

Business idioms

Lesson code: 121P-S7AB-EL43

UPPER INTERMEDIATE

1 Common idioms in business

Match the underlined idiomatic expressions with their correct meaning below.

1. There is more demand for the product than supply. This is causing a bottleneck in our production.
 2. Outsourcing customer service can improve the bottom line by reducing costs.
 3. She was a bit cold, so he made a little small talk to break the ice.
 4. We need to get on board with social media. Everyone else is doing it.
 5. We need to reduce budgets in every single department. There will be cost cutting across the board.
 6. The meeting is not over yet, but I'm a bit tired. Let's call it a day and continue tomorrow.
 7. We've been running the project for two years and there's still no profit. I think we should just cut our losses and start something new.
 8. They tried to cut corners during the construction of the bridge. Now it is falling down.
- a. agree or accept something
 - b. creating an obstacle or delay in progress or production
 - c. everywhere, applying to everybody
 - d. finish for today
 - e. make someone who you have not met before feel more relaxed
 - f. net income or loss
 - g. save money or effort by finding cheaper or easier ways to do something
 - h. stop doing something that is already failing in order to reduce the amount of time or money that is being wasted on it

2 Talking point

Discuss any of the following questions:

1. Have you ever needed to cut corners in your work? What happened?
2. What do people talk about when they want to break the ice in your country?
3. What things can cause a bottleneck in your work or business?
4. Is your company getting on board with new Internet marketing methods?
5. In what ways can your company improve the bottom line?
6. Have you ever decided to cut your losses following a bad investment decision?



3 More business idioms

Study the following idioms and complete the sentences below.

- **take somebody on board** - employ someone
- **a can of worms** - a source of many unpredictable and complicated problems
- **close a deal** - complete a negotiation
- **breathe down someone's neck** - watch someone's activities very closely
- **keep a cool head** - stay calm

Now complete the sentences below with the idioms above:

1. We've negotiated all the terms of the agreement. We are ready to _____ .
2. I'm sure that there is a lot of corruption in that country. The investigation may open up _____ .
3. During intense and stressful negotiations, it is important to _____ .
4. She seemed like a good fit for our company, so we decided to _____ her _____ .
5. Since she became a director, she no longer has a boss _____ ing _____ her _____ .

4 Talking point

Discuss any of the following questions:

1. Is it efficient to breathe down people's necks? How much freedom should a business allow its employees?
2. How stressful is your work? Is it difficult to keep a cool head sometimes?
3. What kind of people does your company or department take on board?
4. Can you think of any situation that could be described as 'opening a can of worms'?

