

# busi·ness

S1 W1

/'biznəs/

noun

**1 | buying or selling goods or services** [uncountable] BUSINESS the activity of making money by producing or buying and selling goods, or providing services:

*Students on the course learn about all aspects of business.*

*Carl began in the music business by running a recording studio.*

*We do business with a number of Italian companies.*

*He has a wide range of business interests.*

**2 | company** [countable] BUSINESS an organization such as a company, shop, or factory that produces or sells goods or provides a service:

*She now has her own \$25 million home-shopping business.*

*They don't know how to run a business.*

*The company began as a small family business.*

**3 | how much work a company has** [uncountable] BUSINESS the amount of work a company does or the amount of money it makes:

*We're now **doing** twice as much **business** as we did last year.*

*Exports account for 72% of overall business.*

**business is good/bad/slow etc**

*Business is slow during the summer.*

**drum up business** (= try to get more work for you or your company)

*Perot was in Europe, drumming up business for his new investment company.*

**4 | for your job** NOT PLEASURE [uncountable] BUSINESS work that you do as part of your job:

*She's in New York this week **on business** (= for her work).*

*Hi Maggie! Is this phone call **business or pleasure**?*

**business trip/meeting etc**

*We discussed the idea over a business lunch.*

**useful business contacts****5 | what someone should be involved in** [uncountable]

a)

if something is not your business or none of your business, you should not be involved in it or ask about it:

*It was not her business, she decided, to ask where the money came from.*

*It's **none of your business** how much I weigh.*

*'Who's that girl you were with?' '**Mind your own business** (= Don't ask questions about something that does not concern you) !'*

*'Are you going out with Kate tonight?' '**That's my business**' (= it doesn't concern you, so don't ask me questions about it) .*

b)

if it is someone's business to do something, it is their duty or responsibility to do it:

**it is the business of somebody to do something**

*It is the business of government to listen to the various groups within society.*

**6 | things to be dealt with** [uncountable] things that need to be done or discussed:

*Okay, let's **get down to business** (= start doing or discussing something) .*

*'Is there **any other business**?' the chairman asked.*

**7 | matter** [singular] a situation or activity, especially one that you have a particular opinion about or attitude towards:**a serious/strange/funny etc business**

*Leon regards keeping fit as a serious business.*

*Tanya found **the whole business** ridiculous.*

**8 be in business**

a)

to be involved in business activities:

*The company has been in business for over 30 years.*

**b) (spoken) READY**

to have all that you need to start doing something:

*I've just got to buy the paint and then we're in business.*

**9 (go) out of business FAIL**

if a company goes out of business, or something puts it out of business, it stops operating, especially because of financial problems:

*Higher interest rates will drive small firms out of business.*

**10 be back in business**

to be working or operating in a normal way again:

*The band are back in business after a long break.*

**11 somebody was (just) minding their own business (spoken)**

used to say that someone was not doing anything unusual or wrong at the time when something unfair or bad happened to them:

*I was driving along, minding my own business, when the police stopped my car.*

**12 go about your business**

to do the things that you normally do:

*The street was full of ordinary people going about their business.*

**13 make it your business to do something TRY TO DO OR GET SOMETHING**

to make a special effort to do something:

*Ruth made it her business to get to know the customers.*

**14 mean business (informal) DETERMINED**

to be serious about doing something even if it involves harming someone:

*The border is guarded by troops who mean business.*

**15 unfinished business**

something you need to discuss further with someone or a situation that has not yet reached a satisfactory solution:

*The sudden death of a loved one can often leave the bereaved with an agonising sense of unfinished business.*

**16 business is business** (spoken) BUSINESS

used to say that profit is the most important thing to consider:

*We can't afford to employ someone who isn't good at the job – business is business.*

**17 business as usual**

when someone or something is still working or operating normally when you think they might not be:

*Despite last night's scare, it was business as usual in the White House today.*

**18 have no business doing something/have no business to do something** BEHAVE

to do something you should not be doing:

*He was drunk and had no business driving.*

**19 not be in the business of doing something** WILL

to not be intending to do something because you think it is a bad idea:

*I'm not in the business of selling my best players.*

**20 and all that business** (spoken informal)

and other things of the same general kind:

*She handles the publicity and all that business.*

**21 (it's) the business** GOOD/EXCELLENT (BrE) (informal)

used to say that something is very good or works well:

*Have you seen David's new car? It's the business!*

**22 do the business** (BrE) (informal)

a)

to do what you are expected to do or what people want you to do:

*Come on, then, and do the business.*

b)

to have sex

→ BIG BUSINESS,

→ **funny business** AT FUNNY (3),

→ **like nobody's business** AT NOBODY<sup>1</sup> (2),

→ **monkey business** AT MONKEY<sup>1</sup> (3),

→ SHOW BUSINESS

## COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 1

### verbs

do business *A lot of firms are keen to do business in Japan.*

conduct business (formal) (= do business) *It is not a sensible way to conduct business.*

go into business (= start working in business) *A lot of university graduates want to go into business.*

set up/ start up in business *The bank gave me a loan to help me set up in business.*

stay in business (= continue operating and not become bankrupt) *Some stores are finding it hard to stay in business.*

go out of business (= stop doing business because of financial problems) *In a recession smaller firms often go out of business.*

### NOUN + business

the music/entertainment/computer etc business *He started out working in the computer business.*

### business + NOUN

a business deal (= an occasion when you buy or sell something) *Negotiation is the most important part of a business deal.*

business activities *His wife refused to get involved in his business activities.*

business interests (= business activities, or shares in companies) *Both companies have substantial business interests in Indonesia.*

the business community (= people who work in business) *There was pressure on the government from the business community.*

the business world *You need to be flexible in today's highly competitive business world.*

business studies (= a course of study about business) *She did business studies at college.*

### COMMON ERRORS

⚠ Do not say 'make business'. Say *do business*.

## COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 2

**verbs**

have/ own a business *Nick owned a software business in Boston.*

run a business (= manage it) *There's plenty of advice available on how to run your own business.*

start/ set up a business *When you're starting a business, you have to work longer hours.*

take over a business (= buy it or start running it) *When my father retired, I took over the business.*

build (up)/ develop a business *He spent years trying to build a business in Antigua.*

establish a business *She overcame many financial difficulties to establish her business.*

a business succeeds *Making a business succeed is not simple.*

a business collapses/ fails (= stops operating) *35% of small businesses fail in the first year of operation.*

**ADJECTIVES/NOUN + business**

a small business (= that employs only a few people) *Many small businesses have been badly hit by the recession.*

a medium-sized business *They offer services to small and medium-sized businesses.*

a software/ catering/ construction etc business *His girlfriend runs a catering business.*

a family business (= owned and controlled by one family) *For many years the hotel was a family business.*

an import/ export business *Kingwell had an export business in New Zealand.*

a successful/ profitable/ thriving business *Within a few years she had established a thriving business in London.*

a viable business (= one that is likely to be successful) *It soon became clear that the restaurant was not a viable business.*

**business + NOUN**

a business partner (= someone who shares a business with you) *Margie was his wife and also his business partner.*

a business manager *We need to take on a business manager to*

*deal with some of the admin.*

*a business customer/ client We're providing our business customers with reliable, proven Internet technology.*

## THESAURUS

**business** the activity of making money by producing, buying, or selling goods, or providing services: *Business in Europe has been badly affected by economic conditions in the US. | He works in the advertising business.*

**trade** the buying and selling of goods and services, especially between countries: *Trade between European countries became easier after the introduction of the Euro. | a trade agreement*

**commerce** the buying and selling of goods and services.

**Commerce** is more formal than **business**, and is used when talking about business activities in general: *One of the roles of the federal government is to regulate commerce. | London became a great **centre of commerce**. | the local **chamber of commerce** (= an organization which the companies and shops in an area belong to)*

**e-commerce** the buying and selling of goods and services on the Internet: *E-commerce is a fast-growing part of the US economy.*

### Word origin

**Date:** 1300–1400

**Origin:** *busy*