

**YKK Episodes**

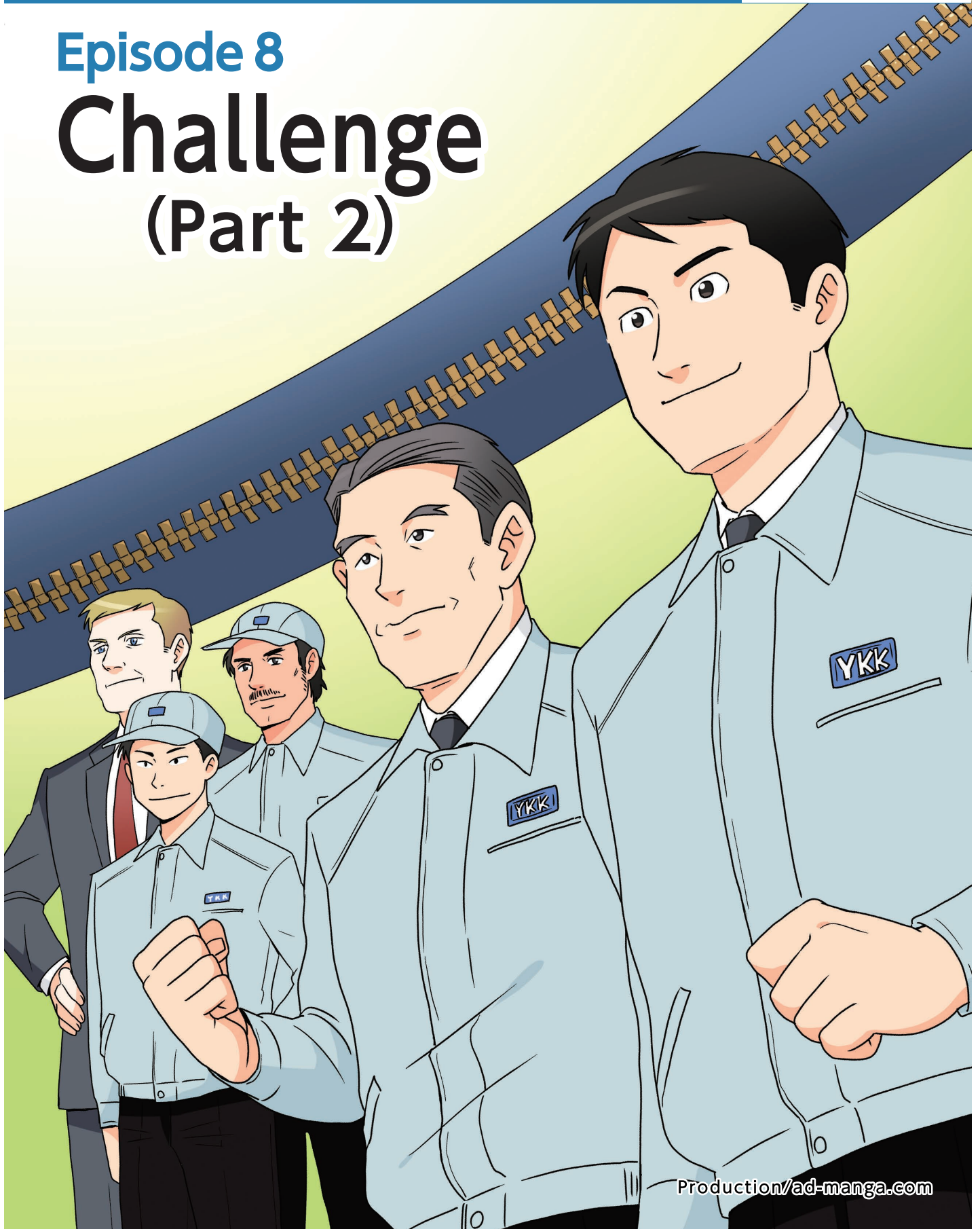
Expanding around the World  
– Memorable Stories –



# Episode 8

# Challenge

## (Part 2)



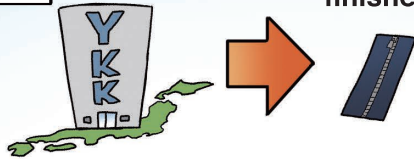
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# What were the trials YKK faced?

In the 1970's in the USA,  
a fundamentally different business model to  
Japan had already taken root.

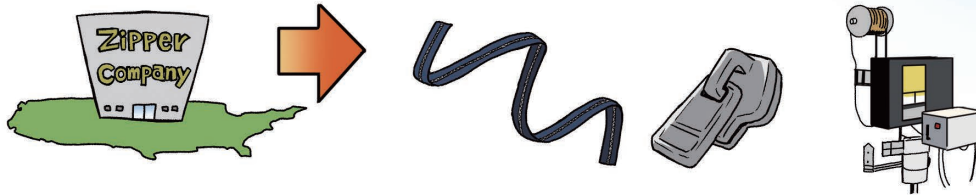
Japan

Delivering the zipper as a  
"finished product"



USA

Delivering the zipper parts  
and leasing the machinery that assembles  
the zipper to the garment factories



On top of that, competitors  
had built relationships of trust  
with jeans manufacturers  
over many years.

So for YKK to break into  
this market was never going  
to be a run-of-the-mill task.

**But that would not stop YKK from moving forward.**

First, we needed to find a way to make stronger zippers at a lower cost compared to other companies. The person who rose to the challenge was Mr. M from Development.

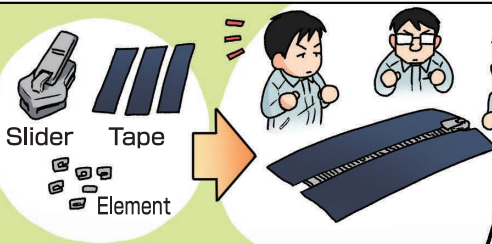
We can guarantee quality of our zippers for jeans during the washing and finishing processes.

Japan

We need to make this kind of product.

Mr. M (50yrs.)

Breaking down the barriers between departments and developing the zippers in three parts changed the development process extensively.

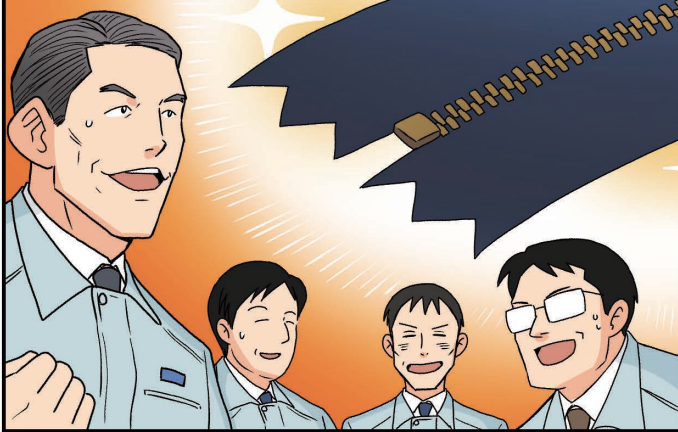


We thoroughly analyzed other companies' zippers.

The necessary materials, manufacturing process, and shape were worked out through a process of trial and error involving several hundred attempts.



We succeeded in surpassing the quality of other companies' products.



We finally completed our jeans zippers.

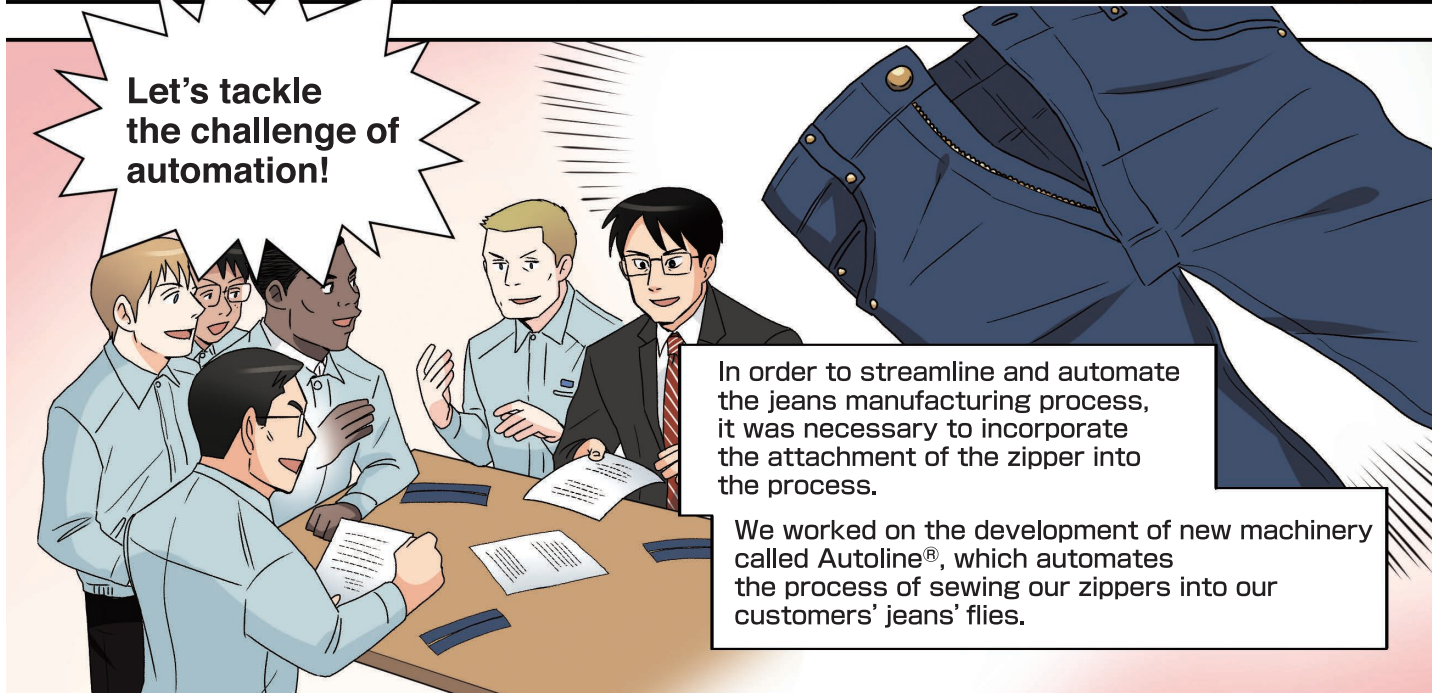
However, breaking into the U.S. market required more than just having a good product.

In the USA,



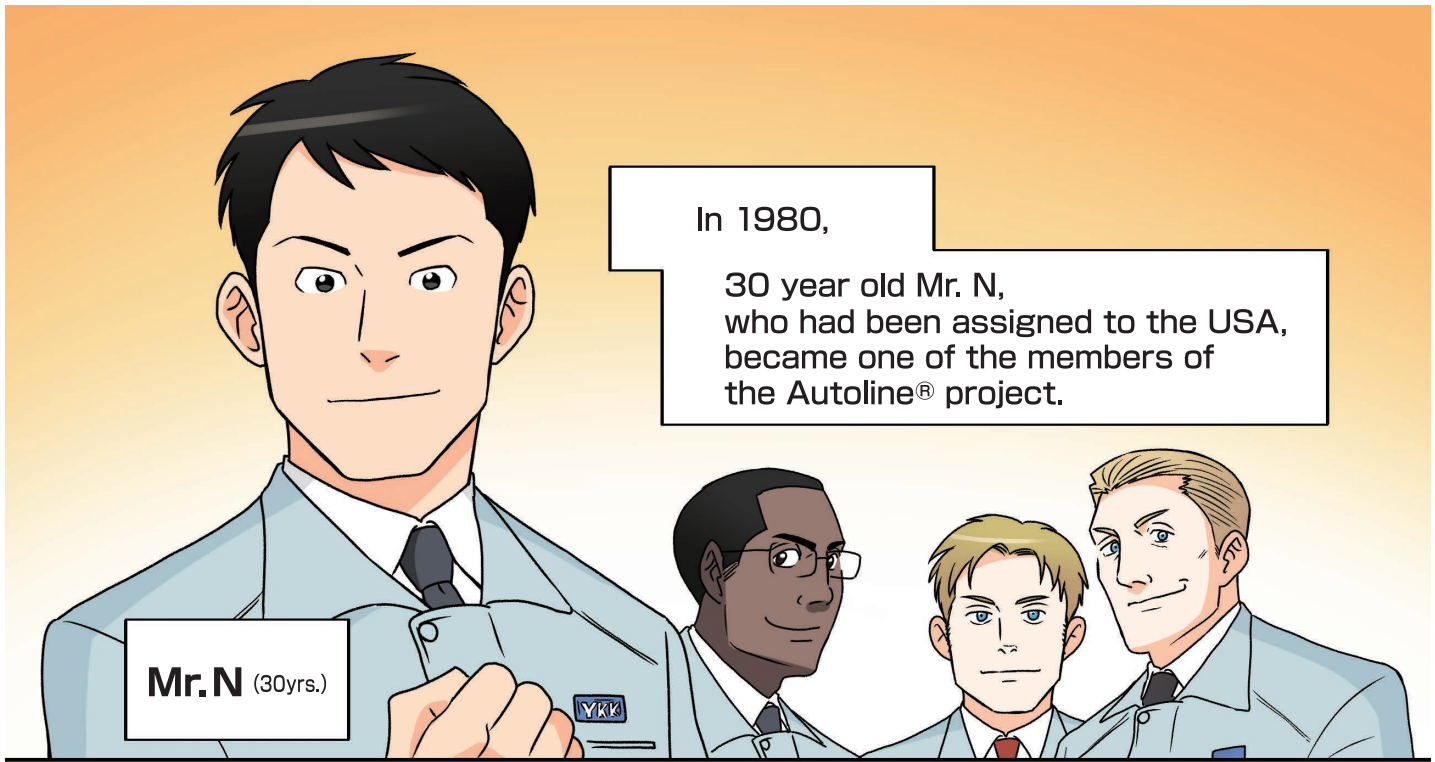
it was necessary to make logical proposals adapted to customers' manufacturing processes.

Let's tackle the challenge of automation!



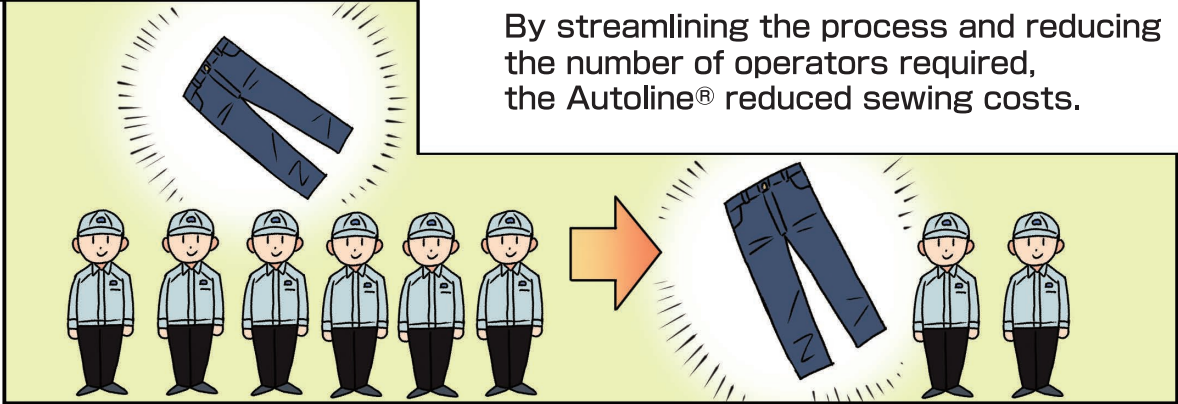
In order to streamline and automate the jeans manufacturing process, it was necessary to incorporate the attachment of the zipper into the process.

We worked on the development of new machinery called Autoline®, which automates the process of sewing our zippers into our customers' jeans' flies.

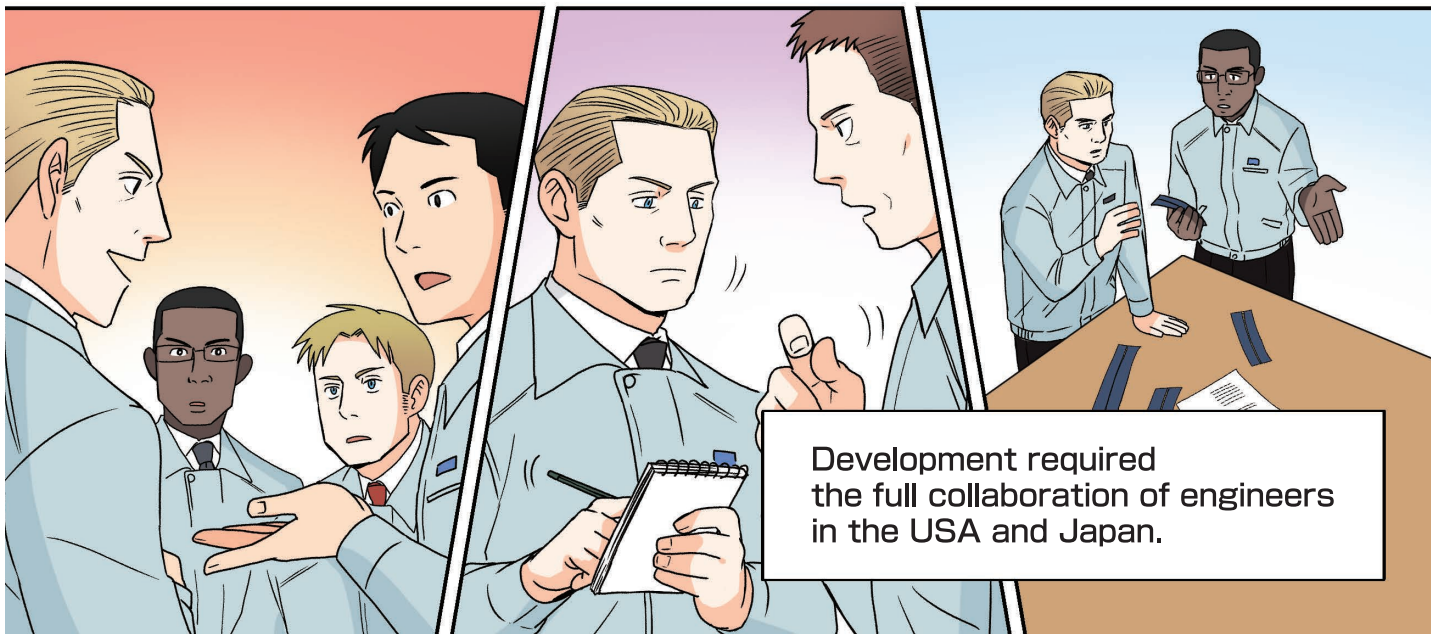


In 1980,  
30 year old Mr. N,  
who had been assigned to the USA,  
became one of the members of  
the Autoline® project.

Until then, machinery was semi-automated,  
designed to make the attachment of  
the zipper as easy as possible.



By streamlining the process and reducing  
the number of operators required,  
the Autoline® reduced sewing costs.



Development required  
the full collaboration of engineers  
in the USA and Japan.



A few years later,  
as a result of the fusion between  
the creative ideas of the USA and  
the technology of Japan,

the prototype was  
finally completed.

But it wasn't enough  
just to test it in  
the prototype lab.

We needed  
the cooperation of  
an actual jeans factory.

The incessant hard work of our  
salespeople in building strong relationships  
of trust bore fruit when a major jeans  
manufacturer allowed us to install  
the equipment for a full-scale trial at  
their factory.

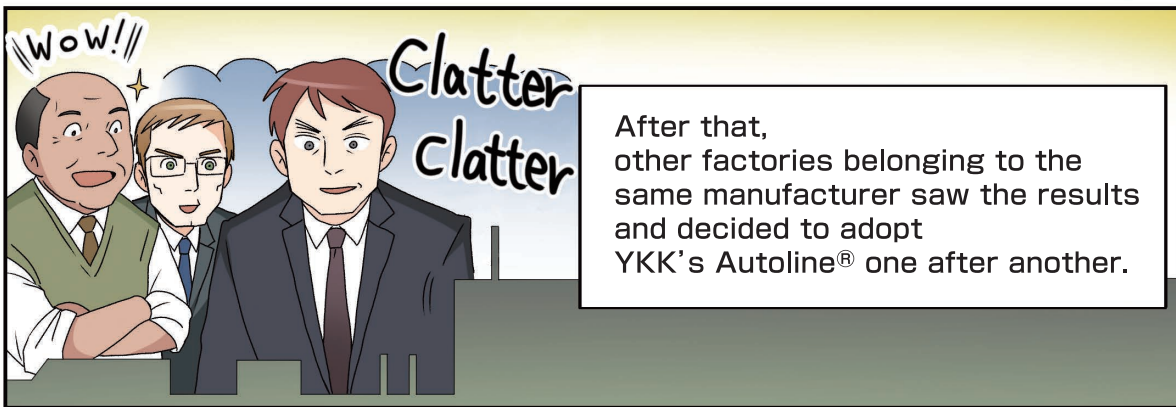
The engineers were glued to  
the factory,  
continually producing  
improvements...

And then six months  
later...



The factory decided to officially adopt YKK's Autoline®.

We had finally done it!



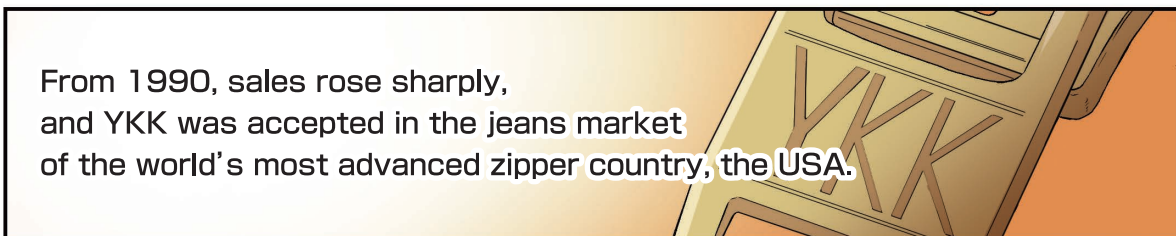
After that, other factories belonging to the same manufacturer saw the results and decided to adopt YKK's Autoline® one after another.



Other customers need this machinery, too!

With the help of the machine tool department in Japan, the new machinery also met the customers' production volume targets.

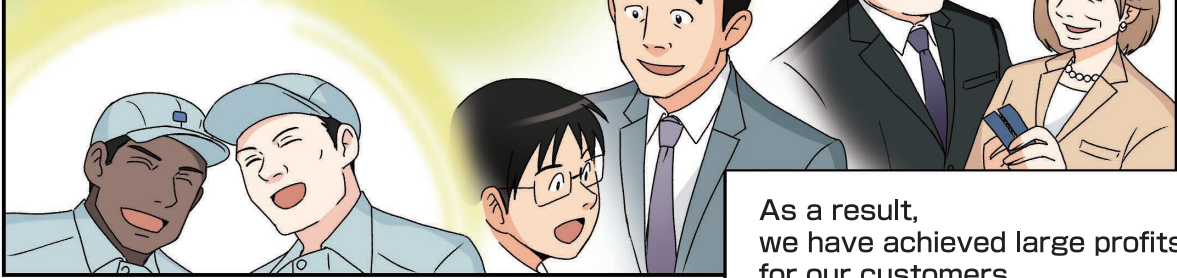
Let's do it together!



From 1990, sales rose sharply, and YKK was accepted in the jeans market of the world's most advanced zipper country, the USA.



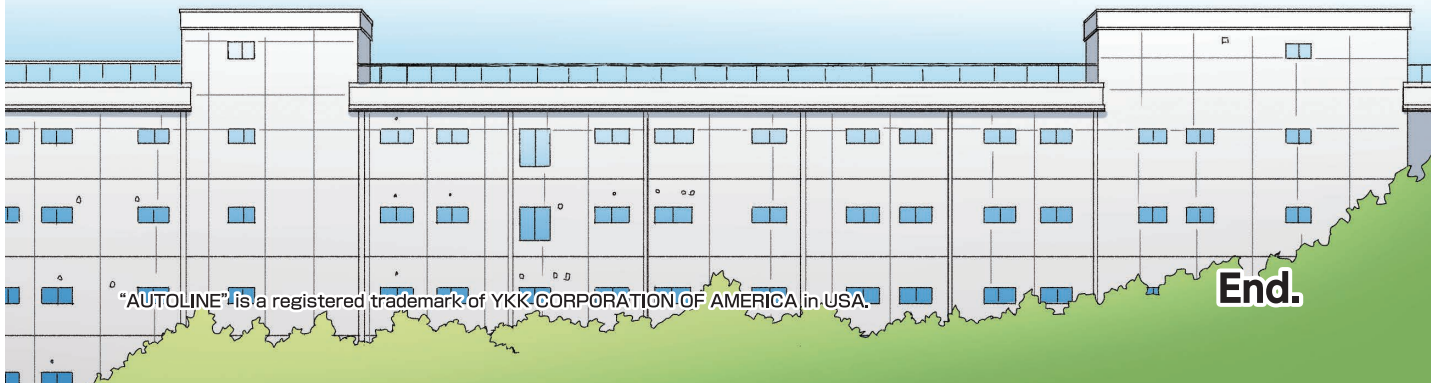
And since that time,  
we have continued working to develop  
new products, improve the Autoline®,  
and reduce manufacturing costs in order to  
better respond to the needs of our customers.



As a result,  
we have achieved large profits  
for our customers

by providing  
customers with better  
products at a  
lower cost and  
with greater speed.

The spirit of those times  
has been passed on  
and is alive at YKK today.



\*"AUTOLINE" is a registered trademark of YKK CORPORATION OF AMERICA in USA.

End.