

If you know these 15 business English phrases, your English is AMAZING!

It's time to boost your business English with 15 essential phrases! From idiomatic expressions to industry jargon, these powerful terms will help you navigate professional situations with confidence. We'll explore the meanings behind each phrase with real-world examples of how to use them effectively. These phrases are sure to elevate your communication skills and set you up for success in the business world. Let's get started!



15 phrases to boost your business English

1

to touch base /ˌtʌtʃ 'beɪs/

to make contact with someone, usually to share updates or information

"Let's **touch base** next week to discuss the progress of the marketing campaign."

We usually say 'base' with a bit more energy: **touch BASE**. You might also hear people say '**check in** - /ˌtʃek 'ɪn/' or '**catch up** - /ˌkætʃ 'ʌp/', which have similar meanings.

2

to get the ball rolling /get ðə bɔːl 'rəʊlɪŋ/

to start or initiate something, like a project or a meeting

"I've scheduled a team meeting for Monday to **get the ball rolling** on the new product launch."



This phrase comes from the idea of pushing a ball to start it moving. Another similar phrase is '**kick off** - /ˌkɪk ˈɒf/ '.

3 **on the same page** /ɒn ðə seɪm peɪdʒ/

everyone agrees and understands a situation in the same way

“Before we move forward, we need to get **on the same page** and figure out the next steps.”

4 **in the loop** /ɪn ðə ˈluːp /

informed about what's going on

“I'll send a weekly update email to keep all stakeholders **in the loop**.”

We normally stress the word '**loop**'. **In the LOOP**.

The opposite phrase is '**out of the loop**,' meaning someone isn't fully-informed or kept outside of the group.

- “I've been feeling a bit **out of the loop** ever since I got back from maternity leave.”

5 **win-win** /ˌwɪn ˈwɪn/

a situation that benefits everyone involved

“If we collaborate with their team, it could be a **win-win** for both companies.”

We say both syllables clearly, but the main stress is on the second ‘win’. **Win-win**.

We also use the opposite phrase ‘**lose-lose** - /ˌluːzˈluːz/’ to refer to a situation that doesn’t benefit any of the parties involved.

6 **to think out of the box** /θɪŋk aʊt əv ðə bɒks/

to think creatively and innovatively, coming up with entirely new solutions

“We really need to **think out of the box** if we're going to beat our competitors on this.”

If someone tells you to ‘**think out of the box**’, they are basically saying ‘think creatively’. You will also hear people shorten ‘out of the’ to ‘**outta the** - /ˈaʊtə ðə/’ in fast speech.

People also say, ‘**think outside the box**’ or ‘**think outside of the box**’: they’re both super common. Choose which phrase you like best!

7 **bottom line** /ˌbɒtəm ˈlaɪn/

1. the essential point or final outcome
2. (financial) the final financial outcome, whether it's a profit or a loss after all expenses and revenues have been accounted for

1. “The **bottom line** is that we need to ensure customer satisfaction above all else.”
2. “Our **bottom line** has improved since implementing the new cost-saving measures.”

The ‘**bottom line**’ has two main meanings in business contexts. First, it refers to the essential point or final outcome. It's **the most important part of the matter**, the deciding factor. This could be meeting a deadline, satisfying customer needs or achieving a specific goal.

In addition to this more general meaning, the ‘**bottom line**’ also has a **specific financial definition**. In a business setting, your bottom line can refer to the final financial outcome.

8

action point /'ækʃn pɔɪnt/

a task that needs to be completed, usually assigned during a meeting

“Let’s review the **action points** from last week’s meeting.”

We typically stress 'action'. You might also hear '**action item**', which has the same meaning.

9

learning curve /'lɜːnɪŋ kɜːv/

the time it takes to learn a new skill or understand a new process

"We went through a steep **learning curve** when switching to the new software but it was worth it in the end."

We often use the strong collocation '**steep learning curve**' to talk about something that is quite difficult to learn.

10

game plan /'geɪm plæn/

a strategy or plan for achieving a goal

"Let's develop a **game plan** for expanding into international markets."

Notice how there's no pause between the two words in fast speech. I blend the /m/ and /p/ together. /'geɪmplæn/. This phrase likely comes from sports, where teams have a strategic plan for winning.

11

to give the green light /gɪv ðə ˌɡriːn 'laɪt/

to approve or give permission for something to happen

"Once the budget is approved, we'll **give the green light** to start the project."

The emphasis is on '**green light**', which comes from traffic signals where green means 'go!'. You might also hear the verb '**to green-light sth.**' which has a similar meaning.

12

at stake /ət steɪk/

at risk or there's something to be lost or gained, often implies high importance or urgency

"There's a lot **at stake** with this big client pitch, so let's bring our A-game!"

There's a bonus expression for you: '**A-game**', meaning giving your best performance or effort.

13

pain point /'peɪn pɔɪnt/

a problem or challenge that a customer or a business is facing

"Our new service addresses a major **pain point** for small business owners."

The emphasis is on '**pain**'.

14

up to speed /ʌp tə spiːd/

to have the latest information and be fully informed about a particular topic or situation

“I need to get **up to speed on** the new project guidelines.”

We often use this phrase with '**on**' to specify the subject.

Once you're comfortable with this usage, you'll often hear it combined with verbs like '**get**' or '**be**'.

- “Let's schedule a call to **get** the new team members **up to speed on** the project.”

15

ballpark figure /'bɔːlpɑːk 'fɪɡə/

a rough estimate, not an exact number

“Can you give me a **ballpark figure** for the cost of the event?”

‘Ballpark’ likely comes from baseball stadiums, implying a large, general area.



Bonus Business Phrases

Word	IPA Transcription	Meaning	Example Sentence
1 low-hanging fruit	/ˌləʊ hæŋɪŋ ˈfruːt/	easy tasks that can be accomplished quickly	"Let's focus on the low-hanging fruit first and tackle the more challenging projects later."
2 bang for the buck	/bæŋ fə ðə bʌk/	value for money spent	"We need to ensure that our marketing campaign delivers the best bang for the buck ."
3 to go the extra mile	/gəʊ ðə ˈekstrə maɪl/	to make an extra effort to achieve something	"Our customer service team always goes the extra mile to ensure client satisfaction."
4 to move the needle	/muːv ðə ˈniːdl/	to make a significant difference or improvement	"This new strategy should help us move the needle on our sales targets."
5 on the radar	/ɒn ðə ˈreɪdɑː/	aware or informed about something	"Make sure this issue stays on the radar , so we can address it promptly."
6 to call the shots	/kɔːl ðə ʃɒts/	to be in control or make the decisions	"As the project manager, you'll be calling the shots on resource allocation and deadlines."
7 on the back burner	/ɒn ðə ˌbæk ˈbɜːnə/	delayed or given lower priority	"Due to budget constraints, the office expansion plan has been put on the back burner ."



Word	IPA Transcription	Meaning	Example Sentence
8 to cut corners	/kʌt 'kɔːnəz/	to take shortcuts to save time or money, often compromising quality	"We can't cut corners on product quality if we want to maintain customer trust."
9 game-changer	/'geɪm ˌtʃeɪndʒə/	something that significantly changes a situation	"This new technology could be a game-changer for our industry."
10 to play hardball	/pleɪ 'hɑːdbɔːl/	to be uncompromising or aggressive in business dealings	"Be prepared for the other side to play hardball and push for their interests."
11 up to par	/ʌp tə pɑː/	meeting the expected standard or quality	"The new batch isn't up to par with our usual quality standards."
12 to make the cut	/meɪk ðə kʌt/	to be selected or qualify for something	"After reviewing all the proposals, only three vendors made the cut for consideration in the final round."
13 red tape	/ˌred 'teɪp/	excessive bureaucracy or adherence to rules and regulations	"The new regulations have created a lot of red tape , making it harder for small businesses to operate."
14 to raise the bar	/reɪz ðə bɑː/	set higher standards or expectations	"We're working to raise the bar on what is considered sustainable."
15 to drill down	/ˌdrɪl 'daʊn/	examine or analyse in detail	"Let's drill down on these numbers to find areas for improvement."



Activity

Choose the correct phrase to complete each sentence.

1. Before the quarterly meeting, the department heads will _____ to align their goals.
a. touch base
b. raise the bar
c. play hardball
2. There'll be a _____ when implementing the new CRM system.
a. pain point
b. red tape
c. learning curve
3. To launch the new product line, we should _____ by conducting market research.
a. get the ball rolling
b. call the shots
c. drill down
4. Can you provide a _____ for the projected revenue growth in the next quarter?
a. game-changer
b. ballpark figure
c. win-win
5. The executive board will _____ for the merger once the due diligence is completed.
a. make the cut
b. give the green light
c. move the needle
6. Our marketing team needs to _____ and develop a unique campaign this time round.
a. think outside the box
b. be on the back burner
c. be up to par
7. The company's _____ has improved since diversifying its investment portfolio.
a. action point
b. bottom line
c. low-hanging fruit
8. I've been _____ since I was on a business trip. Can you fill me in?
a. on the same page
b. bang for the buck
c. out of the loop

Answers:

1. a 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. b 6. a 7. b 8. c

