

## Responding to seasonal trends meetings practice

### Part One: Describing Xmas and New Year trends

Take turns choosing one of the things below and talking about changes in that thing in the past, present and/ or future, for example “The amount of snow used to be quite high but has been slowly declining for years. In the future I think it will flatten out at almost nothing”. Discuss if you agree with the descriptions, then do the same for other topics below.

- Celebrating the Lunar New Year/ Celebrating Chinese New Year
- Crowds
- Drinking
- Eating out over Xmas and/ or New Year
- Giving cash
- Going to the cinema
- Healthiness of what people do/ Unhealthiness of what people do
- Hotel availability/ Hotel prices
- Household spending on (imported/ traditional) Xmas foods and/ or New Year foods
- Length of time that Xmas decorations stay up
- Loneliness/ Social isolation
- New Year sales/ Winter sales (starting date, length, popularity, number of shops, size of discounts, queues, etc)
- Number of presents
- Overseas holidays over Xmas and/ or New Year
- Overseas visitors/ Overseas tourists
- People viewing Xmas lights
- Religious celebrations over Xmas and/ or New Year
- Spending (on presents, Xmas decorations/ New Year decorations, food, travel, etc)
- Spending time with your family and/ or friends
- Superstitions
- Traditional games
- Traditional New Year celebrations/ New Year traditions
- Traffic/ Traffic jams
- Travel (going abroad, going to visit people, etc)
- Watching sporting events (football, sumo wrestling, etc, at the venue or on television)
- Watching variety shows (on TV/ in person)
- Weather (amount of snow, temperature, etc)
- (Doing or watching) winter sports (skiing, snowboarding, etc)
- Working over Xmas/ Working over New Year
- Xmas bonuses/ New Year bonuses/ End of year bonuses
- Xmas lights and decorations (amount, length of time, when they go up and come down, in the home, outside the home, in the street, in shops, etc)
- Xmas music in shops and cafés (amount, length of time, starting date, etc)
- Xmas parties/ New Year parties (number, spending, etc)

## Part Two: Responding to Xmas and New Year trends

Choose three of the trends described below. Imagine that those things are true (without discussing what the trend really is) and hold a meeting to decide how your company should react to those changes. Many of them are problems which you must find solutions to, but others are possible business opportunities. You may also want to discuss the reasons for those changes and consequences of those things happening. You might need to imagine you are in a different kind of company, e.g. a trading company, and/ or that you have different jobs to make the discussion more realistic. You can make up any related trends and numbers which are not mentioned below. Start from greetings and small talk at the very beginning of the meeting, move through the three topics, then smoothly end the meeting.

### Useful phrases for the discussion

#### Useful questions to prompt discussion

- “What can we do about it?”
- “How should we respond?”/ “How should we react?”/ “What should our response be?”
- “How can we take advantage of...?”/ “How can we profit from...?”/ “How can we make money out of...?”

#### Useful language for talking about reasons

- “The main reason for this is probably...”
- “This could be due to...”
- “This might be because of...”

#### Useful language for talking about consequences/ effects

- “One consequence of this could be...”/ “A possible effect is...”
- “This could lead to...”
- “This may affect...”
- “This allows us to...”
- “This gives us the opportunity to...”

#### Useful language for talking about solutions

- “To tackle this, we could...”
- “The best solution would probably be...”
- “Why don’t we...?”
- “Have we thought about...?”
- “We’d better...”

### **Possible Xmas and New Year trends to discuss**

- The number of people skiing domestically has steadily fallen.
- After it grew steadily for many years, the number of people going to winter sales has recently plateaued.
- Hotel overbooking has quickly risen in the last few years.
- The number of workers who are willing to work over the winter holidays has collapsed.
- Demand for traditional New Year and Xmas foods has slumped.
- Traffic jams over Xmas and New Year had stabilized but have grown again in the last three years.
- Winter temperatures are predicted to rise by over two degrees over the next thirty years.
- Cinema attendance over the winter holidays has levelled off.
- Loneliness over the holidays has worsened slowly but steadily over the last two decades.
- The number of foreign visitors over the end of the year has gone up steadily and has reached five point one million.
- Staff are complaining that Xmas bonuses have remained flat for three years.
- The amount of snow falling has been wildly unstable recently.
- Sales of fizzy wine (= sparkling wine) has decreased but is forecast to bounce back (= rebound) in the near future.
- Giving cash instead of presents at Xmas is accelerating.
- Hotel taxes will be raised (= will rise) at the beginning of the next financial year.
- Interest in Lunar New Year is declining.
- The number of hospital admissions over the Xmas break has soared this year.

*Share one of your ideas and see if other groups agree.*

*Ask about any trends above which you don't understand, are not sure about the truth of, are not sure how to respond to, etc, discussing suitable responses as a class each time.*

*Change groups. Roleplay the same kind of meeting on responding to three seasonal trends, but this time make up Xmas and New Year trends (for example from the list on the first page), then talk about how to respond to them.*

### Part Three: Responding to other seasonal trends

*Do the same thing with trends connected to one of the other seasonal topics below, imagining what the changes could be and how you could respond.*

- April Fool's Day
- Armistice Day/ Remembrance Day/ War Memorial Day/ Poppy Day
- Autumn
- Bonfire Night/ Guy Fawkes Night
- Buddhist festivals
- Carnival
- Cherry blossom viewing
- Chinese New Year/ Lunar New Year
- Diwali
- Easter (Good Friday, Easter Sunday, etc)
- Eid
- Gay Pride
- Halloween
- Hanukkah
- Hunting season
- Lent
- May Day
- Monsoon/ Rainy season
- National day/ Constitution Day/ Independence Day
- National holidays/ Bank holidays
- Oktoberfest
- Ramadan
- Saint Patrick's Day
- Shrove Tuesday/ Pancake Day
- Skiing season
- Spring
- Summer/ Summer festival
- Tanabata
- Valentine's Day