BE41: Companies: Reading – Two different organisations

B. Work in pairs. As you read, make a note of the key points about your company in the chart below.

Student A: Read Article 1 on the opposite page.   Student B: Read Article 2 on the opposite page.

India: Tata's search for a new CEO

by Joe Leahy in Mumbai

Mr Tata, Chairman of India's biggest company, is expected to retire – yet again – in two years. But this time things look different. The group appears ready to move on, formally announcing last month that it has set up a special committee to look for a new CEO.

Instead of simply choosing the most obvious successor, the group has said it will consider all candidates for India's biggest corporate job. In a country where companies are often controlled by influential families, the idea of an outsider, particularly a foreigner, controlling a group of Tata's size and reputation is revolutionary.

At risk is more than the future of the Tata Group, though this is very important to the national economy. With its 100 subsidiaries – including India's biggest private-sector steel company, its biggest information technology outsourcing company and its biggest automotive producer - it is also the country's first true multinational, with 65 per cent of its $71bn in revenue generated overseas.

Analysts question whether Tata can create an example for corporate India of orderly transition from family leadership to professional management. "There's a feeling if an outsider, especially a foreigner, took over a group as complex as Tata, it would be disastrous," says a banker who knows the company.

However, some critics argue that introducing professionals would help to break down a reputation for weak management in large, family-run companies.

Is John Lewis the best company in Britain to work for?

by Jon Henley

It is owned by its employees - or partners - who have a say in how it is run and receive a share of the profits. Surely, this is the way every organization should be run?

It's just before opening time on bonus day at John Lewis and, boy, are we excited. Up and down the country, the 69,000 people who work for the nation's favourite retailer are gathered, impatient. A specially chosen staff member opens an envelope and reads out a number. Fifteen per cent, It's the percentage of their salary that each John Lewis employee takes home as that year's bonus.

If a product is on sale in a John Lewis store, you know you can trust it. Plus you can be sure you'll be served by someone who really knows what they're talking about and, most unusually of all, is eager to help.

Unlike other high-street names, John Lewis is owned by its employees, each of whom has a say in its running and a share in its profits. This is Britain's largest example of worker co-ownership. Its purpose is "the happiness of all its members. Through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business''.

''It's a good company to work for." says Pedro, a Waitrose chef. "I didn't realise how good until I joined."

Employer-employee relations at John Lewis. says Nicola McRoberts, "are completely different. They want you to be happy."

A veteran of five years, Kirsty Reilly, in womenswear, speaks of the "passion and commitment" that come from "being engaged, because you have a shared interest in making sure it works, for you and for the people you work with."