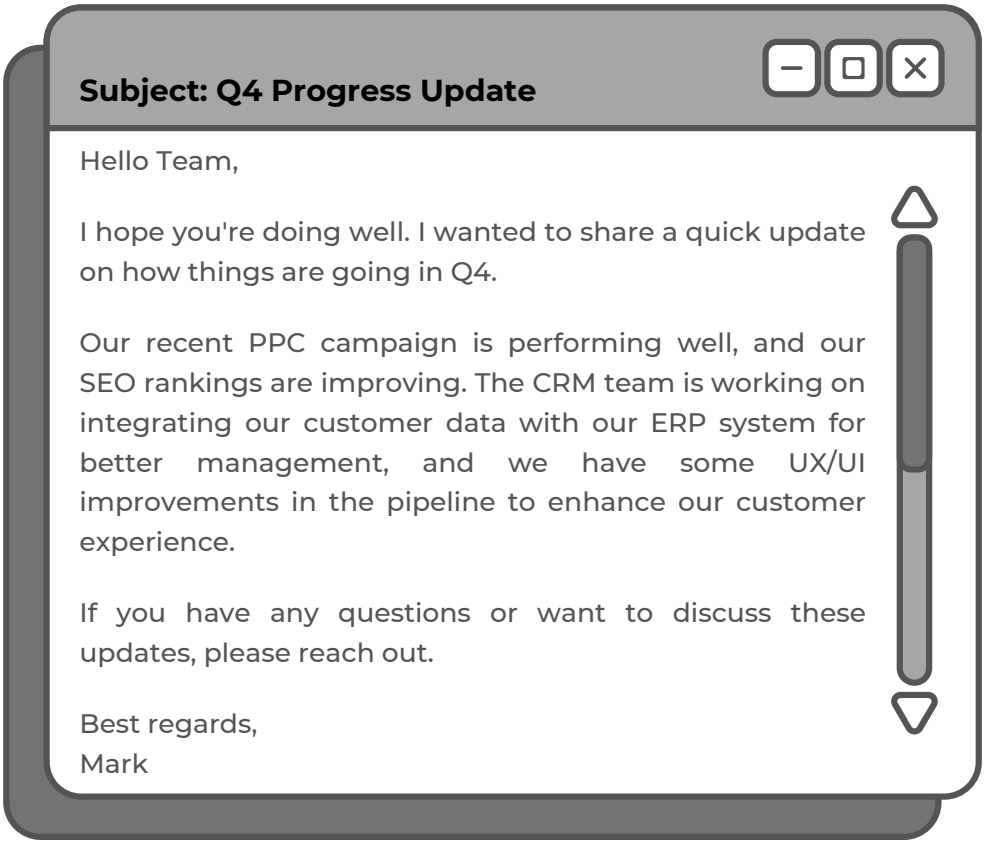
B2 Corporate jargon

Vocabulary

EXERCISE 1 READ THE EMAIL AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW.



1. What is this email about?
2. What is corporate jargon?
3. Underline any examples of corporate jargon.
4. What do the acronyms stand for?

EXERCISE 2 CHECK THE ACRONYMS. MATCH THE ACRONYMS TO THEIR DEFINITIONS.

1. PPC: Pay-Per-Click
2. SEO: Search Engine Optimization
3. CRM: Customer Relationship Management
4. ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning
5. UX/UI: User Experience/User Interface
6. Q4: Fourth Quarter

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A. Improving your website's visibility on search engines.
B. The last three months of the year.
C. A way to advertise online where you pay each time someone clicks on your ad.
D. Managing and improving your interactions with customers.
E. Making websites or apps easy and enjoyable to use by designing them well and focusing on how people interact with them.
F. Software that helps businesses manage different parts of their operations, like finances, inventory, and HR, all in one place.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

EXERCISE 3 DISCUSS.

1. Does your company use corporate jargon?
2. What corporate jargon are you familiar with?
3. Do you think that you are proficient in corporate jargon?
4. Does corporate jargon facilitate or hinder communication? Why?

EXERCISE 4 WATCH THE VIDEO *WHAT CORPORATE PEOPLE SOUND LIKE* AND WRITE AS MANY CORPORATE JARGON WORDS AS YOU CAN. WHAT WAS THE CONVERSATION ABOUT?

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EXERCISE 5 READ THE DIALOGUE AND WRITE DOWN THE MISSING CORPORATE JARGON WORDS. WATCH THE VIDEO *WHAT CORPORATE PEOPLE SOUND LIKE* AGAIN AND CHECK THE ANSWERS.

Patrick: Hey, Greg, just wanted to **(1) c_____ b_____** on that Q3 forecast and try and land the plane from a KPI standpoint.
Greg: Look, Patrick, you want to **(2) w_____-w_____**, but I'm burning the candle at both ends here.
P: I'll tell you what, let me easily put you on a quick hold and **(3) t_____ b_____** with Darren using Zoom Phone.
Darren: Hey, Patrick.
P: Hey, wanna **(4) p_____ y_____ b_____** on the Q3 forecast from a standpoint perspective.

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D: Going forward, I think it's clear from a macro standpoint, we gotta get granular and just hammer things out, you know? Put some chop in the water, go back and **(5) s_____ o_____ p_____.** Hope is not a strategy.
P: Copy that. So from a 30,000-foot standpoint, Darren is thinking we **(6) s_____ t_____ c_____.** Guess we're gonna have to loop someone in from sales.
G: Roger.
Carl: Sales, this is Carl.
P: Carl, Patrick. Greg, Nancy, and I have the **(7) d_____ p_____.** Do you have the adequate tailwind to disrupt the space in a way that is actionable?
C: Gonna need to marinate on that, can we **(8) p_____ a p_____ in it?**
P: It is what it is, let's circle the wagon EOD and see if we can't flip that over and get the North star back in the sky. We need to do a level set.
C: Is Nancy in the dark? If so, you should **(9) p_____ h_____.**
P: Roger that.
C: Copy that Roger.
P: Roger that copy of my Roger.
Zane: Nancy's office.
P: Zane, we're getting some **(10) p_____** on the circle back of our initial push, is Nance available?
Z: Let me transfer you on Zoom Phone.
Nancy: Tell me something good.
P: Nance, it's Patrick. The team wants to loop you in from a pushback standpoint. Going forward, do you have the bandwidth to discuss best practices **(11) m_____ t_____ n_____ f_____** as we can-
N: Yes, I do. Yes, I do. Yes, I do. Yes, I do.
P: Uh, well, from an unpacking standpoint, we may not have enough boots on the ground. So let's **(12) p_____ b_____ t_____ o_____** on this.
N: The elephant in the room is this paradigm shift, which is just basically mission-critical low-hanging fruit with no value add. So **(13) s_____ t_____ d_____,** gather the troops, and let's aim for win-win.
P: Copy.
N: Roger that copy.
P: Copy that Roger of my copy.
N: Roger that copy of my Rogers of your copy.
P: Copy that Roger of my copy of your Roger of my copy over.

EXERCISE 6 THIS DIALOGUE CONTAINS 42 CORPORATE JARGON EXPRESSIONS. IDENTIFY AND UNDERLINE THE OTHER PHRASES.

EXERCISE 7 MATCH THE EXPRESSIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS TASK TO THE DEFINITIONS BELOW.

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Vocabulary

1. _____: The capacity or availability to handle tasks or responsibilities.
2. _____: Easy-to-achieve or readily available opportunities or solutions.
3. _____: Working excessively or putting in too many hours, often to the point of exhaustion.
4. _____: An obvious problem or issue that is being ignored or not addressed.
5. _____: Emphasizes the importance of planning and action rather than relying solely on hope for success.
6. _____: Refers to the end of the workday.
7. _____: A fundamental change in approach or perspective.
8. _____: Favourable conditions or support for a particular initiative.

EXERCISE 8 FILL IN THE GAPS WITH THE MISSING CORPORATE JARGON WORDS FROM EXERCISE 5. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

1. When you encounter a problem at work, how do you and your team typically _____ _____ _____ to find a solution?
2. Can you give an example of a situation where you needed some time to _____ ____ a decision before taking action?
3. When a project needs to be executed with a hands-on approach, how do you ensure you have enough _____ ___ ___ _____ to get the job done?

EXERCISE 9 READ THE SITUATION BELOW AND TRY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM BY USING THE CORPORATE JARGON EXPRESSIONS BELOW. THE FIRST PERSON TO USE ALL THE EXPRESSIONS WINS!

Imagine the following situation: Over the past few months, there has been a noticeable decline in employee morale and productivity within the company. Employees seem disengaged and unmotivated, and some have even expressed dissatisfaction with their work. This issue is affecting overall team dynamics and, consequently, the company's performance.

STUDENT A

- circle back
- elephant in the room
- pick your brain
- paradigm shift
- peel back the onion

STUDENT B

- moving the needle forward
- hope is not a strategy
- pushback
- boots on the ground
- put a pin in it

TOTAL TIME: ~60 mins

Teacher's notes

Exercise 1. Lead-in — 7 mins

Give students a few minutes to read the email. Discuss where they would typically see such a message (at the office). As a group, discuss questions 1-4. In question number 4, students could predict the meaning of the acronyms and share their ideas with the rest of the group. The acronyms are explained and defined in the next exercise.

Answers:

1. *The email is about giving a quick update to the team on how things are going in the fourth quarter. It mentions that a recent advertising campaign is doing well, the website's visibility is improving, and some work is happening to better manage customer data. There are plans to make the website more user-friendly.*
2. *AKA corporate-speak – jargon often used in large corporations and similar workplaces. The tone is associated with managers and consultants. It has a negative connotation as it is often complicated and obscure.*
3. *PPC, SEO, CRM, ERP, UX/UI, Q4*
4. *Answers in the next exercise.*

Exercise 2. Teach - vocabulary (acronyms) — 4 mins

Check the answers to the previous exercise (question 4), by going over the acronyms and what they stand for. Follow this activity by matching the acronyms to their definitions.

Answers: 1C, 2A, 3D, 4F, 5E, 6B

Exercise 3. Pair speaking — 6 mins

In pairs, students discuss the answers to the questions about the use of corporate jargon in their workplaces. Speculate their corporate jargon level using the CEFR scale (A1-C2). Elicit the answers from each group and provide speaking feedback.

Exercise 4. Watching / Listening for gist — 6 mins

Say that you are going to watch a short *video* about corporate workers communicating with each other. Watch the video once and ask students to write down as many corporate jargon words as they can. Go over some of the answers, but don't provide them with the corrections yet. At the end, discuss what the conversation was about.

Answers: The conversation is about discussing and planning for a business-related issue, related to a quarterly forecast or business strategy.

Exercise 5. Watching / Listening for detail — 8 mins

Students work in pairs. Each pair reads the dialogue and predicts the missing corporate jargon expression. Watch / Listen to the video again and check the answers.

Answers: 1. circle back, 2. Win-win, 3. Touch base, 4. Pick your brain, 5. Sharpen our pencils, 6. Square the circle, 7. Dry powder, 8. Put a pin in it, 9. Ping her, 10. Pushback, 11. Moving the needle forward, 12. Peel back the onion, 13. Seal the deal.

Predict the meaning of the expressions by looking at their use in the context.

Answers:
Circle back: to revisit or return to a topic or discussion at a later time or after gathering more information
Win-win: a situation or solution that benefits all parties involved.
Touch base: to make contact or have a brief conversation with someone to discuss or check on a particular matter.
Pick your brain: to ask for someone's opinion or expertise on a particular matter.

TOTAL TIME: ~60 mins

Teacher's notes

Sharpen our pencils: to refine or improve a plan or strategy.
Square the circle: to find a solution to a seemingly impossible problem.
Dry powder: available resources or funds that can be deployed when needed.
Put a pin in it: to delay or set aside a discussion or decision for later.
Ping her: to contact or notify someone.
Pushback: resistance or objection to a proposal or idea.
Moving the needle forward: making progress or achieving results.
Peel back the onion: to investigate or explore deeper layers or aspects of a problem or issue.
Seal the deal: to complete or finalize an agreement or transaction.

Exercise 6. Identify vocabulary — 5 mins

Say that this dialogue contains 42 corporate jargon expressions in total. Identify the missing 29 phrases.

Answers:
Circle back, Q3 forecast, land the plane, KPI standpoint, win-win, burning the candle at both ends, put you on a quick hold, touch base, pick your brain, macro standpoint, get granular, hammer things out, put some chop in the water, sharpen our pencils, hope is not a strategy, 30,000-foot standpoint, square the circle, loop someone in, dry powder, adequate tailwind, disrupt the space, marinate on that, put a pin in it, circle the wagon, EOD, level set, in the dark, ping her, pushback, bandwidth, best practices, moving the needle forward, unpacking standpoint, boots on the ground, peel back the onion, elephant in the room, paradigm shift, mission-critical, low-hanging fruit, value add, seal the deal, gather the troops

Exercise 7. Teach - vocabulary — 5 mins

Students once again work in pairs and look at the underlined expressions. Match eight of them to the definitions.

Answers:
1. bandwidth
2. low-hanging fruit
3. burning the candle at both ends
4. elephant in the room
5. hope is not a strategy
6. EOD
7. paradigm shift
8. adequate tailwind

Exercise 8. Group discussion — 6 mins

Fill in the gaps in the questions with the other corporate jargon expressions. Check the answers and reply to the questions as a group.

Answers:
1. hammer things out: to work through and resolve issues or problems through discussion and negotiation
2. marinate on: to take time to think or reflect on a topic or idea before making a decision.
3. boots on the ground: people or resources physically present at a location or engaged in a task.

TOTAL TIME: ~60 mins

Teacher's notes

Exercise 9. Role-play — 10mins

Students work in pairs. Tell students to imagine the situation described in the task. The rest of the task can be completed in two ways:

1) Students get a set of five different corporate jargon expressions. Students need to discuss the problem and find the solution to it while using the words assigned to each one of them.
2) Students grab a piece of paper with a corporate jargon expression written on it. Students discuss the problem and find the solution to it while using the words written on the piece of paper. The person who used the most expressions wins.

Error correction — 3 mins

Provide speaking feedback.