

# THE UPDATE <sup>®</sup>

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HELPING YOU COMMUNICATE  
INTERNATIONALLY



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first edition of our free newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading our articles and doing the **accompanying** exercises. Our articles and exercises are graded according to the Common European Framework (CEF) level of difficulty (from A2 for beginners to C1 for advanced readers). Please feel free to send us your comments and suggestions - feedback is always **appreciated!**

Based in Düsseldorf, **seminars4business** is a team of native English speakers with training and business qualifications. Our concept is **straightforward** - we offer **tailor-made** seminars delivered by English speakers (who also speak German). We equip you with the communication, management and intercultural skills necessary to **flourish** in an increasingly global market. Our tailor-made seminars enable you to work and operate effectively in English.

We would be happy to talk to you about your training needs in 2009 and look forward to hearing from you.

Your seminars4business team

#### Vocabulary

accompanying = begleitend  
to appreciate = schätzen

straightforward = geradlinig

tailor-made = massgeschneidert

to flourish = florieren

**Upcoming  
Seminars March-  
April 09**

Working  
Effectively with  
Americans

Fundamentals of  
Finance

Successful  
Teleconferences

Communication  
Skills

Working in  
International  
Teams

# COACHING CORNER

## Out with the Old... In with the New Personal Crossroads 2009

CEF Level B2

The New Year is with us and typically it's a time to **take stock** of the previous year; to think about successes and **reassess** what didn't work so well in 2008.

Planning goals for the New Year without taking time to think about the past often leads to repeating mistakes in the coming year.

Use the *Personal Crossroads* tool below to help you learn from the past when planning your goals for 2009.

**Step 1: What brought me here?** Reflect on the key experiences of the past 12 months - both positive and negative. Now, write a description of your current situation .

**Step 2: Who's involved?** Think about the people and relationships that influence

and will be affected by the decisions you may make this year. Recognise the personal networks that play a role in forming your opinions, plans and hopes.

**Step 3: What's calling me?** What makes you *really* happy? Write down the people, the places, the work you most enjoy, and what it is that makes you happy. How can you incorporate more of this into your life?

**Step 4: What's pressing?** Make a note of the issues that are affecting your present situation, driving changes or restricting you. These could be current tasks, pressing deadlines or **looming** decisions. Are you stressed by anything right now? What things do you have to do and when?

**Step 5: Fears/Doubts** This is the area to list your concerns. Reflect on anything you are worried about. What steps can you take now to manage and deal with these fears?

**Step 6: Goals** Set new targets for 2009 using the information from above. Make sure your goals motivate and excite you. **Anticipate** any **obstacles** you may face and decide how best to deal with them. Remember what worked well in 2008 and adapt the successful strategies you used then to your new goals. You have the key to your success in all your past experiences. Learn from these and have a happy and successful 2009!

**Check out our website for our coaching packages**

### Vocabulary

take stock = die Bilanz aus etw. ziehen

reassess = etw. neu bewerten

pressing = dringlich

looming = sich abzeichnend

anticipate = etw. voraussehen

obstacles = Hindernisse



# A New Beginning: Barack Obama

CEF Level B1/2



Tuesday, January 20, 2009 will be a very special day for Americans, as the United States **inaugurates** its 44<sup>th</sup> and first African-American president. Inauguration Day is sure to be a memorable event, as millions of people are expected to travel to Washington DC to witness the historic moment. Obama's **candidacy** and **subsequent** victory **defied all odds**, and already he has inspired many people. Democrats, especially those in Chicago, Obama's home base, are still experiencing post-campaign euphoria.

**Celebratory** banners were even **unfurled** on some of the city's major streets.

Many people expect Obama to work miracles, but Rome wasn't built in a day. He will face several challenges immediately after **taking office**. The US, like much of the world, is

entering its worst economic crisis in decades. According to the New York Times, one of the USA's leading newspapers, 533,000 American jobs were lost in November, the biggest drop since 1974. **Unemployment** stands at 6.7%, and millions of Americans cannot **afford** to pay their **mortgages** and are deeply **in debt**.

Despite all the bad news, there is a feeling of optimism in the air. Obama and his team have clear ideas how to solve the problems they have **inherited**, but have warned that doing so will take time and require **patience**. Can Obama live up to the expectations?

## Vocabulary:

inaugurate = jdn. in sein Amt einführen

candidacy = die Kandidatur

subsequent = anschliessend

defy all odds = allen Widrigkeiten zum Trotz

celebratory = feierlich

unfurl = entfalten

take office = sein Amt antreten

unemployment = Arbeitslosigkeit

afford = sich leisten

mortgage = Hypothek

debt = Schulden

inherit = erben

patience = Geduld

Visit our website for more information on our future intercultural seminars on working effectively with Americans

## CULTURE NOTE

\* Remember to say "African-American" when talking about people of color in the USA!

\* Chicago is the third largest city in the USA, with a population of more than 2.8 million

The year 2008 saw the world economy **out of kilter**. With **turmoil** on stock markets and bond markets **sagging** under the weight of the credit crisis, the **credit crunch** finally broke into full scale global economic crisis. Financial institutions were put **under siege**, bond yields hit 50 year lows, commodity prices collapsed and the financial map was redrawn as household names such as Lehman Brothers collapsed, and a **spate** of takeovers **ensued**.

**Unprecedented** levels of state intervention saw Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae - two giant US mortgage companies nationalized - i.e. are now under US state control and are no longer being run in the interests of private **shareholders**. Government **bail outs** and **liquidity injections** have become de jour as governments around the world seek to protect their economies.

The end of the annus horribilis saw a **recovery rally** on equities markets **bolstered by** state damage-limitation plans. 2009 however will see the full effects of the crisis spill over into the real economy.

The economic outlook is mostly **bleak**: bigger budget deficits and borrowing requirements will increase American need for foreign capital. This foreign funding may not be **forthcoming**, which could trigger a dollar crash. Also the increased role of the state will **crowd out** more productive uses of capital and create a bigger bureaucratic role in the economy.



## Vocabulary:

out of kilter = off balance, out of step

sagging = sink or subside gradually under weight or pressure

credit crunch = a severe shortage of money or credit

under siege = under attack

spate = a large number of similar things occurring in quick succession

unprecedented = never done or known before

shareholders = owners of shares in a company

bail outs = rescues, release someone or something from a difficulty

liquidity injections = cash transferrals

recovery rally = upturn, upswing

bolstered by = supported by or propped up by

bleak = not hopeful or encouraging

forthcoming = planned for or about to happen in the near future

crowd out = exclude

## Workshops

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March 2009  
2-day seminar  
Fundamentals for  
Finance





## Politics in the age of Obama: still a taboo topic for small talk?

Understanding the nuances of another culture can be **challenging**. However, learning to speak your business partner's language (not only English!) can bring you great success. Small talk is one of those often misunderstood topics. Many non-native speakers of English seem to think that English native speakers' habit of making small talk is **superficial**, meaningless or even a waste of time.

Although many native speakers **firmly** believe that "time is money", we make time for small talk in business situations, e.g. before a business meeting, during the coffee break, or during dinner with clients. Why? This is our way of creating good working relationships, or **building rapport**. Too often this strategy is **given short shrift** or completely ignored by people who often don't realize that making this so-called "small talk" is an essential part of doing business -- and ultimately **closing the deal**. What topics are **appropriate**?

Many people think that discussing politics with business partners is "taboo". Politics can be a deeply emotional subject, so the last thing you want to do is anger your business partner and risk losing the deal! Perhaps the early days of Obama's presidency could offer an unexpected new source of small talk. After all, interest in the American election was felt around the world.

So the next time you meet an American, try out the question, "How about that election!?"

### Vocabulary:

challenging = herausfordernd

superficial = oberflächlich

firmly = fest

build rapport = eine Beziehung aufbauen

to be given short shrift = jdn. kurz abfertigen

close the deal = unter Dach und Fach bringen

appropriate = passend

It is increasingly important to focus on building international relationships and developing your "cultural intelligence" as a source of competitive advantage.

### We provide training in:

Working in International Teams  
 Developing People Across Borders  
 Working in the US  
 Working in the UK  
 Working in Germany  
 Relocating Abroad

# Happy 10th Birthday Dear Euro

CEF Level B1/2

In its first ten years the euro has done very well. **Claims** that the **currency** zone would fall apart have been **proven** wrong. It was **feared** that the euro would be a soft currency - this is not the case.

Perhaps 2009 will see a third **referendum** on Denmark joining the eurozone and possibly a change of mind in the UK towards future **membership**, although **opinion polls** still say 71% of people are **against** entering the European single currency, with only 23% **in favour**, according to the ICM **survey** for BBC Radio 4's the World At One.



## Test Your Euro EQ (Euro knowledge)

1. When were euro notes and coins introduced?
2. Which country will join Jan, 2009?
3. Who is president of the ECB?
4. When did the euro start trading on foreign exchange markets?
5. What is another name for the euro?

### Answers:

1. 2002
2. Slovakia
3. Jean-Claude Trichet
4. 1999
5. The single currency



## Vocabulary

claims = Behauptungen

currency = Wahrung

proven = erwiesen/nachgewiesen

feared = befurchtete

referendum = der Volksentschied

membership = die Mitgliedschaft

opinion polls = die Meinungsumfrage

against = dagegen/gegen

in favour = dafur/fur

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Helping you communicate internationally

# LANGUAGE SKILLS

## False Friends

CEF Level B2

### What are false friends ?

Many words in German and English sound similar. But be careful - some have very different meanings.

Complete the sentences below by filling in the missing words (false friends). Check your answers in the box at the bottom of the page.

1. The money our company spends on ..... (Spenden) is tax-deductible.
2. As a sales representative, he earns a basic salary plus..... (Provision).
3. She is always so ..... (sensibel) and can't take any criticism.
4. Could you send me your new .....(Prospekte).
5. Hang on a second, I must get a pen to make a few ..... (Notizen).
6. When she retires, she will receive a company ..... (Rente).
7. Fill in this ..... (Formular) and return it to the HR Department.
8. Our new price list is ..... (gültig) from 1 January 2009.
9. What's your ..... (Meinung)?
10. Could you please send me the ..... (aktuell) sales figures by tomorrow?

## BUZZWORDS (NEW TRENDY WORDS OR PHRASES)

**recessionista** - someone who stays fashionable during difficult economic times. This is a blend of recession and fashionista (a devoted follower of fashion and labels)

**sub-prime mortgage market** - the market for higher-risk mortgages (Hypothesen) in the US for people who otherwise would not have been able to take out a mortgage

**staycation** - a vacation from work or school that does not involve travelling

**maverick** - an independent individual who does not go along with the group. Used by John McCain to describe himself in the US presidential election

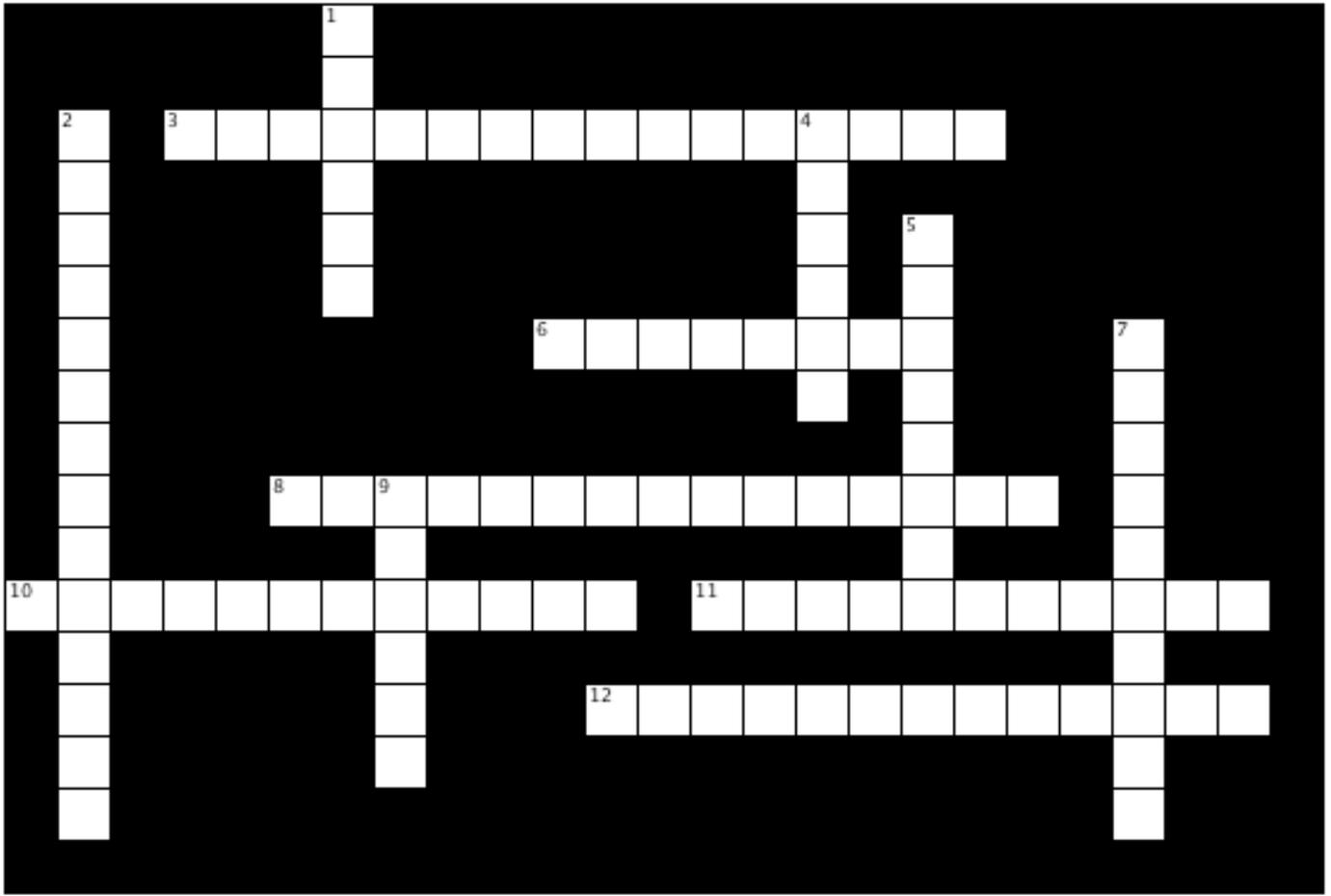
**plutoid** - this term is described by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) as a new class of dwarf planets which lie beyond Neptune (Pluto was kicked out of the planet family two years ago)

Answers to False Friends:

1. donations 2. commission 3. sensitive 4. brochure 5. notes 6. pension 7. form 8. valid 9. opinion 10. current

# Business Crossword Puzzle

CEF Level B1



## Across

- 3. A buzzword meaning the main goal for a company is to improve return on investment for shareholders
- 6. This word describes a person who lives in one city and works in another city
- 8. This tells us what the weather is expected to be like
- 10. This is where a parent company's main offices are located
- 11. An individual or company holding shares in another company
- 12. This company owns one or more subsidiaries

## Down

- 1. The opposite of lend
- 2. Activities carried out to see if there is a market for a product or to analyse trends
- 4. Everything of value owned by a company (buildings, machinery etc.)
- 5. This is a special type of loan used to buy a flat or a house
- 7. This company is owned by a parent company
- 9. Everywhere except the country you live in

**Answers**  
**Across:** 3. Shareholder value 6. Commuter 8. Weather forecast 10. Headquarters 11. Shareholder 12. Parent company  
**Down:** 1. Borrow 2. Market research 4. Assets 5. Mortgage 7. Subsidiary 9. Abroad

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Helping you communicate internationally

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## Teleconferencing

It's a lot cheaper than flying to London or Mexico for that all important meeting, but teleconferences require a different set of language and communication skills than face to face meetings.

Getting the message across and then checking that it's been received and understood in the way you meant it can be **tricky**. People communicate best when they can see each other and can read **facial** expressions and body language. As you don't have the normal **visual clues** to help you in a teleconference other things **gain in importance**.

For example the intercultural element - for some cultures you may need to spend more time than normal on small talk or **building rapport** with other participants.

Most likely you will have a cultural mix sitting around the table - if possible inform yourself in advance.

Remember that with teleconferencing, you also have to **replace** eye contact with verbal contact; it is therefore doubly important to use names. We all like hearing our name **mentioned** - it is an inclusive **bridge-building** strategy.

A teleconference call **involving** both native and non-native English speakers is **challenging**. Make sure you are **armed with** some standard phrases before the conference begins.

Establishing a protocol at the beginning and having a chairperson to keep participants **on track** and focused is key. Add a **willingness** to use active listening skills and you are **on the road to** successful teleconferencing.

## Vocabulary

**tricky** = knifflig/heikel  
**facial** = Gesichts (adj.)  
**visual clues** = visuelle Hilfsmittel  
**to gain in importance** = an Bedeutung gewinnen  
**to build rapport** = ein gutes Verhältnis aufbauen  
**to replace** = ersetzen  
**to mention** = erwähnen  
**bridge-building** = ein gutes Verhältnis aufbauen  
**to involve** = einbeziehen  
**challenging** = anspruchsvoll  
**on track** = auf dem richtigen Weg sein  
**willingness** = Bereitschaft  
**on the road to** = auf dem Weg zum.....

## Useful Teleconferencing Phrases

### Introductions

Hi everyone - I'm Ed Taylor and I'm part of the budget team.  
Good morning/evening/afternoon. My name is Ed Taylor. I'm responsible for the project's budget.

### Checking Understanding

So if I understand you correctly, you're saying...  
Sorry, did you say Tuesday or Thursday?

### Summing Up

So to sum up, we have agreed that..  
In brief we have agreed..

### Clarifying

What seems to be the problem?  
Could you explain that in more detail?

### Slowing Down

Could you speak more slowly please?  
Sorry, could you slow down a bit?

### Next Steps

So Tom, you'll send us the budget proposal and Mary will get back to us on...  
Let's meet again next Friday. Is everyone around at ten o'clock CET?

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