

# 13 Future trends

## Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about global issues
- Making predictions
- Responding to ideas
- Predicting future trends in the workplace

## Case study

- Modernizing a company

## Starting point

- 1 What global issues are in the news at the moment?
- 2 Which issues are you most worried about? Why? Are there any you are not worried about?
- 3 Which ones affect your company, your working life, and you personally?

## Working with words | Global issues

- 1 Read the text and find out when the global oil crisis is predicted to start.

### Countdown to crisis

Oil is running out and the race is on to find an alternative source of energy. Over the last 40 years oil has been used worldwide to give us food, warmth, chemicals, medicine, clothing and, most of all, mobility. But now Jeroen van der Veer, CEO of the oil multinational Royal Dutch Shell, has named the year that our needs will exceed the supply of oil. He predicts **global demand** for oil will rise dramatically in the next few years due to **population growth** and the rapid **economic development** of countries, such as China and India. He forecasts that, because of this, the **world supply** of oil will no longer be able to meet that demand as early as 2015.

Despite the urgency of this problem and the millions invested in **renewable energy** using sources, such as wind, waves, and sunlight, world governments are far from finding a solution. This means that if we don't take the **oil shortage** seriously, the **energy crisis** will happen sooner than we think.



- 2 Work with a partner and answer these questions.

- 1 What is oil used for, apart from cars?
- 2 What reasons does Jeroen van der Veer give for the rise in the demand for oil?
- 3 What measures are governments taking to prevent the energy crisis?

**3 Match the phrases in bold in the text to definitions 1–7 below.**

- 1 energy whose source will always exist \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 the need for something in the world \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 an improvement in financial conditions \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 a time when energy will cause problems \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 an increase in the number of people \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 a situation where there is not enough oil \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 the amount available in the world \_\_\_\_\_

**4 Work with a partner. Take turns to say the first word of the phrases in 3 and for your partner to say the second word.**

*Example: A global*

*B demand*

**5 59▶ Listen to Judy Collins, an economic analyst, discussing the effects of the oil crisis on the economy. Number the effects she mentions in the order you hear them.**

- a Meetings will be by video conference. \_\_\_\_
- b Fewer people will own cars. \_\_\_\_
- c More employees will work from home. \_\_\_\_
- d Oil prices will rise. \_\_\_\_
- e Consumer goods will become more expensive. \_\_\_\_

**6 59▶ Listen again and complete each sentence with a verb.**

- 1 Economists \_\_\_\_\_ that a 5% reduction will cause the price of oil to rise.
- 2 All plastic goods will become more expensive as the oil starts to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Experts \_\_\_\_\_ that only a few people will be able to run cars in the future.
- 4 Recent advances in technology will \_\_\_\_\_ working conditions for many employees.
- 5 The situation will \_\_\_\_\_ until a substitute for oil is found.

**7 Work with a partner. Replace the words and phrases in bold with a verb from 6. Then take turns to ask and answer the questions.**

- 1 How much do you **think** a mobile phone will cost in ten years' time?
- 2 Do you think your working conditions will **get worse** because of the oil crisis?
- 3 What do you do at work when the ink for your printer **comes to an end**?
- 4 How could your company **make** its image **better**?
- 5 What do you **predict** your company will be like in 2015?

▶▶ For more exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 126.

**8 Choose the three global issues from the list that concern you most. Write a sentence about each issue. Then work with a partner and compare your sentences.**

poverty    the energy crisis    population growth  
climate change    sex equality    racism

**9 Work with a partner. Look at your list of issues in 8. What action could you take? What action would you like governments to take?**

① ▶▶ Interactive Workbook ▶▶ Glossary

## Language at work | Future predictions

- 1 Work with a partner. Discuss what trends you think there will be in the workplace in the future. Then read the text and compare your answers.

# Adapting to future trends in the workplace

Companies who adapt to changing trends in the workplace are more likely to survive than those who resist a change. So what trends should companies be looking at and how can they adapt?

### Business pressures

Competition between businesses will be much stronger in the future and the winner will be the first to get its products onto the market. Managers may have to consider restructuring their companies.

### Age of employees

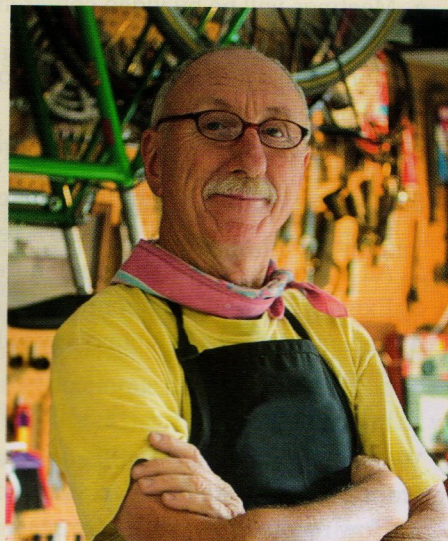
In the future employees might not retire at the age of 65 because of a possible pensions crisis. Employers will have to adapt the workplace to meet the needs of an older workforce.

### Work-life balance

Employees will expect more flexibility from their companies so that they can spend more time with their families. Managers will have to design new timetables in order to keep their staff.

### Technological changes

Advances in technology will mean that employees won't need their own desk any more. In the future, employers will need to redesign work areas so they can be used for meetings and leisure activities.



- 2 Choose the correct answer from the words in *italics*. Then read the text again and check your answers.

- 1 Managers *may* / *may not* have to consider restructuring their companies.
- 2 In the future employees *might* / *might not* retire at the age of 65.
- 3 Employees *will* / *won't* expect more flexibility from their companies.
- 4 Employees *will* / *won't* need their own desk any more.

- 3 Complete the rules about making future predictions.

- 1 Use \_\_\_\_\_ + infinitive when we are sure something will happen.  
*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Use \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ + infinitive when we think that perhaps something will happen.  
*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Use \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ + infinitive when we think that perhaps something will not happen.  
*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Use \_\_\_\_\_ + infinitive when we are sure something will not happen.  
*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

## Tip | short forms of will

The short form of *will* is 'll and the short form of *will not* is *won't*. We usually use short forms in spoken English and informal writing.

*I'm sure I'll enjoy working from home.*

*We won't have enough time to finish the report.*

- 4 60▶ Listen to a representative from the Work Association give a talk on the typical workplace in the year 2020. Tick (✓) the correct column in the table.

In 2020 ...	will	may / might	may / might not	won't
The working population / be older	✓			
There / be many management positions				
Colleagues / see each other often				
Most people / work from home				
There / be a lot of offices in office buildings				
Office buildings / contain a gym				
Employees / stay with the same company				
Employers / offer better conditions				
Employees / take career breaks				

- 5 Work with a partner. Compare your answers by making sentences about the typical workplace in 2020, using *will*, *may*, *might*, and *won't*.

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 127.

- 6 Work with a partner. Make predictions about your jobs using the ideas below. Which of your ideas were similar?

- hours
- technology
- office
- salary
- benefits
- pensions

## Practically speaking | How to respond to ideas

- 1 Work with a partner. Put the responses in order from the most positive (1) to the most negative (5).

- a That's a good idea. \_\_\_      d I think that's a great idea. \_\_\_  
 b I'm not happy about that at all. \_\_\_      e I'm not sure about that. \_\_\_  
 c That might work. \_\_\_

- 2 61▶ Listen to manager Luis de Sousa discussing how to reduce staff turnover with his colleague Gina Ronaldo. Match the responses in 1 to suggestions 1–5 below.

- 1 have a team-building weekend \_\_\_  
 2 hold a weekly department meeting \_\_\_  
 3 offer specialized courses \_\_\_  
 4 give everyone a pay rise \_\_\_  
 5 introduce a bonus system for employees who stay \_\_\_

- 3 Work with a partner. Your company is having problems with staff turnover. Look at these ideas and take turns to make a suggestion and to respond.

- improve the office environment
- offer flexitime
- recruit the right staff
- stop all overtime

## Business communication | Predicting

### 1 Work with a partner and answer the questions.

- 1 What is teleworking?
- 2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of teleworking?

### 2 62▷ Listen to three people asking their manager about their company's new teleworking scheme. Compare your list of advantages from 1 with the ideas the manager mentions.

### 3 62▷ Listen again and put sentences a–h in the order you hear them.

- a \_\_\_ I **hope** employees **will** feel more motivated.
- b \_\_\_ **Hopefully**, productivity **won't** decrease because of the new scheme.
- c \_\_\_ The new scheme **will definitely** save the company a lot of money.
- d \_\_\_ **Do you think** people **will** do more work from home?
- e \_\_\_ **It probably won't** be easy for some people to start with.
- f \_\_\_ So is our office building **likely to** close?
- g \_\_\_ Just how much **are we likely to** save?
- h \_\_\_ The office is **unlikely to** close completely.

### 4 Complete the table with the words in **bold** from the sentences in 3.

Asking for predictions	Making predictions	Expressing hope
1 Are ... likely to ...?	1 ... will definitely ...	1
2	2	2
3	3	

### 5 Work with a partner. You are taking part in the teleworking scheme in 2. Take turns to talk about the changes in your life, using the language in 4 and these ideas.

- get bored?
- miss your colleagues?
- get up early?
- work more?
- have more free time?
- save money?
- enjoy working at home?
- go out more?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 126.

### 6 Work with a partner. You have received an instruction from the Head Office of your company to stop all business trips abroad and make use of videoconferencing instead. Have a meeting to predict the effects of this measure on your company, using the ideas below.

- reduce costs?
- buy new equipment?
- where to put equipment?
- technical problems?
- clients have video equipment?
- clients like idea?

① » Interactive Workbook » Email and » Exercises and Tests

## Key expressions

### Asking for predictions

Is ... likely to ...?  
Are ... likely to ...?  
Do you think ... will ...?

### Making predictions

... will probably / definitely ...  
... probably / definitely won't ...  
... is likely / unlikely to ...

### Expressing hope

I hope ... will / won't ...  
Hopefully, ... will / won't ...

① » Interactive Workbook  
» Phrasebank

## Modernizing a company

### Background

### BMW transforms its Cowley plant

When BMW took over the Rover site at Cowley, Oxford, the plant's low productivity was a major concern. The outdated factory machinery meant that the manufacturing process was extremely expensive. Many of the car parts were imported from abroad, which was both impractical and expensive. The workforce at Cowley had spent many years fighting to keep their jobs, and so relations with management were poor. Finally, one of Rover's main brands, the Mini, could no longer meet the needs of the customer regarding safety, noise, and environmental concerns. For the Cowley car plant to continue production, radical change was necessary.

### Discussion

- 1 What problems did BMW face when it took over the Cowley car plant?
- 2 What changes do you think BMW made to transform Cowley into a successful plant?
- 3 Turn to File 25 on page 140 to compare your answers with the changes BMW actually made.

### Task

Textiles Inc. used to be a successful textile manufacturer, but it is now losing out to competitors.

- 1 Work with a partner. Turn to File 26 on page 140 to find out more about the problems at Textiles Inc. You are consultants for a company which has been employed to try and solve these problems. Discuss the problems and decide what the company needs to do to become successful again.
- 2 Work with another pair and have a meeting to present your possible solutions.
- 3 Choose the six best ideas to present to the management of Textiles Inc.



## Case study

# Information files | 24–31

## File 24 | Unit 12

### Activity, page 77

- 1 Good for your reputation, and now you have a cheap source of recycled plastic. Score three points.
- 2 An important sales argument. Outdoor furniture needs to resist the weather – and vandalism! Score three points.
- 3 You earn a good reputation for promoting equal opportunity policies. Score three points.
- 4 Your web pages will mainly be read by potential employees or future customers. Not a very public way to promote your image. Score one point.
- 5 This works for six months, but now you're at full capacity again and there's no more space to expand. Score one point.
- 6 A good choice. Local salaries won't be too high because of the employment situation. Score three points.
- 7 Recycling is an important part of environmental protection. But in general, plastic isn't good for the environment. Score one point.
- 8 Your market share remains stable because your competitors have had to increase their prices too. Score three points.
- 9 A good socially responsible gesture. It will also make you more popular with your local council customers. Score three points.
- 10 Not a socially responsible action, but you'll be sure to have a good team. If you want the best, your wage bill may be high, though. Score one point.
- 11 You now have many problems with delays in delivery. Also, transport costs are rising dramatically. Is this really a low-cost solution? Lose one point.
- 12 You sell at a good price, but your association with the oil industry isn't good for your image. Lose one point.
- 13 The workers accept your proposal, preferring to work four days a week than to lose their jobs. Score three points.
- 14 The safest way to prevent any more accidents. Your customers are very happy with your socially responsible gesture, and your ex-supplier agrees to pay half the cost. Score three points.
- 15 After six months, your customers start complaining that the quality of your furniture isn't the same as before. Lose one point.
- 16 The local council say they don't want another factory in their beautiful town. Lose two points. Read the question again and choose another option.
- 17 Your customers are very disappointed – this doesn't solve the problem. What happens if somebody gets seriously injured? Lose two points.
- 18 Your good reputation is damaged when the press hear about your sexist policies. Lose three points.

## File 25 | Unit 13

### Case study, Discussion, Exercise 3, page 83

#### Productivity

Invested money – more robots on production line  
Introduced flexible working – 3 shifts every day, 7 days a week  
→ more production hours

#### Logistics

Three main suppliers relocated to near factory + 60% components now delivered from UK → less time and money wasted

#### Relations with workforce

Workers organized into teams of 8–15 people responsible for solving their own problems on production line → improved relations with management

#### Environmental concerns

Minis for European market transported by rail

#### Customer satisfaction

Customers offered personalized car and can choose extensive range of options even after order is placed.

## File 26 | Unit 13

### Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 83

#### Problems at Textiles Inc.

#### Productivity

- low productivity
- high production costs
- inefficient

#### Logistics

- factory in rundown area on outskirts of town
- no public transport links

#### Relations with workforce

- largely female part-time employees
- high level of dissatisfaction
- high staff turnover

#### Environmental concerns

- textiles and factory very old-fashioned
- fined recently for not conforming to environmental legislation

#### Customer satisfaction

- poor – textiles do not meet customers' needs
- many goods returned