

## Vocabulary – Idioms

### Practice 12 Common Business English Idioms – Part 1

A. Match each idiom on the left with its meaning on the right, e.g. *THINK BIG* = be ambitious:

Idiom:

Meaning:

- |     |                                   |                                    |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.  | 24/7                              | a) look at the whole project       |
| 2.  | be ahead of the curve             | b) events which are not public     |
| 3.  | touch base with sby               | c) manual worker / clerical worker |
| 4.  | behind the scenes                 | d) an approximate amount           |
| 5.  | ASAP                              | e) all the time (exaggeration)     |
| 6.  | think big                         | f) be ambitious                    |
| 7.  | blue collar / white collar worker | g) catch up with / meet sby        |
| 8.  | go back to the drawing board      | h) informal / secret agreement     |
| 9.  | behind sby's back                 | i) as soon as possible             |
| 10. | backroom deal                     | j) start again                     |
| 11. | get the big picture               | k) be in front of the competition  |
| 12. | a ballpark figure                 | l) without informing sby           |

B. Discuss each idiom with a partner or small group. How do they relate to your life? E.g. who do you need to touch base with? What do you want to happen ASAP?

C. Complete each sentence with an idiom in the correct verb form, if necessary:

- I'm sorry, but this is not working out. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ on this one.
- Could you email me those documents \_\_\_\_\_, please? I need them urgently.
- 'Do you think P & J are as far advanced as we are?' 'No. I think we're definitely \_\_\_\_\_.'
- He won the contract in a kind of \_\_\_\_\_, with no minutes and a more informal approach.
- Well – I'm not sure of the exact amount, but I can give you \_\_\_\_\_.
- I've been working on this project \_\_\_\_\_. I've got to finish it in time.
- You know, there should be equal terms for both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ employees.
- Their public announcements are very slick, but I'd love to see what's going on \_\_\_\_\_.
- Yeah, she was bidding for the same contract \_\_\_\_\_! I couldn't believe it.
- Can you hang around after the Zoom call. I just want to \_\_\_\_\_ on a few issues.
- Look – you're getting bogged down in details. Details! Can I \_\_\_\_\_ here?
- 'Are we talking about five product lines?' 'No, Gary. I think we should \_\_\_\_\_ this time.

D. i) Write a sentence with each idiom:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

ii) Write a text containing all of the idioms in a particular genre, e.g. a news report, a sci-fi movie, a romantic novel, a comedy, a thriller, etc.



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Answers:

A.

- |    |    |     |    |
|----|----|-----|----|
| 1. | e) | 7.  | c) |
| 2. | k) | 8.  | j) |
| 3. | g) | 9.  | l) |
| 4. | b) | 10. | h) |
| 5. | i) | 11. | a) |
| 6. | f) | 12. | d) |

C.

1. I'm sorry, but this is not working out. Let's **go back to the drawing board** on this one. (8)
2. Could you email me those documents **ASAP**, please? I need them urgently. (5)
3. 'Do you think P & J are as far advanced as we are?' 'No. I think we're definitely **ahead of the curve**.' (2)
4. He won the contract in a kind of **backroom deal**, with no minutes and a more informal approach. (10)
5. Well – I'm not sure of the exact amount, but I can give you **a ballpark figure**. (12)
6. I've been working on this project **24/7**. I've got to finish it in time. (1)
7. You know, there should be equal terms for both **blue collar** and **white collar** employees. (7)
8. Their public announcements are very slick, but I'd love to see what's going on **behind the scenes**. (4)
9. Yeah, she was bidding for the same contract **behind my/our back!** I couldn't believe it. (9)
10. Can you hang around after the Zoom call. I just want to **touch base (with you)** on a few issues. (3)
11. Look – you're getting bogged down in details. Details! Can I **get the big picture** here? (11)
12. 'Are we talking about five product lines?' 'No, Gary. I think we should **think big** this time. (6)

D. i) and ii)

Answers will vary.

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