**ROLE PLAY / 1**

*“Do we need more women managers?”*

[English for Business Studies – pp. 41 / Unit 6]

The CEO of a large consumer-goods company is worried about the small number of women in senior management positions in the company. S/he has called a meeting of the non-executive directors to discuss what can be done about this issue. These are people with a long experience in business who oversee the management of the company.

The roles are the given below.

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| **CEO**  *[3 Ss will assume this role]*  You chair the meeting, and explain the situation – that you think the company does not have enough women managers and directors. Explain why you think this is a problem, and that you want constructive suggestions to solve it. You choose to who will speak first. You will not select Director D to begin, as you suspect that he (probably not she) has very negative views on the matter. At the end of the meeting, you can briefly summarise the director’s suggestions, and inform them which ideas you think are the best and more practical. |

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| **Director A**  *[3 Ss will assume this role]*  You think the problem is simple: it lies in the job advertisements prepared by the HR department. They often contain a picture of a man in a suit, carrying a suitcase, with a text containing words like *aggression*, *competitiveness* and *dynamism*. They also often have a paragraph with the heading “The Perfect Candidate” that begins with “He will be …”. The company needs to rethink its job advertising. If it wants to attract more women, it could use pictures of women, and words like *collaboration*, *innovation*, and *enthusiasm*. Such advertisements might also attract a different kind of man to apply for jobs. The company could also reconsider its selection processes: you could insist, for example, that at least one of three candidates interviewed for each management job is a woman. |

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| **Director B**  You think the problem lies with the traditional career paths in companies. Many women who have children do so in their 30s, and are not able to devote all their time to their job. Unfortunately, this is often the age (typically between about 28 and 35) when companies identify and promote people they think have a high potential for future leadership. If the company also tried to identify leaders at younger and older ages, it might find more potential women leaders, including women who have come back from a career break of a few years. This would also encourage women who take a break to return to the company. |

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| **Director C**  You think that if the company wants to attract and retain women with strong management and leadership potential, it needs to offer childcare. The company could set up a nursery for pre-school children, near the company’s headquarters. This would allow mothers to be near their children while they are at work, and might encourage them not to take a career break when their children are young. This day care would not be free, but managers with high salaries would be able to pay for it, so it wouldn’t necessarily cost the company anything. All this would give the company a big competitive advantage over its rivals. |

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| **Director D**  You are not convinced that there is a problem. The company is successful, and has a lot of hard-working, full-time managers. You are very much against the idea of encouraging career breaks. People coming back from a career break for childcare are often not aware of the latest developments in the company, in the industry, or in the business world in general. Furthermore, if you offer career breaks to women, some men will start demanding them, too or other things like increased flexibility, or part-time positions, and the company will become inefficient and very difficult to run. You also think – even though you are a bit worried about saying this – that mothers should not work, but should stay at home looking after their children. |