Business Listening, lesson 5

**For this question, click in the correct box for each speaker. You have 45 seconds to**  **read the question and look at the table. You will hear the recording twice.**

**Speaker 1**

I was an integral member of the team responsible for the success of my company’s most recent launch of a new range of milk-free drinks. The fundamental thing we did right was to anticipate all the likely obstacles, things like hiccups with suppliers, we always had a fallback, so we could meet demand. That kind of attention to detail is crucial. Of course, it’s important to feel inspired by what you’re selling, but I do feel that I have a natural talent for spotting business opportunities, and threats. Resilience is important too, I never allow my team to get knocked back when product reviewers say nasty things about a product. It’s customer votes that count.

**Speaker 2**

I run a successful business selling personalized cakes – food’s often seen as a fairly safe bet. Of course, you have to understand your market, but I do that intuitively, after working in the food industry for such a long time. I was itching to strike out on my own, and that gave me the drive to put in the hours and energy necessary to make it independently as a business. There are plenty of others offering something similar, so it’s hard to differentiate yourself, but I guess I’m a perfectionist. I’m constantly tweaking things, making those minor changes that might improve the business, and I encourage my staff to adopt the same attitude.

**Speaker 3**

I co-ordinate efforts across the tech company I work for when we release new products onto the market. It’s easy to get caught up in the marketing and lose sight of what’s important – the product. After one of our software packages bombed last year, the whole atmosphere’s become more risk averse. Fortunately, our latest product launch went well, with sales taking off like a shot. I put it down to the way we responded to harsh criticism of our processes. Being open to that helped avoid a repeat of the previous experience. Some tiny differences in the design and marketing process worked a treat, and we’re still waiting for sales to level off – which they’ll probably do eventually.

**Speaker 4**

My company’s been selling furniture for over a century, but sales had been steadily dropping. Customers are much more concerned about environmental factors when they choose products nowadays, and the team became aware that a radical new approach was essential. Without doing further extensive market analysis, we just decided to completely remodel and update the way we produce our top-selling line for today’s customers. This was long before rival companies in the same sector accepted that people wouldn’t keep buying stuff that caused damage to the environment indefinitely. Of course, the future’s always uncertain and you just never know what’s round the corner, especially when it comes to fashions in furniture design but fortunately sales now seem to be on the up and up.

**Speaker 5**

You can’t really predict that much in the business world when it comes to new ventures – however much you might have analysed the market, or finessed your product, it’s impossible to foresee exactly how things’ll pan out. Knowing that gave me some sort of blind courage. I invested everything I had and persuaded some pretty smart investors to do the same. Friends worried me, saying my products were way too niche, and admittedly, what information I’d gathered about my potential customer base didn’t seem to indicate there’d be massive demand for them. How wrong can you be. In the long run, thanks to daring to think big, profits are great for the fourth year running.