

The Bottom Line: 4 Business Idioms You'll Hear at Work

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

92 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Martin, why does this email sound like a sports lesson?

Which email?

The one from your new client.

It says, "Let's touch base, look at the bottom line, raise the bar and go the extra mile."

That is not sport.

That is business English.

It contains a base, a bar, a line and a mile.

All right.

It sounds slightly athletic.

And today we are going to make every expression clear.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Today we are exploring lesson seven of our free Idiom Toolbox course: Business.

You can find the course at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

Open the Idioms section and choose lesson seven, Business.

You will find a slow dialogue, clear meanings, multilingual support, examples and interactive retrieval practice.

The direct link to this free lesson is also in the episode description.

Let us begin with touch base.

To touch base means to make brief contact with someone to exchange information.

You can say: Let's touch base on Friday.

Or: I'll touch base with the supplier this afternoon.

Notice the two useful patterns: touch base with a person, and touch base about or on a topic.

It normally suggests a short conversation, not a long formal meeting.



So when the client says, "Let's touch base tomorrow," she wants a quick update.

Exactly.

She does not want to play baseball.

Good.

Now what is the bottom line?

The bottom line is the most important fact or the final result.

In business, it can also mean the final financial result: profit or loss.

For example: The bottom line is that we cannot finish by Monday.

Or: Better service helped improve the company's bottom line.

The first example means the essential conclusion.

The second refers to financial performance.

So what is the bottom line of your client's email?

She wants better results without increasing the budget.

That sounds challenging.

It does.

She also wants us to raise the bar.

To raise the bar means to set a higher standard.

For example: The new design has raised the bar for the whole industry.

Or: Her presentation raised the bar for the rest of the team.

If someone raises the bar, other people may need to improve to reach the new standard.

Can we lower the bar?

Yes, that means accepting a lower standard.

But I would not suggest it to the client.

Probably wise.

Her final request was to go the extra mile.

To go the extra mile means to make more effort than is normally expected.

A hotel employee might go the extra mile by helping a guest recover a lost passport.

Or a colleague might go the extra mile to help you meet a deadline.

It is usually positive.

It suggests care, commitment and additional effort.



But there is an important limit.

Going the extra mile should not mean accepting impossible demands every day.

Exactly.

Extra effort is valuable when it is a choice, not a permanent expectation.

Let us compare all four idioms.

Touch base means make brief contact and exchange information.

The bottom line means the essential fact or final financial result.

Raise the bar means set a higher standard.

And go the extra mile means make more effort than expected.

Time for a quick challenge.

Choose the best idiom before we answer.

Situation one.

Your manager wants a five-minute update tomorrow.

Let's touch base tomorrow.

Situation two.

One restaurant creates a new standard for service in the city.

It raises the bar.

Situation three.

A team member stays late to help a colleague complete an urgent proposal.

She goes the extra mile.

Situation four.

After a long discussion, you want to state the essential conclusion.

You say: The bottom line is...

Now complete one sentence about your work or studies.

This week, I need to touch base with...

Personal examples help turn recognition into active English.

Continue with lesson seven in the free Idiom Toolbox course at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

Its retrieval exercises bring these expressions back at the right moments, so you practise remembering instead of simply rereading.

The direct lesson link is in the episode description.

So, what will you write to the client?



Let's touch base tomorrow.

The bottom line is that we can raise the bar, but we cannot double the work without changing the budget.

Clear, professional and honest.

Should I also promise to go the extra mile?

Only if the extra mile is included in the schedule.

That may be the real bottom line.

See you next time, friends.

Goodbye.

