OFFICE MATTERS

Technical English (TEIL 2) Weiter geht es in unserer Serie rund um den Alltag in einem Handwerksbetrieb irgendwo in England. Jack zeigt Lucy sein Büro, nicht gerade der »place to be«. Gut, dass Lucy aus Deutschland kommt und Ordnung liebt.



»A place for everything and everything in its place?« Seems to be new for some people. Quelle: Steffen Boiselle

Do you also think that there should be »A place for everything and everything in its place«? Or are you more the type of person that manages chaos in an ingenious way? No matter how you handle this in your private life, it might be different in the office. There you are expected to work efficiently, which is not really possible when you have to spend time on looking for notes, papers etc. Not finding things because you have a mess on your desk or are not well-organized is not very professional and does not make a good impression in a working environment. But let's see what Lucy's and Jack's attitude towards this subject is.

The day after Lucy's arrival is a Sunday. *Therefore*, Jack and Lucy can *sleep in*. Right after breakfast Jack shows Lucy his office where she will be working as his secretary.

Jack: So, Lucy this is my office – your new *workplace*. I hope you'll like it.

Lucy: Oh, Uncle Jack there are *certain similarities* with the inside of your car. I mean, it's *actually quite* a big room but it's so full and looks a bit *untidy*, to be honest.

Jack: Well Lucy, *that's what you're here for*, to *tidy up* this room and to also *keep* it this way. You know, sometimes people come to this office to bring their *defect devices* for repair and it can be very *embarrassing at times* when it looks like this.

Lucy: Oh, I see, uncle Jack, that won't be a problem. At home I also had to tidy up for my little brother because we had to *share* a room. *Let's put it this way*: his *toys* and your toys are a little *different*, but my job will *basically* be the same.

Jack: I'm glad you can see it in such a *relaxed* way. I was *afraid* you were one of those chaotic and *rebellious* teenagers yourself. *Even though* my sister told me you were such a *good girl* but I *suspected* she *just* wanted to *get rid of* you.

Lucy: Very interesting what you think about my mom who's your sister, Uncle Jack. But tell me why is there so much paper lying around here? You can *hardly* see the office *furniture*.

Jack: Well, that's because I'm very often *in a hurry*. So I just *pop in*, *grab* something else that I need, throw everything on the desk and then I'm gone again.

Lucy: Yes, this is exactly what it looks like. Just throwing things somewhere and *piling* them up endlessly. Why don't you *try* to *explain* to me how you would like your office to be *run*?

Jack: First of all the papers need to be *filed* into the *hanging files* in the *filing cabinet over here*. Some of them also go into the *files* on the desk next to the *in-tray* and *out-tray*. And there are also things like my big *notebook*, my *diary*, the *desktop organizer*, *stapler*, *tape dispenser*, *hole punch*, *rubber stamp* with *ink pad*, lots of *paper clips*, *rubber bands* etc. etc.

Lucy: But couldn't these small things go into the drawers of your drawer unit instead of lying around everywhere?

Jack: Of course, they could, my dear. But so far, they somehow haven't found their way in there.

Lucy: Oh and I see, you also have a pretty big computer with a big monitor and keyboard.

Jack: All this is very old, but I've never found the time to get some up-to-date equipment and I'm not an expert on these things *anyway*.

Lucy: *Lucky you*, I *happen* to be an expert on all this because I learned it in school. We had a special subject called IT and it was one of my favourites. I'm sort of a *digital native*, anyway.

Jack: Well, then girl one of the first tasks for you will be to *install* a new computer here after we've bought it. Oh, let's see what we've got here, my telephone. It's a *cordless phone*, which sometimes makes it very *hard to find*. It also has an *answering machine* where I can *retrieve the messages* that my customers *leave* for me. The only problem is that I can't use the phone if I don't *recharge* it in its *docking station*.

Lucy: Yes, that's the *curse* of modern technology. There are still some things that we have to do, that technology cannot do by itself like finding its way to the docking station. But I *assume*, Uncle Jack, that you have your mobile phone with you all the time.

Jack: Well, that's another point. I dropped mine the other day and really never found the time to buy a new one.

Lucy: Then, Uncle Jack, I can only hope that you're a *wealthy* man. *It sounds like* a lot of new technology has to be bought for this office. What about a *printer* and...

Jack: Oh, my printer is relatively up-to-date. It has a copier, scanner and a fax machine, too.

Lucy: Glad to hear that. So, not all is lost yet. And what have we got over there in these big shelves?

Jack: These are all my *invoices* from the last years. I have to keep them for *tax purposes*. And this is also where I keep lots of *manuals*_for equipment *just in case* I need to *look up* something for myself (*chuckles*) or *safety regulations* and all those things which are important in my job. And look over here, I have a wonderfully comfortable *swivel_chair* that you can sit in when you run this office from now on.

Lucy: Oh yes, that's nice. It makes me look very important and *powerful*. What is in the drawers of the desk, by the way?

Jack: That's where I keep my *office supplies* like *stationery* with my company's *letterhead* for writing invoices, *envelopes*, *note pads*, *ink cartridges* for the printer, a *clipboard* etc. etc. I'm sure you will *find your way through* all this and I *wonder_*what other nice things might *turn up* in all this mess.

Lucy: Well, let's see what *treasures* I can find for the two of us (laughs and *hugs* her uncle). It seems like I will be *rather busy* tomorrow on my first working day.

(To be continued)

(Glühbirne)

Beware of false friends!

A false friend is a word that is often *confused with* a word in another language with a different *meaning* because the two words look or sound *similar*.

The English word **actually** is such a typical false friend. Its meaning in German is **eigentlich, tatsächlich** and **not** aktuell**.

- » I actually wanted to talk to the boss. = Eigentlich wollte ich mit dem Chef sprechen.«
- *Aktuell*« in English would be *current*, *up-to-date*, *topical*, *latest*«.The latest news from the U.S., the upto-date version of a mobile phone app.

The same applies to the verb »to wonder«. In German it means »sich fragen ob/wie/was« and not »sich wundern«.

- »I wonder what the weather will be like tomorrow. = Ich frage mich, wie das Wetter morgen wird.«
- »Sich wundern/ jemanden wundern« in English would be »to be surprised/to surprise s.o.«
- I'm surprised to see you here. Does that surprise you? = Ich wundere mich, dich hier zu sehen. Wundert dich das?

Another false friend is the word » meaning« which is translated into German by » Bedeutung« and not » Meinung«.

- » Each word has a different meaning. = Jedes Wort hat eine andere Bedeutung. «
- The English for »Meinung« is »opinion«.
- »In my opinion there should only be electric cars nowadays. = Meiner Meinung nach sollte es heutzutage nur noch Elektrofahrzeuge geben.«
- » Yet« is another one. It means » schon« in German and not » jetzt«. » Not yet« is translated by » noch nicht«.
 - »Have you spoken to your colleague yet? No, I haven't seen him yet. = Hast du schon mit deinem Kollegen gesprochen? Nein, ich habe ihn noch nicht gesehen.«
 - We use *»now*« for the German *»jetzt*«.
 - » I'm going home now. = Ich gehe jetzt nach Hause.«

There are many more of these false friends in English. But we will have a look at them another time.

So much for today. You've learned a lot about office equipment and supplies as well as about false friends which we should not only *avoid* in real life but also when speaking another language. In the next issue we will see what Lucy and Jack bring home from their *shopping spree* in the *electronics store*. Stay tuned!