

BUSINESS ENGLISH

Common Phrasal Verbs in Business that are used every day

di **Tom Roper**

As we investigated in our last article, English has a wonderful habit of making itself very confusing in everyday language. We have taken a look at the Idiomatic Expressions used in business and now we turn to the even more difficult-to-define, Phrasal Verbs. With these verb compositions, you can't, unfortunately, translate literally every part and they take on a new definition. In general, we use these verb and preposition combinations as an alternative to their more "complicated" Latin-based alternative, let's consider the relationship between "get out" and "escape" as an example.

However let's have a look at 8 of these verb phrases in a business context, the most common ones we use, and how to use them effectively:

1. To come across

"I can't find the Sales Report I printed earlier, if you come across it can you bring it to me please?"

If you find something unexpectedly, you can use this verb, it is also an alternative to encounter or discover something or some information.

2. To drop by

"If you are in Verona, drop by my office so we can meet to discuss the new plans"

We use this phrasal verb to define a brief visit, without a prior appointment. "Come by" or even "Pop By" are also valid alternatives.

3. To run by/past

"Can you run this idea by your manager before presenting it to the group, just to make sure everything is in order"

To run something by or past someone means to discuss it in order to get the objective person's opinion of the work. You can use either "By" or "Past" without any changes to the meaning.

4. To figure something out

"I don't have the final solution right now, give me a couple of hours to figure it out"

This phrase can mean to understand something or to find (or deduce) the answer to a particular problem or question. You can also "figure someone out" when you try to understand what that person's agenda or background is.

5. To think something over

"We need some time to think over the potential choices, give us some more time to make a final decision"

This means that you need to consider the various options or contemplate a particular idea before making a decision. It is similar to "think about" but gives you a feeling of a more complicated decision process.

6. To ask around

"Can you ask around and see if people want to participate in the after-work drinks on Friday?"

While this is similar to the simplified "Ask", we are asking the same question to multiple people to try to obtain a clearer understanding of a general situation.

7. To shop around

"Our supplier is starting to become quite expensive, can you shop around for a better price?"

This expression means to compare prices or the quality of something from various different sources.

8. To zero in on

“We have zeroed in on one particular candidate, we think he has everything we are looking for”

This means focusing closely on one particular thing or person. Sometimes it means after looking at many different possibilities, you have identified one unique option.

So there we have 8 relatively common phrasal verbs that you can find in Business English. The key to learning and understanding them is practice and exposure; try to find a way you can hear everyday English more frequently. This could mean watching your favourite TV series in its original language or reading books or articles published in English. The general process is first being aware of these terms and what they mean, then having the opportunity to use them and produce them is the next step. Over time they can then become part of your regular vocabulary! Stay with us to “come across” more tips and techniques to help your Business English.

