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Time Warner picks new president

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23 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Time Warner picks new president

The world's largest media company Time Warner Inc. has promoted from within to fill the vacant posts of president and chief operating officer. Former entertainment executive Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company, putting him next in line to CEO Dick Parsons. Industry insiders predict Bewkes is being groomed to take over the top spot when Parsons calls it a day and retires. The company's website lauded Bewkes' contributions to the company. It said: "We continued to build sustainable long-term value, gained tremendous financial flexibility and positioned ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's emerging opportunities...we're smoothly transitioning our senior management team."

Bewkes is attributed to getting Time Warner back on track following an ill-fated merger with AOL in 2001. He leaves his post as chairman of the entertainment division, which he transformed into one of the most-watched networks on US television, coming up with hits such as *Sex and the City*. He has a reputation for being a no-nonsense manager with a knack for spotting and nurturing talent. Bewkes will now oversee all five of Time Warner's divisions and is expected to push full steam ahead with helping the company sink its teeth into a sizeable portion of the digital media market. His promotion has been sweetened with news of a Time Warner-Google tie-up that will allow him to tap into Google's search technology while moving deeper into the digital realm.

WARM-UPS

1. TIME WARNER SEARCH: Talk to as many other students as you can to find out what they know about the company Time Warner. After you have talked to lots of students, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. Tell each other what you thought was interesting or surprising. Would you like to work for Time Warner?

2. BUSINESSES: Here are some Time Warner-owned businesses. Talk about whether you think they are the best in their industry. Who are their main competitors? What can they do to become or stay at number one? Which would you like to be CEO of?

- Time magazine
- CNN
- Cartoon Network
- Atlanta Braves (football team)
- Warner Bros. Cinemas
- DC Comics
- HBO TV network
- AOL

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

World's largest companies / media / COO / industry insiders / financial flexibility / senior management / reputations / nurturing talent / promotions / tie ups / Google

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. BEING PRESIDENT: In pairs / groups, put the following in order of the most important attribute to become president or CEO of a huge company:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ University qualifications | _____ Energy |
| _____ Vision | _____ A knack for spotting talent |
| _____ A proven track record | _____ A risk taker |
| _____ Loyalty to the company | _____ Unbridled ambition |

5. UNLIKELY TIE-UPS: Look at and assess the following potential business tie-ups. What possibilities can you see for the success of such ventures?

- a. Google and McDonald's
- b. Sony and Louis Vuitton
- c. Guinness and Microsoft
- d. Vodafone and Shell
- e. Boeing and Manchester United Football Club
- f. Hilton Hotels and Hyundai.

Which two tie-ups do you think would be most successful why? Which two tie-ups do you think might be doomed to fail? State your reasons why.

6. PROMOTION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "promotion". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Time Warner predicted Hilary Clinton will be the next US President. T / F
- b. Time Warner (TW) has promoted an insider to be its new COO. T / F
- c. A new COO will be groomed in business etiquette and table manners. T / F
- d. TW is making its management team less rough around the edges. T / F
- e. TW had an ill-fated merger with AOL in 2001. T / F
- f. TW's new COO re-energized the company's TV network. T / F
- g. TW's new COO has a knack for spotting and nurturing nonsense. T / F
- h. Time Warner wants to sink its teeth into the digital media market. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| a. vacant | nose |
| b. groomed | quits |
| c. calls it a day | disastrous |
| d. lauded | readied |
| e. tremendous | developing |
| f. ill-fated | unoccupied |
| g. coming up with | world |
| h. knack | incredible |
| i. nurturing | acclaimed |
| j. realm | creating |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| a. Time Warner Inc. has promoted | world's emerging opportunities |
| b. Bewkes is being groomed | Bewkes' contributions to the company |
| c. The company's website lauded | the digital realm |
| d. take full advantage of the digital | for spotting and nurturing talent |
| e. smoothly transitioning | with hits such as <i>Sex and the City</i> |
| f. attributed to getting Time Warner | from within to fill the vacant posts |
| g. coming up | portion of the digital media market |
| h. a knack | back on track |
| i. sink its teeth into a sizeable | our senior management team |
| j. moving deeper into | to take over the top spot |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Time Warner picks new president

The world's largest _____ company Time Warner Inc. has promoted from _____ to fill the vacant posts of president and chief operating officer. Former entertainment executive Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company, putting him next in _____ to CEO Dick Parsons. Industry insiders predict Bewkes is being _____ to take over the top spot when Parsons calls it a _____ and retires. The company's website _____ Bewkes' contributions to the company. It said: "We continued to build _____ long-term value, gained tremendous financial flexibility and _____ ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's emerging opportunities...we're smoothly transitioning our senior management team."

day
groomed
within
lauded
media
positioned
line
sustainable

Bewkes is _____ to getting Time Warner back on track following an ill-fated merger with AOL in 2001. He leaves his post as chairman of the entertainment division, which he transformed into one of the most-watched networks on US television, _____ up with hits such as *Sex and the City*. He has a _____ for being a no-nonsense manager with a knack for spotting and nurturing talent. Bewkes will now _____ all five of Time Warner's divisions and is expected to push full _____ ahead with helping the company sink its teeth into a sizeable portion of the digital media market. His promotion has been _____ with news of a Time Warner-Google _____ that will allow him to tap into Google's search technology while moving deeper into the digital _____.

realm
steam
coming
oversee
tie-up
attributed
sweetened
reputation

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Time Warner picks new president

The world's largest media company Time Warner Inc. has promoted _____ to fill the vacant posts of president and chief operating officer. Former entertainment executive Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company, putting him next in line to CEO Dick Parsons. Industry _____ predict Bewkes is being _____ to take over the top spot when Parsons calls it a day and retires. The company's website _____ Bewkes' contributions to the company. It said: "We continued to build sustainable long-term value, _____ tremendous financial flexibility and positioned ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's _____ opportunities...we're smoothly transitioning our senior management team."

Bewkes is _____ to getting Time Warner back on track following an _____ merger with AOL in 2001. He leaves his post as chairman of the entertainment division, which he transformed into one of the most-watched networks on US television, _____ with hits such as *Sex and the City*. He has a reputation for being a no-nonsense manager with a _____ for spotting and nurturing talent. Bewkes will now oversee all five of Time Warner's divisions and is expected to push full _____ ahead with helping the company _____ its teeth into a sizeable portion of the digital media market. His promotion has been sweetened with news of a Time Warner-Google tie-up that will allow him to _____ Google's search technology while moving deeper into the digital realm.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**vacant**' and '**post**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "CEO" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about being a CEO.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| • within | • ill-fated |
| • two | • coming up |
| • groomed | • knack |
| • lauded | • steam |
| • tremendous | • teeth |
| • smoothly | • sweetened |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Are you interested in who become president of which company?
- c. Would you like to be a company CEO?
- d. Do you think it's better to promote from within or recruit an outsider?
- e. What do you think are the differences between a CEO and COO?
- f. Do you think your colleagues, peers and boss would laud your contributions to your company / school?
- g. What do you think the president of Time Warner does every day?
- h. Are you interested in the high-flying world of CEOs and presidents?
- i. Do you like the terms "chief executive officer" and "chief operating officer"?
- j. What do you think of the Google-Time Warner tie-up?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How do you think someone is groomed to take over as CEO of a gigantic multinational corporation?
- d. What's the first thing you would do if you suddenly became president of Time Warner?
- e. What are the biggest challenges for Jeff Bewkes as COO of Time Warner?
- f. What kind of a manager do you think you are / might be?
- g. When was the last time you went and did something full steam ahead?
- h. What do you have a knack for?
- i. Have you ever called it a day?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

TIED-UP PRESIDENT: You are the president of a newly-formed business tie-up between two completely different companies. It is your job to build its sustainable long-term value and to avoid it being an ill-fated merger. In pairs / groups, decide on the two completely different companies. Discuss your business plan by filling in the table.

A tie-up between _____ and _____.	
The biggest reason for the tie-up.	
The new product / service to emerge from the tie-up.	
How to sell the product / service to new customers.	
How to stop your main competitors from copying you.	
Potential problems.	
Ways around those problems.	

Change partners and show each other your business plans. Give each other feedback and advice on how to make the plans better.

Return to your original partners and report on the feedback and advice you received. Incorporate it into a revised business plan.

Give presentations to other groups about your business plan. Members of your audience will think your plan is ill fated and will fail miserably. They will ask you many difficult questions.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the tie-up between Time Warner and Google. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. KNACK: What do you have a knack for? Do you have a nose for business? Write a short essay about your ability. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. A DAY IN THE LIFE: You are the CEO of a major corporation. Write your diary/journal entry for one day in your life. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| a. vacant | unoccupied |
| b. groomed | readied |
| c. calls it a day | quits |
| d. lauded | acclaimed |
| e. tremendous | incredible |
| f. ill-fated | disastrous |
| g. coming up with | creating |
| h. knack | nose |
| i. nurturing | developing |
| j. realm | world |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| a. Time Warner Inc. has promoted | from within to fill the vacant posts |
| b. Bewkes is being groomed | to take over the top spot |
| c. The company's website lauded | Bewkes' contributions to the company |
| d. take full advantage of the digital | world's emerging opportunities |
| e. smoothly transitioning | our senior management team |
| f. attributed to getting Time Warner | back on track |
| g. coming up | with hits such as <i>Sex and the City</i> |
| h. a knack | for spotting and nurturing talent |
| i. sink its teeth into a sizeable | portion of the digital media market |
| j. moving deeper into | the digital realm |

GAP FILL:

Time Warner picks new president

The world's largest **media** company Time Warner Inc. has promoted from **within** to fill the vacant posts of president and chief operating officer. Former entertainment executive Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company, putting him next in **line** to CEO Dick Parsons. Industry insiders predict Bewkes is being **groomed** to take over the top spot when Parsons calls it a **day** and retires. The company's website **lauded** Bewkes' contributions to the company. It said: "We continued to build **sustainable** long-term value, gained tremendous financial flexibility and **positioned** ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's emerging opportunities...we're smoothly transitioning our senior management team."

Bewkes is **attributed** to getting Time Warner back on track following an ill-fated merger with AOL in 2001. He leaves his post as chairman of the entertainment division, which he transformed into one of the most-watched networks on US television, **coming** up with hits such as *Sex and the City*. He has a **reputation** for being a no-nonsense manager with a knack for spotting and nurturing talent. Bewkes will now **oversee** all five of Time Warner's divisions and is expected to push full **steam** ahead with helping the company sink its teeth into a sizeable portion of the digital media market. His promotion has been **sweetened** with news of a Time Warner-Google **tie-up** that will allow him to tap into Google's search technology while moving deeper into the digital **realm**.