

## Sujet

### Université Paris1 Panthéon- Sorbonne UFR 06 / SGEL

Licence de Gestion, Semestre 3

### Partiel d'anglais appliqué à la gestion

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6 février 2008  
Durée : 2 heures

- Instructions:
1. No documents allowed
  2. Write your name and student card number only in the space provided on your answer sheet and cover them. Do not write your TD number on it.
  3. Read the text below entitled ***Business in Norway: Girl power*** and address the exercises that follow.

## Business in Norway: Girl power

Norwegian companies' boards are now stacked with women

From January 1<sup>st</sup> all public companies in Norway are obliged to ensure that at least 40% of their board directors are women. Most firms have obeyed the law, which was passed in 2003. But about 75 out of the 480 or so companies it affects are still too male for the government's liking. They will shortly receive a letter informing them that they have until the end of February to act, or face legal consequences – which could include being dissolved.

Before the law was proposed, about 7% of board members in Norway were female, according to the Centre for Corporate Diversity. The number has since jumped to 36%. That is far higher than the average of 9% for big companies across Europe-11% for Britain's FTSE 100- or America's 15% for the Fortune 500. Norway's stock exchange and its main business lobby oppose the law, as do many businessmen. "I am against quotas for women or men as a matter of principle," says Sverre Munck, head of international operations at Schibsted, a media firm. "Board members of public companies should be chosen solely on the basis of merit and experience," he says. Several firms have even given up their public status in order to escape the new law.

Companies have had to recruit about 1,000 women in four years. Many companies complain that it has been difficult to find experienced candidates. Because of this, some of the best women have collected as many as 25 – 35 directorships each, and are known in Norwegian business circles as the "golden skirts". One reason for the scarcity is that there are fairly few women in management in Norwegian companies- they occupy around 15% of senior positions. It has been particularly hard for firms in the oil, technology and financial industries to find women with enough experience. DNO, for instance, an oil and gas firm that operates in Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere, found women it was happy with last November, but their expertise is in finance and human resources, not oil, says Helge Eide, DNO's president. "However, we retain sufficient oil and gas experience in the men on our board," he adds.

Some people worry that their relative lack of experience may keep women, quiet on boards, and that in turn could mean that boards might become less able to hold managers to account. Recent history in Norway, however, suggests that the right women can make strong directors. When a whistleblower at Statoil, the country's biggest firm, alerted managers in 2003 to possible illegal payments to a consultant to secure contracts in Iran, it was Grace Reksten Skaugen and two other women directors who called an extraordinary board meeting that resulted in the resignations of the chairman and chief executive. "Women feel more compelled than men to do their homework," says Ms Resksten Skaugen, who was voted Norway's chairman of the year for 2007, "and we can afford to ask the hard questions, because women are not always expected to know the answers."

(from *The Economist* January 5<sup>th</sup> 2008 pp. 53-54)

### **I. Vocabulary**

**(5 points)**

From your knowledge of the subjects studied in class, define the concepts underlined in the text and give an example of each of the concepts if necessary to illustrate your definition. Do not translate the terms and expressions into French.

1. companies' boards
2. public companies
3. firms
4. stock exchange
5. chief executive

### **II. Comprehension**

**(5 points)**

Answer the following questions in English. Use your own words as much as you can.

1. What is the meaning of the expression *golden skirts* quoted in the text? What other expression(s) can you hear or use in business which start(s) with the word "golden"?
2. How has the situation of women in company directorships in Norway evolved in comparison with other western countries in recent years and what has been the main factor behind the change?
3. How have public companies responded to the new law governing the appointment of women on companies' boards?
4. Why do companies still find it difficult to appoint women on their boards?
5. What advantages, if any, can companies have in appointing women on their boards?

### **III. Grammar**

**(5 points)**

Choose the correct verb form in each of the following sentences and say if the economic trend described means a) a little fall, b) a big fall, c) a little rise d) a big rise or e) stability (i.e. no change).

Example: The number of female board directors in Norway jumps / has jumped / jumped to 36% since 2003 according to the Centre for Corporate Diversity.

Answer: has jumped = a big rise.

1. The gold price rises / has risen/ rose to \$861 a troy ounce on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

2. The Institute for Supply Management's index of activity falls sharply / has fallen sharply / fell sharply from 50.8 to 47.7 in January, the lowest reading since April 2003.
3. New home sales tumble / have tumbled / tumbled in America by 9% in November, leaving them 34.4% lower than a year earlier.
4. Core inflation in Japan perks up / has perked up / perked up since November to its highest rate for almost a decade.
5. Japan's unemployment rate falls/ has fallen / fell to 3.8% over the last two months.
6. The euro climbs/ has climbed/ climbed above \$1.47 on November 7<sup>th</sup>.
7. The sharp fall in the dollar caused both gold and oil prices to hit new highs / have hit new highs/ hit new highs.
8. The outlook for rich economies continues to deteriorate / has continued to deteriorate/ continued to deteriorate lately according to The Economist's monthly poll of forecasters.
9. The British Bankers' Association said that the number of loans approved by its members for house purchase slumps/ has slumped / slumped by 43.5% in the year to November.
10. The figure of \$30 billion that banks have lost because of the subprime crisis is set to rise substantially / have risen substantially / rose substantially as mortgage defaults in America climb.

#### IV. Writing

(5 points)

*How can male/female parity in company directorships be achieved?*

Argue your point in a minimum of 150 and a maximum 300 words. Count and write the number of words you have used at the end of your discussion.

# Corrigé

## I. Vocabulary (5 points)

### Key to answers

1. *Companies' boards*: in full companies' boards of directors. A *board of directors* is the governing body of a corporation which is responsible for controlling and organising it in the interests of shareholders. (coursebook, p.116)  
*Example sentence*: *all big companies in the world have a board of directors at the top of their organisation.*
2. *Public companies*: in full public limited companies. A *public company* is a company which has its shares bought and sold on the stock exchange. (coursebook, p.115, line 1).  
*Example*: *Peugeot s.a is a French public limited company.*
3. *Firms*: a firm is a business organisation. Firm is another word for company, enterprise or business concern. (course book p.116)  
*Example sentence*: *a firm can be a small shop at the corner of a street or a large multinational like Coca-Cola Company.*
4. *Stock exchange*: it is a place where stocks and shares are bought and sold (traded). (coursebook, p.59). Stock exchange is another word for stock market.  
*Example sentence*: *The London Stock Exchange is located in the part of London known as the City.*
5. *Chief executive*: in full Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O). A CEO is a person with the ultimate responsibility for a business organisation and its operations. An other expression is Managing Director (M.D).  
*Example*: *Carlos Goshn is the Chief Executive Officer of Renault-Nissan.*

### Guidelines for marking

Half a point for a good definition, a quarter of a point for a good example and another quarter of a point if the student has spelt out the concept in full and/or has provided a synonym. The maximum to be awarded is 1 point per concept.

Every student's little effort should be rewarded. For example, a definition only= 0.5 point; a synonym only = 0.25, an example only= 0.25 point etc.

## II. Comprehension (5 points)

### Model answers

1. Golden skirts in Norway refer to women occupying directorships in several public companies at the same time. Other words starting with golden: golden parachutes, golden handshake.
2. The situation of women in company directorships in Norway has improved considerably in recent years. In fact the rate of female representation on the boards of directors of big public companies is much higher now than it was in the past (36% now against 7% in the past) or than it is in the rest of Europe (9 or 11%) and America (15%). The main reason of this increase has been an effort by public companies to comply with the requirements of a law voted in 2003, which obliged them to have at least 40% of women serving on their boards of directors.

3. Public companies in Norway have responded differently to this injunction. Most of them have obeyed the law and appointed the required number of women as members of their boards of directors. Some, however, (about 75 out of 486 companies) have been either reluctant or unable to appoint the required number of female directors. Finally, some others have chosen to revert to their initial private company status in order to escape the law altogether.
4. Companies, i.e.; public companies think that there are very few suitable female candidates to directorships. For one thing, there are few women in senior management positions, the natural board of directors' breeding ground (around 15% only). For another, those available seem to have little experience in the areas where their skills are needed. Their lack of experience may not enable them to serve on the board efficiently, it is feared.
5. Given that it is mandatory for them to hire female directors, the first advantage is that they comply with the law, an attitude which can only help them escape possible prosecution. Secondly evidence has shown in Norway that the right women have turned out to be strong directors. They have ensured that the work of the boards of directors remains rigorous and maintains good ethical standards. No wonder that the best top director of the year award for 2007 in Norway went to a lady.

#### Guidelines for marking:

You can award 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, or a full mark if the answer displays student's capacity to write cogently without over quoting the text. What is important here is that students use their own words. 50% if what they say makes sense and is more or less in line with the model answer and another 50% for the standard of their English.

### **III. Grammar (5 points)**

#### Key to answers

1. rose = a little rise
2. fell sharply = a big fall
3. tumbled = a big fall
4. has perked up = a big rise
5. has fallen = a little fall
6. climbed = a little rise
7. hit new highs = a big rise
8. has continued to deteriorate = a little fall
9. slumped = a big fall
10. rise substantially = a big rise

#### Guidelines for marking:

0.25 point for a correct form of the verb and another quarter of a mark for a correctly interpreted trend.

### **IV. Writing (5 points)**

#### Guidelines for marking

a. length: /1 point

A full point is systematically given to a student who has observed and actually counted the number of words required. This point is withheld if the student has failed to count the number of words written. It is also withheld if the student has written a shorter or longer discussion than required.

b. content: /2 points maximum

What is assessed here is the number of sensible ideas the student has put forward. Half a point for each, whether you agree with the student or otherwise, up to a maximum of 2 points.

c. form: /2 points maximum

What is assessed in this connection is the standard of the student's English. 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or a full point for the correctness of the student's sentences and another 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or full point for the way the student has linked the sentences to make a coherent piece of writing. The maximum to be awarded is 2 points.