

Extreme Workplaces

1) Listening comprehension: Fill in the blanks

Hanging 10? Surf's up, dude. No, it's not the weekend. This is someone's nine-to-five. Our next stop takes us to Ventura, California. This is Patagonia, the ultimate workplace for athletes because when you work here, you can work out wherever and whenever you want.

Half the people who come through just got done running 4 miles.

By this afternoon, this place will be getting to be a ghost town.

Everybody likes to go and have fun.

Narrator: It all began with one man and his love of outdoor sports.

Rob BonDurant: Our founder, Yvon Chouinard, started the company 35 years ago by producing rock climbing equipment. From there, the company's never stopped. Now we make sports equipment for climbing and for surfing and for trail running and for skiing and the like.

Narrator: Today, Patagonia is a \$275-million-a-year outdoor sports retail empire, and its employees are as action-ready as the products they make 'cause they don't just make the stuff. They test any of the 600 products out, too.

I'm about to go for a run. I design the running clothes, so I like to go test out the stuff that I design. It's pretty much my dream job.

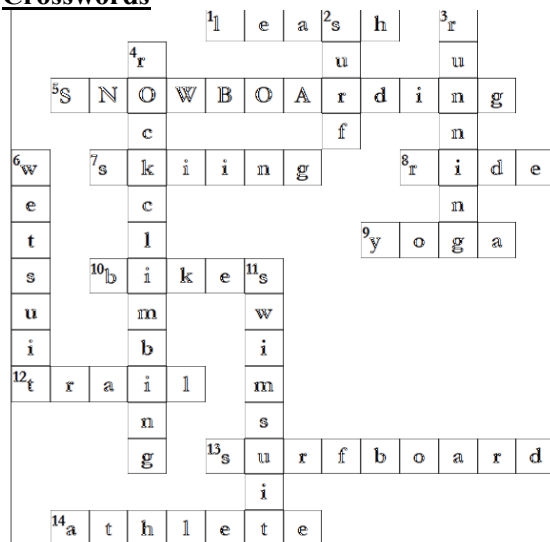
2) Complete the company profile

When was it created?	It was created 35 years ago.
Where is the head office?	Its head office is in Ventura, California.
What does it sell?	It sells outdoor equipment.
Annual turnover?	Patagonia has an annual turnover of \$275 million.
Number of products?	It sells 600 products
Number of employees?	There are 350 employees at the Ventura head office.
Working hours?	They are flexible.

3) Vocabulary: Fill in the blanks using words from the report

Patagonia's corporate culture is characterised by flextime, employees can work out wherever and whenever they want. Another characteristic is that designers test the products they make and as the firm makes outdoor equipment, they practice lots of outdoor activities because the firm offers them a lot of activity options. At Patagonia working is a sporting event.

4) Crosswords



Across:

- 1: a piece of rope, chain, etc. tied to something
- 5: the activity or sport of moving over snow using a board
- 7: the activity or sport of moving on a pair of long, flat narrow pieces of wood or plastic
- 8: to move on (a wave)
- 9: a set of physical and mental exercises, Indian in origin, which is intended to give control over the body and mind
- 10: two-wheeled vehicles that you sit on and move by turning the two pedals
- 12: a path through the countryside, often made or used for a particular purpose
- 13: a long narrow board made of wood or plastic which is used to move on waves as they come in towards the beach
- 14: a person who is very good at sports or physical exercise

Down:

- 2: to move on a wave as it comes towards land, while standing or lying on a special board
- 3: the activity of going somewhere quickly on foot, as a sport or for fun
- 4: the sport of going up mountains
- 6: a piece of clothing, made from rubber, which covers the whole body closely and is designed to keep you warm when you are swimming
- 11: a piece of clothing that you wear at the beach

5) What do these figures correspond to?

- 9 is the time you usually start work.
- 5 is the time you usually leave work.
- 4 miles is the distance employees run before going to work.

30% is the amount of time office workers spend in front of their desks.
20 minutes is the time it takes to reach a rock climbing spot.
3 o'clock is when Jess has a meeting.
30 is the number of boards available to employees.
10% was the raise offered to employees if they stayed at the office in the 1970s.

6) **Writing:**

Would you like to work for this company?

I would really enjoy working at Patagonia because I love surfing. Employees working in Ventura, CA are only minutes away from the beach and as long as they do their job properly - don't miss meetings, appointments or deadlines, come up with great designs - they can leave the office to work out if they want to. It's really a dream job for sporty people, but I gather that if you are not interested in outdoor activities there is no point in working there.

What are the drawbacks of such an organisation?

Several drawbacks can be outlined:

- **Schedule Management:** Flextime typically allows employees to change their schedules as their needs change. Employees must communicate schedule changes with management; however, managers may find it difficult to keep track of a team of employees with frequently changing schedules.
- **Communication:** Extensive use of flextime can diminish communication among members of a team. Although companies typically use email as a communication tool for employees, a flextime schedule may create a lag in response time.
- **Abuse:** Managers worry that employees working without supervision during flextime hours may be less productive than if they worked during normal hours.
- **Team-Building Difficulties:** Meetings, group activities and training are all part of the team-building process. Flextime may reduce a manager's ability to assemble her team for these activities. As a result, individual team members may experience a sense of disconnection from the team over time.

Read more: The Disadvantages of Offering Flextime | eHow.com

http://www.ehow.com/info_8676262_disadvantages-offering-flextime.html#ixzz1nsOGlpfx

7) **Grammar**

a) ***reported speech***

She said : "I will now go for a run." --> She said that she would then go for a run.

She said: "I have worked here since the 1970s." --> She said that she had worked there since the 1970s.

He said: "we will pay you 10% more of your wage if you can stay and work."

--> He said that they would pay us 10% more of our wage if we could stay and work.

He said: "She called it a day" --> He said that she had called it a day.

b) ***Simple present/ present progressive***

Patagonia's head office (to stand) stands in Ventura, California. Yvon Chouinard, founder of the brand, has succeeded in making Patagonia a world-class company. And Patagonia (to be) is a unique company! When employees (arrive) arrive at the office every morning, they (go through) go through their schedule for the day but they also (to check)check the surf report. This month, the vice president, Rob BonDurant (travel) is travelling in the Pacific, where he (visit) is visiting some of the main surfing spots: Hawaii, the Gold Coast and Fiji. Today, he (meet) is meeting a team of designers from all over the world. Patagonia was founded in 1972 and (expand) is expanding faster than ever before.

c) ***Prepositions***

Good morning, everyone. My name's Rob BonDurant. I'd like to talk to you about our new outdoor equipment. My presentation is in three sections. I will first focus on the background to the strategy. I will then explain in what way we have changed our current designs. Finally, I will present the details of the costs and the effect of the change on the quality of our equipment. By the end of my presentation you will understand clearly our new strategy.