

BUSINESS ENGLISH

Another 8 common business idioms that are used every day

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As we saw in a previous article looking at the idiomatic phrases in **Business English**, there are plenty for you to get your **teeth into** (to deal with something or get involved in). This secondary use of common phrases and terms can sometimes feel like a **secret** language used by native speakers, so let's peel back the secrecy and have a look at another few business **idioms**:

1. **It's not rocket science**

"I'm not sure how you didn't understand the instruction, it's not rocket science"

We use rocket science, or **brain surgery** as examples of jobs that require a high level of intellect and skill to do, so when we declare something to **not** be of that level it is a **simple** or **uncomplicated** instruction or job and shouldn't take much thought to do it.

2. **Corner the market**

"When Apple launched the iPod, they created a whole new industry and instantly cornered the market"

This expression refers to companies, investors or groups of people who are able to **dominate** an industry or sector in such a way they can **control** the pricing of that market segment. It can also be used in relation to **monopolising** things.

3. **Learn the ropes**

"It took a while for them to learn the ropes but now they are more than competent"

This phrase is used to show the **learning** procedure of an activity or role, the first step in **understanding** the position and everything it entails and becoming able to **perform** it correctly. This phrase comes from the nautical world where sailors would learn to tie knots and handle the ropes before getting on a boat.

4. **Between a rock and a hard place**

"The management found itself between a rock and a hard place, they couldn't fire the

employee for misconduct yet but they couldn't allow them to continue working in this way”
This is very much the **opposite** of the **win-win** situation we have seen in previous articles.
Essentially the decision maker has to choose between two results with **bad** outcomes or an **impossible** decision due to the limited possibilities.

5. From the ground up

“Building a new company from the ground up will bring you considerable pride but can also be very risky”

Building or creating something from the ground up means you **started** from **zero**, with nothing, and have arrived at your **current** successful or considerable position. This can be used for projects or relationships too.

6. The bottom line

“Shareholders generally only care about the bottom line and not how the company operates day to day”

Generally, the bottom line refers to the last line you would see on a final **declaration** or balance sheet after all expenses have been paid, therefore the **profit margin**. If we refer to the bottom line of a company we are talking about its profitability or not. However, we also use this to mean the very **fundamental** meaning of a phrase.

7. Get down to business

“That's enough of the small talk, let's get down to business”

This expression signifies we need to start being **serious** and begin the relevant **activities**, whether that is a discussion, a meeting, a project or any type of task.

8. Get someone up to speed

“Welcome back! If you pass by my office later I will get you up to speed”

We use this expression to **update** someone on the **current** situation or to give them all the **relevant** or necessary **information** they might not already have allowing them to complete their task or project.

These are another 8 relatively common idiomatic phrases that you can find in everyday **Business English** and not only, you can often find these phrases in every-day conversation too. As we said before they will be used by others when **communicating**, so they can be very useful tools in your own language and in the process of understanding and being understood. However they are not the only way of **getting** your message across, remember your **visual** communication in body language and facial expressions can also help you if you don't feel confident with the language! Don't forget to get in touch if there is a particular aspect of English or Business English you would like help with.

