



IELTS LISTENING S53T3

Willows Studies

PROFESSOR: Before we start Tom and Bella, thanks for coming in today to talk about the key case studies that will help you to understand your classwork better. Now I hope you've read the notes I gave you last week on the furniture company willows as this will be the focus of our discussion today let's begin. Who can tell me what the current focus of the company's business is?

TOM: The company used to be very large with many retail outlets across the country. However since the recession, there have been fewer people spending money on furniture and so the company was forced to close all of its outlets, and now only operates online.

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PROFESSOR: Well done Tom. Bella, can you add anything?

BELLA: Willows used to produce a very large number of products such as tables, chairs and light fittings. However through market research they realized that most of their profit was made from the sale of bookcases, so they now **Q21 specialize in this one product.**

PROFESSOR: Very good does anyone know how our department began its contact with willows.

TOM: Did you contact the company professor?

PROFESSOR: No tom it wasn't through me.

BELLA: Our **Q22 headmaster saw an article** that the manager had written in the newspaper and became very interested in the company. He contacted willows and arranged for a student to work there full time during the summer.

PROFESSOR: Yes exactly, does anyone know what the student thought of their time working at willows?

TOM: Yes he is a friend of ours he worked as a member of the design team creating technical drawings of the furniture using a computer. There was a special software that he used which he said had a bad interface and **Q23 was very difficult to predict.** However it was very efficient and helpful for quickly drawing up furniture designs.

PROFESSOR: How interesting.

BELLA: Yes it was, we both visited him whilst he was working there and he showed us around unfortunately visitors were not allowed to access the I.T department but it was great to chat with his colleagues.

PROFESSOR: Did you meet his manager?

TOM: His manager is a very busy man so he didn't have time to meet with us. However, we were allowed to **Q24 inspect the accounts** which really helped us to understand the effects of the software on the company.

PROFESSOR: Well what an exciting experience. Now before I forget next week I'll be conducting face-to-face interviews with each of you to prepare for job interviews.

BELLA: Can we do it as a group?

PROFESSOR: I'm afraid not bella I want to give each of you my undivided attention and **Q25 there will be too much disturbance** if I interview you all together, plus it will be more realistic if I interview you alone.

TOM: Have you finished writing the feedback on our exam results professor?

PROFESSOR: Yes I have tom, and I must say that I was not disappointed I am glad to say that your performance has dramatically increased since you began attending this after school club and you have both scored **Q26 above the average.** If you continue to work hard your results should soon improve significantly.

PROFESSOR: Now back to our discussion about willows. Can anyone tell me what business decisions might benefit the company?

BELLA: A new system would definitely benefit willows their system is very outdated I don't think it would help them to gain more profit however the system is capable of doing the work of hundreds of people, this would therefore significantly **Q28 lower labor costs.**

TOM: I agree, unfortunately unless they also replace the machinery in their workshop the new system won't reduce the production time.

BELLA: That is a shame. If they can't reduce their production time, they won't be able to increase sales the answer is to **Q27 hire more staff** in order to increase the efficiency of the production line.

PROFESSOR: Yes you have both made interesting points. Now for one final question before we finish this week's session. How will new clients be affected by the new system?

TOM: Unfortunately the new system does not allow clients to connect to the willow system from home. So they are unable to access their work online, this also means that the system presents no opportunity to attract more contacts since clients are unable to view it from their homes.

BELLA: Yes that's true, however it could definitely benefit clients who visit the showroom. The system is very interactive and allows clients to easily browse the furniture catalog which will **Q30 save them a lot of time.**

TOM: It's a shame that staff are still needed to guide clients through the online system as it means that no savings can be made in labor costs. I think the major benefit of the new system is that it enables staff to design the furniture in front of the client, which allows them to **Q29 get a lot more involved in the design.**

PROFESSOR: Bravo! You've both contributed fantastic points to our conversation, that concludes our session for today I'll see you next week...

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