



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

GLOSSARY

to come along – to progress; to move ahead according to a plan

* How is the book coming along? Have you written much yet?

retreat – an informal meeting away from the workplace where employees of a company spend time together and getting to know each other better

* Are you going to the company retreat? The boss says that I have to go.

arrangements – plans; preparations for an event in the future

* Susan made arrangements for the wedding to be held in Hawaii.

to set up – to plan; to get something ready

* The workers set up the chairs in the room for the large meeting.

opening day – the first day; the first time that a business or other place is open to people

* I went to the store on its opening day and found some great sale prices!

to arrange – to set up; to plan; to fix something so that it works a certain way

* Sophie arranged for a band to play at her wedding.

to line up – to schedule to appear or to perform

* I have lined up four new comedians to perform tomorrow night.

speaker – a person who talks in front of other people; a person who gives speeches

* How many speakers will be at the conference this year?

panel – a group speakers, usually on one topic; a discussion group

* A panel of tax experts will speak at the meeting about the new business tax laws.

productivity – the amount and speed at which things are made or produced

* Our factory's productivity increased when employees were given bonuses.

teamwork – the ability to work well together as a group or a team; working together

* The softball team showed great teamwork during the game today.

recreation – free time; relaxation; time to do what a person wants to

* I can't keep sitting in the office all day. I need some recreation!



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

all work and no play – being serious and working hard all the time, without taking time for relaxation or fun

* All work and no play can make anyone feel bored.

to hold – to take place in a certain location; to arrange to happen in a specific place

* The wedding will be held at the church next Saturday.

golf – a game played by hitting a small white ball into small holes in the ground using a long metal club

* Golf is a sport that men and women can play without getting too tired and sweaty.

water sport – a sport or game played in a pool, lake, or ocean

* Steven loves water sports, especially water skiing.

under control – planned and going well, without need of help from anyone else

* Jelissa is taking care of five young children at the same time and she doesn't look like she has things under control.



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the main purpose of the retreat?
 - a) To hear speakers talk about business topics.
 - b) To relax and learn more about each other.
 - c) To improve the managers' golf game.

 2. Who is planning the retreat?
 - a) Leo.
 - b) Sharon.
 - c) The managers.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to come along

The phrasal verb “to come along,” in this podcast, means to progress or to move ahead according to a plan: “The teacher walked around the room to see how the student’s projects were coming along.” “To come along” also means to accompany someone or to go with someone: “Chuck likes to go fishing down by the lake, but he doesn’t like it when his little brother comes along.” “To come along” can also refer to an opportunity or someone else one wants or needs to appear or to become available: “We can’t wait here all day hoping a car will come along and give us a ride.” Or, “It isn’t every day that an opportunity as good as this one comes along.”

to hold

In this podcast, “to hold” means to take place in a certain location or to arrange to happen in a specific place: “We had wanted to hold the school dance in the gym, but we’ll have to hold it in the cafeteria instead.” “To hold” also means to embrace, or to have someone in one’s arms: “When his son hurt his hand and started to cry, Hamid held his son in his lap to comfort him.” “To hold up” means to support something so that it will not fall down: “Can you hold up this picture on the wall while I decide on the best place to hang it?” “To hold up” is also a request made to slow down: “Can you hold up while I catch my breath? I can’t run as fast as you can.”



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

CULTURE NOTE

A Calling and a Second Career

Many people who have worked for many years in one “industry” (field of work) decide to make a change, either because they cannot find work in that industry or because they prefer to work in a different field. These people often start “second careers” in a completely different area of work.

In recent years, there has been a “rise” (increase) of people going into seminaries. A “seminary” is a college that trains people to be priests, ministers, rabbis, and other types of religious leaders. (Different religions or “denominations” (division or branch of the Christian church) use different terms for its leaders: priest=Catholic (Christian), minister=Protestant (Christian), rabbi=Jewish, etc.)

The fastest-growing group of people entering seminaries is baby boomers. Baby boomers are people born between 1946 and 1964. These baby boomers are now in their 50s and 60s and no longer have children to raise or “mortgages” (money owed on a home loan) to pay, and perhaps are looking to change their lives in significant ways.

Many see this as a second career. Many who are entering seminaries have been active in their church for years and have felt a calling for the church. A “calling” is a strong feeling that one should do a certain job, a strong “urge” (desire) that one should pursue a certain career. Although “a calling” is often used in relation to the church, we can also use it, though less commonly, for other professions, especially those that help or serve other people. For example, in medicine, you may have a calling to be a doctor or nurse.

As you might expect, in 2011, students under the age of 30 is still the largest group of seminary students at about 30%, but those over 50 years of age now “make up” (account for; total) about 20%; it was 12% in 1995.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 152: Planning a Company Retreat.

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 152. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On this podcast, we're going to talk about planning a meeting or a retreat for your company. Let's go!

[start of dialog]

Sharon: So, Leo, how are the plans coming along for the company retreat?

Leo: I've made most of the arrangements and I think it's going well. I'm planning to send out information about the two-day event to the managers at the end of this week.

Sharon: What do you have set up for the opening day? There's normally a welcome dinner.

Leo: That's what I have arranged. Then, for the following day, I've lined up several speakers and panels to talk about productivity, teamwork, and the other topics we discussed.

Sharon: Good. What about recreation? We don't want it to be all work and no play.

Leo: The hotel where we're holding the retreat this year has golf and water sports. I don't think the managers will be bored.

Sharon: Well, it sounds like you have it all under control. Keep up the good work.

Leo: Thanks.

[end of dialog]

In this podcast, we heard a conversation between Sharon and Leo, talking about a company retreat. A "retreat" (retreat) in this situation means a meeting. It's a meeting that companies have, usually somewhere away from their office. These



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

are often meetings to do planning, thinking about the future, that sort of thing. In many American – big American companies, they have retreats at a hotel somewhere, sometimes in a different city even, if it's just for the executives, for the most important bosses. The word "retreat" as a noun and a verb, is also used in talking about a war – when you are in a battle with some other army and the army retreats – that means the army goes back. It pulls back towards its own territory or its own country.

Well, in this dialog, Sharon asks Leo, how the plans are "coming along" for the company retreat. That expression "to come along" means how are they developing, how are they turning out, how are they progressing – those are all ideas for this expression "to come along." "To come along" can also mean to "accompany," to go with someone. But when someone says, "How are your plans coming along?" – they mean how are they developing? Are they progressing – going forward – the way you want them to? Leo says that he's made most of the "arrangements" and he thinks it's going well. The "arrangements" are all of the things that he has to do – making reservations, talking to the hotel, talking to the airline – if they're going somewhere else. So, these are all parts of "arrangements." "Arrangements" (arrangements) is anything that you have to do when you are planning a meeting, an event. You can make arrangements for a wedding, or make arrangements for a meeting.

Leo says that he's "planning to send out information" about the two-day event to managers at the end of this week. He's "planning to" means he's intending to, he has the intention, he wants to send out information about the two-day event. "Two-day" (two-day) is the same as the event of two days. But we often use the hyphen form "two-day event," "one-day event" – to describe something. Notice that we don't say, "The two days event." You might think that it should be plural, but in fact, it's singular when there is a hyphen and it is used more or less as an adjective. So, "I'm going to a four-day retreat" means the retreat is going to be four days long.

Sharon asks Leo what he has "set up" for the opening day. "To set up" (set up) is another one of those two-word verbs. It means to arrange. It means to plan. It can also mean sometimes to "put into place." So, for example, we've set up the room for our meeting. We've moved the tables and put the chairs in the correct position – that could be set up. Here, when Sharon says, "What do you have setup for the opening day?" she means what do you have planned? What events – what will happen? The "opening day" is, of course, the first day of the retreat. We use that word "opening" to mean first – usually, if it's the first day of a long event. You also will hear that expression, for example, for a sports season. "Opening day," for baseball is the first day of the official baseball season which



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

should be very soon I think. You can also have the opening day of school – it's the first day.

Sharon says, "There's normally a welcome dinner," meaning an opening dinner – a beginning dinner to welcome people to the event. Leo says that that is exactly what he has arranged. And "to arrange" (arrange) is the verb of arrangements. So, we talked about arrangements. Well, this is the verb form "to arrange." Leo says that "For the next day" – for the following day – the day after the opening day – he's lined up several speakers and panels. "To line up" (line up) – two words – means very much the same as to plan or to arrange. "I've lined up some people." We usually use that expression when we are talking about arranging for people to talk to a group. I've lined up some good speakers. I've lined up some good presenters and so, we use that verb often when talking about getting people to talk to a group. "Speakers," of course, are people who speak to a large group. And company retreats in the United States, often bring in what are called "motivational speakers," or "inspirational speakers." And these are speakers who are not necessarily experts on the company. They don't necessarily know a lot about the company, but they're very good at talking to people and getting them interested and excited about something. And they'll often be very good speakers – very interesting speakers to listen to.

Well, in addition to having speakers, Leo has also lined up some "panels." A "panel" (panel) is when you have a group of people – usually sitting at a table, behind a table, in the front of a room and each person has a microphone in front of them and you have a discussion among the people, about a certain topic. So, you may have an expert from different areas come in and each of them would be on a panel of four or five people and they will talk about a topic like a discussion with each other so that people can listen to them.

Well, the speakers and panels that Leo has lined up are going to talk about productivity and teamwork. "Productivity" is a very common word you will read when companies talk about how they are doing – if they are making money. "Productivity" (productivity) is a noun and it means how hard the people in the company are working, how much they are producing. If they spend 8 hours working, how much work do they get done – how much work do they finish – that's "productivity." The adjective would be "productive." If you say, "I am productive" that means "I'm getting something done," or "We had a productive meeting" means we got a lot accomplished. We managed to do a lot at the meeting. That rarely happens, of course. Meetings are usually not very productive. The opposite of productive is "unproductive" (un) – "unproductive."



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

“Teamwork” – all one word – (teamwork) – “teamwork” is the idea that people work together just like a team. And once again, American companies like to talk about teamwork – everyone working together. There’s an expression “Be a team player.” “Be a team (team) player” means work together with other people, get along with other people, don’t argue with other people – that’s being a team player.

Sharon asks about the “recreation” for the retreat. “Recreation” means enjoyment – things that people can do – usually something physical like a sport. But it could be other things as well. “Recreation” is (recreation). There is a verb “to recreate” but it’s not used very often. The noun is much more common. Sharon says that she doesn’t want the meeting to be “all work and no play.” “All work and no play” means, of course, that they only work and they don’t have time to play. But that’s sort of an expression. “I don’t want it to be all work and no play.” Leo says that the hotel where they’re “holding” the retreat – “to hold” here means the same as to have. We often use it for meetings. “Where is the meeting being held?” “Where are we holding the meeting?” means where is it going to be.

Well, the hotel where they’re holding the retreat has golf and water sports. “Golf,” of course, you all know – the sport that Tiger Woods plays and other people. “Water sports” refers to skiing and swimming and doing things, obviously, in the water. Sharon says, “It sounds good. It sounds like you have it all under control.” “To have something under control” means that you are able to manage it, that nothing is being forgotten. “Everything is under control” – I have everything planned, everything has been taken care of – is another way of saying that. Finally, Sharon says, “Keep up the good work.” That’s a very common expression when you want to tell someone to continue doing the good work that they are doing. “Keep up the good work.”

Now let’s listen to the dialogue this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of dialog]

Sharon: So, Leo, how are the plans coming along for the company retreat?

Leo: I've made most of the arrangements and I think it's going well. I'm planning to send out information about the two-day event to the managers at the end of the week.

Sharon: What do you have set up for the opening day? There's normally a welcome dinner.



ESL Podcast 152 – Planning a Company Retreat

Leo: That's what I have arranged. Then, for the following day, I've lined up several speakers and panels to talk about productivity, teamwork, and the other topics we discussed.

Sharon: Good. What about recreation? We don't want it to be all work and no play.

Leo: The hotel where we're holding the retreat this year has golf and water sports. I don't think the managers will be bored.

Sharon: Well, it sounds like you have it all under control. Keep up the good work.

Leo: Thanks.

[end of dialog]

The script for today's podcast was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com for more information about this podcast and for the transcript of today's dialog.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2006.