**Assessment Task for Reading**

**Topic: Successful Business Women**

This assessment task focuses on developing senior secondary students’ reading skills.

This set of materials contains the following:

* **The reading text**
* **A set of questions**
* **Suggested answers**
* **Annotated text**

**Reading Text**

**An Interview with Ms Melissa Liu**

**[1]**

Interviewer: Thank you, Miss Liu, for agreeing to attend this interview. I know you are very busy and it is a great privilege to have this opportunity.

Melissa Liu: Yes, I have a car below waiting to take me to the airport as I am needed in Singapore this evening for the opening of my new superstore there. I am not too fond of the mass media and would never accept any invitation for press interviews. I have a feeling that most articles about successful business women pretend to celebrate male-female equality, but then show their real prejudices by commenting on the women’s appearance and personal life. But this time, I cannot say no to the Principal’s invitation as I have great affection for the school and great respect for her. Anyway, let’s get on with the interview.

**[2]**

Interviewer: Can you please begin by telling me how you got into business?

Melissa Liu: Well, as you know, I was born in Hong Kong and grew up here. During my years in St Saviour’s School, the Sisters really taught me to be disciplined and organised. I am very grateful to them for nurturing such qualities and attitudes in me. I then moved to Australia to stay with an aunt and get a degree in tourism and hospitality. I worked at a resort for a few years and got married. Then I suddenly felt time was passing, I was in my thirties and hadn’t really done anything and I decided to start a business and so Tools for All was born.

**[3]**

Interviewer: It’s not common to see women in this trade. What made you think of selling tools?

Melissa Liu: I get tired of being asked this sexist question. Tools aren’t only for men. Lots of women are interested in Do-it-yourself (DIY) and spend time decorating and repairing their homes. I admit I first got the idea from watching my menfolk, especially my husband, and hearing their complaints about the tool shops near us. I was then inspired to set up a business that sells craft tools and garden tools but I see nothing strange about a woman seeing a business opportunity in such goods.

**[4]**

Interviewer: Well, your idea was certainly very successful.

Melissa Liu: Indeed, and from the start I thought internationally so when the first shop did well I expanded across Australia very quickly and then into New Zealand. Now we are in Jakarta, Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Tokyo, Seoul and after tonight Singapore.

**[5]**

Interviewer: But you don’t have a store here in Hong Kong?

Melissa Liu: No, our shops are large with a lot of stock and choices. That’s why people like visiting and looking round, comparing things and perhaps having a coffee and cake while they think things over. Rents are too high here for that approach to work so we are compromising. There will be one big warehouse store in Yuen Long, but we expect most of our business to be online. If you haven’t time or inclination to go to Yuen Long, just check our website and place orders online, and we’ll deliver your purchase to you within twenty-four hours.

**[6]**

Interviewer: What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in business?

Melissa Liu: Really, being a man or woman is irrelevant. If you are willing to work very hard and set yourself clear and realistic goals, you can achieve what you want. But it is true that a lot of women have been brainwashed into a lack of confidence in their ability to be entrepreneurs. All over the world far more men than women open new businesses. Yet the evidence suggests new businesses started by women are far more innovative in the goods and services they offer, and make more profit than those set up by men. So why aren’t more women getting active? I think it’s mainly cultural. In the world rankings for female entrepreneurship, Japan, despite being a high-income country with full rights for women, comes only 12th. The United States and Australia come out at the top. And this is a tragedy for economies as well as individuals. What a lot of talent is being wasted! A recent British report pointed out that if as many women as men started new businesses in the UK every year, there’d be hundreds of thousands of new jobs each year too. But I am not really answering your question. One advantage is that women are better at networking. That’s important – good contacts and relationships are crucial. The disadvantages lie more in the corporate world. If you own the company there are no problems, but if you depend on being promoted by men you will have difficulties. People pay lip-service to equal opportunity but the glass ceiling still exists. Even in the States, women make up only 3% of CEOs of the top 500 companies. My advice to women is - run your own business!

**[7]**

Interviewer: Do you have any advice for students or graduates who wish to start their own business?

Melissa Liu: Yes, take risk! Get out of your comfort zone so that you can explore something new and realise your full potential. Think out of the box and don’t be limited by traditions or social norms. I know it is easier said than done but habitual thinking and familiar routine will stop one from learning and growing. My second advice is always hire the best people. **It**’ll cost you more, but **it**’ll also make a world of difference. Find talent, use it and reward it.

**[8]**

Interviewer: What excites you most in your life?

Melissa Liu: If you mean pleasurably, mainly business: seeing a new store, adding a new line to the stock, finding new suppliers and so on. I also love speed – fast cars, boats and my horses. Luckily there’s plenty of space in Australia for such things. But if you mean excite negatively – waste makes me angry, waste of human talent, waste of natural resources, waste of energy, any sort of waste.

**[9]**

Interviewer: What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Melissa Liu: As I said earlier, my convent education taught me to be self-disciplined. Also I am able to put myself in my customers’ shoes. If you can do that and work from that perspective, marketing becomes easy. Weaknesses? I can be too outspoken and blunt with people at times. I am working to control myself better and be more tactful so as not to offend people.

**[10]**

Interviewer: And what do you do in your spare time?

Melissa Liu: I don’t really have any! And in fact, I must dash now.

**[11]**

Interviewer: Thank you for your kindness and time.

Melissa Liu: It’s my pleasure meeting you. Please write a sensible article.

**END OF READING TEXT**

**Questions**

**Read the interview with Melissa Liu and answer questions 1-21. Blacken the circle when appropriate.**

1. What is the tone of Melissa in **[1]**?

A. nervous

B. warm and friendly

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. aggressive

D. depressed

1. Why does Melissa think the mass media shows their “real prejudices” towards successful business women when they comment on the women’s appearance and personal life? (2 marks) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. According to **[2]**, Melissa Liu decided to start a business because

A. she was bored with her life

B. she was getting older but had achieved little

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. she had lost her job and needed to make a living

D. she needed to save for her old age

1. Why does Melissa find the interviewer’s question in **[3]** sexist? (2 marks)

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1. From the information given in **[1]** to **[4]**, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Melissa had a tight schedule on the day of interview. |  |
| b) | Melissa enjoys getting public attention. |  |
| c) | Melissa thinks appearance is more important than talents for women. |  |
| d) | Melissa took up a job related to tourism and hospitality before setting up her own business |  |
| e) | Melissa got married in Australia. |  |
| f) | Melissa started Tools for All in Australia. |  |
| g) | Melissa is interested in doing DIY work. |  |
| h) | Melissa never expected her business to go worldwide |  |

1. In how many countries can Melissa’s tool shop be found after the night of the interview? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which of the following do you expect to find in Melissa’s shop? Tick the relevant pictures. (4 marks)

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| --- | --- | --- |
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1. Based on what Melissa said in **[5]**, give two reasons why Melissa does not set up a store in Central. (2 marks)

i)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ii)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Why is a big warehouse in Yuen Long “a compromise” to Melissa? (2 marks)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. According to Melissa in **[6]**, in what ways are businesses run by women better? (2 marks)

i)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ii)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Based on the information given by Melissa in **[6]**, match each comment with the group of women most likely to make it. Write the letter in the space provided. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Women in the United States |  |
| Women in Australia |  |
| Women in the UK |  |
| Women in Japan |  |

1. I prefer setting up my own business to working my way up in big companies. I see far more opportunities for success in running my own business than competing with my male counterparts for a promotion.
2. It’s common to see women starting businesses here. Gender equality is important to our country’s social and economic development.
3. It’s hard for women to be active in business as women are still expected to take care of the family in our culture.
4. I am glad that people see a need to encourage women’s active participation in the business world. This may be a key to advancing our country’s economic development.
5. Explain the sentence “People pay lip-service to equal opportunity but the glass ceiling still exists” in your own words by filling one word in each blank. (2 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| People just agree in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with equal opportunities but there is still an invisible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that keeps women from rising to the top of the corporate ladder. |

1. Find words in **[6]** and **[7]** that mean the same as the following. Use ONE word only for each item. (4 marks)
2. practical and achievable

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. creative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. rules or standards of behaviour expected of members in a group

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The act and skill of starting new businesses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does “**it**” in line 56 refer to?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Can you suggest one way entrepreneurs may use to reward talents?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Of all the advice given by Melissa in **[7]**, which piece of advice do you consider the most important? Explain why. (2 marks)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Think of two adjectives to describe Melissa and explain with reference to information provided in **[8]**. (2 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adjective | Explanation |
|  |  |
|  |  |

1. Complete the following summary using the ideas in **[9]**. Use one word for each blank. The words may or may not appear in the text. (6 marks)

Melissa learnt the virtue of (a) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when she studied in a convent (b) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She believes the ability to view things from customers’ (c) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is her another strength and this (d) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ her in marketing. However, she also realises that she can be too outspoken at times. She is learning to speak more (e) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to avoid (f) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people.

1. Melissa considers “being blunt with people” her own weakness. Do you see this weakness from the interview? Support your answer with two examples from the text. (3 marks)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you think Melissa has any children? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following may be a suitable alternative title to the text?
2. Secret to Melissa Liu’s Success
3. The Lady behind *Tools of All*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

1. Advice for Female Entrepreneurs
2. Old Girl Talks about Her Innovative Business

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**Suggested Answers to the Reading Task**

1. What is the tone of Melissa in **[1]**?

A. nervous

B. warm and friendly

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ |

C. aggressive

D. depressed

1. Why does Melissa think the mass media shows their “real prejudices” towards successful business women when they comment on the women’s appearance and personal life? (2 marks)

The media seems to attach more importance to women’s appearance and personal life than their ability and business skills, which is different from the way they present successful businessmen.

1. According to **[2]**, Melissa Liu decided to start a business because

A. she was bored with her life

B. she was getting older but had achieved little

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⚫ | ⭘ | ⭘ |

C. she had lost her job and needed to make a living

D. she needed to save for her old age

1. Why does Melissa find the interviewer’s question in **[3]** sexist? (2 marks)

The question seems to suggest that tools belong to the world of men and women are not expected to know or care about them. This is an assumption based on gender stereotypes and therefore, Melissa finds it sexist.

1. From the information given in **[1]** to **[4]**, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). (8 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Melissa had a tight schedule on the day of interview. | T |
| b) | Melissa enjoys getting public attention. | F |
| c) | Melissa thinks appearance is more important than talents for women. | F |
| d) | Melissa took up a job related to tourism and hospitality before setting up her own business | T |
| e) | Melissa got married in Australia. | NG |
| f) | Melissa started Tools for All in Australia. | T |
| g) | Melissa is interested in doing DIY work. | NG |
| h) | Melissa never expected her business to go worldwide | F |

1. In how many countries can Melissa’s tool shop be found after the night of the interview?

Seven / 7\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following do you expect to find in Melissa’s shop? Tick the relevant pictures. (4 marks)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| **✓** |  | **✓** |
|  |  |  |
|  | **✓** | **✓** |

1. Based on what Melissa said in **[5]**, give two reasons why Melissa does not set up a store in Central. (2 marks)
2. The rent is too high in Central.
3. It is hard to find space for a large shop with a lot of stock and choices in the city centre.
4. Why is a big warehouse in Yuen Long “a compromise” to Melissa? (2 marks)

Melissa considers the warehouse in Yuen Long a compromise because it is not an ideal shop but just better than having no shop in Hong Kong. The warehouse in Yuen Long is large but mainly serves as a base for taking orders online. It does not follow her usual pattern of large stores for people to look around, compare things and have a coffee and cake.

1. According to Melissa in [6], in what ways are new businesses run by women better? (2 marks)
2. The goods and services offered are far more innovative
3. They make more profit
4. Based on the information given by Melissa in **[6]**, match each comment with the group of women most likely to make it. Write the letter in the space provided. (4 marks)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Women in the United States | B |
| Women in Australia | A |
| Women in the UK | D |
| Women in Japan | C |

1. I prefer setting up my own business to working my way up in big companies. I see far more opportunities for success in running my own business than competing with my male counterparts for a promotion.
2. It’s common to see women starting businesses here. Gender equality is important to our country’s social and economic development.
3. It’s hard for women to be active in business as women are still expected to take care of the family in our culture.
4. I am glad that people see a need to encourage women’s active participation in the business world. This may be a key to advancing our country’s economic development.
5. Explain the sentence “People pay lip-service to equal opportunity but the glass ceiling still exists” in your own words by filling one word in each blank. (2 marks)

|  |
| --- |
| People just agree in **speech** with equal opportunities but there is still an invisible **barrier / limit** that keeps women from rising to the top of the corporate ladder. |

1. Find words in **[6]** and **[7]** that mean the same as the following. Use ONE word only for each item. (4 marks)
2. practical and achievable

realistic (line 36)

1. creative

innovative (line 39)

1. rules or standards of behaviour expected of members in a group

norms (line 54)

1. the act and skill of starting new businesses

entrepreneurship (line 41)

1. What does “**it**” in line 56 refer to?

Hiring the best people

1. Can you suggest one way entrepreneurs may use to reward talents?

A pay rise / a bonus / a staff award / a company car / housing benefits / any other reasonable answers

1. Of all the advice given by Melissa in **[7]**, which piece of advice do you consider the most important? Explain why. (2 marks)

I think to take risk and get out of the comfort zone is the most useful advice because one must have a change and try something new to come up with fresh and creative business ideas. (any other answer with reasonable explanation)

1. Think of two adjectives to describe Melissa and explain with reference to information provided in **[8]**. (2 marks) (Any two of the answers below)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adjective | Explanation |
| Workaholic | She takes pleasure mainly in seeing her business grow |
| Adventurous | She likes speed games |
| Socially conscious/  Environmentally friendly | She hates wastage of human talent, natural resources and energy |

1. Complete the following summary using the ideas in **[9]**. Use one word for each blank. The words may or may not appear in the text. (6 marks)

Melissa learnt the virtue of (a) self-discipline when she studied in a convent (b) school. She believes the ability to view things from customers’ (c) perspectives is her another strength and this (d) helps her in marketing. However, she also realises that she can be too outspoken at times. She is learning to speak more (d) tactfully to avoid (e) offending / hurting people.

1. Melissa considers “being blunt with people” her own weakness. Do you see this weakness from the interview? Support your answer with two examples from the text. (3 marks)

Yes, she is sometimes very forthright with the interviewer. For example, she expresses her annoyance openly by saying ‘I get tired of being asked this sexist question’ in **[3]** when she is not happy with the interviewer’s question. She also ends the interview abruptly saying that she doesn’t have any spare time and must leave. (Any reasonable examples from the text should be accepted).

1. Do you think Melissa has any children? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

I don’t think Melissa has children because (one of the answers below):

(1) she has not mentioned her children throughout the interview, not even when she talks about what excites her.

(2) she seems to devote much her time to her business and have little time for parenting.

(3) she would not have felt time was passing and she hadn’t done anything in her thirties if she had children

(Any other reasonable answer)

1. Which of the following may be a suitable alternative title to the text?
2. The Secrets to the Success of Melissa Liu
3. The Lady behind *Tools of All*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⚫ |

1. Advice for Female Entrepreneurs
2. **Old Girl Talks about Her Innovative Business**

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

**Annotated Text**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **An Interview with Ms Melissa Liu**  **[1]**  Interviewer: Thank you, Miss Liu, for agreeing to attend this interview. I know you are very busy and it is a great privilege to have this opportunity.  Melissa Liu: Yes, I have a car below waiting to take me to the airport as I am needed in Singapore this evening for the opening of my new superstore there. I am not too fond of the mass media and would never accept any invitation for press interviews. I have a feeling that most articles about successful women pretend to celebrate male-female equality, but then show their real prejudices by commenting on the women’s appearance and personal life. But this time, I cannot say no to the Principal’s invitation as I have great affection for the school and great respect for her. Anyway, let’s get on with the interview.  **[2]**  Interviewer: Can you please begin by telling me how you got into business?  Melissa Liu: Well, as you know, I was born in Hong Kong and grew up here. During my years in St Saviour’s School, the Sisters really taught me to be disciplined and organised. I am very grateful to them for nurturing such qualities and attitudes in me. I then moved to Australia to stay with an aunt and get a degree in tourism and hospitality. I worked at a resort for a few years and got married. Then I suddenly felt time was passing, I was in my thirties and hadn’t really done anything and I decided to start a business and so Tools for All was born.  **[3]**  Interviewer: It’s not common to see women in this trade. What made you think of selling tools?  Melissa Liu: I get tired of being asked this sexist question. Tools aren’t only for men. Lots of women are interested in Do-it-yourself (DIY) and spend time decorating and repairing their homes. I admit I first got the idea from watching my menfolk, especially my husband, and hearing their complaints about the tool shops near us. I was then inspired to set up a business that sells craft tools and garden tools but I see nothing strange about a woman seeing a business opportunity in such goods.  **[4]**  Interviewer: Well, your idea was certainly very successful.  Melissa Liu: Indeed, and from the start I thought internationally so when the first shop did well I expanded across Australia very quickly and then into New Zealand. Now we are in Jakarta, Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Tokyo, Seoul and after tonight Singapore.  **[5]**  Interviewer: But you don’t have a store here in Hong Kong?  Melissa Liu: No, our shops are large with a lot of stock and choices. That’s why people like visiting and looking round, comparing things and perhaps having a coffee and cake while they think things over. Rents are too high here for that approach to work so we are compromising. There will be one big warehouse store in Yuen Long, but we expect most of our business to be online. If you haven’t time or inclination to go to Yuen Long, just check our website and place orders online, and we’ll deliver your purchase to you within twenty-four hours.  **[6]**  Interviewer: What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in business?  Melissa Liu: Really, being a man or woman is irrelevant. If you are willing to work very hard and set yourself clear and **realistic** goals, you can achieve what you want. But it is true that a lot of women have been brainwashed into a lack of confidence in their ability to be entrepreneurs. All over the world far more men than women open new businesses. Yet the evidence suggests new businesses started by women are far more **innovative** in the goods and services they offer, and make more profit than those set up by men. So why aren’t more women getting active? I think it’s mainly cultural. In the world rankings for female **entrepreneurship**, Japan, despite being a high-income country with full rights for women, comes only 12th. The United States and Australia come out at the top. And this is a tragedy for economies as well as individuals. What a lot of talent is being wasted! A recent British report pointed out that if as many women as men started new businesses in the UK every year, there’d be hundreds of thousands of new jobs each year too. But I am not really answering your question. One advantage is that women are better at networking. That’s important – good contacts and relationships are crucial. The disadvantages lie more in the corporate world. If you own the company there are no problems, but if you depend on being promoted by men you will have difficulties. People pay lip-service to equal opportunity but the glass ceiling still exists. Even in the States, women make up only 3% of CEOs of the top 500 companies. My advice to women is - run your own business!  **[7]**  Interviewer: Do you have any advice for students or graduates who wish to start their own business?  Melissa Liu: Yes, take risk! Get out of your comfort zone so that you can explore something new and realise your full potential. Think out of the box and don’t be limited by traditions or social **norms**. I know it is easier said than done but habitual thinking and familiar routine will stop one from learning and growing. My second advice is always hire the best people. **It**’ll cost you more, but **it**’ll also make a world of difference. Find talent, use it and reward it.  **[8]**  Interviewer: What excites you most in your life?  Melissa Liu: If you mean pleasurably, mainly business: seeing a new store, adding a new line to the stock, finding new suppliers and so on. I also love speed – fast cars, boats and my horses. Luckily there’s plenty of space in Australia for such things. But if you mean excite negatively – waste makes me angry, waste of human talent, waste of natural resources, waste of energy, any sort of waste.  **[9]**  Interviewer: What are your strengths and weaknesses?  Melissa Liu: As I said earlier, my convent education taught me to be self-disciplined. Also I am able to put myself in my customers’ shoes. If you can do that and work from that perspective, marketing becomes easy. Weaknesses? I can be too outspoken and blunt with people at times. I am working to control myself better and be more tactful so as not to offend people.  **[10]**  Interviewer: And what do you do in your spare time?  Melissa Liu: I don’t really have any! And in fact, I must dash now.  **[11]**  Interviewer: Thank you for your kindness and time.  Melissa Liu: It’s my pleasure meeting you. Please write a sensible article. | Q21  Q5a  Q5b  Q1, Q2  Q5c  Q5d, Q5e  Q3, Q20  Q4, Q19  Q5g  Q7  Q5h  Q5f, Q6  Q6  Q8, Q9  Q8  Q9  Q13a  Q10  Q13b  Q13d  Q11  Q12  Q11  Q16  Q16  Q13c  Q14, Q16  Q15  Q17, Q20  Q17  Q17  Q18a, Q18b  Q18c  Q18d  Q18e, Q18f  Q19 |

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