

Down to Business English

116 – Salmon Farming

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From Tokyo Japan and Abu Dhabi, UAE. This is Down to Business English.

Business News to improve your Business English.

*With your hosts **Skip Montreux and Dez Morgan.***

Dez: Hello Skip. Good to be back with you.
Anything new with you over there in Japan?

Skip: As a matter of fact, yes there is something coming up pretty soon that I'm pretty excited about.

Dez: Oh, and what's that?

Skip: Well let's see if you can guess. What do you think these four people have in common?
Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Sadao Watanabe, and Skip Montreux.

Dez: Well the first three are jazz saxophonists but I'm not sure where you fit into that group.
Although your name is the same as the famous Montreux Jazz festival in France. Are you telling me that you're going to France soon to take part in the festival?

Skip: Close, but no cigar.

Dez: In that case you must have taken up the saxophone.

Skip: Bullseye! Well actually, I'm going to take up the saxophone again. Not many people know this but I used to play a little bit of sax back in my university days.

Dez: Really? I did not know that.

Skip: Yes. Well I suddenly have the urge to play again and come next payday I'm going down to the Yamaha shop in Shinjuku to get me a horn.

Dez: I think you will find that a horn is a trumpet and that Yamaha make motorbikes.

Skip: It is perfectly okay to call a saxophone a horn
Dez and Yamaha certainly makes saxophones and pianos and flutes and many other musical instruments.

Dez: Yeah, I stand corrected. You know I find it difficult to believe that the same company can make such a wide range of products but I always forget that that's quite normal in Japan.

Skip: Well that is the mighty Japanese keiretsu, Dez.
The large Japanese conglomerates who have interests in a diverse range of industries and businesses.

Dez: And Yamaha, because it makes musical instruments, motorbikes, boats, etc. can be described as a keiretsu?

Skip: That is correct but you know, there are keiretsu and keiretsu.

Dez: If you say so.

Skip: And then there are the keiretsu that are former zaibatsu.

Dez: If you say so.

Skip: I'm sorry Dez. I forgot that you are probably a little bit **rusty** when it comes to the Japanese language and business.

Dez: Thanks for reminding me, but cut me a little slack. I did leave Japan almost 10 years ago now.

Skip: No problem. But just to finish, zaibatsu literally means financial **clique**. Zaibatsu were large family owned enterprises that rose to prominence in late the 19th century here in Japan. The big four zaibatsu as they were known, were Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda.

Dez: I have of course heard of the first three but not Yasuda.

Skip: Well after World War Two, the zaibatsu were dissolved with many of them either changing their structure or in the case of Yasuda disappearing completely. But as you just pointed out three of the four did survive. There is one interesting side story though about Yasuda.

Dez: What's that?

Skip: The Yasuda zaibatsu was founded by Zenjiro Yasuda whose granddaughter was none other

- than Yoko Ono. The Japanese artist and wife of the late John Lennon.
- Dez: Oh wow, that is interesting. And although I could talk keiretsu and zaibatsu with you all evening Skip, is there a story in here somewhere?
- Skip: You never did have any patience Dez. Yes, there is a story here and it has to do with a division of Mitsubishi. So they are the leading partner in Japan's biggest bank, one of Japan's big automotive makers, a real estate company and one of the world's top salmon harvesters. So which division is the story?
- Dez: One of those is our topic for today? It has to be the bank. Right?
- Skip: Wrong. The salmon farming industry is our topic for today. So let's do it. Let's get D2B ... Down to Business with Salmon Farming
- Skip: Let's start with some background on fish farming in general and the farming of Atlantic salmon in particular. Dez, which country do you think produces the greatest amount of farmed fish and what kind of fish do you think is the most popular?
- Dez: Well I'm not doing very well with answering questions today but I'll go with Norway as being the leading country and salmon as being the most popular species of farmed fish.
- Skip: Sorry Dez, that is 0 for 3 now. Believe it or not, China is the largest producer of farmed fish with 62% of the world's production. And the most popular fish is the Grass carp.
- Dez: The Grass carp? Never heard of it.
- Skip: It is a freshwater fish. In fact the top seven farmed fish species are freshwater fish with six of those being some variation of carp. The **odd one out** is the Nile tilapia.
- Dez: Like I said I am not playing your guessing games any longer.
- Skip: Take heart Dez. You answered that the biggest producer of farmed fish was Norway, right? And the most popular fish was the salmon?
- Dez: I did.
- Skip: Well, although salmon is only the seventh most popular farmed fish in terms of weight, it is by far the most lucrative.
- Dez: When I said most popular what I meant was most popular if you wanted to make a profit.
- Skip: I'm sure that is what you meant.
- Dez: What about Norway?
- Skip: And Norway is the biggest producer of farmed Atlantic salmon. So what you must of meant when you said farmed fish was actually farmed Atlantic salmon. Is that right Dez?
- Dez: Yeah, absolutely. That's what I meant.
- Skip: Okay, your answers are better than I gave you credit for. Now, would you like to hear more about the Atlantic salmon industry?
- Dez: Yes, please. Go ahead.
- Skip: To start off we need to define what is considered farmed salmon and what is considered wild salmon. This is important because wild salmon usually costs three to four times more than what farmed salmon costs. Let me ask you this.
- Dez: Not again.
- Skip: Oh, don't worry. Now, do you think salmon raised in a hatchery until it has grown to certain size and then released into the wild and then later caught by commercial fishermen should be considered farmed or wild fish?
- Dez: I have no idea. Semi-wild? Is that possible?
- Skip: No, not really.
- Dez: So what is the answer? Is it wild or farmed fish?
- Skip: In the industry this type of fish is referred to as an ocean-ranched fish, although salmon reared in captivity and then later caught in the ocean are labeled in the supermarket as wild fish.
- Dez: Interesting, and where is this practice popular?
- Skip: In Alaska mainly. However ocean ranched fish only really makes up a very small part of the entire market. And it is mainly salmon that is raised in freshwater hatcheries until they grow to a certain size. Then they are transported to seaside cages where they are fed and monitored until they are ready to be harvested. And get this, just one of those cages can house up to 90,000 fish at a time.
- Dez: Wow that's much more than I expected. It doesn't sound that hard though.
- Skip: There are two main problems with raising salmon in these fish cages. The first issue is with sea lice. This parasite can easily kill young fish. The second issue is a type of algae that can be poisonous to fish when it grows too quickly. This is otherwise known as an algae bloom.

- Dez: Are these big problems? Or can they be managed?
- Skip: They sure are big problems. Norway has had a very hard time dealing with the sea lice. And Chile, the world's second largest producer of farmed salmon, suffers with the algae problem.
- Dez: I see. These issues sound serious.
- Skip: There is a lot of money involved in dealing with them that's for sure. Since 2011 Norway's aquaculture industry has spent around 5 billion Kroner, which is around US\$57 million, trying to **eradicate** the sea lice but they've only had limited success. As a result salmon prices have tripled in the supermarket.
- Dez: Oh, consumers must not be happy about that.
- Skip: They certainly are not. As for the algae bloom; it caused massive problems to the Chilean fish harvests in 2016 but has yet to reach the salmon fisheries so far this year.
- Dez: I am a bit confused Skip. You introduced this story talking about Japanese keiretsu and zaibatsu. Where does Mitsubishi come into all this?
- Skip: Well, the largest producer is Norway and the biggest company by far is also Norwegian; – a company named Marine Harvest. However in 2015, Mitsubishi took over another Norwegian company, Salmar to take the second place spot.
- Dez: But Mitsubishi doesn't farm Atlantic salmon in Japan do they?
- Skip: No Dez because Japan is nowhere near the Atlantic ocean.
- Dez: Well observed. Very funny.
- Skip: Sorry, I couldn't resist. No, Mitsubishi has operations in Chile, Norway and North America.
- Dez: Of course, our interconnected world where a company can be the world's second largest farmed-fish producer and none of the production is done in the country where they're based.
- Skip: Otherwise known as the global economy.
- Dez: Okay. And what about those sea lice? You said that Norway has spent all of this money and the problem still exists?
- Skip: Yes, the problem does still exist. But Marine Harvest is not taking this problem lying down and they have suggested some very **novel** solutions. One solution that might interest you, and our listeners, involves the Panamax container ships.
- Dez: Oh yes, the old container ships that are too small now that the Panama canal has been widened? A story that we covered recently in **D2B Episode 111**.
- Skip: The very same type of ships.
- Dez: How do these Panamaxes fit into Norway's solution?
- Skip: Marine Harvest is suggesting that these old ships should be purchased and used as fish tanks. The water that circulates within the ship could then be controlled and the lice hopefully removed.
- Dez: A very **novel** idea. We did report in our Panama episode that there was an oversupply of these Panamax ships and that they were quite cheap at the moment. So it certainly might be a feasible solution.
- Skip: The interconnected world of D2B Dez.
- Dez: It is crazy isn't it? How two such **disparate** stories could be connected.
- Skip: I guess they have the sea in common. But enough about fish. It is now time for us to get D2V ... Down to Vocabulary.
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- Dez: I will start things off then with the adjective **rusty**, which literally means when a metal surface has gone a brown color because it has been left outside unprotected from the rain.
- Skip: And when rust forms on a metal mechanism, such as the threads on a bolt or the gears of a bicycle, they become difficult to turn. So idiomatically when you say something is **rusty**, you are saying it doesn't work smoothly because it hasn't been used in a while.
- Dez: And that's how Skip used it in the story, to communicate that my Japanese ability and knowledge has not been used for a long time so it had gone **rusty**.
- Skip: In a business context, you could use this adjective in an informal meeting. Imagine you

are about to give a presentation to a group of colleagues but you haven't given one in a very long time. Before you begin, you might apologize to everyone that you are a bit **rusty** so they should be kind to you if you make a mistake.

Dez: I said to Roxie the other day that I needed to catch up on some reading of magazines and drinking coffee as I was a bit **rusty**.

Skip: Really? And what did she say?

Dez: I don't think I should repeat it here but needless to say she thinks I could be spending my time better on other things such as cleaning the yard and taking out the trash.

Skip: I understand. My first word is the noun **clique**. A **clique** is a tightly connected group of people. In the story I said that the Japanese word *zaibatsu* can be loosely translated as a financial **clique**. In other words, it is a group of people who are financially connected.

Dez: It's important to note that a **clique**, as we pronounce it, often has a negative connotations, and it's sometimes used to show that a group that is closed to new members. Let's say for example that you joined a new company and on your first day you tried to have lunch with some of your new colleagues. But they all seemed to be members of different **cliques** and didn't make you feel very welcome. So instead of having a friendly lunch you end up having a cold sandwich by your lonesome at your desk.

Skip: I am sure that has never happened to a popular guy like you Dez.

Dez: It absolutely has. But before I get all emotional about that traumatic experience, let's move on.

Skip: Okay, good idea.

Dez: Next up we have the adjective phrase to be **the odd one out**. When you describe something as being **the odd one out**, you're saying that it's very different, even unusual in comparison to the rest of the group. In the story, Skip reported that out of the group of the top seven kinds of farmed fish, six of them were different types of carp. **The odd one out** was the Nile tilapia, as it's the only one that's not a carp.

Skip: When it comes to business, you never want to be **the odd one out** when it comes to performance reviews. Usually, **the odd one out**

loses their job, or misses out on the summer bonus.

Dez: I was **the odd one out** at my weekly staff meeting recently?

Skip: Really? You lost your job?

Dez: No, no not that bad. We were deciding who would teach an upcoming course that will be held on Saturdays. Everyone had scheduling conflicts so I was **the odd one out** and was assigned the course.

Skip: Oh dear.

Dez: It's not that bad. It's only in the morning so I can still get some 'me' time in the afternoon.

Skip: I'm sure Roxie was glad to hear that.

Dez: Yeah, we'd better move on.

Skip: Sure. The verb to **eradicate** is up next. To **eradicate** something means to remove it completely. In the story I commented that Norwegian companies have tried to **eradicate** sea lice but with only limited success. In other words they are trying to completely remove it from their farms.

Dez: Have you heard what the computer giant Hewlett Packard is up to in India these days?

Skip: No I haven't. What are they up to?

Dez: As part of their CSR, or Corporate Social Responsibility policy, they've invested \$20 million towards **eradicating** illiteracy in India. They've outfitted 48 busses as mobile internet libraries that travel to poor areas of India to offer their services

Skip: Very intriguing. It sounds like a good topic for a future episode.

Dez: It would be a **novel** idea, no pun intended.

Skip: I think our listeners may not have caught that pun. Can you explain?

Dez: Sure. The adjective **novel** is my next word. As an adjective, **novel** describes something that's unique. In the story Skip commented that Marine Harvest had some very **novel** ideas as to how to solve the problem of sea lice.

Skip: And the use of unused cargo ships is undoubtedly the most **novel**. Dez do you remember that **novel** approach to student assessment we used at the college we worked together at here in Japan. You know, the system where the students would assess themselves.

Dez: Yes, I do remember that and I've tried a similar **novel** approach here in the UAE. The interesting thing is, in both cases was the students were harder on themselves than I was.

Skip: Interesting, but let's get back to your unintended pun.

Dez: Oh yes. Whereas the adjective meaning of **novel** is to be unusual or unique, as a noun a **novel** is a type of book. Since Hewlett Packard's project is both unique AND involves reading, it was a bit of a pun when I said it was a **novel** idea.

Skip: Okay, I've got it.

Dez: Finally. What's your next word?

Skip: My next word, and the final word for today is the adjective **disparate**. If two things are **disparate** they are so completely different that they cannot be compared with each other.

Dez: In the story I commented that it was amazing how the **disparate** D2B episodes, one about a shipping company collapse in South Korea and the other about salmon farming in Norway could somehow be connected.

Skip: In other words, it was amazing that those two very different topics could have something in common.

Dez: An example of **disparate** in business world is comparing the leadership styles of someone like billionaire Richard Branson to Mark Cuban. Whereas Branson is very much a hands off leader who builds a team and then lets them run the business, Cuban seems to be much more involved in his business operations.

Skip: I'm not so sure about that analysis Dez.

Dez: Skip, I'd like nothing more than to debate you on this but I'm afraid we are about out of time for vocabulary.

Skip: In that case, we are just going to have to accept that we have **disparate** views on the issue and leave it at that ... for now.

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Dez: Well, thank you for that report on fish farming Skip.

Skip: You are more than welcome.

Dez: Oh hey, and good luck with your new saxophone.

Skip: Thank you. I hope I don't drive my neighbors too crazy as I get back into it. It's been many, many years since I last played and obviously I will be quite **rusty**.

Dez: Well in any case, I'm impressed that you are challenging yourself with a new hobby. At your age it's a **novel** idea.

Skip: Very funny.

Dez: Just before we go I have to ask our listeners a very important question. Are you a D2B member yet?

Skip: Very, very good question Dez.

Dez: If you find D2B useful in your English studies, if you'd like us to release episodes more regularly ...

Skip: If you would like unlimited access to our entire library of audio scripts and the audio scripts of new episodes emailed directly to you as soon as they are released ...

Dez: ... then you need to visit the Down to Business English website today and sign up for one of our D2B membership plans.

Skip: Just go to downtobusinessenglish.com, click on the **membership link** at the top of the page, and choose the membership level that best suits your budget.

Dez: In order to keep Down to Business English on air, we really do need your support.

Skip: And to those of you who are D2B members, thank you very, very much. Your support is sincerely appreciated.

Dez: It most certainly is.

Skip: Thanks for listening everyone! See you next time.

Dez: Okay, bye bye.

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