

BEC HIGHER PRACTICE TEST READING

PART TWO

Questions 9 – 14

- Read this text taken from an article about the structure of organizations.
- Choose the best sentence from the opposite page to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap **9 – 14**, mark one letter (**A – H**) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, **(0)**.

The new organisation

Fifty years ago William Whyte, an editor at *Fortune* magazine, wrote a book called “The Organisation Man” that defined the nature of corporate life for a generation by looking at typical organisations. **(0)**...H....

Half a century on, organisation man seems almost extinct. The company that used to be most closely identified with this way of life was IBM. **(9)**..... It is some measure of the change that has taken place since Whyte's day that today 50% of IBM's employees have worked for the company for under five years; 40% of its 320,000 employees are “mobile”, meaning that they do not report daily to an IBM site; and about 30% are women. An organisation once dominated by lifetime employees selling computer products has been revolutionized into a conglomeration of transient suppliers of services.

(10)..... Here, globalisation of production and sales, and the large-scale shift of responsibility to outsiders for what were once considered a company's core functions—via outsourcing, joint-ventures and other sorts of alliances that involve a loosening of control over vital inputs – are commonplace.

Today instead we have “networked person”, a species that can now be observed in airport lounges, on fast inter-city trains and at motorway service stations. He is always on the move, juggling with a laptop computer, a mobile phone and a BlackBerry for e-mails, keeping in electronic touch with people he no longer regularly bumps into in a corridor. Indeed, there may be no corridor. **(11)**..... Organisation man did bump into people in corridors, but he was cautious about networking. In his world, knowledge was power, and he needed to be careful about sharing out his particular store of it. **(12)** He lived in a highly structured world where lines of authority were clearly drawn on charts, decisions were made on high, and knowledge resided in manuals.

Networked person, by contrast, takes decisions all the time, guided by the knowledge base he has access to, the corporate culture he has embraced, and the colleagues with whom he is constantly communicating. **(13)**.....

And yet despite the dramatic changes in the way people work, the organisations in which they carry out that work have changed much less than might be expected. In an article in the *McKinsey Quarterly* last year, two of the firm's consultants argued that “today's big companies do very little to enhance the productivity of their professionals”. **(14)**..... In other words, 21st-century organisations are not fit for 21st-century workers.

The classic structure in which organisation man felt comfortable consisted of a number of business units that operated similarly but separately. They were controlled by a head office that determined strategy and watched over its implementation.

BEC HIGHER PRACTICE TEST READING PART TWO (continued ...)

- A** This is because these days, many employees no longer have a physical home base in a building provided by their employer.
- B** As a result, being able to keep in touch with a much wider range of people through technologies such as e-mail has brought everyone closer.
- C** He found comfort in hierarchy, which obviated the need to be self-motivating and take risks.
- D** This transformation has been brought about by a variety of changes in the environment in which businesses operate, particularly in communications technology.
- E** For many years its managers wore only dark blue suits, white shirts and dark ties, symbols of their total allegiance to the organisation.
- F** In fact, their vertically oriented organisational structures, retrofitted with ad hoc and matrix overlays, nearly always make professional work more complex and inefficient.”
- G** Ideas and commands moved up and down from headquarters to these units, leading to the creation of vertical “silos” with very little communication between them.
- H** Foremost among the organisations that he had in mind was the corporation, which he thought rewarded long service, obedience and loyalty quite as faithfully as did any monastery or battalion.