

Answers

A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to overlook	to make up for	to be wide of the mark	a rash decision
to take accountability	stubborn	to get away with	to backfire
to get complacent	to pay the price	to take your eye off the ball	

1. A decision made without thinking clearly about it first: **a rash decision**

*"He panicked and made a **rash decision**."*

2. To stop monitoring or paying attention to something: **to take your eye off the ball**

*"As an investor, you can't afford to **take your eye off the ball**, because the markets change all the time."*

3. Refusing to change your point of view, even if it means that you are being unreasonable: **stubborn**

*"The manager was far too **stubborn**. She decided to proceed with her plan anyway despite the fact that we all warned her that it wouldn't work."*

4. To compensate for something: **to make up for**

*"She **made up for** her previous mistake by delivering record profits the next year."*

5. Incorrect or inaccurate: **wide of the mark**

*"Our projected profits for last year turned out to be really **wide of the mark**."
"The government's housing scheme was very **wide of the mark**. They didn't tackle the root causes of the crisis, so they only made it worse."*

6. To escape negative consequences when you make a mistake or do something wrong: **to get away with**

*"We missed the deadline by 2 days, but I think we have **got away with** it. Neither customers nor shareholders seem too concerned."
"The company has broken a few regulations. I don't think they're going to **get away with** it. It looks like they're going to receive a penalty."*

7. To become overly satisfied with your achievements to the point that you feel you don't need to try as hard any more: **to get complacent**

*"We got too **complacent** as market leaders and we stopped innovating."*

8. To experience the bad result of something that you have done: **to pay the price**

*"He made some very negative comments on social media, and he **paid the price** by getting fired from his job".*

9. To fail to notice something: **to overlook**

*"We admit that we **overlooked** a lot of the potential risks when we made the decision."*

10. To have the opposite and negative effect from what was expected: **to backfire**

*"The move to arrest the election candidate **backfired** as it caused her party to gain even more support."*

11. To accept responsibility for making a mistake: **to take accountability for**

*"As a leader, it is important for me to **take accountability** for problems that the team are facing."*

*"She is refusing to **take accountability** for her error."*

*"We aim to encourage a culture of **taking accountability** for decisions and actions."*

12. To be taken by surprise by something when you are not ready for it: **to be caught off guard**

*"We were **caught off guard** by the sudden changes in the market."*

B) Key Words in a New Context

The Downfall of Nokia

The once famous and much-loved Nokia 3210 now looks like something more likely to be seen in a museum. The Finnish company were once giants in the tech market, dominating the mobile industry with their sturdy, reliable and user-friendly devices. Believe it or not, such devices were extremely fashionable among consumers in the early 2000s. So how did Nokia, once a leading mobile phone company, go from being a market leader to falling quite spectacularly into a now fairly obscure corporation?



One of the most prominent mistakes Nokia made was around 2007 after Apple released the iPhone. By this time, Nokia had become so **complacent / stubborn**, believing that the strength of the brand image was enough to maintain their popularity. However, the company completely **overlooked** the rise of the smartphone, and they **took their eye off the ball / were caught off guard** regarding changing trends and consumer preferences for larger touch-screen phones.

Nokia's **stubborn** middle-management at the time refused to switch to an Android operating system. The heavy bureaucracy in the company meant that it was slow to adapt to changes in the market, even when it was clear that the company was on the wrong track. As a result, they missed many opportunities for innovation. This stubbornness also led to a series of **rash** decisions that proved to be **wide of the mark** and ultimately **backfired**, as nothing went according to plan. For example, allowing themselves to be acquired by Microsoft in 2013, at a time when Microsoft was really struggling with losses proved to be a huge mistake, which they ultimately **paid the price for** when they lost around 90% of their market share within 6 years.

Unfortunately, Nokia never managed to **make up for** their mistakes, and failed to recover in such a fast-paced industry after they had missed the boat on so many innovations. To this day, no-one at Nokia has ever willingly **taken accountability** for the company's mistakes. We could say that the whole world was **caught off guard** by the speed at which the mobile industry grew, but that will not be much of a consolation for Nokia. Neither will be the fact that my Nokia 3210 still works perfectly to this day.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. What lesson can be learned in paragraph 2 about brand image?
That brand image alone is not enough for a company to maintain its popularity. It needs to innovate and keep an eye on new trends.
2. According to the article, what were 2 main flaws in Nokia's middle management during their downfall?
They were stubborn, and there was too much bureaucracy, meaning that it was slow to adapt to changes.
3. What did Microsoft do in 2013, and why was this a bad idea?
Microsoft acquired Nokia, which was a bad idea because Microsoft were really struggling financially at the time.
4. The final paragraph refers to how Nokia 'missed the boat' on so many innovations. What do you think that 'missed the boat' means in this context?
To miss the boat means to be too slow to take advantage of an opportunity. This is often used in relation to investments and innovation.
"We really missed the boat on that stock."
5. Which 2 factors mentioned in the article will not make Nokia executives feel any better?
The first factor is that the whole world was caught off guard by the speed of innovation in the mobile industry. The second factor is that the author's Nokia 3210 device still works today.