

Grammar Bank

Talking about Success & Failure



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How successful has your company/team/individual performance been over the past year? Are you prepared to report your successes and failures to management? If you need some help in this area, here are some useful grammar and language tips to help you.



Present Perfect

When reporting information and giving updates we often use the present perfect. We use this structure to emphasise that something started in the past and continues up until the present, or that it finished very recently.

Subject	Auxiliary	Past Participle	Rest
The company	has	performed	extremely well this year.
It	has	been	a challenging year.
I	have	managed	to consistently meet my goals

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Talking about Achievements

When we want to talk about our achievements it is common to use the verbs 'succeed in' and 'manage to'. They both mean the same thing, but the structure is different:

Structure	Example
Succeed in + verb + -ing	We succeeded in signing a major new contract.
Manage to + infinitive	The team managed to sign a major new contract.

Success, Successful

Verb	Succeed	The team succeeded in meeting their goals this year.
Noun	Success	The departments results have been a great success .
Adjective	Successful	Overall, the company has been very successful this year.

Adverb + Adjective	Adjective + Noun
Very successful	A great success
Moderately successful	A moderate success

Talking about Failure

When we want to report the things that haven't gone so well, it is common to use the verb 'fail' and the noun 'failure'.

Verb	Fail	The team failed to meet the organisational goals.
Noun	Failure	The departments results have been a complete failure .

When presenting bad news it's important to communicate clearly and avoid ambiguity. However, sometimes we want to be subtle when talking about failure. The following expressions can help you:

Phrase	Example
To not quite manage	The company didn't quite manage to increase profits.
To not be a great success	The new marketing initiative wasn't a great success .
To fall short	This year's profits will fall short by 10%.
To hope for	We had hoped for a better outcome this financial year.