

# Worker Profiles

## Simulation

Work in small groups of 3 to 5. You are the owners of a small flooring company. Your team must save the company from going bankrupt\*. Since you have only 20 % of the work you had one year ago, you will have to figure out how to keep the business alive. You have worked out already that in order to save 20 % you must fire three of your employees. You have decided that you must lay off\* some of your workers. Discuss in groups which of your employees you want to lay off. Who would you let go? Read the following worker profiles sheet and make a selection of employees, who will be staying with or leaving the company. You must explain why each individual will be kept or let go. What can they give your company? Who will be an asset\*, who is pulling you down? Write down your decisions.

### \* Glosser

bankrupt konkurs

to lay off at fyre

to be an asset at være et aktiv



## JOSÉ: 49 yrs.

**Has worked for the company for 12 years.** Friendly person, who gets on well with everyone. Hard worker, and knows what he is doing. Very versatile, has taken many courses, so he can do most jobs needed by the company. He is not a qualified joiner, but has been trained by the company, and has proven himself an efficient worker. Before coming to work for the company José had worked numerous jobs, including as a street sweeper and as a handy man in a church. José is liked by all the employees and has had very few customer complaints. He demonstrated initiative by taking the lead on some very critical projects.

## DAVID: 38 yrs.

**He has worked for the company for 14 years.** A very quiet worker, minds his own business, but very reliable, always does his job on time and works well with the rest of the team. He gets on best with the older workers. 10 years ago David quit his job, but came back one year later. He has been happy there since. He has an in-depth knowledge of maintenance, techniques, tools and equipment and quality assurance, cost control and safety.

He lives alone in a flat in the city.



## BILL: 54 yrs.

**Has worked for the company since it started 20 years ago.** He is a good teacher for the younger employees. He has done a lot of good work for the company. He knows most of the tricks of the trade. He is very good at manual work. He identified and resolved a potential cost-overrun issue and maintained project schedule despite unexpected delays in parts deliveries.

Bill lives with his wife in a house in the suburbs. His children are grown and have moved on.







## DEREK: 23 yrs.

**Has been working for the company for one year.** He has proven himself as a good worker, although in the start he had some difficulties understanding all the details of the job. Derek has showed signs of frustration in the beginning, but seems to have settled in with the crew.

Derek lives with his girlfriend and newborn baby. In his spare time he enjoys boxing, which he does at semi pro level. He hopes to become a professional boxer, and is sometimes away on boxing tournaments.

## KAREN: 45 yrs.

**Karen just started last month.** She was head hunted by the company for her skills as master joiner. She has done a lot of volunteering jobs and also won several skills competitions. She always has a smile on her face. Karen loves what she does. Her job is her hobby.

Karen lives with her husband and two teenage sons in the suburbs. Her sons will soon be starting college, which will be quite expensive for Karen and her husband.



## PETER: 51 yrs.

**He left a job in a steel factory to join the company as the new millennium dawned, drawn by the promise of plenty and varied work.**

While working, he took advantage of support for career advancement to train as Labour Foreman. When the crew was asked, here's how they described their workplace: team atmosphere, leaders who believe in the well-being of employees, good company parties and trips, steady work, support for training, opportunities to build a career, a safe work environment. This is the kind of environment Peter has created.

He lives with his wife in the suburbs. His two daughters are in college.

## ANDREW: 31 yrs.

**Has been employed for 5 years.** He is a very easygoing person. Very helpful, and very good at keeping up morale when things get tough. He recently recovered from cancer, and is now back working full time, after 2 years part time during his recovery period. He has excellent diagnostic abilities. He excels at communicating with clients.

He lives with his wife in the city.







## HERMAN: 25 yrs.

has been employed as an **apprentice for 1 year.** He had a rough start, as he had some problems with drugs and has had a history of violence. He was removed from his drug-addicted mother when he was 13, and spent most his life in a home for troubled youths. He is now clean and on the right track, thanks to this company. Herman is currently helping youths in trouble with the law. He wants to make a difference to other people.

## ADRIAN: 20 yrs.

has been employed as an **apprentice.** He has proved to be interested and a quick learner. He fits in well with most of the employees. He lives with his mother in the suburbs. He started 5 months ago. His father is in the army, and is currently serving in the Middle East. Adrian dreams of becoming an engineer, later on in his life.



## TAYLOR: 28 yrs.

Taylor specialises in **wooden flooring decorations.** He mainly works the specialized jobs, for the high profile clients. There has recently been a complaint on one of his floors, but it turned out it was the supplier that had sold the company wood that had not dried properly, and the floorboards had become warped. Taylor had problems communicating with the client. Taylor does not talk a lot, he is very shy, but does an excellent job.

Taylor lives in a flat with two other flatmates.

## TIFFANY: 25 yrs.

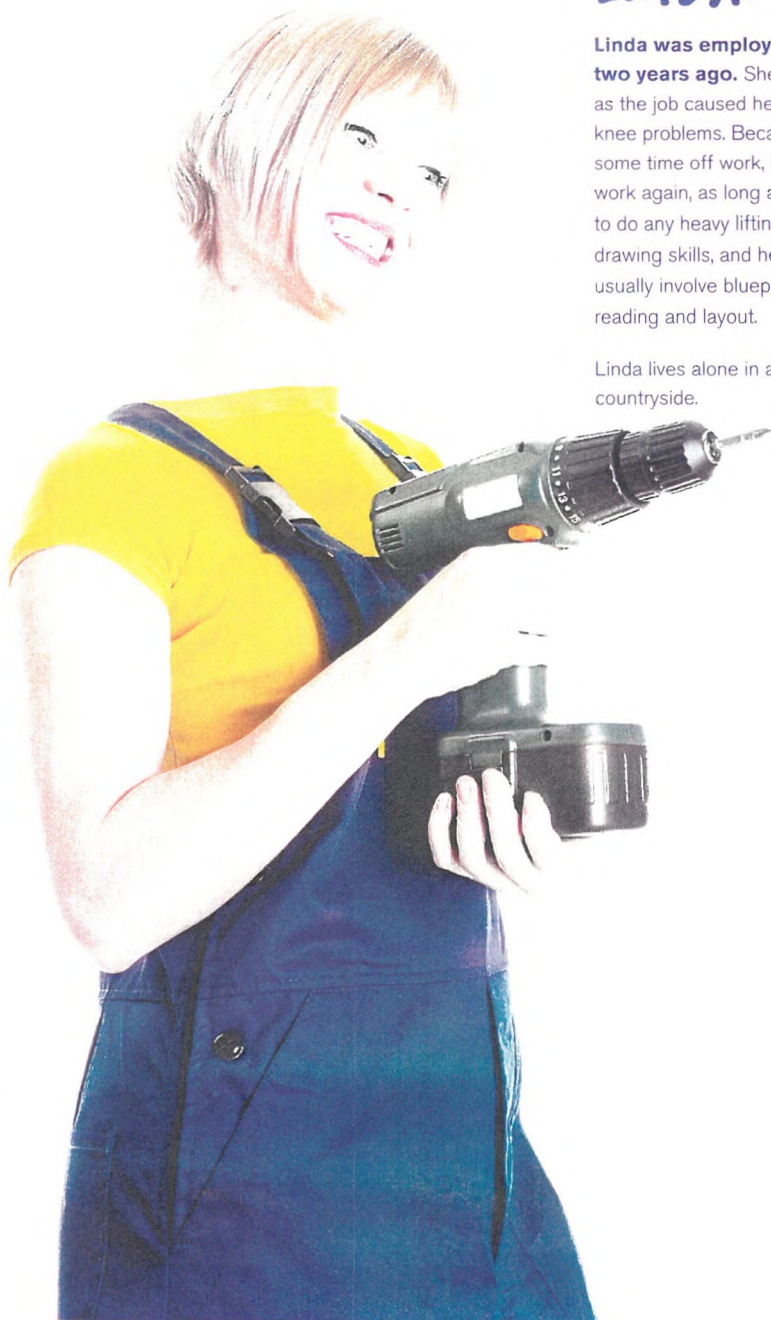
Tiffany has been working **for the company for 7 years.**

She started working there as an apprentice when she was 18. She has grown to love the job. She is expecting her first baby in 7 months. Her work ethics are excellent. Last year she received an employee of the year prize, and is always the first employee to arrive in the morning and the last to go home.

Tiffany lives in the city with her boyfriend.







## LINDA: 20 yrs.

**Linda was employed in the company two years ago.** She had a rough start, as the job caused her to have back and knee problems. Because of this she had some time off work, but is now back to work again, as long as she does not have to do any heavy lifting. Linda has excellent drawing skills, and her responsibilities usually involve blueprints, specification reading and layout.

Linda lives alone in a small house in the countryside.

## Present your decisions to the rest of the class

Did everyone make the same decisions? Talk about the decisions, and your reasons for making them. Do you agree with these or not?

## Interview

A journalist has contacted your company. He/she is interested in hearing why you have fired staff. In your groups you must enact the interview. Write the script describing what the journalist will be asking and what the company owner's answer will be. Use this wordlist to help you. If there is time, you could also enact this scenario as a role-play.



|                     |
|---------------------|
| Work-force          |
| Lay off             |
| Bankruptcy          |
| Make ends meet      |
| Efficient employees |
| Find new jobs       |
| Close down          |
| Money is tight      |
| Stumbling economy   |
| Cash flow           |
| Stay on float       |
| Go under            |
| Pay off loans       |
| The economy         |