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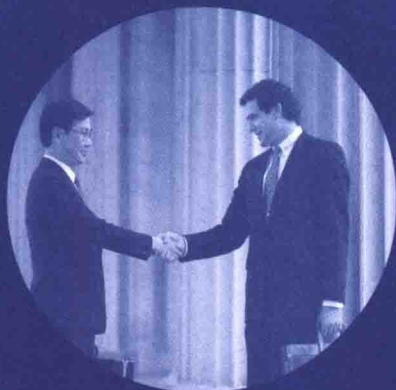
商务英语 阅读与实务

Business English Reading Comprehension
and Business Affairs



河南大学出版社

H319.4/875



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江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



河南大学出版社

P3467/02

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

商务英语阅读与实务/陈雪琳主编. —开封: 河南大学出版社, 2004. 2
ISBN 7-81091-142-5

I. 商… II. 陈… III. 商务—英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教材 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 007448 号

书 名 商务英语阅读与实务
主 编 陈雪琳

责任编辑 王超明
责任印制 苗 卉

责任校对 皓 月
封面设计 生生书房

出 版 河南大学出版社

地址: 河南省开封市明伦街 85 号 邮编: 475001

电话: 0378—2864669(行管部) 0378—2825001(营销部)

网址: www.hupress.com

E-mail: bangong@hupress.com

经 销 河南省新华书店

排 版 河南大学出版社印务公司

印 刷 河南诚和印制有限公司

版 次 2004 年 5 月第 1 版

印 次 2004 年 5 月第 1 次印刷

开 本 787mm×1092mm 1/16

印 张 11.5

字 数 295 千字

印 数 1—2000 册

ISBN 7-81091-142-2/F·149

定 价 19.00 元

(本书如有印装质量问题, 请与河南大学出版社营销部联系调换)

前 言

中国加入 WTO 后,各种形式的国际商务活动日渐频繁,商务英语作为国际交流中的必备工具,其重要作用越来越突出。为使更多的人在未来的社会竞争中站稳脚跟,掌握国际商务活动中的专业语言知识及操作技能,我们组织编写了这本《商务英语阅读与实务》。

本书材料多取自国外原版著作及国际商务实例,题材广泛,旨在向工商管理等专业的学生提供丰富的商务英语资料,为他们未来的商务活动能力打下坚实基础。本书共分两大部分:第一部分为商务英语阅读,共 10 单元,内容涉及企业组织结构、应用管理科学、战略联盟、营销管理、品牌管理、分销渠道、差异化、财务管理、电子商务、WTO 等方面。编者根据多年的专业英语教学实践,深知学生商务英语能力的提高和阅读兴趣的培养有赖于大量阅读,所以在每单元的编排中,加入了补充阅读材料以帮助他们提高商务英语文献的阅读能力。第二部分是商务英语实务,共 4 单元,对进出口贸易各环节常用的贸易结算方式、货物装运等内容加以介绍,并配以大量练习和常用语句,旨在提高学生用英语处理实际商务业务的操作能力。本书各单元课文后附有生词及词汇表,并对文中出现的难点一一注释,为学生自学提供方便。

本书由陈雪琳担任主编,王殊、郭松珍担任副主编。第一单元、第三单元、第五单元由王殊编写,第二单元、第四单元、第六单元、第十单元由陈雪琳编写,第七单元由张莉编写,第八单元由姜霄编写,第九单元由蒋海舰编写,第十一单元、第十二单元、第十四单元由郭松珍编写,第十三单元由史晓慧编写。在编写过程中,祝渐为本书做了部分录入、排版、校对等工作,特表示感谢。

由于本书内容涉猎广泛,编者难以在每一专业领域都有深入研究,因此,书中难免存在不足之处,恳请广大读者和同行批评指正。

编 者

2004 年 1 月

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Part One

Business English

Reading Comprehension

Unit One

Text

Restructuring Organizations

Increasing global competition and rapid technological and environmental changes are forcing organizations to restructure themselves from rigid bureaucracies to leaner, more flexible structures. These new forms of organizing are highly adaptive and cost efficient. They often result in fewer managers and employees, and streamlined work flows that break down functional barriers.

Interventions aimed at structural design include moving from more traditional ways of dividing the organization's overall work, such as functional, self-contained-unit, and matrix structures, to more integrative and flexible forms, such as process-based and network-based structures. Diagnostic guidelines help determine which structure is appropriate for particular organizational environments, technologies and conditions.

Organization structure describes how the overall work of the organization is divided into sub-units and how these sub-units are coordinated for task completion. It is a key feature of an organization's strategic orientation. Based on a contingency perspective, organization structures should be designed to fit with at least five factors: the environment; organization size; technology; organization strategy; and worldwide operations. Organization effectiveness depends on the extent to which organization structures are responsive to these contingencies.

Organizations have traditionally structured themselves into three forms: 1) functional departments that are task specialized; 2) self-contained-units that are oriented to specific products, customers, or regions; 3) matrix structures that combine both functional specialization and self-containment. The advantages, disadvantages and contingencies of different structures are described below.

The Functional Organization

Perhaps the most widely used organizational structure in the world today is the basic hierarchical structure, which is the standard pyramid, with senior management at the top,

middle and lower managers spread out directly below, and workers at the bottom. The organization is usually subdivided into different functional units, such as engineering, research, operations, human resources, finance, and marketing. This organizational structure is based on early management theories regarding specialization, line and staff relations, span of control, authority, and responsibility. The major functional sub-units are staffed by specialists in such disciplines as engineering and accounting.

On the positive side, functional structures promote specialization of skills and resources. People are grouped together who perform similar work and face similar problems. This facilitates communication within departments and allows specialists to share their expertise. It also enhances career development within the specialty, whether it be accounting, finance, engineering, or sales. The functional structure reduces duplication of services because it makes the best use of people and resources. On the negative side, functional structures tend to promote routine tasks with a limited orientation. Departmental members focus on their own tasks, rather than on the organization's total task. This can lead to conflict across functional departments when each group attempts to maximize its own performance without considering the performances of the other units. Coordination and scheduling among the departments can be difficult when each emphasizes its own perspective.

The functional structure tends to work best in small to medium-sized firms facing environments that are relatively stable and certain. These organizations typically have a small number of products or services, and coordination across specialized units is relatively easy. This structure is also best suited to routine technologies in which there is interdependence within functions and to organizational goals emphasizing efficiency and technical quality.

The Self-contained-unit Organization

The self-contained-unit structure represents a fundamentally different way of organizing. Also known as a product or divisional structure, it was developed at about the same time by GMs, Sears, and Dupont. It groups organizational activities on the basis of products, services, customers, or geography. All or most of the resources necessary for the accomplishment of specific objectives are set up as a self-contained unit headed by a product or division manager. In effect, a large organization may set up smaller (sometimes temporary) special-purpose organizations, each geared to a specific product, service, customer, or region. Interestingly, the formal structure within a self-contained unit is often functional in nature.

The self-contained-unit structure works best in conditions almost the opposite of those favoring a functional organization. The organization needs to be relatively large to

support the duplication of resources assigned to the units. Because each unit is designed to fit a particular niche, the structure adapts well to uncertain conditions. Self-contained-units also help to coordinate technical interdependencies falling across functions and are suited to goals promoting product or service specialization and innovation.

These organizations recognize key interdependencies and promote coordination of resources toward an overall outcome. This strong outcome orientation ensures departmental accountability and promotes cohesion among those contributing to the product. These structures provide employees with opportunities for learning new skills and expanding knowledge because they can more easily move among the different specialties contributing to the product. As a result, self-contained-unit structures are well suited for developing general managers. Self-contained-unit organizations have certain problems, however. They may not have enough specialized work to fully use people's skills and abilities. Specialists may feel isolated from their professional colleagues and may fail to advance in their career specialties. These structures may promote allegiance to departmental goals, rather than to organizational objectives.

The Matrix Organization

Every matrix organization contains three unique and critical roles: the top manager who heads and balances the dual chains of command; the matrix bosses (functional, product, or area) who share subordinates; and the two-boss managers who report to two different matrix bosses. Each of these roles has its own unique requirements. For example, functional matrix bosses are expected to maximize their respective technical expertise within constraints posed by market realities. Two-boss managers, however, must accomplish work within the demands of supervisors who want to achieve technical sophistication on the one hand, and to meet customer expectations on the other. Thus, a matrix organization is more than matrix structure. It must also be reinforced by matrix processes, such as performance management systems that get input from both functional and project bosses, by matrix leadership behavior that operates comfortably with lateral decision making, and by a matrix culture that fosters open conflict management and a balance of power.

Matrix organizations, like all organization structures, have both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, matrix structures allow multiple orientations. Specialized, functional knowledge can be applied to all projects. New products or projects can quickly be implemented by using people flexibly and by moving between product and functional orientations as the circumstances demand. Matrix organizations can maintain consistency among departments and projects by requiring communication among managers. For many people, matrix structures are motivating and exciting.

On the negative side, matrix organizations can be difficult to manage. To implement and maintain them requires heavy managerial costs and support. When people are assigned to more than one department, there may be role ambiguity and conflict. Similarly, overall performance may be sacrificed if there are power conflicts between functional departments and project structures. To make matrix organizations work, organization members need interpersonal and conflict management skills. People can get confused about how the matrix works, which can lead to chaos and inefficiencies.

Process-based Structures

A radically new logic for structuring organizations is to form multidisciplinary teams around core processes, such as product development, sales generation, and customer support. Process-based structures group all related functions that are necessary to produce a product or service into a common unit usually managed by someone called "process owner". There are few hierarchical levels, and the senior executive team is relatively small, typically consisting of the chairperson, the chief operating officer, and the heads of a few key support services, such as strategic planning, human resources, and finance.

Process-based structures eliminate many of the hierarchical and departmental boundaries that can impede task coordination and slow decision-making and task performance. They reduce the enormous costs of managing across departments and up and down the hierarchy. Process-based structures enable organizations to focus most of their resources on serving customers, both inside and outside the firm.

The application of process-based structures is growing rapidly in a variety of manufacturing and service company. Typically referred to as "horizontal", "boundaryless", or "team-based" organizations, they are used to enhance customer service. Although there is no one right way to design process-based structures, the following features characterize this new form of organization: 1) processes drive structure; 2) work adds value; 3) teams are fundamental; 4) customers define performance; 5) teams are rewarded for performance; 6) teams are tightly linked to suppliers and customers; 7) team members are well informed and trained.

The most frequently mentioned advantage is intense focus on meeting customer needs, which can result in dramatic improvements in speed, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Process-based structures remove layers of management, and consequently information flows more quickly and accurately throughout the organization. Because process teams are composed of different functional specialties, boundaries between departments are removed, thus affording organization members a broad view of work flow and a clear line of sight between team performance and organization effectiveness.

Process-based structures are more flexible and adaptable to change than traditional structures.

A major disadvantage of process-based structures is the difficulty of changing to this new organizational form. Process-based structures typically require radical shifts in mindsets, skills, and managerial roles. These changes involve considerable time and resources and can be resisted by functional managers and staff specialists. Moreover, process-based structures may result in expensive duplication of scarce resources and, if team skills are not present, in slower decision-making as team struggle to define and reach consensus. Finally, implementation of process-based structures relies on proper identification of key processes needed to satisfy customer needs. If critical processes are misidentified or ignored altogether, performance and customer satisfaction are likely to suffer. Process-based structures are particularly appropriate for highly uncertain environments where customer demands and market conditions are changing rapidly. They enable organizations to manage non-routine technologies and to coordinate work flows that are highly interdependent.

Network-based Structures

A network-based structure manages the diverse, complex, and dynamic relationships among multiple organizations, each specializing in a particular business function or task. The network structure redraws organizational boundaries and links separate organizations to facilitate task interaction. The essence of networks is the relationship between organizations that perform different aspects of work. Examples of network organizations include joint ventures to design, manufacture, and market advanced products, research and development consortia, subcontracting and licensing agreements across national borders, and wholly owned subsidiaries selling products and services to one another.

Network structures typically have the following characteristics:

1. Vertical disaggregating. Different business functions, such as production, marketing, and distribution, that are traditionally performed within a single organization, are performed by different network members.
2. Brokers. Networks are often managed by broker organizations that locate and assemble member organizations. The broker may play a central role and subcontract for needed products or services, or it might specialize in linking equal partners into a network.
3. Coordinating mechanisms. Coordination of the work in a network falls into three categories: informal relationships, contracts, and market mechanisms.

Network structures are highly flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. The ability to form partnerships with different organizations permits the creation of a "best

of the best" company to exploit opportunities, often global in nature. They allow each member to exploit its distinctive competence. They can enable sufficient resources and expertise to be applied to large, complex tasks that single organizations cannot perform. Perhaps the most important is the fact that network organizations can have synergistic effects, allowing members to build on each other's strengths and competencies.

The major problems with network organizations are in managing such complex structures. Network structures are described as matrix organizations extending beyond the boundaries of single firms but lacking the ability to appeal to a higher authority to resolve conflicts. Thus, matrix skills of managing lateral relations across organizational boundaries are critical to administering network structures. Other disadvantages of network organizations include the difficulties of motivating organizations to join such structures and of sustaining commitment over time. Potential members may not want to give up their autonomy to link with other organizations. Once linked, they may have problems sustaining the benefits of joining together. This is especially true if the network consists of organizations that are not the "best in the breed". Finally, joining in a network may expose the organization's proprietary knowledge and skills to others.

Network organizations are best suited to highly complex and uncertain environments where multiple competencies and flexible responses are needed. Network structures fit with goals emphasizing organization specialization and innovation. They also fit well in organizations with worldwide operations.

New Words and Key Terms

bureaucracy *n.* 官僚主义

lean *adj.* 精简的

streamline *n./adj.* 流线型(的); 精简、调整机构以提高效率(的)

self-contained *adj.* 自给自足的

matrix *n.* 矩阵

integrative *adj.* 综合的

diagnostic *adj.* 诊断的

orientation *n.* 方向, 倾向

contingency *n.* 偶然, 可能性, 意外情况

hierarchical *adj.* 分级的

facilitate *vt.* 提供便利

duplication *n.* 重复

gear to 适合于

accountability *n.* 责任, 可说明性

cohesion *n.* 凝聚, 结合

allegiance *n.* 忠诚,效忠
 lateral *adj.* 侧面的,横向的
 ambiguity *n.* 含糊,不明确
 chaos *n.* 混乱
 multidisciplinary *n.* 多学科的
 impede *v.* 阻止,阻碍
 mindsets *n.* 精神状态
 redraw *v.* 重新勾画
 subcontract *v.* 转包,分包
 disaggregate *v.* 解体,分解
 synergistic *adj.* 协作的,相互促进的
 autonomy *n.* 自治
 best in the breed 同类中最好的

Notes

1. Interventions aimed at structural design include moving from more traditional ways of dividing the organization's overall work, such as functional, self-contained-unit, and matrix structures, to more integrative and flexible forms, such as process-based and network-based structures.

该句意为:对组织结构设计的干预行为包括从诸如职能式、自足单位式、矩阵式结构等较为传统的划分组织整体工作的方法向更加综合以及灵活的形式转变,比如以基于流程和基于网络的组织结构。

2. Organization effectiveness depends on the extent to which organization structures are responsive to these contingencies.

该句意为:组织的有效性取决于组织结构对这些权变因素做出的反应程度。

3. Perhaps the most widely used organizational structure in the world today is the basic hierarchical structure, which is the standard pyramid, with senior management at the top, middle and lower managers spread out directly below, and workers at the bottom.

该句意为:可能目前应用最广泛的组织结构就是基本的等级式结构。这种结构是标准的金字塔形,高层管理者居于顶端,中层和低层管理者分布在其下,而工人在金字塔的最底层。

4. In effect, a large organization may set up smaller (sometimes temporary) special-purpose organizations, each geared to a specific product, service, customer, or region.

该句意为:一个大型组织可以建立一些较小的(有时是临时性的)、具有特定用途的组织。事实上,每个组织的构成只适合一种特定的产品或服务,或针对某一类客户或地区。

5. This strong outcome orientation ensures departmental accountability and promotes cohesion among those contributing to the product.

该句意为:这种强调效益的组织结构确定了部门责任制,加强了对产品做出贡献的各部门之间的凝聚力。

6. Thus, a matrix organization is more than matrix structure. It must also be reinforced by matrix processes, such as performance management systems that get input from both functional and project bosses, by matrix leadership behavior that operates comfortably with lateral decision making, and by a matrix culture that fosters open conflict management and a balance of power.

该句意为:因此,矩阵式组织结构决不仅仅体现在结构上,它的强化发展还需借助类似业绩管理体系这样的、能够从职能和项目经理那里获得意见的矩阵式生产流程,借助善于做横向决策的矩阵式领导风格,借助既能培养出开诚布公的管理人才又具有权利制衡特点的企业文化。

Review Questions

1. What are the basic organizational structures that dominate most enterprises today?
2. What are the factors that organization structure should be designed to fit in?
3. List the unique and critical roles of matrix organizations.
4. What is the most frequently mentioned advantage of process-based structures?
5. Can you give some other names for network-based structures?
6. Under what circumstances are network-based structures most suitable?

* * * *

Supplementary Reading

Downsizing and Reengineering

Downsizing seeks to reduce costs and bureaucracy by decreasing the size of the organization. This reduction in personnel can be accomplished through layoffs, organization redesign, and outsourcing, which involves moving functions that are not part of the organization's core competence to outside contractors.

Reengineering radically redesigns the organization's core work processes to give tighter linkage and coordination among the different tasks. This work-flow integration results in faster, more responsive task performance. Reengineering is often accomplished with new information technology that permits employees to control and coordinate work processes more effectively.

Downsizing

Downsizing refers to interventions aimed at reducing the size of the organization. This is typically accomplished by decreasing the number of employees through layoffs, attrition, redeployment, or early retirement, or by reducing the number of organizational units or managerial levels through divestiture, outsourcing, reorganization, or delayering. In practice, downsizing generally involves layoffs where a certain number or class of organization member is no longer employed by the organization. Although traditionally associated with lower-level workers, downsizing has increasingly claimed the jobs of staff specialists, middle managers, and senior executives.

An important consequence of downsizing has been the rise of the contingent work force. These less expensive temporary or permanent part-time workers are often hired by the organizations that just laid off thousands of their employees. In many cases, terminated employees become independent contractors or consultants to the organization that just terminated them. This is because the reduced number of workers is not matched by an appropriate reduction in or redesign of the work load; fewer workers must accomplish the same amount of work. Overall cost reduction is achieved by replacing expensive permanent workers with a contingent work force.

Over the last decade, most major corporations and government agencies have been engaged in downsizing activities. Between 1987 and 1991, more than 85 percent of the *Fortune 100* reduced their white-collar staffs. Such diverse organizations as IBM, General Motors, the U. S. Postal Services, AT&T, Kodak have recently reduced the size of their work forces. Other organizations have downsized through redeploying employees from one function or job to another. Since 1992, American Airlines has reduced its flight-operation personnel by almost five thousand, while hiring more than two thousand people in information-services jobs. AT&T, who ten years ago had less than one hundred employees outside the United States, now has more than 54000 employees working in other countries. These foreign-based workers have helped to offset the reduction of 72000 domestic jobs since 1984.

Downsizing is generally a response to at least three major conditions. First, it can result from organization decline caused by loss of revenues and market share and by technological and industrial change. In southern California, an economy traditionally dependent on the defense industry, more than 100000 jobs have been lost to relocation or elimination as this industry has contracted and consolidated. Second, downsizing can occur when organizations implement one of the new organizational structures described above. For example, creation of network-based structures often involves outsourcing work to other firms that is not essential to the organization's core competence. Third,

downsizing can result from beliefs and social pressures that smaller is better. In the United States, there is strong conviction that organizations should be leaner and more flexible. Hamel and Prahalad warned, however, that organizations must be careful that downsizing is not a symptom of "corporate anorexia". Organizations may downsize for their own sake and not think about future growth. They may lose key employees who are necessary for future success; they may cut into the organization's core competencies and leave a legacy of mistrust among organization members. In these situations, it is questionable whether downsizing is developmental as defined in OD.

Reengineering

The final restructuring intervention is reengineering—the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in performance. Reengineering seeks to transform how organizations traditionally produce and deliver goods and services. Beginning with the industrial revolution, organizations have increasingly fragmented work into specialized units, each focusing on a limited part of the overall production process. Although this division of labor has enabled organizations to mass-produce standardized products and services efficiently, it can be overly complicated, difficult to manage, and allow to respond to the rapid and unpredictable changes experienced by many organizations today. Reengineering addresses these problems by breaking down specialized work units into more integrated, cross-functional work processes. This streamlines work processes and makes them faster and more flexible; consequently, they are more responsive to changes in competitive conditions, customer demands, product life cycles, and technologies.

As might be expected, reengineering requires an almost revolutionary change in how organizations think about and design work. It addresses fundamental issues about why organizations do what they do, and why they do it in a particular way. Reengineering identifies and questions the often taken-for-granted assumptions underlying how organizations perform work. This typically results in radical changes in thinking and work methods—a shift from specialized jobs, tasks, and structures to integrated processes that deliver value to customers. Such revolutionary change differs considerably from incremental approaches to performance improvement, such as TQM, that emphasize continuous improvement of existing work processes. Because reengineering radically alters the status quo, it seeks to produce dramatic increases in organization performance.

In radically changing business processes, reengineering frequently takes advantage of new information technology. Modern information technologies, such as teleconferencing, expert systems, shared data bases, and wireless communication, can enable organizations to reengineer. They can help organizations to break out of traditional ways