

24 Phrasal Verbs for Business – Video

In this lesson you can learn several business English phrasal verbs. Although you'll see these phrasal verbs in a business context, you can also use many of them in everyday life. See examples using these phrasal verbs for business in conversation and get tips to help you remember them.

You'll hear two dialogues each containing twelve phrasal verbs. After each dialogue you'll see the meaning of the phrasal verbs. At the end of each section, there's a short quiz to test your understanding.

1. Setting Up a New Business

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/open-sign-2-scaled.webp>)

In this dialogue, you'll hear some business English phrasal verbs. Listen to the dialogue, where two people are talking about setting up a new business. Try to find the twelve phrasal verbs for business!

Don't forget to watch our other Oxford Online English lesson on Phrasal Verbs in English (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/phrasal-verbs>).

Liam: I hear that you're setting up your own business. How exciting!

Kasia: That's right! I'm taking over the antique shop on the high street.

L: So, you're opening an antique shop? I didn't know you dealt in antiques. Not exactly. The owners wanted to sell up as they're moving on, so I'm going to turn it into a zero waste shop.

L: Wow! So, what exactly are you going to sell?

K: Well, I think that lots of people are trying to cut down on plastic packaging, so the idea is that they bring their own containers and fill them up with anything from pasta to washing up liquid.

L: What a great idea! It must be difficult to find suppliers though.

K: No, not at all. In fact, I'm hoping to buy all my stock locally. I'm in the process of firming up arrangements with some more local suppliers today. If it all goes to plan, I should be able to launch next month.

L: That quickly?

K: Yes, I've already stocked up on bathroom items such as unpackaged soap and bamboo toothbrushes, but I still need to kit out the shop floor with some more shelving to display everything.

L: Well, good luck with everything!

K: Thank you. Hey, you should come to the launch!

L: Great! I'll look forward to it!

So, did you get all twelve business English phrasal verbs?

Here's a challenge for you. Look at the definitions of four verbs you heard.

start/create something

gain control of something

buy and sell something

buy a large amount of something

Can you match the definitions to the phrasal verbs in the dialogue? If not, why not go back and listen again? You can also pause the video if you want some time to think. Otherwise, you'll see the answers in a few seconds.

Here are the answers.

start/create something = set up

gain control of something = take over

buy and sell something = deal in

buy a large amount of something = stock up

In the dialogue, you heard them in these sentences.

I hear that you're setting up your own business.

I'm taking over the antique shop on the high street.

I didn't know you dealt in antiques.

I've already stocked up on bathroom items.

In this case, 'take over' suggests buying a business from someone else.

'Stock up' has the idea of buying a large amount in order to prepare for something. For example, if you run a shop, and you know that your busiest season is coming soon, you might stock up on supplies so that you're ready for an increase in customer numbers.

Next, look at another sentence you heard.

The owners wanted to sell their business as they're leaving to start something new, so I'm going to change the antique shop to a zero waste shop (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero_waste).

Here, we've replaced three phrasal verbs with different verb phrases. Can you remember the original phrasal verbs? Again, pause the video if you need time to think about it.

Here is the original text, with the phrasal verbs.

The owners wanted to sell up as they're moving on, so I'm going to turn it into a zero waste shop.

'Sell up' is similar to 'sell', but not exactly the same. 'Sell up' means to complete a large, important transaction, like selling a house or a business. 'Sell up' can't be used with an object.

Similarly, 'move on (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/move-on>)' is similar to 'move', but not exactly the same. 'Move on' has the idea of starting something new, so it has a more specific meaning than 'move'.

Finally, here are five more phrasal verbs and definitions used in the dialogue. Can you match them?

cut down on provide necessary equipment

fill up use less of something

firm up be excited about something in the future

kit out make more definite

look forward to put things in a container until it is full

Here are the answers:

cut down on use less of something
fill up put things in a container until it is full
firm up make more definite
kit out provide necessary equipment
look forward to be excited about something in the future

Did you get the right answers? Let's look at a couple of these verbs in more detail.

First, where might you use the word 'firm up'?

You might use 'firm up' to talk about agreements or plans which you've made, but not in detail. When you firm up an agreement or a plan, you work out the details, so that your agreement or plan is clear.

What about 'kit out'; can you think of another situation where you could use it?

'Kit out' is commonly used with things like cars, vehicles, buildings or rooms. It can be used with an object or not. So, you can say 'We spent \$50,000 kitting out the new office,' or 'We spent \$50,000 kitting out the new office with desks, computer equipment and other furniture.'

So, we have considered all twelve phrasal verbs for business from dialogue one.

Don't forget that you can go back and review the dialogue and explanations if you need. If you feel confident, why not test your skills with a short quiz? Take a look.

1. I've been so stressed at work lately, but I'm going on holiday next week. I'm really _____ it.
2. Have you heard that a new supermarket is _____ the old cinema on the high street?
3. I have to drive to my meeting tomorrow 100 miles away, so I must remember to go to a petrol station this evening and _____.
4. Bob said that he's finalising a settlement in his business dispute. He's hoping to _____ the deal tomorrow.

You need to fill in the blanks using a phrasal verb from dialogue one. Don't forget to use the right verb form! Pause the video and try it now.

Ready? Here are the answers.

1. I've been so stressed at work lately, but I'm going on holiday next week. I'm really **looking forward to** it.
2. Have you heard that a new supermarket is **taking over** the old cinema on the high street?
3. I have to drive to my meeting tomorrow 100 miles away, so I must remember to go to a petrol station this evening and **fill up**.
4. Bob said that he's finalising a settlement in his business dispute. He's hoping to **firm up** the deal tomorrow.

Do you want more practice with business vocabulary? Be sure to watch our lesson on Describing Business Strategy (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/describing-business-strategy>) for many more words and phrases.

If you're ready to move on, let's look at part two.

2. Managing a Department

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/work-together-scaled.webp>)

In our dialogue, one person has just started a new job and the other has been promoted. Just like the first dialogue, you'll hear twelve phrasal verbs for business. Two of them were already introduced in the first dialogue. Can you spot all twelve? Let's listen!

Kasia: How are things? You look a little tired.

Liam: Oh... I'm OK. I guess I am a bit tired. Work is quite stressful as I've just been taken on by Ascendant. You know, the new insurance company that just opened an office?

K: Oh really? What are you doing?

L: Well, I'm heading up the insurance fraud department, which is a really exciting opportunity for me, but I'm basically setting up the department from scratch, so I have to draw up lots of new procedures and it's taking ages.... Anyway, how's everything in the legal world?

K: Good thanks. In fact, I've been promoted! We've had a full restructure and the litigation department where I work has been hived off, and I'm now looking after some of our biggest clients.

L: That's great news!

K: Thanks. It was all a bit sudden, so it's been really busy as we've had to move premises, rebrand and change our name. We brought in a consultancy agency to help and that side of things is all sorted out now.

L: So, where have you moved to?

K: We've taken over the old library building in the centre of town. The previous tenants needed to move out pretty quickly, so we were able to move in last week. In fact, We've pretty much settled in now.

L: Great! Well good luck with everything.

K: Thanks. You too!

So, how did you get on? Did you get them all?

First question: which two phrasal verbs in this dialogue did you already hear in part one?

You heard 'set up' – meaning to start or create something – and 'take over' – meaning to take control of a business.

What about the other ten? Let's look together. Here are the definitions of four new business English phrasal verbs you heard.

hire a new employee

be in charge of something

involve new people in a project

prepare an official document

Can you find the phrasal verbs in the dialogue which match these definitions? Remember that you can go back and listen again if you need!

Done? Here are the answers:

hire a new employee = take on
be in charge of something = head up
involve new people in a project = bring in
prepare an official document = draw up

Here, 'head up' has a slightly more specific meaning than 'be in charge of' or 'be responsible for'. If you head something up, then you're the leader.

'Bring in' can be used in many different ways. In the dialogue, you heard 'We brought in a consultancy agency.' If you head up a team, and you don't have enough people to do your work, you'll need to *bring in* new workers, maybe from other departments, or maybe from outside the company.

'Draw up' is commonly used with contracts, proposals and similar documents which you might need during a negotiation.

Let's look at two more phrasal verbs for business from the dialogue. Look at a sentence.

We've had a full restructure and the litigation department where I work has been separated into a new independent company, and I'm now responsible for some of our biggest clients.

You heard something similar in the dialogue, but here we've replaced the phrasal verbs with different words. Can you remember the phrasal verbs?

Here's the answer:

We've had a full restructure and the litigation department where I work has been hived off, and I'm now looking after some of our biggest clients.

'Hive off' has a very specific meaning. You use it when part of a larger company is separated into a smaller, independent organisation. 'Hive off' suggests that part of a larger company is made into a legally separate business.

Get more practice with this list of law vocabulary (<https://www.englishclub.com/business-english/vocabulary-law.php>) you can use in business situations.

Instead of 'look after', you could also say 'take care of'; both have the same meaning, and in fact both are phrasal verbs!

Finally, let's look at the four remaining business English phrasal verbs.

sort out
move in/move out
settle in

We put two together – 'move in' and 'move out' – because they're two sides of the same idea.

So, what's your job now?

Imagine you're an English teacher (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/about-our-online-english-teachers>). You want to explain what these words mean to someone who doesn't know them. You need to be a good teacher and make your explanations as clear as possible!

Pause the video and think about your explanations now. Say them out loud.

Could you do it? There's more than one right answer, but here are some examples.

'Sort out' means to find a solution to something. If you sort something out, maybe you solve a problem, or maybe you find a way to deal with a complex situation.

'Move in' and 'move out' mean to change physical location. You can use it with houses or apartments (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/how-to-rent-house-apartment>), but companies can also move in or move out, for example when they move to a different shop, or a different office.

'Settle in' means to get used to a new environment. If your company moves to a new location, you might need some time to adjust to the new location and learn where everything is – you need to settle in.

OK, now you've seen explanations for all the phrasal verbs for business in the second dialogue. Ready for a short quiz? Let's look!

1. I moved to London last year. It took me a while to _____ but now I really enjoy living here.
2. Did you know that the new law firm in town is _____ 10 paralegals this month?
3. My boss is away this week so I'm _____ her top client!
4. I'm so excited! I'm going to be _____ our international office in Paris!

Pause the video and think about your answers. Remember that the missing words are all business English phrasal verbs, so you need to put two words in each gap. Also, don't forget to put the verb in the correct form!

Could you do it? Let's see the answers.

1. I moved to London last year. It took me a while to **settle in** but now I really enjoy living here.
2. Did you know that the new law firm in town is **taking on** 10 paralegals this month?
3. My boss is away this week so I'm **looking after** her top client!
4. I'm so excited! I'm going to be **heading up** our international office in Paris!

That's all for this lesson. We hope you added some new business English phrasal verbs to your vocabulary. Thanks for watching!