

IDIOMS FOR BUSINESS

by

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Introduction

Welcome to *Idioms for Business*. The most cogent reason for using this book in your classes is simple and straightforward; it is the amazing number of idioms that occur in even the shortest article in any business publication - *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *Forbes*, *Financial Times*, *Fortune*, etc. - or in any business-oriented conversation. It is practically impossible for students of business, economics, management, and so on to understand business English without an understanding of the idioms used. I have therefore put together 140 of the most useful and frequently occurring business idioms in a textbook which is fun and easy to use. Much of the teacher's valuable time is saved by providing Japanese equivalents for the vocabulary in the text; the teacher can concentrate on the exercises without being sidetracked by time-consuming explanations. As an added bonus the idioms themselves are explained fully in Japanese in the appendix, where the Japanese equivalents are given unit-by-unit, which saves time when checking meanings. And the business milieus in which they are used are by no means confined to the office; different units deal with the movie industry, car manufacturers, advertising, pharmaceuticals, metals and commodities, overseas investment, emerging economies, etc. This will also give your students the stimulating global perspective they need in today's world. There are also no "pointless" illustrations. All of the excellent illustrations are informative and/or amusing. I hope you will enjoy using the book as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

With best wishes,

Barry Andrew Ward

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1 UNIT

BRAINSTORMING

A. IDIOMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 1. **brainstorming:** *to rack one's brains for new ideas*
- 2. **to come up with:** *to produce*
- 3. **As you know:** *to assume something is already known*
- 4. **a fraction of:** *only a small part of*
- 5. **stanch the red ink:** *stop the financial losses, stop losing money*
- 6. **back on its/one's feet:** *fully recovered—applies to people and companies, est.*
- 7. **input:** *information, data*
- 8. **the good news:** *the good point, reason for optimism*
- 9. **the odds of:** *the chances of, the probability*
- 10. **take for granted:** *to assume maybe without good reason that something will continue*

B. DIALOGUE

Read and repeat the following dialogue, and mark the idioms (see section A) in magic pen.

- a:** Good morning. Today's meeting is basically a brainstorming session to come up with solutions to the company's problems. As you know, sales this year are a fraction of what they were last year. We need to stanch the red ink and get the company back on its feet, so your input is welcome. The good news is that the odds of the present recession continuing into next year are low but
- b:** But we can't take that for granted, right?
- a:** Right.

NOTES: basically 「基本的には、本来」 solutions 「解決策」



C. TRUE OR FALSE?

Check the dialogue and circle T or F, as appropriate.

1. This is a sales meeting.
2. Sales this year are down.
3. Input from employees is welcome.
4. The company is losing money.
5. There is no good news.

T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F

D. QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the dialogue carefully and answer the following questions with short answers.

a) What kind of meeting is this?

b) What are the company's problems?

c) What is the good news?

E. USING THE IDIOMS CORRECTLY

Put the correct idiom in the brackets.

1. Today's meeting is a () to develop new ideas.
2. Thanks for your (). I needed that information.
3. Sales are down by 50% to only a () of last year's figures.
4. OK, we've heard the bad news. Now tell us some ().
5. Bernie's back on () after his recent illness.*
6. Apple always seems to () with interesting new products.
7. (), global weather patterns are changing rapidly.
8. Cutting the company's energy consumption should help to () and save money.
9. The () an economic recovery this year? I'd say about 3 to 1.
10. The world has to develop alternative energy sources. We can't () that new oil reserves will always be discovered.*

NOTES: products 「製品」 rapidly 「急速に」 energy consumption 「エネルギー消費」 alternative energy sources 「代替エネルギー源」 oil reserves 「油田」 discovered 「発見される」

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| a. fraction | f. as you know |
| b. his feet | g. input |
| c. come up | h. brainstorming session |
| d. odds of | i. take it for granted |
| e. good news | j. stanch the red ink |

F. FREE STYLE

Match the idioms on the left with the appropriate situation on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A) It's a brainstorming session. | 1) It's common knowledge. |
| B) Tom's back on his feet. | 2) Bonuses have been increased. |
| C) As you know | 3) They are thinking hard. |
| D) A fraction | 4) He's feeling fine after the flu. |
| E) The good news | 5) 1/4, 1/2, 1/10, etc. |

G. DICTATION

Listen and write down the missing words.

1 _____, the management was 2 _____ in taking it
 3 _____ that the company would be 4 _____ this year.
 So we would like to hear 5 _____ in today's 6 _____
 session. We are 7 _____ you can 8 _____ with
 some good 9 _____ to help us 10 _____ the red
 11 _____. Who 12 _____ like to 13 _____ ?



2 UNIT

MANAGEMENT AND LABOR

A. IDIOMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 1. *a walk-out: a strike (also "to walk out")*
- 2. *shuttered: closed down*
- 3. *pay freeze: no increase in pay*
- 4. *in return for: in exchange for, as part of a bargain*
- 5. *a halt: to stop something*
- 6. *lay-offs: firings of staff (also "to lay off")*
- 7. *overhaul: to re-examine, to check, to look at again*
- 8. *worker-friendly: anything that is good for workers, concerned with workers' welfare*
- 9. *bright spot: good point*
- 10. *picking up: increasing, rising*

B. DIALOGUE/ NEWS REPORT

Read and repeat the following dialogue, and mark the idioms (see section A) in magic pen.

The latest dispute between management and labor resulted in a walk-out that shuttered most of the company for a week. However, the union agreed to a pay freeze in return for a halt to lay-offs. The company has agreed to overhaul its negotiating procedures and institute more worker-friendly policies. The only bright spot in the situation is that demand for the company's products seems to be picking up.

NOTES: dispute 「争い、論争」 resulted (in~) 「(〜に) 繋がった」 negotiating procedures 「交渉手続」 institute 「〜を設ける、制定する」 demand 「需要」



C. TRUE OR FALSE?

Check the dialogue and circle T or F, as appropriate.

1. The management walked out.
2. The walk-out lasted a month.
3. Lay-offs have been stopped.
4. The company has decided to overhaul its hiring procedures.
5. There is one bright spot in the situation.

T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F

D. QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the dialogue carefully and answer the following questions with short answers.

a) Was all of the company shuttered for a week?

b) What did the union agree to?

c) What is the bright spot in the situation?

E. USING THE IDIOMS CORRECTLY

Put the correct idiom in the brackets.

1. The () was of course unpopular with the workers.*
2. The workers downed tools and () in the dispute with management.
3. They returned to work () for promises of fair treatment.
4. The company's trucks were () after a series of break-downs.
5. Rising employment is the () in the current economic environment.
6. The plant has been () for a week. It's very quiet.
7. There was a () in production when the assembly line broke down.
8. () policies help reduce the number of strikes.
9. Sales are () as people spend more.*
10. Construction workers were () as long as the freezing winter conditions lasted.

NOTES: downed tools 「仕事をすることをやめる」 dispute 「争議」 fair treatment 「公正な対応」 break-downs 「故障」 current 「現在の」 plant 「工場」 production 「製造」 policies 「方針」 construction 「建設」 freezing 「凍えるほどの」

a. picking up

b. shuttered

c. halt

d. laid off

e. walked out

f. overhauled

g. pay freeze

h. in return

i. worker-friendly

j. bright spot

F. FREE STYLE

Which of the following are worker-friendly policies?

- a) compulsory overtime
- b) better food in the canteen
- c) more safety training
- d) bigger bonuses for managers
- e) longer summer vacations

G. DICTATION

Listen and write down the missing words.

1 _____ workers at Eastern 2 _____ Refiners
3 _____ today in the continuing 4 _____ over the
company's 5 _____ for a 6 _____. The 7 _____
says it cannot 8 _____ to this while the company continues
9 _____ workers. 10 _____ are 11 _____ to
12 _____ next week, 13 _____. The only 14 _____
in the 15 _____ is the 16 _____ improvement in the
17 _____.



*1



*9