



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 _____¹. 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 _____² 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 _____³.
- 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 _____⁴ with the French company and make sure that we _____⁵ with whoever we get to replace them.
- Aziz:** Yes, I think Fiona has _____⁶. 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 _____⁷ 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 _____⁸. 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.