

## **Business English- Discussing Business Problems with First, Second and Third Conditionals**

*Work in groups of two to four students. You all work for the same company. Choose an issue that your company has such as one of the situations below and discuss it. Say what you should have done in the past, dismiss impossible or unlikely solutions (e.g. because they don't match the real situation), and then try to come up with solutions which are more likely to be successful. Use the same three steps in that order in each discussion, with these three different conditional forms for each part of that discussion:*

- Mistakes/ regrets – Third Conditional (e.g. “If we had launched a bid for those companies first, we would have grown bigger”)
- Unlikely or impossible solutions – Second Conditional (e.g. “If CDs became more popular again, we would be okay – but that’s not going to happen”)
- Realistic ideas with positive consequences – First Conditional (e.g. “If we hire a SEO expert, they will probably be able to sort it out”)

*With most of the situations, you will need to imagine you that you work for different kinds of companies to your real ones, e.g. a music shop, and to use your imaginations when talking about past mistakes, market conditions, etc.*

### **Possible problem situations to discuss**

Fewer and fewer people are buying CDs in your music shops

The other insurance companies have grown larger than yours by taking over smaller companies

Your bank has many bad debts

The market for your toys has shrunk because of the falling birth rate in your home market

Consumers have an image of your TVs as being expensive

Your website's Google ranking has been slipping

You sell mid-range mobile phones, which is a rapidly shrinking sector

The staff in one of your factories in China have kidnapped the manager from your company

Your global supply chain has been disrupted by a natural disaster in Thailand

Hackers have broken into your IT system and stolen customer and staff data

Your CEO has quit to join a competitor

Annual staff turnover of graduate recruits has been 30% this year

*Why are the three conditional forms used for the parts of the discussion above that they are used for? What are the differences between the three different conditional forms?*