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Time Warner picks new president

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

23 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Time Warner picks new president

Time Warner Inc., the biggest media company in the world, has chosen a new president and Chief Operating Officer. The company promoted an insider to fill the positions. Ex-entertainment boss Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company. Industry analysts say he is next in line to take over the top spot and become CEO. The company's website congratulated Bewkes on his promotion and listed his many valuable achievements. It said: "We gained tremendous financial flexibility and positioned ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's emerging opportunities."

Many people say Bewkes got Time Warner back into profitability after a difficult merger with AOL in 2001. In his post as chairman of the entertainment division, he transformed Time Warner into one of the most-watched networks on US television. He has a reputation for being a no-nonsense manager with a talent for spotting and developing skilled executives. Bewkes will now push full steam ahead and help the company move into the digital media market. His promotion has been sweetened with news of a Time Warner-Google tie-up that will allow him to exploit Google's search technology.

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 of Time Warner's businesses. Are they 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 / CEOs / industry analysts / financial flexibility / profitability / TV networks / talent / steam / 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 qualities to become president or CEO of a huge company:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ University qualifications | _____ Energy |
| _____ Vision | _____ A skill for spotting talent |
| _____ A successful track record | _____ A risk taker |
| _____ Loyalty to the company | _____ Lots of ambition |

5. UNLIKELY TIE-UPS: Look at and talk about the following possible business tie-ups. How do you think they could be successful?

- 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? Explain 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 president. T / F
- c. TW's new president congratulated himself on the company's website. T / F
- d. TW has gained tremendous financial flexibility. T / F
- e. TW had a difficult merger with AOL in 2001. T / F
- f. TW's new president re-energized the company's TV network. T / F
- g. TW's new president has a knack for spotting skilled executives. T / F
- h. Time Warner also recently announced a business tie-up with Google. T / F

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

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. chosen | experts |
| b. number two | quickly |
| c. analysts | tie-up |
| d. gained | name |
| e. emerging | selected |
| f. merger | profit from |
| g. division | got |
| h. reputation | second in command |
| i. full steam ahead | department |
| j. exploit | developing |

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

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. the biggest | networks on US television |
| b. The company promoted | and become CEO |
| c. next in line to take over the top spot | world's emerging opportunities |
| d. The company's website congratulated | difficult merger with AOL in 2001 |
| e. take full advantage of the digital | media company in the world |
| f. back into profitability after a | steam ahead |
| g. one of the most-watched | an insider to fill the positions |
| h. He has a reputation for being a | Bewkes on his promotion |
| i. push full | of a Time Warner-Google tie-up |
| j. sweetened with news | no-nonsense manager |

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

Time Warner Inc., the biggest _____ company in the world, has _____ a new president and Chief Operating Officer. The company promoted an _____ to fill the positions. Ex-entertainment boss Jeff Bewkes is now number _____ at the company. Industry analysts say he is next in _____ to take over the top spot and become CEO. The company's website congratulated Bewkes on his promotion and _____ his many valuable achievements. It said: "We gained tremendous financial _____ and positioned ourselves to take full _____ of the digital world's emerging opportunities."

Many people say Bewkes got Time Warner _____ into profitability after a difficult merger with AOL in 2001. In his _____ as chairman of the entertainment division, he _____ Time Warner into one of the most-watched networks on US television. He has a _____ for being a no-nonsense manager with a _____ for spotting and developing skilled executives. Bewkes will now _____ full steam ahead and help the company move into the digital media market. His promotion has been _____ with news of a Time Warner-Google tie-up that will _____ him to exploit Google's search technology.

listed
advantage
chosen
two
media
advantage
insider
line
post
talent
sweetened
back
reputation
allow
transformed
push

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Time Warner picks new president

Time Warner Inc., the biggest _____ company in the world, has chosen a new president and Chief Operating Officer. The company promoted an _____ to fill the positions. Ex-entertainment boss Jeff Bewkes is now number two at the company. Industry _____ say he is next in line to take over the top spot and become CEO. The company's website congratulated Bewkes on his promotion and _____ his many valuable achievements. It said: "We gained tremendous _____ flexibility and positioned ourselves to take full advantage of the digital world's _____ opportunities."

Many people say Bewkes got Time Warner _____ into profitability after a difficult merger with AOL in 2001. In his _____ as chairman of the entertainment division, he transformed Time Warner into one of the most-watched _____ on US television. He has a reputation for being a no-_____ manager with a talent for spotting and developing skilled executives. Bewkes will now push full _____ ahead and help the company move into 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.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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:

- media
- insider
- two
- analysts
- listed
- emerging
- difficult
- transformed
- reputation
- steam
- sweetened
- exploit

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 from outside?
- e. What are the differences between a CEO and COO?
- f. What are your valuable achievements?
- g. What do you think the president of Time Warner does every day?
- h. Are you interested in the high-level world of CEOs?
- 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 learn to become CEO of huge multinational companies?
- 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?
- 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 reputation for?
- i. What do you think of Google's search technology?
- 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

PRESIDENT: You are the president of a new business tie-up between two completely different companies. It is your job to make it a success. 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. Use it to make your business plan better.
- Give presentations to other groups about your business plan. Members of your audience will think your plan will fail. 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. REPUTATION: What do you have a reputation for? Write a short essay about your reputation(s). 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. T e. T f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. chosen | selected |
| b. number two | second in command |
| c. analysts | experts |
| d. gained | got |
| e. emerging | developing |
| f. merger | tie-up |
| g. division | department |
| h. reputation | name |
| i. full steam ahead | quickly |
| j. exploit | profit from |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. the biggest | media company in the world |
| b. The company promoted | an insider to fill the positions |
| c. next in line to take over the top spot | and become CEO |
| d. The company's website congratulated | Bewkes on his promotion |
| e. take full advantage of the digital | world's emerging opportunities |
| f. back into profitability after a | difficult merger with AOL in 2001 |
| g. one of the most-watched | networks on US television |
| h. He has a reputation for being a | no-nonsense manager |
| i. push full | steam ahead |
| j. sweetened with news | of a Time Warner-Google tie-up |

GAP FILL:

Time Warner picks new president

Time Warner Inc., the biggest **media** company in the world, has **chosen** a new president and Chief Operating Officer. The company promoted an **insider** to fill the positions. Ex-entertainment boss Jeff Bewkes is now number **two** at the company. Industry analysts say he is next in **line** to take over the top spot and become CEO. The company's website congratulated Bewkes on his promotion and **listed** his many valuable achievements. It said: "We gained tremendous financial **flexibility** and positioned ourselves to take full **advantage** of the digital world's emerging opportunities."

Many people say Bewkes got Time Warner **back** into profitability after a difficult merger with AOL in 2001. In his **post** as chairman of the entertainment division, he **transformed** Time Warner into one of the most-watched networks on US television. He has a **reputation** for being a no-nonsense manager with a **talent** for spotting and developing skilled executives. Bewkes will now **push** full steam ahead and help the company move into the digital media market. His promotion has been **sweetened** with news of a Time Warner-Google tie-up that will **allow** him to exploit Google's search technology.