Laura M. Basta - Karen L. Maddick - Elena Malaffo

Business@heart

User-friendly guide to Business English
for Italian students

Giappichelli

PRESENTAZIONE

Questo progetto è nato dall'osservazione delle reali necessità di studenti e professionisti.

Il materiale è stato progettato specificamente per favorire l'approfondimento e lo studio in autonomia con l'obiettivo di sviluppare e specifiche competenze lessicali e comunicative in breve tempo.

Le autrici operano nel settore dell'insegnamento della lingua inglese per l'economia e il commercio sia in ambito di istruzione superiore sia in contesto aziendale. Collaborano da tempo con la SAA School of Management di Torino. Laura M. Basta è anche docente liceale; Karen L. Maddick insegna presso la Scuola di Management ed Economia dell'Università di Torino; Elena Malaffo è stata responsabile linguistico presso ESCP European School of Management Italia e attualmente si occupa di comunicazione e negoziazione interculturale.

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UNIT 1
COMPANY STRUCTURE

TYPES OF COMPANY STRUCTURE

Companies can come in all different shapes and sizes, as can their company structures. The choice of structure which a company adopts is often based on the goals, priorities and the key strategies of senior management.

Small companies often start out with a flat company structure where workers of various backgrounds and possessing different skills share business decisions and responsibilities.
As the small business grows it must then decide which company structure it should adopt and which would be most practical.

It is important to remember that all types of organisations are controlled through two sets of processes:
- Operating – how a company produces, sells, distributes and supports its products and services
- Management – how a company directs, coordinates and controls the above operations.
  For example, typical management processes include human resources, planning and budgeting.

On the whole, we generally talk about three main types of company structure: hierarchical, entrepreneurial and information age.
Let's consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of these three.

Hierarchical structures, typical of the 1960s and 1970s, are commonly associated with large established companies. They can often have communication problems as information is limited and tends to move slowly between departments.
Although the aspect of collecting, processing and distributing information has greatly improved over the years, thanks to technology, management's response time can still be rather slow compared to smaller, more nimble rivals.
Hierarchical companies control operating processes by standardising jobs which are then separated into sequential steps and carried out under direct supervision.
However, line workers often lack both the authority and motivation needed to improve routine tasks and may be limited by a local view of the business.
On the other hand, there is a high level of control which is beneficial. In order for a hierarchical structure to be truly effective, it must operate in a relatively stable business environment where change tends to happen slowly.
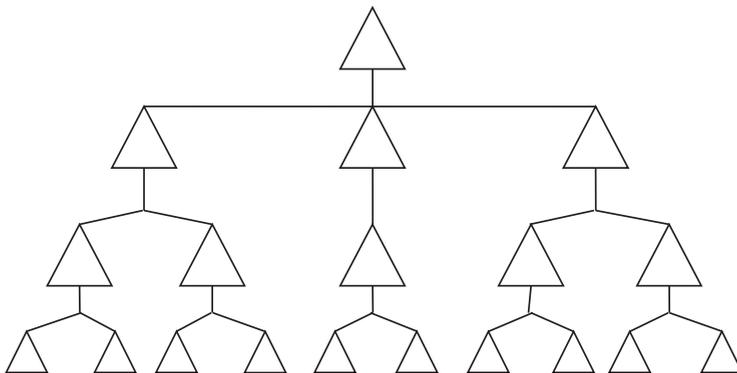
Entrepreneurial structures allow for a quick response without any loss of control.
A totally centralised authority and daily direct contact between the owner and employees ensure responsiveness to any external problems and instant feedback ensures effective control. However, as the company becomes larger and more complex, this control can very often break down and more operating and management processes then become necessary, thereby making this type of structure more suitable for small companies where there is an owner manager.
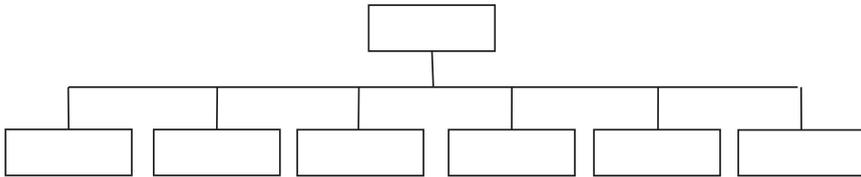
Information Age structures are generally popular with flexible companies with project-based teams. This structure can manage the complexity of the large hierarchical structure without losing the speed of the entrepreneurial start-up.
As its name suggests, IT plays a highly important role. It can coordinate complex, fast-cycle operating processes and it gives decision-makers quick access to detailed, real-time information regarding market performance and operations.
Employees can constantly refine their actions and strategies and organisational control is dynamic.
However, although IT has many advantages and can make a "big small" company a reality, it cannot motivate people to use information in order to act on the organisation's behalf.
Therefore, the main challenge that organisations face is how to ensure that both managers and employees share the same perspective and are motivated to achieve the same goals.
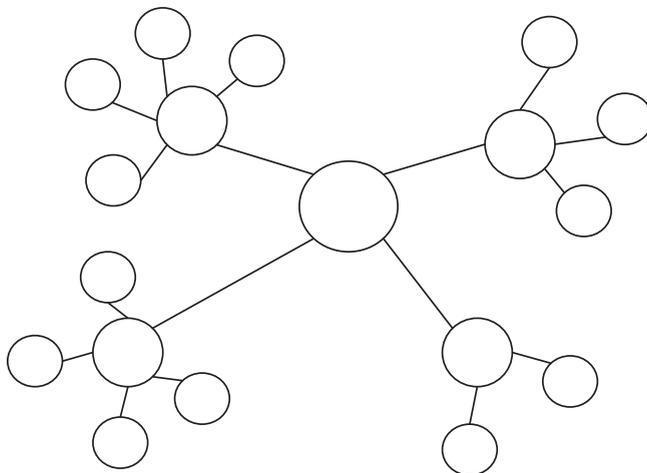
Let's work with the text

1. Read the text and mark the following statements true (T) or false (F).

	T	F
a) There is only one type of company structure.	□	□
b) Small companies often start out with a hierarchical structure.	□	□
c) The distribution of company products is part of the operating process.	□	□
d) Communication problems can sometimes occur in a hierarchical structure.	□	□
e) A hierarchical structure has the advantage of a high level of control.	□	□
f) An entrepreneurial structure would work best with a very large company.	□	□
g) An information age structure can give quick access to information.	□	□
h) IT cannot motivate people to use the information they have.	□	□

2. Read the text again and answer the following questions.

a) What are the differences between an operating and a management process?
_____
_____

b) In what way do hierarchical companies ensure control of operating systems?
_____
_____

c) How can an entrepreneurial company be responsive and gain control?
_____
_____

d) Why doesn't information alone guarantee effective management?
_____
_____

3. Translate the following words into Italian.

a) all shapes and sizes

b) goals

c) a flat company structure

d) budgeting

e) nimble

f) to lack

g) to ensure

h) responsiveness

i) to break down

j) the main challenge

Let's work with vocabulary

4. Match the words to their meanings.

   a) the CEO (Chief Executive Officer)
   b) a client
   c) a manager
   d) the CFO (Chief Financial Officer)
   e) a customer
   f) a colleague
   g) an employee
   h) a head of department
   i) the HRO (Human Resources Officer)
   j) the staff

   1. the person in charge of part of an organisation, e.g. a branch or a shop.
   2. the group of people who work for an organisation.
   3. someone who receives a service from a professional person e.g. from a lawyer.
   4. a person who works for someone or for a company.
   5. someone who buys services or goods e.g. from a restaurant or from a shop.
   6. the person with the highest rank in a company and whose responsibilities include developing strategies, managing operations and communicating with the Board.
   7. someone who is in charge of a department in a company.
   8. the person responsible for hiring, developing and looking after employees.
   9. someone who works with you.
   10. the person responsible for handling all the company's financial operations.

5. Choose the correct word for each sentence.

   a) Before joining the company, I studied economics/economy at university.
   b) My bank manager has agreed to borrow/lend me € 5,000.
   c) She is applying for a job/work in the HR department.
   d) Can you say/tell the difference between these two products?
   e) The company is extremely sensitive/sensible to any sort of criticism.
   f) We need to cancel/postpone the meeting until next week.
   g) Some employees have a long journey/travel to work every day.
   h) How will the increase in interest rates effect/affect your sales?
   i) Unfortunately, the cost of life/living is going up again.
   j) The overtake/takeover bid from the Chinese company came as a big surprise.

6. Match the phrasal verbs with their meanings.

   a) to call back
   b) to call up
   c) to carry on
   d) to close down
   e) to come up
   f) to come up with
   g) to give up
   h) to hand out
   i) to hold on
   j) to put off

   1. to continue doing something
   2. to invent
   3. to distribute the same thing to a group of people
   4. to postpone
   5. to wait
   6. to return a telephone call
   7. to stop doing something
   8. to occur or appear unexpectedly
   9. to contact someone telephonically
   10. to shut completely

7. Complete the sentences with the correct phrasal verbs from the previous exercise. Use the right tense.

a) Could you please _____ a moment while I check with my manager?

b) The company has decided to _____ two of their stores in France. They're losing money.

c) We should _____ meeting the Board of Directors until we have all the information at hand.

d) When you have a minute, would you mind _____ the client?

e) We have a bad connection. Can I _____ you _____ in a few minutes?

f) Jake has _____ a brilliant idea for our new product. He's so inventive!

g) I'll only email you if something interesting _____ in the meeting with the CFO.

h) I'll start explaining the changes we've made while Becky _____ a copy of the new policy.

i) We never expected him to _____ his job as head of marketing.

j) The company is trying to _____working despite the risk of going bankrupt.

Let's work with grammar

8. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets in the Present Simple tense.

a) I often _____ (travel) abroad on business to visit clients.

b) The founder of the company _____ (have) an MBA and previous experience.

c) The company _____(operate) a website that allows users to personalise cards.

d) The department manager usually _____(leave) early on Friday.

e) I _____ (not think) the tax rates are so high.

f) He _____ (not work) for the company anymore, he has just retired.

g) _____ (you have got) the flight details for your trip to Edinburgh?

h) How often _____ (you attend) meetings with your boss?

i) How many hours a week _____ he _____ (work)?

j) She _____ (be) always on time for department meetings.

9. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets in the Present Continuous tense.

a) We _____ (use) this office until the new one is ready.

b) The economic situation _____ (get) better.

c) Our company share price _____ (improve) steadily.

d) I _____ (do) a training course this month but it's not very interesting.

e) We _____ (have) a lot of problems with our suppliers at the moment.

f) Unfortunately, our new product _____ (not sell) very well this year.

g) Why ____they _____ (set up) a business?

h) Stuart _____ (think) of changing his job because he's not very happy.

i) Markets in India and China _____ (develop) rapidly and are more attractive to large companies.

j) We _____ (think) about moving IT services to Indonesia.

10. Fill in the gap with the verb in the Present Simple or the Present Continuous tense.

a) They _____(work) a lot of overtime at the moment.

b) His company usually _____ (spend) a lot on foreign investment.

c) Many economists believe that the Chinese economy _____ (grow) too fast.

d) They _____ (modernise) the offices this month so it's very difficult to concentrate with all the noise.

e) Generally, an IT specialist in India _____(not earn) as much as one in Europe.

f) Who _____ they_____(talk) to about further investment?

g) Normally I'm in the office in the morning but this week I _____ (do) a course.

h) In the winter the sales reps _____ (sell) more than in the summer.

i) Our most important market is in the Far East. We always_____ (do) business with several companies there.

j) 'What are you doing?' 'I_____ (prepare) this month's sales figures'.

11. Choose the best alternative for each space and mark a, b or c in the table below the text.

Our company always **1.** _____ professional networking sites such as ConnectIN, in order **2.** _____ recruit new members of staff. I **3.** _____ to say that we prefer it to the more traditional methods of recruitment because it's so much faster and it **4.** _____ the company anything, which pleases the finance department!

At the moment, our company **5.** _____ very well and growing considerably. As a consequence, we **6.** _____ some new positions available. Currently, we're looking **7.** _____ a new marketing manager, who will be responsible for a new publicity campaign which **8.** _____ next spring on an international level. He/she will directly deal **9.** _____ the IT department to enhance on-line communication between the company and potential customers.

I posted the job advert yesterday and I **10.** _____ have 15 excellent CVs and applications for the position. If you think, the process took months before we used professional networking sites!

1.	a) is using	b) uses	c) use
2.	a) to	b) for	c) with
3.	a) must	b) should	c) have
4.	a) doesn't cost	b) don't cost	c) not costs
5.	a) does	b) is doing	c) are doing
6.	a) have	b) are having	c) has
7.	a) to	b) forward	c) for
8.	a) is coming out	b) came out	c) has come out
9.	a) with	b) to	c) at
10.	a) already	b) yet	c) still

Let's talk!

- Can you name any famous companies which have one of the company structures we read about earlier?

- Which type of company structure would you prefer to work in?

- How would you feel about working in a flat or entrepreneurial company structure with few or no managers?

Let's work with translation

12. Translate the following sentences into Italian.

a) The company usually spends a lot of money on foreign investment.
b) We're having many problems with our suppliers at the moment.
c) As CFO I'm responsible for checking the company's accounts.
d) We often have to work late at the office but we never get paid overtime.
e) Molly is meeting the suppliers tomorrow afternoon.
f) I'm afraid I'm running a bit late, I'm sitting in a big traffic jam.
g) How much does the new office equipment cost?

13. Translate the following sentences into English.

a) Dicono che l'azienda vuole licenziare 40 persone, ma non ci credo.
b) Lei non parla tedesco, ma vuole impararlo perché la casa madre ha sede a Berlino.
c) Di solito lavoro otto ore al giorno ma questa settimana ne lavoro 12 perché dobbiamo finire un progetto.
d) Cosa stai facendo? Sto controllando tutti i dati.
e) Vuole vendere l'azienda ai Finlandesi.
f) Ogni venerdì ci incontriamo per parlare della situazione in ufficio.
g) La nostra azienda sta cercando un nuovo CFO.

14. Translate the following text into English.

Storie di giovani imprenditori

Pietro R. e **Anna G.** si sono conosciuti quando erano studenti universitari**.** Ora lavorano insieme e utilizzano uno spazio di *coworking c*he l'università ha messo a disposizione in uno dei suoi edifici. *"Qui entri in contatto con altri professionisti con problemi simili ai tuoi. Riesci a condividere le tue idee e questo risulta costruttivo"* spiega Pietro.

Pietro, come Anna, è laureato in Comunicazione Audiovisiva, e dirige il settore della sua agenzia che si occupa di comunicazione web. Un settore che non conosce crisi e al quale lui contribuisce quotidianamente. Anna, responsabile degli audiovisivi, si scontra con una realtà più complicata da quando la regione ha deciso di **chiudere la televisione locale** con un taglio delle trasmissioni in diretta.

Pietro e Anna hanno intrapreso un cammino per nulla semplice ma che li accomuna con molti giovani della loro età. Secondo i dati del Ministero del Lavoro, negli ultimi dieci anni la fascia di popolazione tra i 25 e i 34 anni ha registrato un tasso di imprenditorialità molto superiore alla media.

15. Choose a famous company and describe it in detail, include its organisational structure, what it produces, and what it is working on now (120-150 words).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Write a short presentation of yourself that you would like to post on a professional social media website.

ConnectIN

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

My notes

My notes

My notes

Toolbox

THE PRESENT SIMPLE

We use it when the action is:
- Something regular, a habit or something which is part of a routine.
  I study at the BMM School of Management.
- Something you think or feel.
  I can't stand Statistics!
- Regular times and schedules.
  My lesson ends at five o'clock.

Adverbs of frequency are normally used with the Present Simple because they express routines. Here are the most common:

always	often	sometimes	occasionally	seldom	rarely	hardly ever	never

Adverbs of frequency come before the verb, except for the verb *to be* and *modal verbs*.
e.g. *I always arrive on time for my Marketing lesson.*
  I am never late for my English lesson.
  I can always rely on you!

To make the negative and interrogative forms use **do/does**.
Do you *live in Turin?*
Does *he study at the BMM School of Management?*
I don't / do not *agree with you.*
She doesn't / does not *know anything about the topic.*

Remember that you must add –s to 3rd person singular!

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I work	I don't work	Do I work?
You work	You don't work	Do you work?
He/she/it **works**	He/she/it **doesn't work**	**Does** he/she/it **work**?
We work	We don't work	Do we work?
You work	You don't work	Do you work?
They work	They don't work	Do they work?

To be, to have got and the modal verbs do not form the negative and interrogative in the same way.

I am - have got - can	You We They
I am not (I'm not) - I have not got (I haven't got) I cannot (I can't)	You (singular and plural) are - have got You are not (you aren't) - You have not got (you haven't got) - You cannot (you can't)
He/she/it is - has got - can He is not (he isn't) - he has not got (he hasn't) he cannot (can't)	Is he/she/it? Has he/she/it got? Can he/she/it?

THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS

We use it to express:

- Something which is happening at the moment of speaking.
    I am waiting to speak to the visiting professor.

- Something which is happening in this period but it is not a normal situation. It is a temporary activity.
    She usually works in the Turin office but currently she is helping her English colleagues in Manchester set up the new program.

- Something you have arranged to do in the future.
    I am seeing my parents next week.

- Some verbs are almost never used in the continuous form. They are mostly used to express feelings, mental activity and perceptions.
    (like/love/hate/know/understand/want/see/hear/seem).

- The verb **to be** cannot be used with a future meaning.

To make a verb in the Present Continuous negative add **not (n't)** to the auxiliary verb.
In order to make a question, **invert** the subject and verb.

*He **is** listening to music now.*
*He **isn't** listening to music now.*
***Is he** listening to music now?*

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I am travelling	I am not travelling	Am I travelling?
You are travelling	You aren't travelling	Are you travelling?
He/she/it is travelling	He/she/it isn't travelling	Is he/she/it travelling?
We are travelling	We aren't travelling	Are we travelling?
You are travelling	You aren't travelling	Are you travelling?
They are travelling	They aren't travelling	Are they travelling?