

 **2.03** Read the article. As a class, summarize the basic differences between traditional and collaborative management styles.

Management Styles in the 21st Century



In the past, almost all companies had a traditional structure. This basically meant that the decision-making was done by the managers, and the employees were told what to do. This structure worked very well in companies where there were very clear differences in skills between managers and workers, but in modern companies, the differences are often not as clear. Employees often have a lot of experience and in their field, and they have excellent thinking skills. Many are good at problem-solving and are very creative. Quite a few companies, and even whole industries, still use a traditional management structure, but many companies are changing to a more management style.

In a traditional management structure, company executives work alone or with each other to solve problems and make decisions. The employees under them then those decisions, and they are the decisions very often. Employees are given only as much information as they need to do their specific jobs. Managers often suggestions. Employees are very clear rules about everything from their roles and responsibilities to office hours to dress codes.

In a collaborative management structure, the workplace is very different. There are still managers, but the office culture is based more on cooperation and individual responsibility. Managers think the employees under them in problem-solving and decision-making. There is a high level of information sharing. Teamwork is important, and employees are encouraged to offer ideas and suggestions. Rules are often more flexible;

employees strict dress codes, and sometimes, office hours are flexible.

There are pros and cons to both business models. Decision-making is faster when only a few people are involved, and managers often have more experience and knowledge than other employees. However, involving more people means there are more ideas to choose from, and younger employees may have new, fresh ideas. If a lot of information is shared with employees, they might leave the company and give information to competitors, so it may be safer for only a few people to have it. However, having more information about the company may help employees do their work more effectively. Strict rules can create a professional, productive atmosphere in a company, and many people like knowing exactly what they and what the rules are. Other people work better in a more collaborative environment. They feel more motivated if they think the company values their knowledge and ideas.

One of the most important decisions that companies have to make in the 21st century is which management style will work best for their type of business and for their employees. In some cases, it is possible to have a combination of traditional and nontraditional characteristics so that employees how they want to work that best fits the situation.

C READING SKILL—Use a graphic organizer to take notes. Look back at the article in B. Write study notes in the organizer.

