



BUSINESS IDIOMS 3



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Expemo code:
1FLF-A1L9-377



1

Warm up

In pairs or small groups, discuss the questions below.

1. What qualities do you think make someone a great employee or a successful leader? Why?
2. What is the most important factor for success in business: hard work, creativity, or networking? Why?
3. Can you describe a job you think would be exciting and a job you think would be boring? What makes them different?
4. How has technology changed the way people work in the last 10 years? Do you think these changes are mostly positive or negative?





2

Common idioms and phrases in business 1

Match the bolded idiomatic expressions with their correct meaning below.

1. David lost the deal because of his poor communication skills. He really **blew it**.
2. Our new product did very well in our home market, but it really **bombed** abroad.
3. Joanne is very **bullish** about the company's future. She thinks we'll eventually dominate the market.
4. The manager is the one who **calls the shots** around here. The workers' opinions don't count.
5. Their accountant tried to **cook the books** but he got caught. He might go to prison.
6. Rachel **runs a tight ship**. She has no time for people who try to avoid work.
7. Dean always **drives a hard bargain** during negotiations.
8. Even during the worst economic crises, some businessmen are able to **make a killing**.
 - a. have great financial success
 - b. confident, optimistic
 - c. failed to take advantage of an opportunity by doing or saying something wrong
 - d. expects a lot in exchange for something
 - e. is in the position of being able to make the decisions that will influence a situation
 - f. controls a business firmly and effectively
 - g. failed
 - h. alter facts or figures dishonestly or illegally

3

Talking point 1

Discuss the following questions.

1. Was there an occasion in the past when you felt you blew it?
2. Can you think of any products or services that were bombed in your country?
3. Are you bullish about the future of your economy?
4. Who do you think should call the shots in a large company?
5. Do accountants cook the books in your industry sector?
6. Are many people able to make a killing in your country?



4

Common idioms and phrases in business 2

Part A: Match the following expressions to their definitions on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. small talk | a. difficult to achieve because of obstacles and difficulties |
| 2. an uphill battle | b. uncertain, often because other matters have to be decided first |
| 3. in the loop | c. everything that is involved with a particular situation |
| 4. the big picture | d. conversation about unimportant topics that do not offend people |
| 5. up in the air | e. part of a select group with knowledge that others do not have |



Part B: Complete the sentences below with the correct idioms from Part A.

1. We want to add new features to our website, but nothing has been decided yet. Everything's still _____.
2. I think winning that contract is going to be _____. Our competitors are offering much better prices than we are.
3. Even though we all have very specific tasks to do, our manager always makes sure we see _____.
4. We usually make about 10 minutes of _____ before negotiating.
5. Please keep me _____ while I'm away. I want to know what's going on in the company.

5

Talking point 2

In pairs or small groups, discuss the questions below.

1. Do you make a lot of small talk in your work?
2. Are there many uphill battles in your business?
3. Is there anything in your work or business that is still up in the air?
4. Why is it important to always see the big picture?



6

Optional extension: role play

In pairs, create a short dialogue between two business professionals discussing a project or a business challenge. Incorporate at least five of the business idioms from the lesson into your conversations. Then play your roles together in pairs.

Example scenario 1

Two colleagues are discussing how to handle delays in completing a project.

Example scenario 2

Two employees from the marketing department are brainstorming creative ideas for a new product launch.