



# COMMON EXPRESSIONS IN BUSINESS



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
19M9-S6XF-SJ58



## 1

### Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What is an idiom?
2. Can you give an example of an idiom from your first language?
3. Can you give an example of idioms you know in English?

## 2

### Idioms with verbs

Part A: Match the verb to the rest of the idiom.

- |          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| 1. go    | a. off on the right foot  |
| 2. bring | b. back to square one     |
| 3. cut   | c. the ball rolling       |
| 4. get   | d. the nail on the head   |
| 5. hit   | e. someone on their toes  |
| 6. keep  | f. your losses            |
| 7. start | g. outside the box        |
| 8. think | h. something to the table |



**Part B: Now write the completed idiom underneath the correct meaning.**

1. get a process going

\_\_\_\_\_

2. begin a relationship in a positive way

\_\_\_\_\_

3. make sure someone is ready to do something unexpected or with very little warning

\_\_\_\_\_

4. approach a problem or situation in a way that hasn't been done before

\_\_\_\_\_

5. be correct about (often the cause of) a situation or problem

\_\_\_\_\_

6. contribute to a conversation or situation in a useful way

\_\_\_\_\_

7. have to start again from the beginning

\_\_\_\_\_

8. stop a process that is unsuccessful before it gets worse

\_\_\_\_\_

**Now complete the following questions.**

1. When you meet someone new, what is a good way to **start** \_\_\_\_\_?

2. Have you ever worked on a project and then had to **cut** \_\_\_\_\_ and change it a lot?

3. Does your company **keep** \_\_\_\_\_? Or is it easy to predict what you will be working on? Why?

4. In your team or department, what knowledge and experience do you **bring** \_\_\_\_\_?

5. Do you often have to **think** \_\_\_\_\_ in your work? Why/why not?

6. When you start a new task or a new project, how do you normally **get** \_\_\_\_\_?

**Now in pairs, answer the questions.**

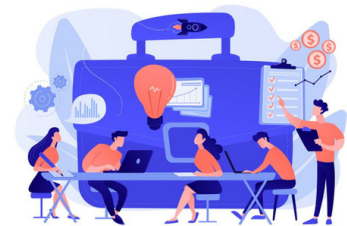


## 3

**Understanding a conversation**

Quickly complete the dialogue below with the idioms from the vocabulary section.

- Aziz:** Good morning, everyone. We've got a lot to do today, so let's \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>. First of all, we need to talk about the problem we've got with our French supplier. As you may have heard, they are shutting down their business and can no longer supply the parts we need for our machines. This is going to affect production for us. So, we will have to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> there and we're going to need to find someone else.
- Stuart:** Sorry, can I just point out something? I've been talking about this with Julie in Production and she said that it could be almost a year before they shut down their factories, so it's still possible they could help us. Failing that, there's a Spanish supplier that could \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup>.
- Fiona:** I don't think we can base our project on important deliveries from a company that may or may not be able to supply us. I think we're going to have to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> with the French company and make sure that we \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> with whoever we get to replace them.
- Aziz:** Yes, I think Fiona has \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup>. It's going to be better to know exactly what we can deliver and when we can deliver it by, even if there's a delay, than spend the next year worrying that it could all go wrong at a later stage when it will be more difficult to fix. Also, I'm not sure that I see eye to eye with Julie on the situation in France. I worked quite closely with them and I've got some good contacts there. They all say the situation is more serious than that and I think they'll be shutting down much sooner. We can certainly look at the Spanish option, but this may require us to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup> a little bit and find a supplier we haven't used before. We do need to keep costs in mind though. Fiona and Stuart, can I ask both of you to do some research this week and we'll meet again on Friday to discuss how to move forward?
- Stuart:** Not a problem.
- Fiona:** Let's arrange some time after this meeting, Stuart.
- Aziz:** Thank you both, I know we've got a lot to do at the moment, but I like to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup>. Right, the second thing we need to discuss is ...





## 4 Reading Comprehension

Read the following statements about the dialogue and decide if they are true (T), false (F) or not given (NG).

1. The French company has broken a contract with Aziz's company. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Stuart suggests a solution to the problem. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fiona thinks they should keep using the French supplier. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Aziz thinks the French supplier will be out of business in less than a year. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Aziz thinks using the Spanish supplier will be the best option. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Stuart and Fiona will meet without Aziz before next Friday. \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 Idioms with prepositions and adverbs

Complete the following idioms with the adverbs and prepositions in the box. You will need to use some of the words more than once.

from / on / behind / up / by / in / ahead

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the ball
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the ground up
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the loop
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the book
5. \_\_\_\_\_ the same page
6. \_\_\_\_\_ of the game
7. \_\_\_\_\_ the scenes
8. \_\_\_\_\_ in the air



Discuss what you think the idioms mean. Check your ideas in a dictionary or with the teacher.

Now complete the following questions.

1. Are you comfortable when your plans are \_\_\_\_\_ in the air, or do you like to know exactly what you are doing?
2. Are you someone who likes to do everything \_\_\_\_\_ the book? Why/why not?
3. How do you keep your manager and your colleagues \_\_\_\_\_ the loop at work?
4. When you were at school or university, were you \_\_\_\_\_ of the game? Why/why not?
5. Do you find you're usually \_\_\_\_\_ the same page as the people in your department or team? Why/why not?
6. Do you think you are someone who could build a business \_\_\_\_\_ the ground up? Why/why not?
7. What time of day are you most likely to be \_\_\_\_\_ the ball? Why?
8. What do you think your customers would think if they could see what happens \_\_\_\_\_ the scenes?

In pairs, answer the questions.

## 6

### Listening for details



Listen to the two speakers talking about their careers. Complete the extracts with the idioms and write down which one each speaker uses.

1. It's a tough job doing sales here because you need to be really \_\_\_\_\_ ... - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
2. My father built his business \_\_\_\_\_ ... - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
3. I made the mistake of not keeping my manager \_\_\_\_\_ ... - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
4. He's the type of guy that does everything \_\_\_\_\_ ... - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
5. ... and we're not really \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to my future. - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
6. He's always been \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to business. - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
7. I...learned a lot about the business by watching what was going on \_\_\_\_\_. - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_
8. So now my career is really \_\_\_\_\_ ... - Speaker \_\_\_\_\_



**7 Listening comprehension**

Complete the table by ticking the box to answer each of the questions.

Who ...	Speaker 1	Speaker 2
a. started a career that they want to change?		
b. worked in a family business?		
c. traveled a lot as part of their job?		
d. made contacts in the military?		
e. is interested in how vehicles work?		
f. lost their job?		
g. doesn't know what they want to do next?		
h. has a good idea about what they want to do next?		

**8 Talking point**

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Which of the idioms you've been talking about today do you think are the most useful?
2. What do you think the following idioms mean? How can you use them?

- raise the bar
- word of mouth
- twist someone's arm
- go the extra mile
- all in the same boat
- the ball is in your court
- cut corners



## 9

**Extended activity/Homework**

Write about a time when you've had to do one of the following:

- Cut corners
- Raise the bar
- Twist someone's arm
- Go the extra mile

**You should:**

- write at least 150 words,
- check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.