural focus – misunderstandings
- ◆ business focus – small talk
- ◆ simulation – cocktail party



Aurora Picardi



Walter Armitage



Carlo Rospo



Costas Tsappanis



Alison Fisher



Tony Kallus

## START UP

- 1 What is important to you when you choose a hotel a) for business b) for pleasure? Make a list.
- 2 Compare your experiences of hotels with a partner. Which are the best and worst hotels you have ever stayed in?
- 3 Read this short description from a travel guide of the Grand Hotel Pelleas in Valletta, Malta. Answer the questions under it. Would you like to stay there?



### The Grand Hotel Pelleas, Valletta, Malta \*\*\*

Once a place to find writers like Hemingway, Roth and Scott Fitzgerald, this hotel, which is part of the San Francisco-based Pelleas Business Hotels chain, has seen better days. Opened in 1872 by a local hotelier, Baron Emanuel Picardi (whose great-great-great-granddaughter, Aurora, is the present manager), it is a beautiful building with a lot of old world charm – the chandeliers in the impressive reception area and the excellent restaurant, for example – but everything (especially the plumbing!) needs repairing or updating for the modern business traveller. Staff are friendly but slow. Check it out for cocktails and dinner, but stay somewhere else!

- 1 Who owns the Grand Hotel?
- 2 From the description do you think the Grand now has ... ?

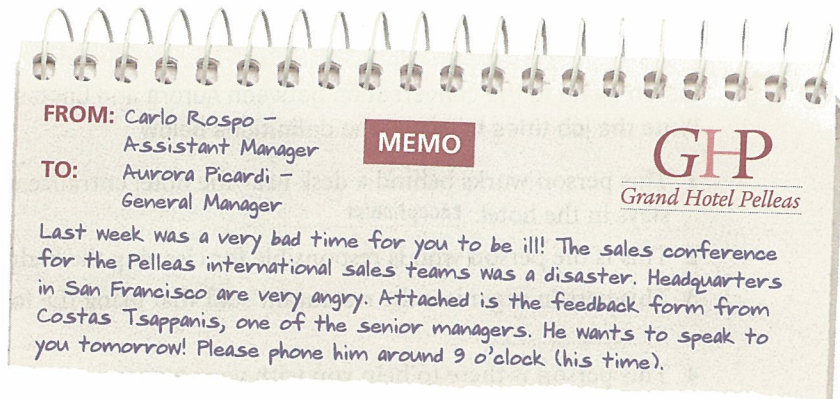
famous visitors  a fitness centre  internet and email access   
 video-conferencing  good food  tennis courts  a bar

- 3 How many stars could you give the Grand Hotel for the features below? (1 = bad, 5 = excellent) Why?

◆ personnel  ◆ atmosphere   
 ◆ food  ◆ bathrooms

4

Last week Aurora Picardi, the general manager of the Grand Hotel Pelleas, was ill. When she got back to work she found this memo from her assistant manager, Carlo Rospo. What was the problem?



5

5

Aurora checks the situation with the hotel staff and then calls Costas Tsappanis in San Francisco. Listen to the conversation and complete the missing information on the form.

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**Pelleas Business Hotels Inc.**

**Questionnaire**

**GHP**  
Grand Hotel Pelleas

At Pelleas Business Hotels Inc. we want our employees to deliver 100% customer satisfaction. Please fill in our questionnaire.

Hotel: Grand Hotel Pelleas      Dates of stay: 13-16 January  
 Name: Costas Tsappanis      Company: Pelleas Business Hotels Inc.  
 Position: <sup>1)</sup> .....      Reason for stay: International sales conference

Please rate the hotel and the facilities (1 = bad, 5 = excellent) and add comments:

	Score	Comments
Reception:	2	Receptionist lost the <sup>2)</sup> ..... to my room.
Bedrooms:	2	Maria, the chambermaid, threw important papers <sup>3)</sup> .....
Bathrooms:	1	Toilet blocked.
Restaurant:	4	Very good, but head waiter was very <sup>4)</sup> .....
Conference rooms:	5	<sup>5)</sup> .....
Technical - equipment:	5	Excellent.
- support:	1	Terrible, <sup>6)</sup> ..... had no idea how to use it.
Staff:	3	OK, but very <sup>7)</sup> ..... : the porter is at least 90!
Can you recommend the hotel?		Only to my <sup>8)</sup> ..... enemy!
What can we change?		Need somebody with <sup>9)</sup> ..... to deal with the problems.

6

Why is Aurora angry about the situation? What will she do?

1

Listen again to the conversation between Aurora and Costas from page 2.

Write the job titles to match the definitions below.

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- 1 This person works behind a desk near the hotel entrance and deals with everyone who stays in the hotel. receptionist
- 2 This is the person who is responsible for cleaning the bedrooms. ....
- 3 This person organises the restaurant staff that bring the food to your table. ....
- 4 This person is there to help you with your luggage. ....
- 5 This person is in charge of marketing. ....
- 6 This person manages large amounts of money in the organisation. ....

2

Read through the customer satisfaction form and find words which fit these definitions:

- 1 to answer and complete all the questions in a form. fill in
- 2 a general word for services and equipment in a hotel. ....
- 3 two words for people who work for an organisation. ....
- 4 to tell somebody else to use the hotel. ....

3

Aurora and her assistant manager, Carlo Rospo, talked about the problems at the Pelleas sales conference when she came back to work. Read the conversation and put the phrases from the box into the right place. Then listen and check your answers.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=21&filename=Track03\\_Unit1\\_page3\\_activity3.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=21&filename=Track03_Unit1_page3_activity3.mp3)

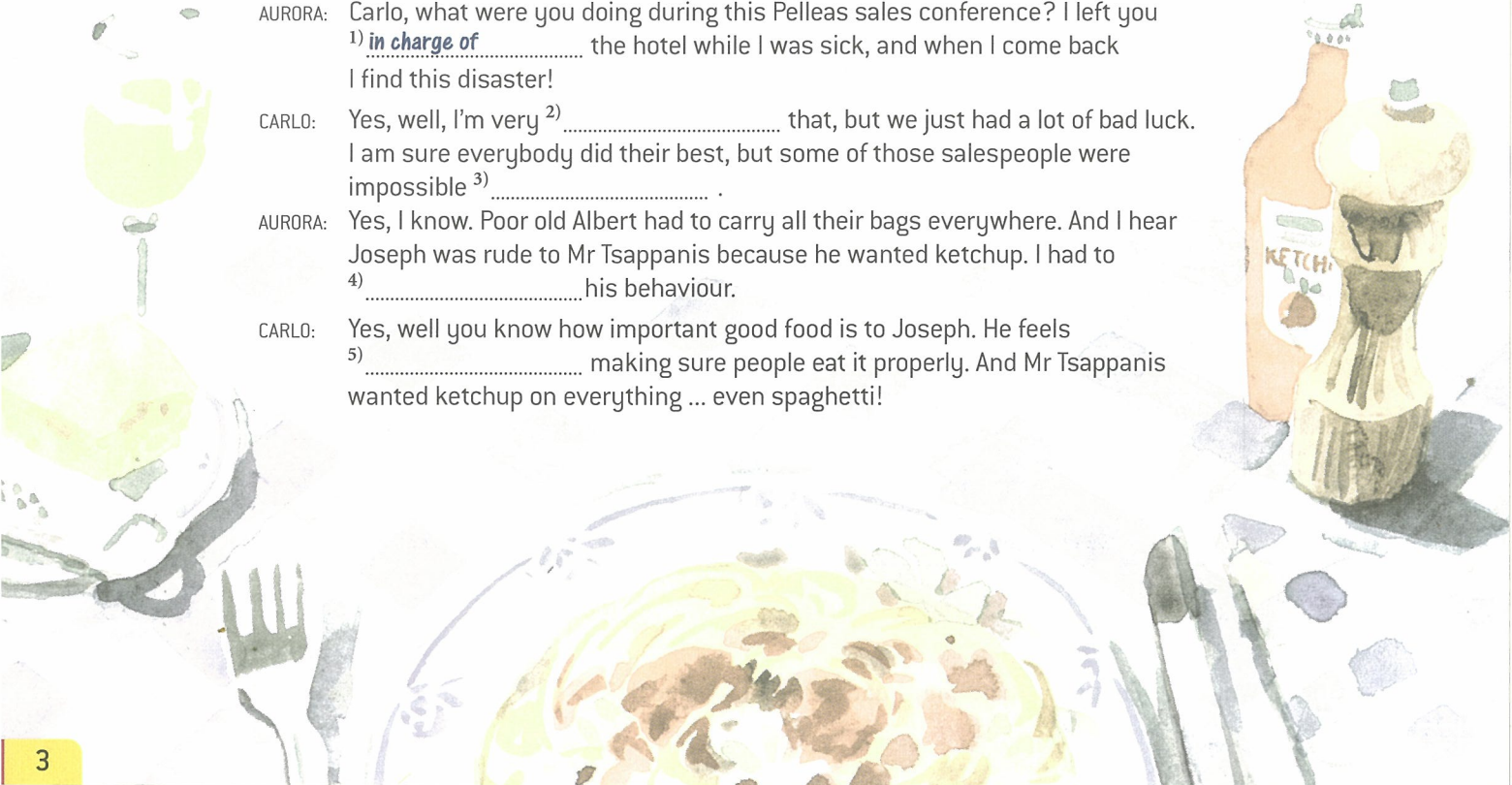
responsible for   apologise for   to deal with   ~~in charge of~~   sorry about

AURORA: Carlo, what were you doing during this Pelleas sales conference? I left you  
 1) in charge of ..... the hotel while I was sick, and when I come back  
 I find this disaster!

CARLO: Yes, well, I'm very 2) ..... that, but we just had a lot of bad luck.  
 I am sure everybody did their best, but some of those salespeople were  
 impossible 3) .....

AURORA: Yes, I know. Poor old Albert had to carry all their bags everywhere. And I hear  
 Joseph was rude to Mr Tsappanis because he wanted ketchup. I had to  
 4) ..... his behaviour.

CARLO: Yes, well you know how important good food is to Joseph. He feels  
 5) ..... making sure people eat it properly. And Mr Tsappanis  
 wanted ketchup on everything ... even spaghetti!



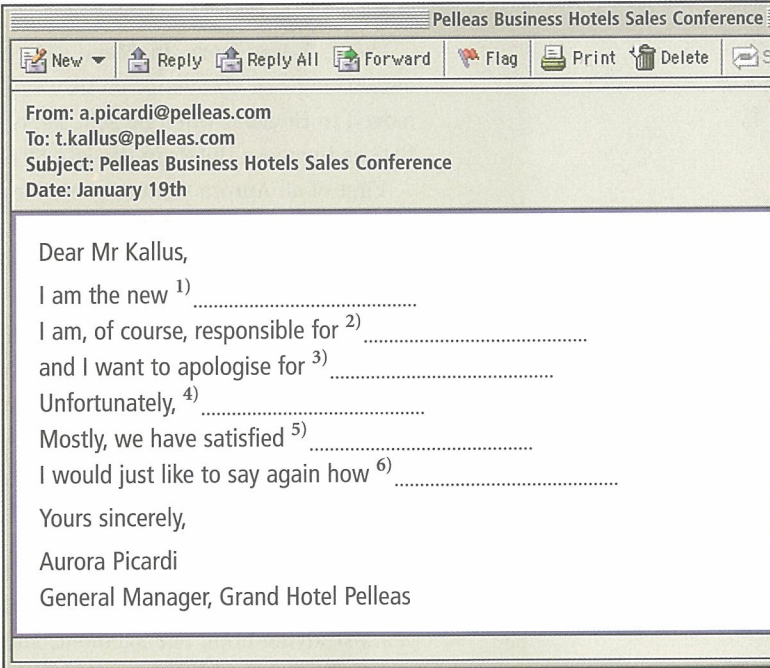
- 4 With your partner think of some more word partners for the key words in **bold**. Then compare your examples with other people in your class.

<b>to manage</b>	<b>a team</b>

<b>general</b>	<b>manager</b>

<b>satisfied</b>	<b>customer</b>

**Hot tip!**  
 Words that can be regularly used together are called 'word partners' or 'collocations'. In business, three key words are 'manage', 'manager' and 'customer'. They often make important word partners, e.g. manage a team, general manager, satisfied customer.



- 5 Aurora decides to write an email to Tony Kallus, chief executive officer of Pelleas Business Hotels Inc., about the problems with the sales conference. Complete each sentence for her using language from the Business Vocabulary section.



- 1 Read this interview with Aurora Picardi in 'Career Woman' magazine, then complete the sentences underneath.

## Career Woman: PROFILE

For this week's interview Purdy Smith flew to Malta to meet Aurora Picardi, the 28-year-old general manager of the Grand Hotel Pelleas.

Aurora Picardi (28) is the great-great-great-granddaughter of a Maltese baron. She is also the general manager of the Grand Hotel Pelleas in Valletta, the first woman ever to hold this position. I started by asking her about her Maltese background.

"Well, I was born in Malta. My father owned and ran this hotel at that time. We moved to England when he sold the hotel to Pelleas Business Hotels in the late 80s."

First of all Aurora went to school in Malta for about five years. "Then we moved to London and later Manchester – that was for eight years."

She ended up at a finishing school in Lausanne, Switzerland. She speaks three languages fluently – Maltese, English and French, and can also get by in Italian and German. She told us about life after finishing school:

"Switzerland was the best place to learn more about the hotel business, which was sort of in my blood anyway, so I spent three years studying hotel management, and then got my first job, as a junior manager in a hotel in Geneva. Since then I've worked in three different hotels in different capital cities."

But Aurora's heart was still in Malta, and when the chance came to go back she didn't hesitate. She explained what happened.

"About six months ago I saw that the General Manager job at the Malta Pelleas was up for grabs. Apparently there had been a few problems with the staff, and they wanted someone who knew Malta. That person had to be able to move fast because the last General Manager had resigned at short notice. I jumped at the chance to come back to Malta. I love it, and of course I still have lots of friends here. And my father was buried in Malta when he died. The Grand Hotel is like home for me, in a way."



- 1 Aurora first went to school in **Malta** .....
- 2 Aurora's finishing school was in .....
- 3 Aurora studied .....
- 4 Aurora's first job as a junior hotel manager was in .....
- 5 Aurora came back to Malta about .....
- 6 Aurora is now the .....

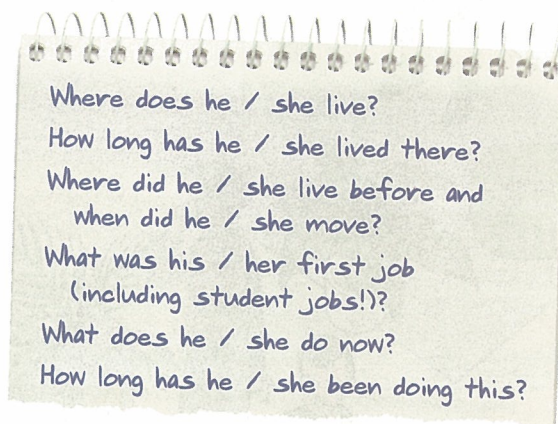
2 Read the article again. Look at the following phrases and match the two halves.

- |                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 for about       | a of all                     |
| 2 since then I've | b for three years            |
| 3 at short        | c eight years                |
| 4 about six       | d to London                  |
| 5 that was        | e worked in different hotels |
| 6 then we moved   | f months ago                 |
| 7 first           | g notice                     |

3 Fill in the gaps using *for*, *since*, or *ago*.

- I've been here since ..... 1983.
- I've been here ..... eight years.
- I arrived about six weeks .....
- We've been working ..... 3 o'clock.
- The taxi left five minutes .....
- I haven't had a drink ..... the party.
- I haven't had a drink ..... ages.

4 Interview your partner and find the answers to these questions:



5 Now tell the class all about your partner. Try to include some of the following words or phrases:

first of all then for since about ago

6 Discuss with a partner. What do you think Aurora means when she says that:

- ... her father *ran* the hotel?
- ... the hotel business is *in her blood*?
- ... the General Manager job was *up for grabs*?
- ... she *jumped at the chance*?
- ... that person had *to be able to move fast*?



- 1 At this international conference there are some cross-cultural misunderstandings. With your partner discuss what the problem could be in each case.
- 2 Which country do you think the people at the conference come from?  
 What advice could you give each person about how to deal with their foreign partner?  
 Do people from your culture sometimes behave in any of these ways?

- 3 Think about the work place in your own country and answer the questions below. Then find out what your partner thinks.

## Work life

- 1 Do people use first or second names the first time they meet someone?

- 2 How do you greet people you know already?

- 3 How important is it always to be on time for appointments?

- 4 How close do you usually stand to somebody when you are talking to them?

- 5 Do you sometimes touch a business colleague when you are talking to them?

- 6 Do you ever talk about personal things (family, hobbies, etc.) with a new business partner?

- 7 If you want to entertain a new business partner do you invite them to a restaurant or could you also invite them to your house?

- 4 Compare your answers with other people in your class. Do you have similar answers or different? Why?
- 5 With your partner write some tips for somebody coming for a short business trip to your country. Use the information you collected in activity 3.
- 6 Is it easy for people to come to live and work in your country for a long time? What problems could they have?



- 1 Look at the table below. Here are three ways to start a conversation with someone you don't know. Listen to the beginnings of five conversations and tick (✓) which technique Aurora is using in each case.

*Hot tip!*  
 'Small talk' is an important part of doing business. It helps you to develop business relationships, and it can be used to find out more about a person and their company.

	Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3	Conversation 4	Conversation 5
Ask a question					
Introduce yourself	✓				
Make a comment					

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[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=25&filename=Track07\\_Unit1\\_page9\\_activity1\\_conversation4.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=25&filename=Track07_Unit1_page9_activity1_conversation4.mp3)  
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- 2 The next stage in talking to a stranger is to find some common interests. It is important to listen carefully, and say something which shows interest. Match a sentence on the left with a response on the right.

1 After that we went to Berlin for a few days ...	a Pleased to meet you, too. I hear you've just flown in from Malaysia.
2 I'm sorry I'm late – the train was delayed.	b Have you seen the opera house yet? It's really impressive. I can recommend it.
3 I've just got to phone my children before they go to bed, so, if you'll excuse me ...	c Oh dear. How annoying. Not to worry – I only just got here too. Was it the train from London?
4 This food is just great!	d Good idea. I must do the same. Thanks for reminding me!
5 Pleased to meet you.	e Yes, isn't it? I'm going to get some more. Shall I get you something?
6 We've been here for three days now, so we've seen some of the sights already.	f Really? It's a great city. I lived there before I moved to Singapore.

- 3 What do you know about the other people in the class? Talk to as many people as possible in 15 minutes and find someone who:

- ◆ ... has a birthday in the same month as you. (when?)
- ◆ ... can speak three languages. (which ones?)
- ◆ ... has seen a film in English recently. (which one?)
- ◆ ... has to use English for their work. (what for?)
- ◆ ... has visited an English-speaking country. (which one? when?)
- ◆ ... likes the same music as you. (what?)

1

'Business Watchdog' is an American radio programme about international business.

Listen to the radio report about a country called Bellonia, and make notes in the table below.

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1 Location:	Pacific	6 Government plan:	
2 Population:		7 Business (future):	
3 Business (before):		8 Investment plans:	
4 Business (now):		9 Bank of Bellonia:	
5 National income (now):		10 Business opportunity:	

2

Work in two groups, A and B.

**Group A:** you work for an international company, Bergerbild AG.

**Group B:** you work for the Bank of Bellonia. Work through the stages.

### Stage 1

**Group A:** your boss sends you an email memo (see right).

**Group B:** turn to page 121 and read the email.



Cocktails with the Bellonians

New Reply Reply All Forward Flag Print Delete Send & Receive Address Bo

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From: FrankChurchill@bergerbild.com  
 To: you@bergerbild.com  
 Subject: Cocktails with the Bellonians  
 Date: January 19th

---

I want you to go to a cocktail party this evening that we have organised for some important people from the Bank of Bellonia. They are on a fact-finding visit to our country and we think they are interested in working with a company like ours on projects in Bellonia.

The problem is, we don't know much about the bank at all. Is it private or state owned? What kind of projects is Bellonia interested in? When are they thinking of starting these projects? How much money has the bank got to invest?

Tomorrow our top management will have a business meeting with them, but we want to have some background information beforehand. Try to find out as much as you can about Bellonia and the Bellonians at the cocktail party this evening. Unfortunately I cannot come until near the end of the evening. We can have a meeting then and you can tell me what you have learnt.

### Stage 2

In your groups, prepare the questions you are going to ask. Then, individually, enjoy your cocktail party!

### Stage 3

- 1 Discuss in your original groups what you have learnt about the other team. Do you want to do business with them? Why? Why not?
- 2 What lessons can we learn from this about doing business with people from another culture?

## Pauline's Problems

- 1 Read the email which Aurora sent to her best friend, Pauline. Complete the email using words from the box.

apologising rude marketing director in charge  
~~sorry~~ deal with experience threw away staff  
 conference



Re: The cat died!

New Reply Reply All Forward Flag Print Delete Send & Receive Address Book Find

From: a.picardi@pelleas.com  
 To: p\_lafayette@yoohoo.com  
 Subject: Re: The cat died!  
 Date: January 19th

Dear Pauline,

I am so <sup>1)</sup> sorry ..... about your cat. She was such a good mouser. I remember when she left three on my bed the last time I visited you! You must miss her terribly.

Life here is difficult. The hotel hosted a <sup>2)</sup> ..... for the Pelleas salespeople last week but, as you know, I was ill. My assistant, Carlo, was <sup>3)</sup> ..... and everything went wrong.

The head waiter, Joseph, was <sup>4)</sup> ..... to a senior American manager, the chambermaid <sup>5)</sup> ..... some important papers by mistake and everybody said the <sup>6)</sup> ..... were too slow. Of course, I have to find a way to <sup>7)</sup> ..... the situation quickly. The <sup>8)</sup> ..... , Costas Tsappanis, wants to send someone here with <sup>9)</sup> ..... of the business in the US so I have to think fast what to do, apart from <sup>10)</sup> ..... every five minutes!

I'll write again when I have more time.

Love,  
 Aurora



**1** Complete the data bank with language that is useful for you. The language in columns 1 and 5 should come from the unit.

1 Key word(s)	2 Model sentence	3 Similar (S) or opposite (O)	4 Translation
facilities	The hotel facilities are excellent.		

5 Useful phrases or idioms	6 Translation
At short notice	

7 When can I use the language or ideas from this unit?