

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

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

8 learning entries

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

1

to touch base

DEF

To make brief contact with someone in order to exchange information or give a quick update.

Common in workplace English and usually informal or neutral. It suggests a short check-in rather than a long formal meeting. Use "with" before a person and "about" or "on" before a topic.

Let's touch base on Friday before we send the proposal.

I'll touch base with the supplier this afternoon.

2

the bottom line

DEF

The essential fact or final conclusion.

A company's final financial result, especially its profit or loss.

The context determines whether the expression means the key conclusion or a financial result. "The bottom line is that..." is a natural way to introduce a direct conclusion.

The bottom line is that we cannot finish by Monday.

Better service helped improve the company's bottom line.

3

to raise the bar

DEF

To establish a higher standard of quality, performance or achievement.

This metaphor comes from sports. Raising the bar makes success more demanding and can encourage other people to improve. The opposite is "to lower the bar".

The new design has raised the bar for the whole industry.

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

4

to go the extra mile

DEF

To make more effort than is normally required or expected.

Usually positive and associated with care and commitment. It describes exceptional extra effort, not a healthy obligation to accept impossible demands every day.

The hotel employee went the extra mile to recover the guest's passport.

She went the extra mile to help her colleague meet the deadline.



5

to exchange information

DEF

To give information to another person and receive information from them in return.

Exchange is reciprocal: both sides contribute. In professional contexts, it often refers to sharing updates, details or ideas rather than transferring a physical object.

We met briefly to exchange information about the project.

The two departments exchange information every Friday.

6

to meet a deadline

DEF

To complete work by or before the time or date when it is due.

In English, you meet a deadline when you finish on time; you miss a deadline when you finish late. "Reach a deadline" does not normally express successful completion.

The team worked together to meet the Friday deadline.

Can we meet the deadline without reducing the quality?

7

to improve the bottom line

DEF

To increase a company's profit or strengthen its overall financial result.

Here, bottom line has its specifically financial meaning. An action may improve the bottom line by increasing revenue, reducing costs or creating longer-term value.

Better customer service can improve the bottom line.

The company reduced waste to improve its bottom line.

8

a permanent expectation

DEF

Something that people continually assume or require, rather than an occasional request.

In the episode, this phrase marks the boundary between choosing to make exceptional extra effort and being expected to overwork as a normal condition.

Extra effort should not become a permanent expectation.

Working late began as an exception but soon became a permanent expectation.

