

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH COURSE

Unit 2: Essential Workplace Vocabulary

10 Common Business Idioms

PART 1 BUSINESS IDIOMS – VIDEO

1. Ballpark number/figure

A very inexact estimate. It is a bit like saying very roughly. The number is in the park as it were but not in the goal. Examples sentences would be: **Could you give me a ballpark number how much it costs if we assign all the online store operation to your company?**

2. By the book

To do things exactly according to the rules or the law. Sometimes people try and bend the rules and don't do things by the book, maybe because there are lot of rules or they want to do things more quickly. **Example sentence: We told our auditors that we do everything by the book.**

3. Corner the market

To dominate a particular market, to be the strongest and most successful business in that market, like McDonalds in the fast-food industry. **Example: Amazon more or less corners the online retailing market.**

4. Cut-throat

Very intense, aggressive, and merciless competition. An environment where you could be easily sacked if you don't meet your target or others will try and push you down and step over you so they can succeed. **Example : Competition in top legal firms is cut-throat, you really have to watch your back.**

5. Go down the drain

Something is wasted or lost. We often use these words to talk about work or money which has been lost or wasted as something did not go to plan or something went wrong. **For example, the director rejected our proposal at the end, which made all our efforts in the last 2 months go down the drain.** All our efforts **to enter this new market went down the drain when the country increased its tax on imports**, it made it too expensive for us to sell our products in that region.

6. Go the extra mile

To do more than what is expected, to do extra. I went the extra mile to win a client back to the deal with my company. Companies sometimes use phrases such as **'we give our customers the best shopping experience, we go the extra mile'**. You can also use this personally, **for example, 'my husband really went the extra mile when he booked the trip to Paris for my birthday'**.



7. Hands are tied

Not being free to behave in the way that you would like, you are restricted by your current situation. **For example, I'd love to help you with the strike, but my hands are tied, I can't risk upsetting the manager on your behalf because I really need this job so I can pay my bills.**

8. In a nutshell

Using as few words as possible – this is a phrase we use when we summarise. **In a nutshell, if we don't sell anything we won't get commission, so we won't get paid.** Or in a nutshell, we will run out of cash in three months' time.

9. In the driver's seat

To be in charge or in control of a situation. To be in charge or in control of a situation. Once I am offered the position of managing director, **I'll be in the driver's seat so I can start to change things for the better.**

10. Long shot

Something that has a very low probability of happening, something that is unlikely but usually you can give it a try. **For example, winning that contract is a long shot, there is a lot of competition but let's give it a go!**