



● We used to spend a lot of money on inventory. We'd have at least three months stock on hand, and that all cost money: storage, moving it about, paperwork...	■ Now we work with a supplier in Milan who is far more reliable.
● We used to spend a fortune on TV advertising. We'd routinely approve publicity budgets of over half a million.	■ Now we use a lot of freelancers. We have access to a wider range of skills, but sometimes you can't get the person you want for a specific job.
● We used to produce all the electronic components in our factory in Kyoto. We'd ship them out to assembly plants in Europe and America.	■ Now we use more press advertising and special events. It's cheaper and just as effective.
● We used to operate only at the top end of the market. Everything we sold would be top quality and priced to match.	■ Now we subcontract a lot of our production. This gives us a lot more flexibility.
● We used to make all the parts in every machine ourselves. This would create big problems when we wanted to change a product line.	■ Now we have to customise to fit different people's needs. If we didn't, we couldn't compete.
● We used to have separate dining rooms. Management would eat in the Executive Restaurant, workers would go to the canteen.	■ Now we have flexitime and there's always somebody working whatever time you come in.
● We used to have parts built by a company in Turin. They were very inefficient and had poor labour relations. We'd often have to stop production because they were on strike.	■ Now we have a range of goods at different price points. It gives us access to more markets, but we have to be careful not to compromise our image.
● We used to have fixed hours for everybody in the company. Office workers would come in at nine and go home at five.	■ Now we control things much more tightly. We rarely have more than a week's stock at any one time. It's cut our costs enormously.
● We used to have a completely standardised range of products. We'd sell the same machines to all our customers in the same colours.	■ Now we've relocated to Ireland and Mexico because of the yen getting so expensive. It was the only way we could keep costs under control.
● We used to have a lot of design staff and researchers. We'd complete most projects 100% inside the company.	■ Now there are 1,500 people in the company. It's a lot more impersonal.
● We used to employ a lot of secretaries. Everything would be typed out by hand and if there was a mistake it would have to be done again.	■ Now everybody eats together. It's good for the atmosphere in the company.
● The director used to know the names of every single member of staff. He would go around on Fridays and see how everybody was getting along.	■ Now every manager has a PC on the desk. We have a lower salary bill and documents are easier to produce.

Before and after

Worksheet

9b

ACTIVITY

Groupwork and whole class: reading, speaking

AIM

To talk about how things have changed in companies, first through example sentences and then from the students' own experiences.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONS

Past states and habits

Used to + verb

Would + verb

VOCABULARY

inventory, stock on hand, storage, paperwork, a fortune, to approve a budget, electrical components, to ship something, assembly plant, the top end of the market, product line, canteen, inefficient, labour relations, to stop production, to go on strike, fixed hours, standardised, range of products, design, researchers, supplier, reliable, press advertising, special events, freelancer, access to skills, subcontract, flexibility, customise, compete, flexitime, price point, access to a market, to compromise an image, impersonal, PC (personal computer), document

PREPARATION

Make one copy of Worksheet 9b and cut it up as indicated.

TIME

20-30 minutes

PROCEDURE

- Write the following paragraph on the board:
We used to close the company for a month in August. Everybody would have their holidays at the same time. Now...
- Elicit ways to complete the paragraph (*Now we stay open all year; Now we all take our holidays at different times...*).
- Tell the students they are going to do an exercise about change in companies.
- Divide the class into two groups: *Before* and *After*.
- Give the *Before* group the cards which start with the words *We used to*.
- Give the *After* groups the cards which start with the word *Now*.
- Ask each group to discuss and note possible openings or completions for their half paragraphs.
- Bring the two groups together.
- In turn, a student from each group reads out a half paragraph. The other group look for the completion. When they find it, one student reads it out and the two cards are put to one side. The activity continues until all the cards are paired. The answers are given below.
- When the cards are paired ask the students about changes in their company/ies. Ask why changes took place and if they have made things better or worse.

FOLLOW-UP

Students write 150 words on changes in their company/ies.

ANSWERS

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The director used to know the names of every single member of staff. He would go around on Fridays and see how everybody was getting along. Now there are 1,500 people in the company. It's a lot more impersonal.

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