

# Business IDIOMS

Glenn Darragh



---

1,000 EVERYDAY  
IDIOMS IN BUSINESS

---



EDITORIAL  
STANLEY

# **Business**

## **IDIOMS**

Glenn Darragh

---

**1,000 EVERYDAY**

---

**IDIOMS IN BUSINESS**

---



# **1,000 EVERYDAY IDIOMS IN BUSINESS**

**WRITTEN BY  
GLENN DARRAGH**

**PUBLISHED BY  
EDITORIAL STANLEY**

**LAYOUT  
ANGELA GÓMEZ MARTÍN**

**FRONT PAGE DESIGN  
DISEÑO IRUNÉS**

**© EDITORIAL STANLEY  
APDO. 207 - 20302 IRUN - SPAIN  
TELF. (943) 64 04 12 - FAX. (943) 64 38 63**

**ISBN: 84-7873-345-0  
DEP. LEG. BI-524-00**

**FIRST EDITION 2000**

**PRINTERS  
IMPRESA BEREKINTZA**

# 1,000 Everyday idioms in business

## 1.000 Modismos empresariales de uso diario

### Contents - Contenido

---

#### Introduction · Introducción

1. Fundamentals · Fundamentos . . . . . 1	22. Mistakes · Los errores . . . . . 85
Exercise . . . . . 4	Exercise . . . . . 88
2. Time · El tiempo . . . . . 5	23. Criticism · La crítica . . . . . 89
Exercise . . . . . 8	Exercise . . . . . 92
3. Money · El dinero . . . . . 9	24. Reactions · Las reacciones . . . . . 93
Exercise . . . . . 12	Exercise . . . . . 96
4. Information · La información . . . . . 13	25. Opportunities · Las oportunidades . . 97
Exercise . . . . . 16	Exercise . . . . . 100
5. Experience · La experiencia . . . . . 17	26. Risk · El riesgo . . . . . 101
Exercise . . . . . 20	Exercise . . . . . 104
6. Work · El trabajo . . . . . 21	27. Competition · La competencia . . . . 105
Exercise . . . . . 24	Exercise . . . . . 108
7. Routine · La rutina . . . . . 25	28. Teamwork · El trabajo en equipo . . 109
Exercise . . . . . 28	Exercise . . . . . 112
8. Trading · Las transacciones . . . . . 29	29. Quality · La calidad . . . . . 113
Exercise . . . . . 32	Exercise . . . . . 116
9. Thinking · El pensamiento . . . . . 33	30. Negotiations · Las negociaciones . . 117
Exercise . . . . . 36	Exercise . . . . . 120
10. Understanding · La comprensión . . . 37	31. Results · Los resultados . . . . . 121
Exercise . . . . . 40	Exercise . . . . . 124
11. Discussions · Los debates . . . . . 41	32. Responsibility · La responsabilidad . 125
Exercise . . . . . 44	Exercise . . . . . 128
12. Meetings · Las reuniones . . . . . 45	33. Ethics · La ética . . . . . 129
Exercise . . . . . 48	Exercise . . . . . 132
13. Speaking · La conversación . . . . . 49	34. Psychology · La psicología . . . . . 133
Exercise . . . . . 52	Exercise . . . . . 136
14. Decisions · Las decisiones . . . . . 53	35. Colleagues · Los compañeros . . . . 137
Exercise . . . . . 56	Exercise . . . . . 140
15. Priorities · Las prioridades . . . . . 57	36. Politics · La política . . . . . 141
Exercise . . . . . 60	Exercise . . . . . 144
16. Planning · La planificación . . . . . 61	37. Careers · Las carreras . . . . . 145
Exercise . . . . . 64	Exercise . . . . . 148
17. Problems · Los problemas . . . . . 65	38. Contacts · Los contactos . . . . . 149
Exercise . . . . . 68	Exercise . . . . . 152
18. Emergencies · Las emergencias . . . . 69	39. Socialising · Las relaciones sociales . 153
Exercise . . . . . 72	Exercise . . . . . 156
19. Action · La acción . . . . . 73	40. Miscellaneous · Varios . . . . . 157
Exercise . . . . . 76	Exercise . . . . . 160
20. Success · El éxito . . . . . 77	
Exercise . . . . . 80	Answers . . . . . 161
21. Failure · El fracaso . . . . . 81	Index . . . . . 185
Exercise . . . . . 84	

# Introduction

This book has been designed for intermediate and advanced learners of English who want to increase their understanding of everyday spoken English, especially as it is used in a business context. The book will help you learn 1,000 common idiomatic expressions, all of which are current, and all of which are known and used by native English speakers everywhere. It is suitable for both self-study and classroom work with a teacher.

Many people in business think that a knowledge of idiomatic English is a kind of linguistic optional extra, adding colour to the language but otherwise not strictly essential. This view, needless to say, is erroneous, for many idioms are as frequently used and as necessary as the most basic words. Indeed idioms are often composed of the most basic words, although these are grouped in a metaphorical shorthand for more complex ideas: "You're pulling my leg", "He's cooking the books", "It's gone to the dogs", "There's more to this than meets the eye", and so on. Taken separately, each word is easily understood, but unless you understand the expression as a whole, you cannot hope to follow what is happening in meetings with your American and British counterparts, or in negotiations, or even at the dinner table. In circumstances like these, native English speakers will use idiomatic expressions as naturally and as often as you would use comparable idioms in Spanish.

Few English idioms can be translated word for word into Spanish, but some can, and others have near equivalents. Most, however, express cultural concepts that can only be paraphrased or approximated, and so must be learned by heart and in some sort of context. The purpose of this book is to provide you with appropriate contexts. The expressions are loosely grouped in short manageable units, each dealing with a particular theme and consisting of 25 idioms.

Within the unit, each idiom is presented in a specific situation, the majority of the illustrative sentences having been adapted from authentic sources like the "Financial Times", "Fortune", "Business Week", and "Forbes". (Although the examples are drawn from sources worldwide, British spelling is used throughout the book for the sake of consistency.)

The second part of each unit consists of exercises, which not only test your comprehension and assimilation of this material but also add to your understanding by providing literal definitions of each idiom in English, as well as further short examples of how to use them. For the benefit of students working on their own, an answer key to the exercises can be found at the end of the book. An index of keywords is also provided to enable you to find any particular idiom quickly.

The English language contains many, many thousands of idioms, and many of these exist in variant forms. Such abundance is daunting, so in studying idioms it is important to have realistic goals. Initially you should aim for a passive knowledge, being able to recognise and understand a limited number of the most common expressions in context. Try reading the examples in this book with the Spanish translations hidden. When you can do that with full understanding, you are ready to start inventing examples of your own. This is the best way (and also the only way) to incorporate them in your active vocabulary. You will find that your listening comprehension and oral English improve dramatically as a result. Little by little you will find yourself using these idioms in conversation.

At that point, you will start wondering how you ever managed to communicate without them.

# Introducción

Este libro ha sido diseñado para personas con un nivel medio y avanzado de inglés, con objeto de aumentar su comprensión del idioma, en particular, el que se usa en el mundo de los negocios. El libro te ayudará a aprender 1.000 expresiones idiomáticas de uso corriente, empleadas por gente de habla inglesa en todo el mundo. Es apropiado tanto para autodidactas como para su utilización en clase con apoyo del profesorado.

Mucha gente en el mundo empresarial piensa que el conocimiento del inglés idiomático es un tipo de opción lingüística adicional, que aporta riqueza al idioma pero que no es estrictamente esencial. Sin lugar a dudas, este punto de vista está equivocado, ya que se usan muchos modismos con la misma frecuencia y son tan necesarios como las palabras más básicas. De hecho, los modismos están compuestos con frecuencia por las palabras más básicas, aunque estén agrupadas y reducidas metafóricamente para formar ideas más complejas: "You're pulling my leg" (Me estás tomando el pelo.), "He's cooking the books" (Está amañando las cuentas.), "It's gone to the dogs", (Se ha arruinado), "There's more to this than meets the eye". (Es más complicado de lo que parece.), etc. Tomada por separado, cada palabra se entiende fácilmente, pero salvo que se entienda la expresión en su totalidad, no podrá entender lo que está ocurriendo en una reunión entre americanos y británicos, o en negociaciones, o incluso en la mesa. En circunstancias como éstas, los nativos de habla inglesa utilizarán modismos con la misma naturalidad y frecuencia que uno usaría giros similares en castellano.

Hay pocos modismos en inglés que se pueden traducir literalmente al castellano, salvo unos pocos, y otros son muy parecidos. La mayoría, sin embargo, expresan conceptos culturales que sólo pueden ser parafraseados aproximados, y por lo tanto han de ser aprendidos de memoria y dentro de un contexto determinado. El propósito de este libro es proporcionar al

estudiante contextos apropiados. Las expresiones están agrupadas informalmente en pequeños capítulos manejables, que tratan cada uno de un tema en particular, con un total de 25 modismos. Dentro de cada capítulo, cada modismo está presentado en una situación específica y la mayoría de las frases ilustrativas proceden de auténticas fuentes como el "Financial Times", "Fortune", "Business Week" y "Forbes". (Aunque los ejemplos vienen de fuentes de todo el mundo, la ortografía británica se utiliza en todo el libro por cuestión de coherencia).

La segunda parte de cada capítulo contiene ejercicios, los cuales no sólo ponen a prueba la comprensión y asimilación del material, sino que también ayudan a la comprensión al facilitar definiciones literales de cada modismo en inglés, al igual que otros ejemplos más breves sobre cómo utilizarlos. Para beneficio de las personas autodidactas, se puede encontrar las respuestas a los ejercicios al final del libro. También se ha incluido un índice de palabras clave para ayudar a encontrar rápidamente cualquier modismo.

El idioma inglés contiene miles de modismos, que revisten a menudo varias formas. Tal abundancia intimida; por ello al estudiar los modismos es importante fijarse metas razonables. Inicialmente se debería intentar adquirir un conocimiento pasivo y ser capaz de reconocer y comprender un número limitado de las expresiones más comunes dentro de un contexto. El estudiante debería leer los ejemplos con las traducciones al español ocultas. Cuando pueda hacerlos con una comprensión total, estará listo para inventar sus propios ejemplos. Ésta es la mejor forma (y también la única) de introducirle en un vocabulario activo. Se verá que la comprensión auditiva y el inglés oral mejoran drásticamente. Poco a poco irá utilizando estos modismos en las conversaciones.

A esas alturas, comenzará a preguntarse cómo conseguía comunicarse sin ellos.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# **1,000 everyday idioms in business**



*This page intentionally left blank*

# 1. Fundamentals

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## the ground rules

---

There are a lot of similarities between rearing a family and starting a new business; in both cases it is essential to establish **the ground rules** early.

## time is money

---

Opinion polls show that more people complain about lack of time than about lack of money. It is often said that **time is money**, but in fact it is much more: time is life itself.

## a fool and his money are soon parted

---

**A fool and his money** are nowhere more quickly parted than on the stock exchange.

## a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

---

I know their offer isn't as good as others we might receive in the future, but I think we should accept it nevertheless. After all, **a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush**.

## half a loaf is better than none

---

I applied for two weeks' holiday, but we're so short-handed at the moment that they allowed me only a week. Ah well, **half a loaf's better than none**

## he who pays the piper calls the tune

---

It seems to me that we have every right to stipulate the contents of the course. **We're paying the piper**, aren't we?

## what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts

---

It's a **swings-and-roundabouts situation**. An investment in new equipment will cost us a lot now, but it will also enable us to increase our output significantly over the next few years.

## easy come, easy go

---

Our Asian investments had practically doubled overnight. Hence, when the crash came, we could hardly complain. It was **easy come, easy go**

## las reglas básicas

---

Hay muchas similitudes entre formar una familia y crear un negocio: en ambos casos es esencial establecer rápidamente las reglas básicas.

## el tiempo es oro

---

Según las encuestas, hay gente que se queja más por falta de tiempo que por falta de dinero. Con frecuencia se dice que el tiempo es oro, pero de hecho, es mucho más: el tiempo es la vida misma.

## a los tontos no les dura el dinero

---

En ningún lugar les dura a los tontos tan poco tiempo el dinero como en la bolsa.

## más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando

---

Ya sé que su oferta no es tan buena como otras que podamos recibir en el futuro, pero creo que aun así deberíamos aceptarlo. Después de todo, **más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando**.

## a falta de pan, buenas son tortas

---

He solicitado unas vacaciones de dos semanas, pero en este momento andamos tan cortos de personal que sólo me han concedido una semana. En fin, **a falta de pan, buenas son tortas**.

## el que paga tiene derecho a escoger

---

Opino que tenemos todo el derecho del mundo a elegir el contenido del curso. El que paga tiene derecho a escoger, ¿no es así?

## lo que se pierde en una cosa se gana en otra

---

Es una situación de "lo que se pierde acá, se gana allá". Invertir en equipo nuevo nos costará mucho ahora, pero también nos permitirá *incrementar de forma significativa* nuestro nivel de producción en los próximos años.

## lo que fácil viene, fácil se va

---

Nuestras inversiones asiáticas prácticamente se habían duplicado de la noche a la mañana. Por lo tanto, cuando llegó la calda, realmente no nos podíamos quejar. Lo que fácil viene, fácil se va.

**forewarned is forearmed**

You must plan for trouble. No business is immune to negative word-of-mouth, and **forewarned is forearmed**.

**take the rough with the smooth**

You'll get the opportunity in this job to travel all over the world. Of course, that means you'll often be separated from your family — but you have to **take the rough with the smooth**.

**ups and downs**

Consulting has its **ups and downs**. Can you function without knowing where your next cheque is coming from? Are your comfortable relying on your ingenuity? These are questions you need to ask yourself.

**waste not, want not**

**Waste not, want not**. Especially don't waste your own resources and your customer's time by providing extras they don't need or care about.

**that's the way the cookie crumbles**

When the weather is bad, the tourist industry suffers. **That's the way the cookie crumbles** and there's no point complaining about it.

**the exception proves the rule**

During the summer, Fridays are usually quiet in the office, really quiet. I guess today was **the exception which proves the rule**

**the grass is always greener on the other side of the hill**

I would advise you to think very carefully before resigning your post with us to take up similar work in another company. **The grass always looks greener on the other side of the hill**

**let sleeping dogs lie**

With morale so low throughout the company, we feel this is not the right moment to introduce a new Personnel Appraisal procedure. For the time being, we prefer to **let sleeping dogs lie**

**if at first you don't succeed, try and try again**

Salesmanship is 90% perseverance. The only basic rule is: if at first you don't succeed, **try and try again**

**hombre prevenido vale por dos**

Hay que tener un plan para hacer frente a los problemas. Ningún negocio es inmune a un boca-a-boca negativo, y hombre prevenido vale por dos.

**estar a las duras y a las maduras**

Con este empleo tendrás la oportunidad de viajar por todo el mundo. Por supuesto, eso significa que con frecuencia estarás separado de tu familia, pero hay que estar a las duras y a las maduras.

**los pros y los contras**

El trabajo de consultoría tiene sus pros y sus contras. ¿Puedes vivir sin saber de dónde van a salir tus próximos ingresos? ¿No te preocupa el depender sólo de tu ingenio? Éstas son las preguntas que te has de hacer.

**no malgastes y no te faltará**

No malgastes y no te faltará. Sobre todo, no malgastes ni tus propios recursos ni el tiempo de tus clientes dándoles cosas extras que ni necesitan ni les importa.

**así es la vida**

Cuando hace mal tiempo, la industria turística se resiente. Así es la vida y no sirve de nada quejarse.

**la excepción confirma la regla**

Durante el verano, los viernes suelen ser tranquilos en la oficina, muy tranquilos. Supongo que hoy ha sido la excepción que confirma la regla.

**la hierba siempre parece más verde en el jardín del vecino**

Te aconsejaría que reflexionaras antes de dejar tu puesto en nuestra empresa para aceptar un trabajo similar en otra. La hierba siempre parece más verde en el jardín del vecino.

**más vale no tocarlo**

Con la moral tan baja en toda la empresa, pensamos que no es el momento de introducir un nuevo procedimiento de evaluación del personal. De momento, pensamos que más vale no tocar el tema.

**el que la sigue la consigue**

Las ventas son perseverancia en un 90%. La única regla básica es que el que la sigue, la consigue.

**never put off till tomorrow what you can do today**

You know you're going to have to write that report sooner or later. Why continue to **put off till tomorrow what you can do today**?

**one good turn deserves another**

You helped me when I was in trouble, so it's only natural that I should help you now. **One good turn deserves another**, and all that.

**it never rains but it pours**

My secretary's off sick, the computer has broken down and now I've lost my agenda and don't know what I'm supposed to be doing today. It **never rains but it pours**.

**a bad workman blames his tools**

He admitted that his presentation was dreadful but said it was because he had never used that kind of overhead projector before. Of course, that was just the **bad workman blaming his tools**.

**it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good**

Lawyers are generally the first to admit that it's an **ill wind that blows nobody any good**.

**where there's a will there's a way**

Certainly there are obstacles in our path, it can't be denied. But **where there's a will, there's a way**, and I don't doubt we'll succeed in the end.

**keep one's head above water**

Our aim is to **keep our heads above water** for the first year. If we can manage to do that, we should start showing a profit in the second.

**take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves**

Never forget that a profit is a profit and that there's no such thing as a small profit. If you **take care of the pennies, the pounds will take care of themselves**.

**nunca dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy**

Sabes que vas a tener que escribir ese informe tarde o temprano. ¿Por qué dejar para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy?

**favor con favor se paga**

Me ayudaste cuando tenía problemas, y por ello es natural que yo te ayude ahora. Favor con favor se paga.

**las desgracias nunca vienen solas**

Mi secretaria está de baja, el ordenador se ha averiado y además, he perdido mi agenda y no sé qué es lo que se supone que debería hacer hoy. Las desgracias nunca vienen solas.

**no hay que buscar excusas para un trabajo mal hecho**

Admitió que su presentación fue malísima pero se excusó diciendo que era porque nunca había usado un proyector de ese tipo. Está claro que buscaba excusas para un trabajo mal hecho.

**no hay mal que por bien no venga**

Los abogados suelen ser los primeros en admitir que no hay mal que por bien no venga.

**querer es poder**

Es cierto que hay obstáculos en nuestro camino, no se puede negar. Pero querer es poder, y no dudo que al final triunfaremos.

**mantenerse a flote**

Nuestra meta es mantenernos a flote durante el primer año. Si podemos conseguirlo, deberíamos empezar a ver beneficios de inmediato.

**muchos pocos hacen un mucho**

No hay que olvidar que el beneficio es el beneficio y que no existe el pequeño beneficio. Muchos pocos hacen un mucho.

# 1. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** *(saying)* A person who produces bad work will blame the material he is using rather than admit his own responsibility.
- 2** *(saying)* When you know about a future danger, you can prepare for it, and so deal with it more effectively.
- 3** To survive by avoiding debt and other difficulties: We had serious cash flow problems last year, but fortunately we managed to \_\_\_\_\_ until the situation improved.
- 4** *(saying)* One should be grateful for what one gets, even if it is very little, since it is still better than nothing at all.
- 5** *(saying)* If a necessary task can be performed immediately, it should be. Otherwise there is the risk it may never be done at all.
- 6** The basic principles or rules of behaviour in a given situation: A estas alturas ya no se pueden cambiar las reglas básicas.
- 7** *(saying)* It is better to work and earn money than to waste your time: El tiempo es oro.
- 8** *(saying)* No matter how many failures you have encountered, keep trying and eventually you will be successful.
- 9** *(saying)* An unfortunate event is generally accompanied by other unfortunate events.
- 10** To accept the difficult or disagreeable part of something as well as the pleasant part: Hay que estar a las duras y a las maduras.
- 11** *(saying)* A foolish person cannot keep money long, because it is easy to take it away from him.
- 12** *(saying)* In every misfortune, there is something of benefit to someone.
- 13** *(saying)* One should not waste small amounts of money since many small amounts quickly add up to a large amount.
- 14** *(saying)* Disadvantages and setbacks in one area are compensated by advantages and progress in other areas.
- 15** *(saying)* It is preferable to take a small but certain advantage immediately, rather than to hope for a greater advantage later.
- 16** *(saying)* The person who pays for something has the right to decide what it should be like, how it should be used, etc.
- 17** *(saying, often used to express unconcern at losing something, e.g. money)* What one gains or earns too easily is just as easily lost.
- 18** *(saying)* Life always appears to be better somewhere else.
- 19** *(saying)* If you really want to do something, no matter how difficult it appears, you will find a way to do it.
- 20** Periods of success and happiness alternating with periods of unhappiness and failure: Su negocio ha tenido sus altibajos.
- 21** To avoid looking for trouble, or to avoid any action which is likely to cause disorder.
- 22** *(saying)* If you help me in some way, it is only right that I help you when you need it.
- 23** *(saying, usually employed when the speaker claims something that another person has discarded)* If you make proper and careful use of the things you have, you will never be in need.
- 24** *(saying)* Although this example is not in accordance with the rule, it shows that the rule is still useful in most cases.
- 25** *(used when something unfortunate has just happened)* This is the situation and we have no choice but to accept it: Así es la vida.

## 2. Time

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### at the best of times

---

It's difficult to sell to the Japanese **at the best of times**, but now, with the dollar at an all-time high against the yen, I think it would be quite impossible.

### against the clock

---

Their oil reserves may last only another 20 years. Consequently, they must work **against the clock** to diversify their economy before the oil revenues run out.

### round the clock

---

This is one of the largest orders we have ever received. We will need three shifts working **round the clock** if we are to meet the deadline.

### till the cows come home

---

We can sit around analysing our production methods **till the cows come home**; but analysis in itself is not going to increase productivity.

### keep up to date with sth

---

An important part of my job is to **keep up to date with** the latest developments in the pharmaceutical industry.

### be out of date

---

This report is utterly worthless. It analyses current economic problems using concepts that are at least thirty years **out of date**.

### to date

---

**To date**, more than £100m has been invested in about 950 companies under the terms of the Enterprise Investment Scheme.

### call it a day

---

After disappointing ventures abroad, Israel's largest food retailer has decided **to call it a day**. They are returning home and concentrating on what they do best: selling food to Israelis.

### take one's time

---

There's no need to rush. Just **take your time** and tell me clearly what happened.

### con todo a favor

---

Es difícil hacer negocios con los japoneses incluso con todo a favor, pero ahora, con el dólar cotizando más alto que nunca con respecto al yen, creo que sería casi imposible.

### contrarreloj

---

Puede que sus reservas de petróleo sólo les duren 20 años más. Por lo tanto, han de trabajar **contrarreloj** para diversificar su economía antes de que se acaben sus ingresos del petróleo.

### día y noche, las 24 horas

---

Este es uno de los mayores pedidos que hemos recibido nunca. Necesitaremos tres turnos que trabajen día y noche si hemos de cumplir el plazo de entrega.

### hasta el día del juicio final

---

Podemos quedarnos a analizar nuestros métodos de producción hasta el día del juicio final, pero el análisis en sí no va a incrementar la productividad.

### mantenerse al corriente de algo

---

Una parte importante de mi trabajo es **mantenerme al corriente** de los últimos avances de la industria farmacéutica.

### ser anticuado, obsoleto

---

Este informe no sirve para nada. Analiza los actuales problemas económicos utilizando conceptos que quedaron obsoletos hace al menos 30 años.

### hasta la fecha, hasta ahora

---

**Hasta la fecha**, se han invertido más de £100m en unas 950 empresas al amparo del Plan de Inversión Empresarial.

### dar algo por concluido

---

Tras realizar inversiones poco lucrativas en el extranjero, la mayor empresa israelí de alimentación ha decidido **dar por concluidas** sus inversiones en el extranjero. Regresan a casa y se concentrarán en lo que se les da mejor: vender productos alimenticios a los israelíes.

### tomarse su tiempo, hacer algo con calma

---

No hay prisa. **Tómate tu tiempo** y cuéntame con claridad lo ocurrido.

**for donkey's years**

We've been doing business with them **for donkey's years** and have always found them completely reliable.

**on the dot**

The meeting will begin at 3:30 **on the dot** and I would appreciate it if you could all make a special effort to be on time.

**at the eleventh hour**

A strike was averted **at the eleventh hour** when management announced they would withdraw plans to close the Longbridge factory.

**do sth at one's leisure**

I'd like your opinion on this safety report, but there's no great rush. Why don't you take it home with you and read it **at your leisure**?

**time flies**

My goodness, I had no idea it was so late. **Time simply flies** when you're enjoying yourself.

**once and for all**

The tobacco companies decided to pay **once and for all**, offering the government a sum in excess of \$250 billion rather than face an endless series of lawsuits.

**in the long run**

The single currency may — **in the long run** — be a good idea. However, monetary union imposes one level of interest rates on everyone and so threatens to make the jobless problem even worse in the short term.

**for the time being**

Clearly the Americans, who have no desire to offend such an important trading partner as China, are satisfied **for the time being** to let the status quo continue.

**it's high time that...**

With the right exchange rate and lower taxes, Britain could be an important offshore manufacturing centre. **It is high time** the government understood this reality.

**desde hace siglos**

Llevamos siglos trabajando con ellos y siempre han sido puntuales en sus compromisos.

**en punto**

La reunión comenzará a las 3:30 en punto y me gustaría que todos hicierais un esfuerzo especial por ser puntuales.

**a última hora**

Se evitó una huelga a última hora cuando la directiva anunció que retirarían los planes para cerrar la fábrica de Longbridge.

**hacer algo cuando a uno le venga bien**

Me gustaría tu opinión sobre este informe de seguridad, pero no corre prisa. ¿Por qué no te lo llevas a casa y le echas un vistazo cuando te venga bien?

**el tiempo pasa volando**

Cielos, no tenía ni idea de que fuera tan tarde. El tiempo pasa volando cuando uno se lo está pasando bien.

**de una vez por todas**

Las empresas tabaqueras decidieron pagar de una vez por todas, ofreciendo al gobierno una cantidad superior a \$250.000 millones en lugar de enfrentarse a una serie interminable de pleitos.

**a la larga**

La moneda única puede ser a la larga una buena idea. Sin embargo, la unión monetaria impone un solo nivel de tipos de interés para todos y por lo tanto amenaza con empeorar a corto plazo el problema del paro.

**de momento, por ahora**

Está claro que los americanos, quienes no tienen ningún interés en enemistarse con un socio comercial como China, están satisfechos de momento con la continuación del *statu quo*.

**es hora de que...**

Con el tipo de cambio apropiado e impuestos más bajos, Inglaterra podría ser un importante centro industrial. Ya va siendo hora de que el gobierno comprenda esta realidad.

### **a thing of the past**

In recent years, the Japanese have had to accept that guaranteed employment for life **is a thing of the past**

### **for old time's sake**

As we had been at school together, it was natural he should think I would view his offer more favourably than the others, **for old time's sake**

### **the sooner the better**

Our association with Maxwell has cost us and is still costing us a great deal of money. **The sooner** we end that association, **the better**

### **be ahead of one's time**

Rockefeller, who really created the modern oil industry, was years **ahead of his time**. He standardised the product, so that when you lit your oil lamp, it didn't explode; you had a high-quality product.

### **move with the times**

In an attempt to **move with the times** and to reinvent itself as a modern high technology company, the defence and engineering group General Electric Company is to cut 1,500 jobs through a voluntary redundancy scheme.

### **it was about time**

They've been discussing that project for the past two years. **It was about time** they took a decision.

### **in the nick of time**

I arrived at the airport **in the nick of time**: another five minutes and I'd have missed my flight.

### **ser cosa del pasado**

En los últimos años, los japoneses han tenido que aceptar que un empleo garantizado de por vida es cosa del pasado.

### **por los viejos tiempos**

Como fuimos al colegio juntos, era natural que pensara que vería su oferta con mejores ojos que los demás, por los viejos tiempos.

### **cuanto antes mejor**

Nuestra asociación con Maxwell nos ha costado y nos sigue costando mucho dinero. Cuanto antes cortemos con la asociación, mejor.

### **adelantarse a su época**

Rockefeller, que fue quien creó la industria petrolífera moderna, se adelantó a su época. Normalizó el producto para que al encender la lámpara de petróleo no explotara; se trataba de un producto de alta calidad.

### **ir con los tiempos**

En un esfuerzo por ir con los tiempos y reconvertirse en una empresa moderna de alta tecnología, el grupo de defensa e ingeniería General Electric Company recortará 1.500 puestos de trabajo mediante un plan de jubilaciones voluntarias.

### **ya era hora**

Han estado discutiendo ese proyecto durante los dos últimos años. Ya era hora de que tomaran una decisión.

### **en el último momento**

Llegué al aeropuerto en el último momento: cinco minutos más tarde y hubiese perdido el avión.



## 2. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** *Ultimately, not immediately but after a relatively long period of time: This item is selling badly now, but \_\_\_\_\_ we expect to break even and perhaps even make a small profit.*
- 2** *Until the present situation changes, for the present: Déjalo ahí por el momento.*
- 3** *For an infinitely long period of time, forever: You can talk to that man \_\_\_\_\_, but it won't do any good: he simply refuses to admit he's wrong.*
- 4** *(used to indicate that an action or decision must be taken immediately) It is necessary now...: Ya va siendo hora de que alguien haga algo.*
- 5** *Exactly at the specified time: El tren salió a las dos y media en punto.*
- 6** *Because of happy times in the past, or as a reminder of such times: Así no lo harás, ni siquiera por los viejos tiempos.*
- 7** *(saying, usually expressing surprise that so much time has passed while one was working, talking, etc.) Time passes very quickly: ¡Qué rápido pasa el tiempo!*
- 8** *It is preferable to take action as quickly as possible: \_\_\_\_\_ this decision is implemented, \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 9** *To stop doing something, especially to stop working: Obviamente no estaba logrando nada, así que abandoné y me fui.*
- 10** *Finished, no longer appropriate: Los tranvías han pasado a la historia.*
- 11** *To have ideas which are so advanced or original that one's contemporaries can't understand them: Se adelantó a su época.*
- 12** *Up to the present time, until today: We've sold 5,000 units \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 13** *Within a limited period of time: We will be working \_\_\_\_\_ to meet this deadline; we can't afford to waste a single minute.*
- 14** *To do something without hurrying, when one has plenty of time: Léalo cuando le venga bien.*
- 15** *To stay abreast of current trends, to stay up-to-date: Any company that hasn't got a web site isn't \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 16** *To stay aware of the present situation, to be modern in one's thinking and practice: No matter how many magazines you read, it's impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ with what's happening in the computer industry.*
- 17** *(used to refer to something which one feels should have been done much sooner) Finally, at last: \_\_\_\_\_ they replaced those old 286 P.C.s.*
- 18** *For a very long time: Hace siglos que no la veo.*
- 19** *When conditions are most favourable: This is hard work \_\_\_\_\_, but it is particularly difficult in these poor conditions.*
- 20** *Just in time, before it would have been too late: Llegué al aeropuerto justo a tiempo.*
- 21** *To be old-fashioned, not recent: These customer files are worthless, they're all \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 22** *At the last possible moment: A strike was narrowly avoided when management produced a better offer \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 23** *To do something slowly and carefully: Tómate todo el tiempo que necesites.*
- 24** *Twenty-four hours a day, without stop: We have three shifts working \_\_\_\_\_ every day of the year.*
- 25** *For the very last time: I'm warning you \_\_\_\_\_, I won't tolerate this kind of behaviour.*

## 3. Money

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### money talks

When it comes to keeping high-performance employees, **money talks**; the best way to reward them is with bonuses.

### make a bomb

Speculators **made a bomb** as the price of rubber increased by more than 200%.

### cost a bomb

An advertising campaign like that is out of the question for a small firm like ours. For one thing, it would **cost a bomb**.

### be in the black

Although it has made heavy losses in the past two years, Mr Bernhard said that the company was already back **in the black** after a restructuring programme.

### be in the red

All five of the country's biggest steel companies **are in the red**. Bankruptcies are at record levels, and the outlook is grim.

### foot the bill

No one wants spending on product research to be cut completely. On the other hand, we are not prepared to **foot the bill** of ever-higher R & D costs.

### throw good money after bad

We have already lost huge sums on this product. In my opinion, to attempt to develop it any further will simply be throwing **good money after bad**.

### pay cash on the nail

We generally allow a 15% discount to customers who **pay cash on the nail**.

### money is no object

Our management attaches great importance to this project. **Money is no object** whatsoever.

### be penny wise and pound foolish

Insisting that employees should not make private telephone calls from the office is not really going to reduce the firm's losses, but it will affect morale: it's **being penny wise and pound foolish**.

### poderoso caballero es don dinero

Cuando se trata de retener a los empleados altamente rentables, poderoso caballero es don dinero; la mejor forma de recompensarles es con un plus.

### ganar una fortuna

Los especuladores ganaron una fortuna cuando el precio del caucho subió más del 200%.

### costar un ojo de la cara

Una campaña de publicidad como ésta está fuera del alcance de una empresa pequeña como la nuestra. Para empezar, costaría un ojo de la cara.

### ser solvente

Aunque ha sufrido grandes pérdidas en los dos últimos años, el Sr. Bernhard ha dicho que la empresa es ya solvente tras el programa de reestructuración.

### estar al descubierto o en números rojos

Todas y cada una de las cinco grandes empresas del acero están en números rojos. Hay un número récord de quiebras y el pronóstico no es favorable.

### pagar

Nadie quiere que se deje de invertir totalmente en la investigación de productos. Por otra parte, no estamos preparados para pagar la cuenta cada vez más elevada de los gastos de investigación y desarrollo.

### echar la sogá tras el caldero

Ya hemos perdido sumas enormes en este producto. En mi opinión, intentar desarrollarlo más significaría echar la sogá tras el caldero.

### pagar al contado

Generalmente concedemos un descuento del 15% a los clientes que pagan al contado.

### no importan los gastos

Nuestros directivos dan mucha importancia a este proyecto. No importan los gastos.

### hacer economías de chicha y nabo

Insistir en que los empleados no realicen llamadas privadas desde la oficina no va a reducir las pérdidas de la empresa, pero afectará a la moral: es hacer economías de chicha y nabo.

**at any price**

In a 1997 survey, 47% of consumers said they'd be much more likely to buy from a "good" company if quality, service and price were equal, and 70% said they would not buy - **at any price** - from a company that wasn't socially responsible.

**the sixty-four thousand dollar question**

We've discussed the salary and conditions. That only leaves **the sixty-four thousand dollar question**: would you be willing to work for us on those terms?

**be rolling in it**

Well, I wouldn't say **we're exactly rolling in it**, but we don't have to worry about cash flow problems either.

**go through the roof**

If the drought in Assam and West Bengal continues for some time, Indian tea production will be badly hit and prices will **go through the roof**.

**do sth on a shoestring**

Marketing, even **on a shoestring**, is essential. Use ingenuity and persistence to make up for what you lack in cash.

**money doesn't grow on trees**

We have to make employees aware that unnecessary photocopying costs us an incredible amount annually - and that **money doesn't grow on trees**.

**to the tune of ...**

They are not at all financially sound. Rumour has it that they are in debt **to the tune of** \$500,000.

**for a song**

He bought the company **for a song** just over ten years ago. Now it has an annual turnover of more than \$5,000,000.

**be deep in debt**

A merger of the two companies was not seen as the ideal solution. Neither had a good "product pipeline" and both **were deep in debt**.

**a cualquier precio, a ningún precio**

En una encuesta de 1997, el 47% de los consumidores dijeron que estarían mucho más dispuestos a comprar a una "buena" empresa si la calidad, el servicio y el precio fueran iguales, y el 70% dijo que no compraría - a ningún precio - a una empresa que no fuera socialmente responsable.

**la pregunta del millón**

Hemos comentado el sueldo y las condiciones. Ahora sólo queda la pregunta del millón: ¿estaría dispuesto a trabajar para nosotros en esas condiciones?

**nadar en oro**

Pues diría que no estamos exactamente nadando en oro, pero tampoco tenemos que preocuparnos por problemas de liquidez.

**subir por las nubes**

Si la sequía en Assam y Bengala Occidental continúa durante algún tiempo, la producción india de té se verá seriamente afectada y los precios subirán por las nubes.

**hacer algo con poquísimo dinero**

El marketing es esencial, incluso con poquísimo dinero. Utiliza el ingenio y la perseverancia para compensar lo que te falte en efectivo.

**el dinero no nace en las macetas**

Tenemos que conseguir que los empleados se den cuenta de que las fotocopias innecesarias nos cuestan una cantidad increíble al año y que el dinero no nace en las macetas.

**por un importe de ...**

Su situación financiera deja mucho que desear. Se rumorea que están endeudados por un importe de \$500,000.

**regalado**

Compró la empresa casi regalada hace poco más de diez años. Ahora factura más de \$5.000.000 anuales.

**estar endeudado**

La fusión de las dos empresas no fue vista como una solución ideal. Ninguna de las dos tenía una buena línea de productos y ambas estaban muy endeudadas.

**pay over the odds**

Our regular supplier has not been able to furnish us with these items for weeks. We therefore feel it's worth **paying** a bit **over the odds** to stock up.

**be hard up**

More than half Britain's workers face **being hard-up** in retirement, according to a new study published today. Some 13m people are due to retire on £106 a week or less.

**not have a penny to one's name**

I doubt if he'll be able to raise a loan. It's well known in business circles that he doesn't **have a penny to his name**.

**see the colour of sb's money**

If your credit is good, no one asks to see **the colour of your money**.

**you can bet your bottom dollar that ...**

You can bet your bottom dollar that their new hotel on Lake Tahoe, with its combination of gambling and ski resort, is destined to be a success.

**a drop in the ocean**

Lavery said he'd be prepared to invest £10,000. Unfortunately that's only **a drop in the ocean**. We need a quarter of a million at least.

**pagar más de la cuenta**

Durante semanas, nuestro proveedor habitual no nos ha podido suministrar estos artículos. Por lo tanto, creemos que merece la pena pagar un poco más para incrementar los stocks.

**estar en una situación límite**

Más de la mitad de los trabajadores británicos se enfrentan a una situación límite al jubilarse, según un nuevo estudio publicado hoy. Se dice que unos 13 millones de personas se jubilarán con £106 a la semana o incluso menos.

**no tener dónde caerse muerto**

Dudo que pueda conseguir un préstamo. En los círculos empresariales se sabe que no tiene **dónde caerse muerto**.

**adelantar el dinero**

Si tu crédito es bueno, **nadie te pedirá que adelantes el dinero**.

**puedes apostar que ...**

Puedes apostar que ese nuevo hotel en el lago Tahoe, que combina el casino y el centro de esquí, está destinado a ser un éxito.

**una gota de agua en el mar**

Lavery dijo que estaría preparado a invertir £10.000. Desgraciadamente eso es sólo una gota de agua en el mar. Necesitamos al menos un cuarto de millón.

### 3. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** The question on which everything else depends: And now, let me ask you \_\_\_\_\_, do you want to buy it or not?
- 2** To be extremely rich: Estaban podridos de dinero.
- 3** To earn a large amount of money: Hizo una fortuna con ese negocio.
- 4** (*prices*) To increase very rapidly: El precio de la gasolina se puso por las nubes.
- 5** Very cheaply, on a very low budget: Operan con poquísimos dólares.
- 6** To pay at once, on the spot: We \_\_\_\_\_ to get the 10% discount.
- 7** (*saying*) Money is not easy to obtain: These days, more than ever, you have to keep reminding young people that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8** To be the person who pays, usually for something involving a number of people: La empresa correrá con los gastos.
- 9** To the sum of a stated amount of money: Tiene una deuda de cinco mil libras.
- 10** To pay more than one would usually expect: We're willing to \_\_\_\_\_ for this equipment, provided you can guarantee immediate delivery.
- 11** (*saying*) Wealth can influence events to the advantage of its owner: Poderoso caballero es don dinero.
- 12** To have very little money: Estábamos mal de dinero.
- 13** To spend more money in an attempt to regain money that has already been lost: Many people feel that by giving more millions to Russia, the IMF is simply \_\_\_\_\_.
- 14** Under any conditions at all: Quieren el contrato cueste lo que cueste.
- 15** To have no money at all: He can't possibly be a sleeping partner, he doesn't \_\_\_\_\_.
- 16** To have money in the bank, not to be in debt: Su cuenta tiene un saldo positivo.
- 17** To be in debt, having spent more money than one has in the bank: Siempre estoy en números rojos.
- 18** (*used when one is doubtful that somebody has money to pay for something*) To see somebody's money: I wasn't going to give him the goods until I had \_\_\_\_\_.
- 19** Very cheaply: Compraron la empresa casi regalada.
- 20** To cost a large amount of money: Eso te debe de haber costado un ojo de la cara.
- 21** To be careful with small sums of money but careless or wasteful with large sums: He tends to \_\_\_\_\_, spending hours choosing the cheapest office stationery, then impulsively buying the latest electronic gadget to come on the market.
- 22** To owe a great deal of money: Están agobiados de deudas.
- 23** It doesn't matter how much it costs: Dijo que el dinero no era un problema.
- 24** Be completely certain: You can \_\_\_\_\_ that he'll accept the post: it's what he's wanted for years.
- 25** A very small amount, especially when compared with a larger amount: Es un grano de arena en el desierto.

## 4. Information

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **put sb in the picture**

The first thing I want you to do is **to put me in the picture** about what's been happening while I've been away.

### **let the cat out of the bag**

Only a very limited number of people must know about this plan. It will spoil everything if someone **lets the cat out of the bag** before we're ready to act.

### **spill the beans**

Why did you have to go and **spill the beans** about the proposed pay increase? It was meant to be a surprise.

### **hear sth straight from the horse's mouth**

I'm sure that Hendly has handed in his resignation because I heard it **straight from the horse's mouth**. He told me this morning.

### **keep sth under one's hat**

We've decided to freeze salaries for the next two years, but **keep it under your hat** for the time being. There's no point in provoking the unions before we have to.

### **come to light**

The affair **came to light** in September 1998 after the discovery of serious irregularities in the management of the company.

### **it's news to me**

Did you say that they intend to close their Manchester branch? Well, **that's news to me**, I must say. I had no idea they were in such difficulty.

### **no news is good news**

Small business entrepreneurs noted that the chancellor did not mention capital gains tax in his speech. The general view is that in this case **no news is good news**.

### **keep one's ear to the ground**

There are rumours that our main competitors are thinking of moving into the home electronics market. Keep **your ear to the ground** and let me know if you hear anything definite.

### **poner a alguien al corriente**

Lo primero que quiero es que me pongas al corriente sobre lo que ha estado ocurriendo mientras he estado fuera.

### **descubrir el pastel**

Sólo un número muy limitado de personas debe conocer este plan. Se echaría todo a perder si se descubriese el pastel antes de que estuviéramos listos para actuar.

### **revelar sin querer el secreto**

¿Por qué tuviste que irte de la lengua sobre la propuesta de incremento de sueldo? Se suponía que era una sorpresa.

### **saber algo de buena tinta**

Estoy seguro de que Hendley ha entregado su renuncia. Lo sé de buena tinta. Me lo dijo esta mañana.

### **guardar un secreto**

Hemos decidido congelar los salarios durante los dos próximos años, pero de momento guarda el secreto. No conviene provocar a los sindicatos antes de tiempo.

### **salir a luz**

El asunto salió a la luz en septiembre de 1998 tras descubrir serias irregularidades en la gerencia de la empresa.

### **ahora me entero**

¿Has dicho que tienen intención de cerrar su sucursal de Manchester? Bueno, debo admitir que ahora me entero. No tenía ni idea de que estuvieran pasando por semejantes dificultades.

### **la falta de noticias significa buenas noticias**

Los pequeños empresarios se dieron cuenta de que el canciller no mencionó el impuesto sobre las plusvalías del capital. En este caso la falta de noticias significa buenas noticias.

### **mantenerse atento**

Hay rumores de que nuestros principales competidores están pensando en adentrarse en el mercado de la electrónica doméstica. Mantente atento y házme saber si oyes algo definitivo.

**sell sb a bum steer**

I'm afraid someone has **sold you a bum steer**. We're not remotely interested in hiring a public relations officer.

**take sth with a pinch of salt**

Their own assessment of the value of the company, \$13 million, needs to be taken **with a pinch of salt**, for they have known debts of at least \$7 million.

**keep sb posted**

**Keep me posted daily**. If there are any new developments, I expect to be the first to hear about them.

**there's no smoke without fire**

It would be wiser to treat these rumours as if they were at least partly true. **There's no smoke without fire**, you know.

**spread like wildfire**

The news that management had decided to cut 200 jobs in the coming year **spread like wildfire** throughout the company.

**keep sth under wraps**

Somehow the team of lawyers and advisors managed **to keep everything under wraps** until last week, when the motor industry was stunned by news of the deal.

**shed light on sth**

The chairman thanked him for his report, which, he said, **shed a great deal of light** on the complex environmental problems facing the industry.

**a little bird told me**

- How did you find out they were going to cancel that project?  
- Let's just say **a little bird told me**.

**put sb out of his misery**

The three mechanics stood nervously in the boss's office, having no idea why they had been summoned there. Finally, he put them **out of their misery** by declaring how pleased he was with their work.

**put sth down in black and white**

Listen, vague promises are not enough. Not only do we want you to state your position clearly on this matter, we want you to put it down **in black and white**.

**dar información falsa a alguien**

Me temo que alguien te ha dado información falsa. No estamos en absoluto interesados en contratar un empleado de relaciones públicas.

**aceptar algo con muchas reservas**

Su propia tasación del valor de la empresa, 13 millones de dólares, debe ser aceptada con muchas reservas, ya que sus deudas conocidas ascienden al menos a 7 millones de dólares.

**mantener a alguien al corriente**

Manténme al corriente a diario. Si hay algo nuevo, cuento con ser el primero en conocerlo.

**cuando el río suena, agua lleva**

Sería mejor tratar estos rumores como si fueran ciertos al menos en parte. Ya sabes que cuando el río suena, agua lleva.

**correr como la pólvora**

La noticia de que los directivos habían decidido recortar 200 puestos de trabajo el año siguiente corrió como la pólvora por toda la empresa.

**mantener algo en secreto**

De alguna manera el equipo de abogados y asesores consiguió mantenerlo en secreto hasta la pasada semana, cuando la industria del automóvil se quedó estupefacta ante la noticia del contrato.

**aclarar algo - arrojar luz sobre algo**

El presidente le dio las gracias por su informe, el cual, dijo, aclaraba mucho los complejos problemas medioambientales a los que se enfrenta la industria.

**me lo ha dicho un pajarito**

-¿Cómo te enteraste de que iban a cancelar el proyecto?  
-Digamos que me lo ha dicho un pajarito.

**sacar de su angustia**

Los tres mecánicos esperaban nerviosos en la oficina del jefe, sin tener idea de por qué les habían llamado. Finalmente, les sacó de su angustia, declarando lo muy complacido que estaba con su trabajo.

**poner algo negro sobre blanco**

Escucha, no basta con promesas ambiguas. No sólo queremos que expreses claramente tu posición en este asunto, sino que lo pongas negro sobre blanco.

**be none of sb's business**

During the interview, they asked him a number of deliberately "stressful" questions about his sexual preferences. He told them frankly that his sexual life **was none of their business**.

**have sth at one's fingertips**

If you want to know about the legal aspects, ask Lewis in the Accounting Department. He has all **the facts at his fingertips**.

**cannot believe one's ears**

We've always been extremely busy in the run-up to Christmas, so when he said that he expected sales to fall during the Christmas period, I simply **couldn't believe my ears**.

**play one's cards close to one's chest**

Negotiating with the Japanese is never an easy matter. They tend to play their cards very **close to their chest**, so most of the time you have little idea of what they really want.

**keep sth dark**

They told me that I was going to get the promotion but they asked me **to keep it dark** for the time being, so as not to cause any unnecessary bad feeling in the office.

**a red herring**

Every time we mentioned the poor quality of the goods he had supplied, he tried to shift our attention to the dockers' strike and to the exchange rate of the dollar and other **red herrings**.

**no ser de su incumbencia**

Durante la entrevista, le hicieron una serie de preguntas deliberadamente "estresantes" sobre sus preferencias sexuales. Les dijo sinceramente que su vida sexual no era de su incumbencia.

**saberse algo al dedillo**

Si quieres saber algo sobre los aspectos legales, pregunta a Lewis en el departamento de contabilidad. Se sabe todos los detalles al dedillo.

**no poder creer lo que uno oye**

Siempre hemos tenido mucho trabajo en el periodo pre-navideño, así que cuando dijo que temía que las ventas cayeran durante las navidades, no podía creer lo que estaba oyendo.

**no revelar las intenciones de uno**

Negociar con Japón nunca es un asunto fácil. Tienen a no revelar sus intenciones, así que la mayor parte del tiempo no tienes ni idea de lo que quieren en realidad.

**mantener algo en secreto**

Me dijeron que me iban a conceder el ascenso pero me pidieron que lo mantuviera de momento en secreto, para no causar una tensión innecesaria en la oficina.

**un pretexto para desviar la atención**

Cada vez que mencionábamos la poca calidad de los artículos que nos suministraba, se salía por la tangente hablando sobre la huelga de los estibadores, el cambio del dólar y cualquier otra cosa para desviar nuestra atención.



## 4. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To keep something secret: Guardó en secreto su ascenso durante tres meses.
- 2** To keep someone informed about one's progress, etc: We hold regular interdepartmental meetings to \_\_\_\_\_ each other \_\_\_\_\_ on what's happening throughout the company.
- 3** (*saying*) If something is being widely talked about, there is a good reason for it : the rumours are probably true.
- 4** (*news, etc.*) To spread very quickly from one person to another: La noticia de que había dimitido se extendió como un reguero de pólvora.
- 5** An expression used to avoid revealing the source of one's information, usually in answer to a question. ¿Cómo lo sabías? — Me lo dijo un pajarito.
- 6** (*plans, ideas, etc.*) To keep something hidden or secret: Details of exactly how small investors will be affected are being \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To give someone a piece of false information or bad advice: Me han dado un pésimo dato.
- 8** To doubt that a statement is completely true or reliable: No me fiaría mucho de nada de lo que él diga.
- 9** (*secret information*) To become widely known: If these figures ever \_\_\_\_\_ we'll be in deep trouble.
- 10** To relieve someone's anxiety by telling him something he wants to know: No me tengas más tiempo en ascuas y cuéntame lo que pasó.
- 11** To be very familiar with a subject: You can ask him anything about the new measures, he \_\_\_\_\_ all the facts \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12** It's a piece of information I didn't know and it surprises me: Me pilló de nuevas.
- 13** To reveal something that is being kept secret, especially at the wrong time: ¿Quién se ha ido de la lengua?
- 14** To be no concern of someone's: Lo que yo haga no es asunto tuyo.
- 15** To put something in written form: Quiero ver su oferta por escrito.
- 16** To learn something directly from the person most concerned: Lo sé de buena tinta.
- 17** To be very secretive, hiding one's intentions: All through the negotiations he \_\_\_\_\_, so we never knew how far he was prepared to go.
- 18** To give someone the facts about a situation: Llegó tarde, pero pronto le pusimos al corriente.
- 19** To be alert to what is happening or is about to happen: Estáte al tanto.
- 20** Not to tell anyone about something, to keep something secret: This information is highly sensitive, so I'd appreciate it if you could \_\_\_\_\_ for the time being.
- 21** To be unable to accept what one has just heard as true: I \_\_\_\_\_ when he said we were bankrupt.
- 22** To reveal a piece of information, usually involuntarily: ¿Me prometes que no te irás de la lengua?
- 23** To give new information about something or make a situation clearer: A ver si puedes aclararnos un poco este asunto.
- 24** A piece of information introduced to divert attention from what is really important: Resultó ser otro truco para despistarnos.
- 25** (*saying*) If we hear nothing, it probably means that nothing bad has happened.

## 5. Experience

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### once bitten, twice shy

We lost a lot of money last year but this time we are being very careful to deal through the approved and recognised channels. **Once bitten, twice shy.**

### find out the hard way

Why **learn the hard way**? Mentors have already overcome the obstacles you're now facing. They understand what you're going through and can offer invaluable insights and advice.

### a lot of water

#### has flowed under the bridge

There was a time when I intensely disliked doing business with them, but a **lot of water has gone under the bridge** since then. Maybe I'm more tolerant now.

### trial and error

Adding staff during the growth phase of the company wasn't easy, but through **trial and error**, we learned to make good hiring decisions.

### be wise after the event

It's easy to **be wise after the event** and say he was obviously unsuitable for the job, but it would have been much more helpful to have said so before we hired him.

### you can't teach

#### an old dog new tricks

Most franchising companies don't require industry experience, largely because they find it hard to teach **an old dog new tricks**. Instead they look for young people with the right personality.

### be wet behind the ears

The other members of the team paid little attention to my suggestions. They probably thought that, as a new employee, **I was still wet behind the ears**.

### get one's fingers burnt

It is feared that the large American banks, who got **their fingers burnt** with bad investments in Russia and Asia, might now slow their lending dramatically.

### have sth under one's belt

With 23 years as a banker **under his belt**, Dawson knows what bankers look for when making a loan.

### gato escaldado del agua fría huye

Perdimos mucho dinero el año pasado, pero esta vez estamos teniendo mucho cuidado de comercializar sólo a través de canales autorizados y reconocidos. **Gato escaldado del agua fría huye.**

### aprender de la forma más difícil

¿Por qué aprender de la forma más difícil? Los consejeros ya han superado los obstáculos a los que ahora te enfrentas. Saben de sobra lo que estás pasando y te pueden ofrecer su ayuda y sus inestimables consejos.

### ha corrido

#### mucha agua bajo el puente

Hubo un tiempo en el que me disgustaba intensamente hacer negocios con ellos, pero ha corrido mucha agua bajo el puente desde entonces. Quizás sea más tolerante ahora.

### la experiencia

Incrementar el personal durante la fase de crecimiento de la empresa no fue fácil, pero la experiencia nos enseñó a tomar buenas decisiones a la hora de contratar.

### hablar a toro pasado

Es fácil hablar a toro pasado y decir que no era adecuado para el puesto, pero hubiera sido mucho mejor haberlo dicho antes de contratarlo.

### loro viejo no aprende a hablar

La mayoría de empresas de franquicias no exigen experiencia industrial, en gran parte porque el loro viejo no aprende a hablar. En su lugar, buscan a gente joven con la personalidad adecuada.

### estar verde

Los otros miembros del equipo prestaron poca atención a mis sugerencias. Probablemente pensaron que, al ser un empleado nuevo, aún estaba verde.

### pillarse los dedos

Se teme que los grandes bancos americanos, que se pillaron los dedos con malas inversiones en Rusia y Asia, quizá reduzcan ahora drásticamente el ritmo de sus préstamos.

### tener algo en su haber

Con 23 años como banquero en su haber, Dawson sabe lo que buscan los banqueros al realizar un préstamo.

**be an old hand**

Look, I'm **an old hand** at this business. This isn't my first setback and God knows it won't be my last. So relax. We can deal with it.

**learn one's lesson**

We observed him closely over the next six months. We wanted to be sure that he had **learned his lesson** and could be depended on.

**be in one's line of country**

I don't really know what kind of testing procedure they have. Quality control is more **in your line of country** than mine.

**live and learn**

I had no idea that it was so easy to set up a network. Well, well, **live and learn**.

**go through the mill**

We didn't just suddenly decide to open an on-line store. Most of us had already been **through the mill** at traditional mail order companies.

**an object lesson**

The Coca-Cola Company received **an object lesson** in the magic of the formula in 1985, when management announced that it was changing the product's original formula. The result was a storm of protest.

**know one's onions**

When it comes to taxation, Jackson certainly **knows his onions**. He saves the company thousands every year.

**learn the ropes**

Obviously everything must seem very confusing at first. But once you've **learned the ropes**, you'll see that it's not such a difficult job.

**know the score**

Before he joined the company, I told him precisely what our financial position was; so he can't say he didn't **know the score**.

**seeing is believing**

Can money be made out of farming organically? Most market observers are sceptical. Their attitude is summed up in three words: **seeing is believing**.

**ser perro viejo**

Soy un perro viejo en este negocio. Éste no es mi primer contratiempo y Dios sabe que no será el último. Así que relájate. Nos arreglaremos.

**aprender de sus errores**

Le observamos de cerca durante los seis meses siguientes. Queríamos estar seguros de que había aprendido de sus errores y que se podía contar con él.

**ser de su especialidad**

En realidad no sé cuál es su proceso de control. El control de calidad es más tu especialidad que la mía.

**vivir para ver**

No tenía ni idea de que fuera tan fácil montar una red. ¡Vaya! vivir para ver.

**pasarlas moradas**

No tomamos de repente la decisión de montar una empresa a través de la red. La mayoría de nosotros ya las habíamos pasado moradas en las empresas tradicionales de ventas por correo.

**una perfecta demostración**

La compañía Coca-Cola recibió una perfecta demostración de la magia de la fórmula en 1985, cuando los directivos anunciaron que iban a cambiar la fórmula original del producto. El resultado fue una tormenta de protestas.

**saber uno****lo que se trae entre manos**

En lo que a los impuestos se refiere, Jackson, sabe, sin duda, lo que se trae entre manos. Le ahorra cada año miles de libras a la empresa.

**ponerse al tanto**

Obviamente todo debe de parecer muy confuso al principio. Pero una vez que te pongas al tanto, verás que no es un trabajo tan difícil.

**estar al tanto de todo**

Antes de que se integrara en la empresa, le dije exactamente cual era nuestra posición financiera; así que no puede decir que no estaba al tanto de todo.

**vivir para creer**

¿Es posible ganar dinero con la agricultura sin usar productos químicos? La mayoría de los observadores del mercado tienen sus dudas. Su postura se resume en tres palabras: vivir para creer.

**give sb a rough ride**

Independent ISPs face a **rough ride** over the next few years as competition intensifies in the rapidly expanding worldwide market for internet services.

**through thick and thin**

Nobody knows more about the history of this company than John does. He joined us in 1963 and has been with us **through thick and thin** ever since.

**have another string to one's bow**

Several of our engineering staff are following part-time MBA courses. With record unemployment, it's vital nowadays to have **an extra string to your bow**.

**it's just one of those things**

We did everything possible to win the Sacramento contract, but in the end it was awarded to our competitors. **It's just one of those things**.

**to be second nature to sb**

You'll find our office procedures a bit unusual at first, but in a month or two they'll have become **second nature to you**.

**take a leaf out of sb's book**

McFetridge is our best and most experienced salesman. If you want to do well here, you should **take a leaf out of his book** and visit your prospects regularly.

**hacer pasar un mal rato**

Los proveedores independientes de Servicios de Internet van a pasarlo mal los próximos años al intensificarse la competencia en el mercado global de servicios de Internet, que va expandiéndose rápidamente.

**a las duras y a las maduras**

Nadie sabe más que John sobre la historia de esta empresa. Se nos unió en 1963 y desde entonces ha estado con nosotros a las duras y a las maduras.

**tener dos cuerdas en su arco**

Varios miembros de nuestro equipo de ingenieros se han inscrito en unos cursos de Master de Administración de Empresas a jornada parcial. Con un nivel de paro más alto que nunca, estos días es vital tener dos cuerdas en el arco.

**son cosas que pasan**

Hicimos todo lo posible por ganar el contrato de Sacramento, pero al final fue adjudicado a nuestros competidores. Son cosas que pasan.

**acostumbrarse**

Al principio encontrarás que nuestra forma de trabajar en la oficina es un poco extraña, pero dentro de un mes o dos te habrás acostumbrado.

**seguir el ejemplo de alguien**

McFetridge es nuestro mejor y más experimentado vendedor. Si quieres labrarte un porvenir, deberías seguir su ejemplo y visitar a tus clientes con regularidad.

## 5. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To recognize the difficulties of a situation and how to deal with them after the situation has happened: Es muy fácil criticar a posteriori.
- 2** An expression of surprise when one learns something new. Todos los días se aprende algo nuevo.
- 3** To go through a period of hardship or difficult training in which one gains valuable experience: It was one of those commando-style leadership courses, where you really \_\_\_\_\_ to get your diploma.
- 4** A method of solving a problem by making repeated attempts and learning from one's mistakes as one goes: Lo resolvimos a fuerza de probar y descartar soluciones.
- 5** A very clear example of how to do something: Fue la perfecta demostración de lo que no se debe hacer.
- 6** To suffer as a result of something one has done, especially because one failed to consider the possible consequences: Bad debt rose to record levels as business after business went bankrupt, and many lenders \_\_\_\_\_ badly.
- 7** To have a thorough knowledge of all the facts related to one's work: You can't hope to get to the top in this profession unless you really \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8** To learn something useful or necessary, especially as the result of a mistake: Well, we've certainly \_\_\_\_\_: we won't use those suppliers again.
- 9** To learn the rules, procedures and organization of a company: Necesitará tiempo para familiarizarse con todo.
- 10** (saying) After an unpleasant experience one is cautious in similar situations.
- 11** To know about the bad aspects of something (e.g. a situation, or life in general): Le hablé de mi pasado, así que está al tanto de la situación.
- 12** In one's experience: Tienen una serie de logros a sus espaldas.
- 13** (saying) You can only believe what you actually see: Ver para creer.
- 14** A long time has passed and many things have happened: Ha llovido mucho desde entonces.
- 15** To be something that one does particularly well, or enjoys doing: Eso no es de mi especialidad.
- 16** To have a bad experience or be treated badly: Las cosas no han marchado muy bien para la empresa últimamente.
- 17** (saying) Older people find it impossible to adapt to new ideas, methods, procedures, etc: Loro viejo no aprende a hablar.
- 18** Through good times and bad times, regardless of what happens: Puedes contar con él tanto a las duras como a las maduras.
- 19** To have another ability or plan that one can use if one's first choice is not successful: También es electricista, así que tiene otra manera de ganarse la vida.
- 20** (A skill or practised ability) To come very easily to someone: No te preocupes, pronto te parecerá una cosa muy natural.
- 21** To learn something, usually unpleasant, through one's own experience (and not from the advice of others): Aprendió a las malas.
- 22** To follow somebody's good example: Deberías seguir el ejemplo de Manolo.
- 23** To be a person with long experience in a certain field or activity: Tiene mucha experiencia en alpinismo.
- 24** It's something which has to be accepted, no matter how unpleasant or difficult to understand: Son cosas que pasan.
- 25** To be lacking in experience: El nuevo director está aún un poco verde.

## 6. Work

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **not do a hand's turn**

He's one of the laziest people I've ever met. He never **does a hand's turn**. What on earth do they keep him for?

### **be snowed under with sth**

I'd love to play golf this afternoon, but I'm afraid it's out of the question. We have three people off sick and we're **snowed under with paperwork**.

### **swing the lead**

When I saw how little work had been done while I was away, I realised that he was **swinging the lead**. All that interested him was collecting his salary.

### **keep one's nose to the grindstone**

The length of an individual's 'To Do' list should be inversely proportional to his position in the company. When you're keeping your **nose to the grindstone**, you can't possibly see the big picture.

### **do the spadework**

If Monsanto had **done their spadework** properly, the public relations fiasco over introducing transgenic foods into Europe could have been avoided.

### **at full stretch**

Time is extremely limited. We're going to have to work **at full stretch** if we want to meet this deadline.

### **put one's shoulder to the wheel**

If we all **put our shoulders to the wheel**, we can get the job finished before close of business today.

### **get one's teeth into sth**

At first you'll only have relatively unimportant work to do. But don't worry - once you've learnt the ropes, we'll give you something serious **to get your teeth into**.

### **down tools**

Twenty thousand Mercedes-Benz workers **downed tools** today in support of the German unions' fight against cuts in sick pay entitlement.

### **no dar golpe**

Es una de las personas más vagas que he conocido jamás. No da ni golpe. ¿Para qué diablos siguen con él?

### **estar hasta el cuello de algo**

Me encantaría jugar al golf esta tarde pero me temo que no será posible. Tenemos a tres personas de baja y estamos hasta el cuello de papaleo.

### **poner excusas para no trabajar**

Cuando vi el poco trabajo que había hecho mientras estuve fuera, me di cuenta de que estaba poniendo excusas para no trabajar. Lo único que le interesaba era cobrar su sueldo.

### **trabajar sin levantar cabeza**

La longitud de la lista de "cosas que hacer" de una persona debería ser inversamente proporcional a su puesto en la empresa. Cuando se trabaja sin levantar cabeza, no es posible ver el conjunto.

### **hacer el trabajo preliminar**

Si Monsanto hubiese hecho su trabajo preliminar como Dios manda, se podría haber evitado el desastre de relaciones públicas que causó el hecho de introducir alimentos transgénicos en Europa.

### **a tope, al máximo**

El tiempo es sumamente limitado. Vamos a tener que trabajar al máximo si queremos cumplir con los plazos.

### **arrimar el hombro**

Si todos arrimamos el hombro, podremos terminar el trabajo hoy antes de salir.

### **hincarle el diente a algo**

Al principio sólo tendrás trabajos relativamente sencillos. Pero no te preocupes, una vez que hayas aprendido lo básico, te daremos algo más serio para **hincarle el diente**.

### **hacer huelga de brazos caídos**

Veinte mil trabajadores de Mercedes-Benz hicieron huelga de brazos caídos para apoyar la lucha de los sindicatos alemanes en contra de los recortes en las prestaciones por bajas de enfermedad.

**burn the midnight oil**

**Burning the midnight oil** on occasion is fine, but if you consistently skimp on sleep, beware. You're racing on the fast track to burnout.

**breathe down sb's neck**

I can't work properly with you **breathing down my neck** all the time. Leave me alone and I'll tell you when I've finished.

**keep tabs on sb**

Like the Koreans, Russians, Japanese and others, we need to **keep tabs on** what our competitors are doing, scouring the world for the latest and best technology.

**keep a tight rein on sth**

Wage growth has stabilised since last spring. The government has played its part by **keeping a tight rein** on public sector spending and pay.

**do the dirty work**

Moffatt would never tell anybody they're fired. It's his partner who **does all the dirty work**.

**do the donkey work**

In most companies, the young, less experienced employees are left to **do the donkey work** while those with more experience do more interesting things.

**have one's work cut out for one**

The two young men launched the company in 1998. In those critical first six months in business, they **had their work cut out for them**.

**make short work of sth**

He made short work of the pile of paper that had accumulated in his in-tray, mainly by transferring most of it **to the waste paper basket**.

**put one's back into sth**

If you **put your back into it**, you should be able to finish it by tonight.

**pasar la noche en vela**

Pasar la noche en vela de vez en cuando está bien, pero si recortas el sueño a menudo, ten cuidado. Al final tu cuerpo se resentirá.

**no dejar a alguien a sol ni a sombra**

No puedo trabajar a gusto si no me dejas ni a sol ni a sombra. Déjame en paz y te avisaré cuando haya terminado.

**vigilar a alguien**

Lo mismo que hacen los coreanos, los rusos, los japoneses y otros, necesitamos vigilar lo que hacen nuestros competidores, recorriendo el mundo en busca de la tecnología más avanzada.

**llevar un estricto control de algo**

La subida de los sueldos se ha estabilizado desde la primavera pasada. El gobierno ha desempeñado su papel al llevar un estricto control sobre los gastos y sueldos del sector público.

**hacer el trabajo sucio**

Moffatt nunca le diría a nadie que está despedido. Es su socio el que hace todo el trabajo sucio.

**hacer el trabajo pesado**

En la mayoría de las empresas, les toca a los empleados más jóvenes y con menos experiencia hacer el trabajo pesado mientras que aquellos con más experiencia hacen cosas más interesantes.

**tener que trabajar mucho**

Los dos jóvenes crearon la empresa en 1998. Durante los seis primeros meses, que fueron críticos para la empresa, tuvieron que trabajar mucho.

**despachar algo rápidamente**

Despachó rápidamente el montón de papeles que se había acumulado en su mesa, yendo a parar la mayor parte a la papelera.

**poner empeño en algo**

Si pones empeño en ello, deberías poder terminarlo para esta noche.

**burn the candle at both ends**

As we get older we sleep less and less, and eventually turn into harassed, bad-tempered adults who **burn the candle at both ends**.

**sit on one's hands**

The government has not taken any action but has **been sitting on its hands** waiting for the unions' anger to subside.

**be dead beat**

It was one of the toughest negotiations I ever took part in. At the end of every day **I was dead beat**. All I wanted to do was to crawl into bed for a week.

**be a piece of cake**

Business is simple. Take capital, invest it so that you make more money than the capital costs, and return the difference to your stockholders. **It's a piece of cake**. The hard part is choosing where to invest.

**wear and tear**

Yoga builds strength and endurance without a lot of hard work or **wear and tear** on the body. Its promise of serenity appeals to executives and sports enthusiasts alike.

**be on the dole**

The problem is that nobody wants to hire a person who has **been on the dole** for more than a year. So, the longer you're unemployed, the more unemployable you become.

**a blue-collar job**

He's been with us for 25 years, most of that time in various **blue-collar positions**. Last year, however, when he started having health problems, we transferred him to an office job.

**hacer de la noche día**

Según envejecemos, dormimos cada vez menos y terminamos convirtiéndonos en adultos agobiados, malhumorados, que hacen de la noche día.

**cruzarse de brazos**

El gobierno no ha tomado medidas sino que se ha cruzado de brazos esperando a que se calme el enfado de los sindicatos.

**estar hecho polvo**

Ha sido una de las negociaciones más duras en las que he participado. Al final del día estaba hecho polvo. Todo lo que quería hacer era quedarme una semana en la cama.

**ser pan comido**

Iniciar un negocio es sencillo. Consigue un capital, inviértelo para ganar más dinero de lo que cuesta el capital y devuelve la diferencia a tus accionistas. Es pan comido. La parte más difícil es escoger dónde invertir.

**desgaste de**

El yoga proporciona fuerza y resistencia sin hacer un trabajo duro ni desgastar el cuerpo. Su promesa de serenidad atrae tanto a los ejecutivos como a los deportistas.

**estar en el paro**

El problema es que nadie quiere contratar a una persona que ha estado en el paro durante más de un año. Por lo tanto, cuanto más tiempo estés en paro, menos posibilidades tienes de que te contraten.

**un trabajo manual**

Lleva con nosotros 25 años, la mayor parte de ese tiempo en varios puestos de taller. El año pasado, sin embargo, cuando comenzó a tener problemas de salud, le dimos un puesto de administrativo.



## 6. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** Using all one's strength and energy: La fábrica está trabajando al máximo.
- 2** To do the difficult or unpleasant part of a job or business: Estoy harto de hacerle el trabajo sucio.
- 3** To keep a careful watch or gather information on somebody or something: Tenemos que vigilar quién entra y sale del edificio.
- 4** To deal with something quickly: She's very efficient, she'll \_\_\_\_\_ of typing those reports.
- 5** To exert great effort to do something: He seems to \_\_\_\_\_ into everything he undertakes.
- 6** To do no work, to give no help at all: All he thinks about are his holidays; I can't get him \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To work with eagerness and great application: If you \_\_\_\_\_, you can meet the deadline easily.
- 8** To work hard during the day and lead a busy social life at night, with bad results: Quiere hacer tantas cosas que está agotado.
- 9** To do the hard, necessary work at the beginning of something: A lot of executives think, wrongly, that they can learn English without \_\_\_\_\_ of learning the basic grammatical structures, the irregular verbs, etc.
- 10** To do nothing, to be inactive: We need their decision urgently but they seem to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11** To keep a tight control over something, allowing it little freedom: El gobierno mantiene un estricto control de los gastos.
- 12** To avoid doing one's work, especially by using deceitful excuses: If that fellow puts as much energy into doing his job as he does into \_\_\_\_\_, he'd win prizes for productivity.
- 13** The hard, usually physical, part of a job: Yo me llevé la peor parte del trabajo y él toda la gloria.
- 14** Something that can be done very easily: Convencerlos para que vinieran fue pan comido.
- 15** To keep working hard, without resting: Voy a tener que hincar los codos hasta que terminen los exámenes.
- 16** Deterioration through frequent use: Tres años de uso continuo hicieron necesaria una revisión a fondo.
- 17** To be faced with a lot of difficult work one has to do: Le va a costar terminar el trabajo a tiempo.
- 18** To have more work than one can cope with: En este momento estoy agobiada de trabajo.
- 19** To be receiving unemployment benefit from the state: Lleva dos años cobrando el paro.
- 20** To work very late, especially intellectually: Se está acostando a las tantas de la madrugada para acabar el trabajo.
- 21** To stop work suddenly, especially as a group and because of discontent: The announcement that 500 jobs would be sacrificed caused workers to \_\_\_\_\_ in protest.
- 22** A job performed by a manual or factory worker, i.e. not by an office or white-collar worker: We'll be reducing the number of employees working in administration, but \_\_\_\_\_ won't be affected.
- 23** To watch someone too closely while he's working: Tuve al jefe detrás de mí todo el día.
- 24** To be physically and mentally exhausted after hard work: Tienes cara de estar agotado.
- 25** To become eagerly concerned with something, or to do something with vigour: Ahora tienes otra tarea a la que hincar el diente.

## 7. Routine

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **it's all in a day's work**

For emergency hotline operators, dealing with complaints from angry or panic-stricken customers **is all in a day's work**.

### **the order of the day**

At the centre of the scandal was the Direct Investment Group. Limousines, wild parties, and expensive overseas junkets became **the order of the day**, paid for out of clients' investment dollars.

### **do sth as a matter of course**

You don't have to do anything special about insurance. We insure every shipment against damage or loss **as a matter of course**.

### **In the normal course of events**

I expect that, **in the normal course of events**, my estate will be subject to inheritance tax. On the other hand, any bequests I make to charity will be exempt from tax.

### **get into the swing of sth**

It's a rather complicated procedure but once you **get into the swing of it**, you'll have no problems at all.

### **take sth in one's stride**

Sir Peter **takes** even the harshest criticism **in his stride** and seems to thrive on adversity.

### **be plain sailing**

The hard part of this job is learning to use our CAD software. But once you've mastered that, you'll find the rest **is plain sailing**.

### **backwards and forwards**

In the end I decided to change my job because travelling **backwards and forwards** every day was simply costing me too much money.

### **day in, day out**

When I started this business, I had no credentials, no reputation, no credibility and no experience. So I had to call a lot of people. I called over a hundred people a day, **day in and day out**, simply to ask for an appointment.

### **true to form**

At the age of 43, Steve Jobs, interim C.E.O. of Apple Computers, professes to feel no different from when he was a 17-year-old. **True to**

### **todo forma parte del trabajo diario**

Para los operadores de las líneas de emergencia, atender llamadas de clientes enfadados o asustados, forma parte del trabajo diario.

### **a la orden del día**

En el centro del escándalo estaba el Grupo de Inversión Directa. Las limusinas, las fiestas locas y los viajes caros al extranjero estaban a la orden del día, y se pagaban con los dólares de las inversiones de los clientes.

### **hacer algo automáticamente, por rutina**

No tienes que hacer nada especial con el seguro. Cada envío está automáticamente asegurado contra daños o pérdidas.

### **en circunstancias normales**

Cuento con que, en circunstancias normales, mi propiedad esté gravada con el impuesto de sucesiones. Por otra parte, cualquier donativo que haga a una organización benéfica estará exento de impuestos.

### **coger el ritmo de algo, coger el tranquillo**

Es un proceso bastante complicado pero una vez que le cojas el tranquillo, no tendrás ningún problema.

### **hacerlo sin pestañear**

Sir Peter acepta la crítica más despiadada sin pestañear y parece crecerse ante la adversidad.

### **ser coser y cantar**

La parte dura de este trabajo es aprender a utilizar nuestro software CAD. Pero una vez que lo hayas superado, encontrarás que lo demás es coser y cantar.

### **de acá para allá**

Al final he decidido cambiar de trabajo simplemente porque el viajar de acá para allá todos los días me estaba costando muy caro.

### **día tras día**

Quando inicié este negocio, no tenía ni credenciales, ni reputación, ni credibilidad, ni experiencia. Así que tuve que llamar a muchas personas. Llamaba a más de 100 personas al día, día tras día, tan solo para pedir una cita.

### **como era de esperar**

A la edad de 43 años, Steve Jobs, director provincial de Apple Computers, asegura no sentirse distinto a cuando tenía 17 años. Como era

**form**, he contradicts himself a little later, confessing to be “an old man now.”

---

### **on an even keel**

That was by no means a normal day for the emergency team but things stayed **on an even keel** because everyone knew his job and continued to perform efficiently.

---

### **toe the line**

The government is insisting that lenders **toe the line**. Henceforward they must ensure that would-be borrowers get good-quality advice and have access to a decent complaints system.

---

### **middle-of-the-road**

Everybody is involved in brainstorming sessions, from the bookkeeper to the office manager, because they see things **completely differently** from us. And we need that **middle-of-the-road** thinking.

---

### **go through the motions**

Who are the happiest people at work? Could it be you? Not if you are middle-aged, have a university degree, work for a big company and are **going through the motions** in a job you have been doing for years, according to a new study of workers in the UK.

---

### **be par for the course**

Only 7 employees out of nearly 800 were rated as outstanding in this year's Performance Appraisal exercise. That may seem like a very small number but it's **about par for the course**.

---

### **in practice**

In theory any employee can walk into the General Manager's office at any time and tell him what wrong with the company. **In practice**, of course, that simply never happens.

---

### **as a rule**

**As a rule**, lower-priced products in any category have lower-quality packaging, while high-priced products have high-quality packaging. Buyers use packaging as one criterion in selecting which products they buy.

de esperar, se contradice un poco más tarde, confesando ser ahora “un hombre viejo”.

---

### **en equilibrio, equilibrado**

No fue en absoluto un día normal para el equipo de urgencias, pero todo se mantuvo bajo control porque todo el mundo conocía su trabajo y siguió desempeñándolo con eficacia.

---

### **acatar la disciplina, entrar en vereda**

El gobierno está tratando de conseguir que los prestamistas entren en vereda. De ahora en adelante, deben asegurarse de que quienes vayan a recibir préstamos estén bien aconsejados y tengan acceso a un sistema de reclamaciones aceptable.

---

### **moderado**

Todo el mundo está involucrado en las sesiones de creatividad, desde el contable hasta el gerente de la oficina porque ellos ven las cosas de una forma completamente distinta a nosotros. Y necesitamos conocer esas formas de pensar más moderadas.

---

### **hacer algo como es debido pero sin convicción.**

¿Quiénes son las personas más felices en su trabajo? ¿Podrías ser tú? No, si eres de mediana edad, tienes una licenciatura, trabajas para una gran empresa y has estado haciendo tu trabajo durante años como es debido pero sin convicción, según un reciente estudio de trabajadores del Reino Unido.

---

### **ser lo normal**

Sólo 7 de casi 800 empleados fueron clasificados como excelentes en el ejercicio anual de Evaluación de Rendimiento. Puede parecer un número muy pequeño, pero es más o menos lo normal.

---

### **en la práctica**

En teoría cualquier empleado puede entrar en la oficina del Director General en cualquier momento y decirle lo que no funciona bien en la empresa. En la práctica, claro está, esto no suele ocurrir nunca.

---

### **por lo general**

Por lo general, los productos de precio inferior en cualquier categoría tienen embalajes de inferior calidad, mientras que los productos de precio superior tienen embalajes de alta calidad. Los compradores utilizan los embalajes como criterio para seleccionar el producto que van a comprar.

**as a rule of thumb**

To keep your store fresh and interesting, change your window displays often. **As a rule of thumb**, change them every 5 to 8 weeks if people drive by your store; every 2 to 4 weeks if you're on a street with plenty of pedestrian traffic.

**be in a rut**

I've been doing the same job for the past seven years, so I really feel **I'm in a rut**. I need something more challenging, or at least something different.

**practice makes perfect**

Many executives fail to realise that the only way to perfect their English is to practise it. Only regular and disciplined **practice makes perfect**.

**kill time**

Even in a slack period, there's always something useful you can do. And personally, I find it's much easier to work than to **kill the time** drinking endless cups of coffee and watching the clock.

**red tape**

The situation was desperate and the stakes were high. I asked for the total support of the board. Once I got it, I could cut through the **red tape**, abolish committees, and act decisively.

**run-of-the-mill**

Special packaging, using embossed labels or special shapes and decorations, will differentiate quality products from **run-of-the-mill** brands.

**from day to day**

You will need a certain amount of cash on hand to operate your business **from day to day**. This can be calculated from your monthly expenditures or from surveying similar businesses.

**out of the ordinary**

He told his secretary she could contact him at the golf club, but only if something really **out of the ordinary** came up.

**por regla general**

Para que tu tienda siga teniendo un aspecto atractivo e interesante, cambia los escaparates con frecuencia. Por regla general, cámbialos cada 5 a 8 semanas si la gente pasa por tu tienda en coche, y cada 2 a 4 semanas si estás en una calle con mucho tráfico peatonal.

**ser esclavo de la rutina**

Llevo haciendo el mismo trabajo durante los siete últimos años, así que realmente me siento esclavo de la rutina. Necesito un desafío mayor, o al menos algo diferente.

**la práctica hace al maestro**

Muchos ejecutivos no terminan de darse cuenta de que la única forma de perfeccionar su inglés es practicándolo. Sólo la práctica disciplinada hace al maestro.

**pasar el rato**

Incluso en periodos de poco trabajo, siempre hay algo útil que hacer. En lo que a mí respecta, encuentro que es mucho más fácil trabajar que pasar el rato bebiendo un sin fin de tazas de café y mirando el reloj.

**papeleo burocrático**

La situación era desesperada y había mucho en juego. Pedí el apoyo incondicional de la junta. Una vez que lo recibí, pude saltarme el papeleo burocrático, eliminar los comités y actuar con decisión.

**corriente**

Los embalajes especiales en los que se utiliza etiquetas grabadas en relieve o figuras y decoraciones especiales, diferencian los productos de calidad de las marcas corrientes.

**de día en día - diario**

Necesitarás cierta cantidad de dinero en efectivo para los gastos diarios de la empresa. Estos se pueden calcular según tus gastos mensuales o estudiando casos similares.

**fuera de lo común, excepcional**

Le dijo a su secretaria que podía ponerse en contacto con él en el club de golf, pero sólo si surgía algo fuera de lo corriente.

## 7. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** Steady and calm, with no sudden changes: La economía se ha estabilizado.
- 2** To obey orders, to conform to a policy: Lo están obligando a seguir la línea del partido.
- 3** Moderate, unlikely to cause offence: He's a dull sort of fellow with \_\_\_\_\_ views on practically everything.
- 4** (*repeated or continuous actions*) For many consecutive days, one day after another: Escucho las mismas quejas todo el santo día.
- 5** To do what one is expected to do but without enthusiasm or care: Lo entrevistaron por pura formalidad.
- 6** (*used to indicate that problems can be dealt with easily*) No worse than usual: This kind of pressure may seem excessive to someone who's not used to it, but to us it's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To be as expected, to be typical: Estar de mal humor es su estado natural.
- 8** (*usually expressing disapproval*) In accordance with a person's usual behaviour: Como era de esperar, llegó tarde.
- 9** According to what really happens: En teoría tendríamos que contestar a todas las cartas, pero en la práctica es imposible.
- 10** To deal with a problem calmly, without needing to make a special effort: Se lo toma todo con calma.
- 11** In a dull, unexciting way of life that is difficult to change: Tienes que salir de esa rutina sofocante.
- 12** To do something automatically, without having to be asked: Tenemos por norma conservar una copia.
- 13** (*saying*) Only by repeatedly practising an action or activity can you learn to perform it perfectly: La práctica hace al maestro.
- 14** Usually, generally: Por lo general es muy trabajadora.
- 15** To become accustomed to an activity or task and begin to do it well: Pronto le cogerás el tranquillo.
- 16** As an approximate guide to use for quick calculations: Yo diría que el viaje lleva aproximadamente tres horas.
- 17** To do things to prevent oneself from being bored, especially when one is forced to wait: Hice el crucigrama para matar el tiempo.
- 18** The usual or popular thing to do or have: El pelo corto estaba a la orden del día.
- 19** Bureaucratic papers, rules and formalities: You have to cut your way through tons of \_\_\_\_\_ if you want to start a company in France.
- 20** From one place to the other repeatedly: Me he pasado el día yendo y viniendo entre la casa y el despacho.
- 21** Average, ordinary, banal: Their new software is in no way exceptional; personally I find it very \_\_\_\_\_ indeed.
- 22** As each day comes, routinely: This form is for filling in your expenses \_\_\_\_\_.
- 23** A continuous, easy situation without difficulties: De ahora en adelante todo será coser y cantar.
- 24** Unusual, strange, odd: ¿Notaste algo fuera de lo común?
- 25** Normally, in normal circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_ I would never buy at these prices, but as we need the goods urgently, I'm making an exception.

## 8. Trading

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### wheel and deal

After Renault's deal with Nissan, who will be next? There are increasing signs that the **wheeling and dealing** in Japan's automotive industry has only just begun.

### drive a hard bargain

The truth is that we need their business a great deal more than they need ours. In other words, we can expect them to **drive a very hard bargain** indeed.

### pay through the nose

Watch your costs. If you are selling a fragile vase by mail, you may have to **pay through the nose** to see that it arrives intact. Forget such additional costs and you can end up losing money on a hot product.

### cost an arm and a leg

In Salzburg the best seats for operas **cost an arm and a leg**, which is to say about £270.

### break even

Circulation of the new magazine inched up only 15%, to 175,000 last year — far short of the 300,000 needed to **break even**.

### sell like hot cakes

Customers raved about the new product. We knew it would **sell like hot cakes** if only we could reach a larger audience.

### get one's foot in the door

Suppliers can easily become subcontractors, and vice versa. What makes both relationships so valuable is that they allow you to **get your foot in the door** with not only that corporation but also other large companies it does business with.

### change hands

Its stock is nearly always on the NYSE most active list — in fact, only Telefonos de Mexico, Ford, and Compaq have had more shares **change hands** this year than Micron.

### be in the market for sth

When people buy a house, **they're** often also **in the market** for a refrigerator, painting services, homeowner's insurance, and the like.

### trapichear

Tras la unión de Renault y Nissan, ¿a quién le tocará? Hay cada vez más señales de que los trapicheos en la industria japonesa del automóvil sólo acaban de empezar.

### poner las cosas difíciles

La verdad es que necesitamos de ellos mucho más de lo que ellos necesitan de nosotros. En otras palabras, nos van a poner las cosas muy difíciles.

### pagar un dineral

Vigila tus gastos. Si estás vendiendo una jarra frágil por correo, puede que tengas que pagar un dineral para asegurarte de que llegue intacta. Si te olvidas de ese tipo de gastos adicionales puedes terminar perdiendo dinero con un excelente producto.

### costar una fortuna

En Salzburgo las mejores entradas para la ópera cuestan una fortuna, es decir unas 270 libras.

### cubrir gastos

La circulación de la nueva revista a duras penas se incrementó en un 15%, hasta alcanzar los 175.000 ejemplares el año pasado, lejos de los 300.000 que se necesitaban para cubrir gastos.

### venderse como rosquillas

Los clientes están como locos con el nuevo producto. Sabíamos que se vendería como rosquillas si tan sólo pudiésemos llegar a un público más amplio.

### abrirse una brecha

Los suministradores pueden fácilmente convertirse en subcontratistas y al revés. Lo que hace que estas relaciones sean tan valiosas es que te permiten abrir una brecha no sólo con esa empresa en concreto sino en las grandes empresas con quienes negocian.

### cambiar de dueño

Sus acciones están casi siempre en la lista de las más activas de la Bolsa de Nueva York; de hecho, sólo las acciones de Teléfonos de México, Ford y Compaq han cambiado más veces de dueño que las de Micron este año.

### interesarse en comprar algo

Cuando la gente se compra una casa, también está interesada en comprar un frigorífico, contratar los servicios de un pintor, pólizas de seguro y cosas semejantes.

**price oneself out of the market**

It can be argued that for years Apple, whose machines cost about twice as much as PCs of comparable power and performance, simply priced **themselves out of the market**.

**at a price**

The company will still handle special requests, but **at a price**. If you want us to do something special, we will, but you'll have to pay for it.

**be worth sb's while**

Most magazine articles are written to provide readers with practical information they can use, and writers like to illustrate the points with real-life examples. **It's worth your while** to get your company cited as such an example.

**run short of sth**

Fundamentally Korean companies have many strengths, but they are over-reliant on bank borrowing, which means heavy interest charges. The problem is that now everyone's **running short of money**.

**put sth on the market**

Last year's export slowdown coincided with a period when large amounts of unwanted property were being **put on the market**. This caused strains in the banking system of several countries, especially Thailand.

**corner the market in sth**

Nevada had **cornered the market** in casino gambling until 1976, when New Jersey approved casinos to be built in Atlantic City.

**flood the market with sth**

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, the kingdom's equivalent of a central bank, **flooded the market with dollars**, spending close to \$1bn to support the riyal.

**it's six of the one and half a dozen of the other**

It's true that you can buy computers much cheaper in the US than in Europe, but then you have to pay shipping costs and import

**perder clientes por poner precios muy altos**

Se puede argumentar que durante años Apple, cuyos ordenadores costaban el doble que los PCs, con una potencia y rendimiento comparables, ha perdido clientes por mantener los precios tan altos.

**a un precio caro**

La empresa aún aceptará pedidos especiales, pero costarán más. Si quiere que hagamos algo especial, lo haremos, pero tendrá que pagarlo.

**valer la pena, merecer la pena**

La mayoría de los artículos de las revistas están escritos para facilitar a los lectores información que puedan poner en práctica, y a los escritores les gusta respaldar sus declaraciones con ejemplos de la vida misma. Merece la pena conseguir que citen a tu empresa como ejemplo.

**andar escaso de algo**

Las empresas, coreanas principalmente, tienen mucho a su favor, pero dependen demasiado de los préstamos bancarios, lo cual significa elevados gastos en concepto de intereses. El problema es que ahora todos andan escasos de dinero.

**salida al mercado, sacar algo a la venta**

La desaceleración de las exportaciones el año pasado coincidió con un período de salida al mercado de un gran número de inmuebles. Esto provocó cierta tensión en el sistema bancario de varios países, en especial en Tailandia.

**acaparar el mercado de algo**

Nevada había acaparado el mercado del juego hasta 1976, cuando Nueva Jersey aprobó la creación de casinos en Atlantic City.

**saturar el mercado con algo**

La Agencia Monetaria de Arabia Saudí, el equivalente al banco central en dicho reino, saturó el mercado de dólares, gastándose casi 1.000 millones de dólares para apoyar el rial.

**viene a ser lo mismo**

Es verdad que se pueden comprar ordenadores mucho más baratos en los Estados Unidos que en Europa, pero, por otro lado,

duties and so on, so you don't really gain anything. **It's six of the one and half a dozen of the other.**

### **the going rate**

Every industry has a **going rate** for people at all levels, and you usually have to pay it to have somebody good.

### **go public**

Analysts have recently been speculating that Ikea might **go public**, but Ingvar Kamprad, founder and chairman of the world's largest furniture retailer, yesterday ruled out that possibility.

### **give sb first refusal**

Logan told me they might decide to sell their premises in Linenhall Street. If they do, he's promised to **give us first refusal**.

### **go window-shopping**

We may be interested in engaging a consultant at some future date, but for the moment we're still **only window-shopping**.

### **sell oneself short**

I have two basic rules: when it comes to performance, do a good job, and when it comes to pricing, don't **sell yourself short**.

### **chicken feed**

Commenting on the budget, Mr Harris said, "The extra £500m for the health service is **chicken feed**. It needs much, much more."

### **like getting blood from a stone**

Getting those people to pay on time is like getting **blood from a stone**. If this situation continues, we shall have to stop supplying them.

### **be in short supply**

The emerging markets, home to 80% of the world's population, have extraordinary potential for export sales. Yet, while Britain has an important economic interest in their development, business managers with the insight and experience to exploit it **are in short supply**.

hay que pagar los costes de envío, los aranceles y demás, así que realmente no se gana nada. Viene a ser lo mismo.

### **lo que se suele pagar**

Cada industria tiene unos sueldos standard para cada nivel, y hay que pagar bien si se quiere tener a alguien bueno.

### **salir a bolsa**

Los analistas han estado especulando recientemente con la posibilidad de que Ikea salga a cotizar en bolsa, pero Ingvar Kamprad, el fundador y director de la mayor empresa de muebles del mundo, descartó ayer esa posibilidad.

### **darle a alguien la primera opción**

Logan me dijo que quizás decidan vender sus locales de la calle Linenhall. Si lo hacen, ha prometido darnos la primera opción.

### **tantear**

Puede que nos interese contratar un analista en el futuro, pero de momento sólo estamos tanteando.

### **no hacerse valer**

Tengo dos reglas básicas: cuando se trata del rendimiento, haz un buen trabajo, y cuando se trate del precio, hazte valer.

### **una miseria, una calderilla**

Comentando el presupuesto, Mr. Harris dijo: "Los 500 millones de libras adicionales para la sanidad son una miseria. Se necesita más, mucho más."

### **como sacar agua de las piedras**

Conseguir que esas personas paguen puntualmente es como sacar agua de las piedras. Si esta situación continúa, tendremos que dejar de suministrarles.

### **escasear**

Los mercados emergentes, donde habita el 80% de la población mundial, tienen un potencial extraordinario para nuestras exportaciones. Aún así, aunque Gran Bretaña tenga un importante interés económico en su desarrollo, escasean los directivos con la perspicacia y experiencia suficientes para explotarlo.



## 8. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To have one's expenses and losses exactly balanced by one's gains: It's obvious now that we aren't going to make a profit; let's hope we can at least \_\_\_\_.
- 2** (*time, money, coffee, etc.*) Not to have enough of something: Se nos está acabando el dinero.
- 3** To put something up for sale: Pusimos la casa por venta por £150,000.
- 4** To pay a very high price for something: Nos costó un riñón.
- 5** To cost a large amount of money: Ese coche me costó un ojo de la cara.
- 6** To gain a monopoly of something: Han acaparado el mercado de libros electrónicos.
- 7** (*money, goods, property, etc.*) To be sold or given to another person: La empresa ha cambiado de dueño.
- 8** The usual price to pay for particular goods or services at a given moment: Eso es lo que se suele pagar.
- 9** To give somebody the chance to buy something before offering it to others: ¿Me da la primera opción?
- 10** To act cleverly but often unscrupulously to get what one wants: He eats, drinks, sleeps, \_\_\_\_; making money is the only thing that interests him.
- 11** To examine goods on sale but with no intention to purchase immediately: Ayer estuvimos mirando escaparates.
- 12** To ask so much money for a product or service that no one wants to buy: Han subido tanto los precios que se han quedado sin compradores.
- 13** The same in one case as in the other: ¿Lo hacemos hoy o mañana? — Da lo mismo.
- 14** To undervalue oneself: Tienes que hacerte valer.
- 15** To gain an introduction or entrance to an organization, especially when this is difficult: Es una manera de introducirte en la empresa.
- 16** A very small amount of money (especially in comparison with larger amounts): Pagan una miseria a sus empleados.
- 17** To want to buy a particular thing: Están buscando semiconductores.
- 18** (*goods, etc.*) To put a very large number on sale at the same time: They're \_\_\_\_ with cheap Taiwanese imitations.
- 19** (*used when trying to get something from someone who does not want to give it*) Extremely difficult or impossible: Sacarle dinero a ése es como pedirle peras al olmo.
- 20** To be hard and strong-willed in making business deals: Sabe cómo conseguir lo que quiere.
- 21** To be scarce: Había escasez de cobre.
- 22** At a high price: I'm willing to help you, but \_\_\_\_ of course.
- 23** Be profitable to someone (to do something): Te convendría hacerte amigo suyo.
- 24** (*a company*) To issue shares on the Stock Exchange: At our present rate of expansion, we'll probably be in a position to \_\_\_\_ within 3 or 4 years.
- 25** (*goods*) To be bought very quickly because of being popular: Sus libros se están vendiendo como rosquillas.

## 9. Thinking

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### rack one's brains

I've been **racking my brains** trying to find a solution to this problem but I just can't do it. We're going to have to take it to an expert.

### not have a clue

- Do you know how much they paid for it?  
- No, sorry, I **don't have a clue**.

### have sth in mind

When a customer says, "Your price is too high," what should I say? Well, you might try asking, "Why do you say that?" or "What price did you **have in mind**?"

### jump to conclusions

Was your banker really being mean when he rejected your loan application? **Don't jump to conclusions**. Perhaps you simply misinterpreted his frankness.

### food for thought

This has been a very useful discussion. Constructive criticism is always valuable and yours has certainly given me **food for thought**.

### have no idea

Many entrepreneurs admit they **had no idea** what they were getting into, no matter how much pre-launch research they carried out.

### grey matter

To make sure that managers' **grey matter** stays focused on company goals, Ford has instituted a distinctive change in the way it pays top executives.

### have sth at the back of one's mind

As foremen and supervisors, you will be required to make many hard, on-the-spot decisions. However, the risk of causing a serious labour dispute should always be **at the back of your mind**.

### bear sth in mind

**Bear in mind** that recruiters tend to be specialists, often working exclusively in one narrow niche such as financial services, manufacturing, or high tech.

### cross one's mind

It suddenly **crossed my mind** that he was not telling us everything he knew about the company's financial status.

### devanarse los sesos

He estado devanándome los sesos intentando encontrar una solución a este problema pero no he podido. Vamos a tener que someterlo al criterio de un experto.

### no tener la menor idea

- ¿Sabes cuánto han pagado por ello?  
- No, lo siento, no tengo ni idea.

### estar pensando en algo

Cuando un cliente dice, "Su precio es demasiado alto," ¿qué debería decir? Pues, podrías intentar preguntar, "¿Por qué dice usted eso?" o "¿En qué precio estaba usted pensando?"

### sacar conclusiones precipitadas

¿Realmente tu banquero te resultó desagradable al decir que rechazaba tu solicitud de préstamo? No saques conclusiones precipitadas. Quizás simplemente interpretaste mal su franqueza.

### algo en qué pensar

Esta ha sido una conversación muy útil. La crítica constructiva es siempre valiosa y la tuya, sin duda, me ha dado algo en qué pensar.

### no tener ni idea

Muchos empresarios admiten que no tenían ni idea de dónde se estaban metiendo, a pesar de toda la investigación que llevaron a cabo antes de lanzarse.

### materia gris

Para asegurarse de que la materia gris de los directivos se mantiene centrada en las metas de la empresa, Ford ha establecido un cambio en la forma de pagar a sus altos ejecutivos.

### tener algo en cuenta

Como capataces y supervisores, tendrás que tomar sobre la marcha muchas decisiones difíciles. Sin embargo, siempre deberíais tener en cuenta el riesgo de provocar un serio conflicto laboral.

### tener algo presente

Ten presente que las empresas que contratan personal tienden a ser especialistas y que trabajan muchas veces exclusivamente en un campo muy restringido, como son los servicios financieros, la fabricación o la alta tecnología.

### ocurrirsele a uno

De repente se me ocurrió que no nos estaba contando todo lo que sabía sobre la situación financiera de la empresa.

**great minds think alike**

If I understand you correctly, you think we should increase our prices. Well, **great minds think alike**, because that's my conclusion also.

**dead from the neck up**

It's pointless asking Austin anything, **he's dead from the neck up**. That plant in the corner knows more about finance than he does.

**see reason**

He insists on sending the letter, even though it will only cause greater problems. I've argued with him for hours but I can't make him **see reason**.

**think twice about doing sth**

We had intended to build a new plant there but the outbreak of political troubles **made us think twice**.

**be on the right track**

The odds are that Korea will once again become an economic force. Kim's reforms, if carried out fully and vigorously, should eventually get the country back **on the right track**.

**put two and two together**

When a substantial number of employees called in to say they were sick on the day of the World Cup final, **we put two and two together** and concluded these events were not unrelated.

**the whys and wherefores**

For the moment, you don't need to worry about the **whys and wherefores** of this change in policy. All will become clear in due course.

**bear no relation to sth**

One problem is that this report was written in the 1950s. Its conclusions probably **bear no relation at all** to present-day conditions.

**have a mind of one's own**

Don't waste your time asking McGrath for his opinion. He doesn't **have a mind of his own**. He's an apparatchik, he just does what he's told.

**los sabios siempre piensan igual**

Si te he entendido bien, piensas que deberíamos incrementar nuestros precios. Bueno, los sabios siempre pensamos igual, ya que ésa es también mi conclusión.

**inútil, bobo**

No tiene sentido pedirle nada a Austin, es un inútil. Esa planta del rincón sabe más sobre finanzas que él.

**entrar en razón**

Insiste en enviar la carta, aunque sólo causará problemas. Llevo horas discutiendo con él, pero no puedo hacerle entrar en razón.

**pensar algo dos veces antes de hacerlo**

Habíamos pensado construir allí una nueva planta pero los disturbios políticos nos han hecho pensarlo dos veces antes de hacerlo.

**ir por buen camino**

Lo más seguro es que Corea sea una vez más una fuerza económica. Las reformas de Kim, si se llevan a cabo por completo y con tesón, deberían a la larga volver a llevar al país por el buen camino.

**atar cabos**

Cuando un número elevado de empleados llamaron por teléfono para decir que estaban enfermos el día en que se jugaba la final del mundial de fútbol, atamos cabos y llegamos a la conclusión de que ambas cosas estaban relacionadas.

**el cómo y el por qué**

De momento, no necesitas preocuparte del cómo y del por qué de este cambio en política. Todo quedará claro a su debido tiempo.

**no guardar ninguna relación con algo**

El problema es que este informe fue escrito en los años 50. Sus conclusiones no guardan probablemente ninguna relación con las condiciones actuales.

**tener sus propias opiniones**

No pierdas el tiempo pidiéndole a McGrath su opinión. No tiene opiniones propias. Es un robot, sólo hace lo que le mandan.

---

**wishful thinking**

It's **wishful thinking** to expect all your customers to pay cash on the nail and all your suppliers to give you six months' credit. It simply isn't going to happen.

---

**in one's heart of hearts**

The more he told me that all our troubles would soon be over, the more I wanted to believe him. But, of course, in my **heart of hearts** I knew he was lying.

---

**take sth at face value**

An insecure secretary will say that the computer is no good, difficult to learn, etc. But it would be a mistake to take this response **at face value** and deal with it by trying to improve the computer system. The ostensible issue is masking the real problem.

---

**toy with an idea**

He was **toying with the idea** of selling the company; the problem was he had no idea who might want to buy it.

---

**have a brainwave**

It was a technical problem we'd been trying in vain to solve for weeks. Then, one morning, as I was stepping out of the shower, **I had a brainwave**. It was simple!

---

**come to think of it ...**

- I wonder where McCabe is these days. I haven't seen him for ages.  
- **Come to think of it**, neither have I.

---

**hacerse ilusiones**

El esperar que todos tus clientes paguen en efectivo y que todos tus proveedores te den crédito durante seis meses es hacerse ilusiones. Eso sencillamente no va a ocurrir.

---

**en lo más íntimo de su corazón**

Cuanto más me contaba que nuestros problemas pronto se acabarían, más inclinado estaba a creerle. Pero, claro, en el fondo sabía que estaba mintiendo.

---

**creer algo a pies juntillas**

Una secretaria mediocre se excusaría diciendo que el ordenador no es bueno, que es difícil de manejar, etc. Pero sería un error creerse esta respuesta a pies juntillas y tratar de mejorar el sistema del ordenador. El tema aparente está ocultando el auténtico problema.

---

**barajar una idea**

Estaba barajando la idea de vender la empresa; el problema era que no tenía ni idea de quién querría comprarla.

---

**tener una idea luminosa**

Era un problema técnico que habíamos estado intentando solucionar en vano durante semanas. Entonces, una mañana, al salir de la ducha, tuve una idea luminosa. ¡Era sencillo!

---

**ahora que lo pienso...**

- Me pregunto dónde se ha metido McCabe estos días. No le he visto desde hace siglos.  
- **Ahora que lo pienso**, yo tampoco.

## 9. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** Something that causes one to think carefully: Las palabras de su jefe le hicieron reflexionar.
- 2** Not to know something at all: No tengo ni la más mínima idea de lo que estás hablando.
- 3** (*saying, used humourously to praise oneself on finding that someone's else thinks exactly the same thing*) All very clever people have the same opinions, judgements, etc.
- 4** To be stupid: No tiene dos dedos de frente.
- 5** To have no idea about something: No tengo la menor idea de cuánto cuesta.
- 6** To accept advice, admit the truth of an argument, etc: No quiere atender a razones.
- 7** To think carefully before doing something: Lo va a pensar dos veces antes de volver a faltarme al respeto.
- 8** Brains, reasoning abilities: ¡Utiliza la materia gris!
- 9** Thinking correctly, moving in the right direction to get the desired result: Me parece que así vamos por el buen camino.
- 10** To consider or intend something: Lo tenía en mente para ese puesto.
- 11** To make a correct guess based on what one already knows: Muy prontoató cabos.
- 12** To think very hard trying to find the answer to a difficult problem: Se devanó los sesos buscando una excusa.
- 13** To have an independent character: Sabe muy bien lo que quiere.
- 14** To consider something or keep it in one's mind: Ten en cuenta que tienes que volver antes de las cinco.
- 15** Believing something to be true or possible because one would like it to be so: ¿Más dinero? No te hagas ilusiones.
- 16** To be in a hurry to form a judgement or opinion, usually a wrong one: ¡No te precipites en sacar conclusiones!
- 17** In the deepest part of one's mind or feelings: En su fuero interno sabía que no había esperanza.
- 18** To have nothing to do with something: Su respuesta no guarda ninguna relación con la pregunta.
- 19** (*ideas, worries, intentions*) To have in one's thoughts: He tenido presente lo de la entrevista durante todo el día.
- 20** To accept something as it appears to be on the surface: Yo me creí lo que dijo: ¿por qué iba a mentir?
- 21** Think about an action with only a vague intention of actually doing it: Le he estado dando vueltas a la idea de comprarme un barco.
- 22** (*used when the speaker wants to add to a previous statement something he has just thought of*) When one considers the facts: Lo podría haber hecho ayer, ahora que lo pienso.
- 23** Suddenly to have a good idea: Tuve una idea genial (se me encendió la luz).
- 24** The purpose or reasons behind something: Siempre quiere saber todas las razones.
- 25** To come into one's mind fleetingly: Ni se le pasó por la cabeza.

# 10. Understanding

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## **there's more to this than meets the eye**

The quality of a knife depends on much more **than meets the eye**, but mostly on the blade and on the amount of carbon used in the steel.

## **cannot make head or tail of sth**

I've been studying these diagrams all morning but **I can't make head or tail of them**. Can you explain them to me?

## **it's all Greek to me**

He gave me a brief explanation of how the new computer system worked but, to tell you the truth, **it was all Greek to me**.

## **read between the lines**

How did Michael Bloomberg become the head of a billion-dollar empire? Well, you may have to **read between the lines**, but some hints await the careful reader of Bloomberg's recently published memoirs.

## **get the hang of sth**

Iacocca says, "I'm still in demand as a public speaker because I'm good at it. When you've talked for 45 years, you **get the hang of it**. And I have 616 speeches to draw from on various subjects".

## **get the picture**

My idea was to deliver an oil change the way other companies deliver pizzas, to people's homes. But the banks couldn't understand the concept. Finally bank number 12 **got the picture** and lent me the capital.

## **make allowances for sth**

Successful teamwork depends mainly on its members' willingness to work together and **make allowances** for each other's faults and weaknesses.

## **not know the first thing about sth**

There are a great many entrepreneurs that have great ideas and a lot of talent, but don't know the **first thing about running a business**.

## **be out of one's depth**

Many European companies still do not realise how important e-mail has become. This may be because, when it comes to information technology, the average European company

## **es más complicado de lo que parece**

La calidad de un cuchillo es algo más complicado de lo que parece, pero depende principalmente de la hoja y de la cantidad de carbono utilizado en el acero.

## **no tener ni pies ni cabeza**

He estado estudiando estos diagramas toda la mañana pero no les encuentro ni pies ni cabeza. ¿Me los puedes explicar?

## **me suena a chino**

Me dio una explicación breve sobre cómo funcionaba el nuevo sistema informático pero, a decir verdad, me sonó todo a chino.

## **leer entre líneas**

¿Cómo es que Michael Bloomberg se convirtió en el presidente de un imperio de mil millones de dólares? Bueno, puede que tengas que leer entre líneas, pero se dan algunas pistas a los atentos lectores de las memorias de Bloomberg, recientemente publicadas.

## **cogerle el tranquillo a algo**

Según Iacocca, "Sigo estando solicitado como orador público porque se me da bien. Cuando has hablado durante 45 años, te coges el tranquillo. Además tengo 616 discursos de temas variados de donde sacar material."

## **entender, enterarse**

Mi idea era ofrecer un cambio de aceite así como otras empresas entregan pizzas a domicilio. Pero los bancos no terminaban de entender el concepto. Al final, el banco núm. 12 comprendió la idea y me prestó el capital.

## **tener paciencia con algo**

El éxito del trabajo en equipo depende principalmente de la buena voluntad de los socios para trabajar juntos y tener paciencia con los fallos y debilidades de los demás.

## **no saber nada en absoluto sobre algo**

Hay una gran cantidad de empresarios que tienen grandes ideas y mucho talento, pero no saben nada en absoluto sobre cómo llevar una empresa.

## **perderse, no entender nada**

Muchas empresas europeas aún no se dan cuenta de la importancia del correo electrónico. Esto puede ser porque, en lo que a tecnología de la información se refiere, el típico

director is completely **out of his depth**.

### **go right over one's head**

You know what lawyers are like, full of jargon and technical terms and references to obscure precedents. Most of what they were saying **went straight over my head**.

### **have a good head for sth**

We always knew he would be an accountant or a banker or something like that. Even as a child, he **had a good head for figures**.

### **the mind boggles**

The **mind boggles** at the array of products executives are buying in order to de-stress: "relaxation pillows", aromatherapy oils, herbal teas, goggles that emit relaxing light waves.

### **the penny dropped**

We had been trying to tell him politely that we were not going to renew his employment contract, but he hadn't understood. Then someone asked him if he had any plans for the future and the **penny dropped**.

### **fall into place**

You mustn't overprepare. If you really want to do something, you can't wait until every little detail is ready. Just start and you'll find that most things will **fall into place** later.

### **get hold of the wrong end of the stick**

Wait a minute, Frank, you seem to **have got hold of the wrong end of the stick** here. My position is exactly the opposite of what you think it is.

### **know one's stuff**

She answered all my questions about export conditions without even pausing for thought. I must say, she certainly seems **to know her stuff**.

### **get one's wires crossed**

Thanks to cellular phones and laptop computers, the main office can communicate at any time with sales representatives on the road. We can get things done quickly and efficiently, without **getting our wires crossed**.

director de empresa europea está totalmente perdido.

### **ser demasiado complicado para uno**

Ya sabes cómo son los abogados: recurren a su jerga, a términos técnicos y se refieren a confusos antecedentes. Casi todo lo que decían era demasiado complicado para mí.

### **tener facilidad para algo**

Siempre supimos que sería banquero, contable o algo parecido. Incluso de niño, tenía *facilidad para los números*.

### **alucinar**

Uno alucina al ver el conjunto impresionante de productos que compran los ejecutivos para eliminar el estrés: almohadas de relajación, aceites de aromaterapia, té de hierbas, gafas que emiten ondas de luz relajante...

### **caer en la cuenta**

Hablamos estado intentando decirle con indirectas que no íbamos a renovar su contrato de trabajo, pero no había entendido. Entonces alguien le preguntó si tenía planes para el futuro y cayó en la cuenta.

### **encajar, cuadrar**

No deberías excederte en tu preparación. Si realmente quieres hacer algo, no puedes esperar a que cada pequeño detalle esté listo. No tienes más que empezar y encontrarás que la mayoría de las cosas encajarán más tarde.

### **coger el rábano por las hojas**

Espera un minuto, Frank, parece que has cogido el rábano por las hojas. Mi postura es exactamente lo contrario de lo que crees.

### **saber de lo que uno está hablando**

Ella contestó a todas mis preguntas sobre las condiciones de exportación sin ni siquiera pararse a pensar. Debo decir que sabe de lo que está hablando.

### **tener los cables cruzados**

Gracias a los teléfonos móviles y a los ordenadores portátiles, la oficina principal puede comunicarse a cualquier hora con los comerciales que están de viaje. Podemos hacer las cosas rápida y eficazmente sin que se nos crucen los cables.

**not see the point of doing sth**

I really **don't see the point** of equipping our secretaries with the most powerful, most sophisticated computers on the market if they are only going to perform simple tasks like typing memos and letters.

**lose the thread**

I wonder if you'd mind going over those last few points again, please. I think I **lost the thread** somewhere in the middle of your argument.

**you can't see the wood for the trees**

When people are deeply involved in this kind of research, they often lose sight of the main objective. They become so obsessed with details that they can't **see the wood for the trees**.

**give sb to understand that ...**

At my interview with the Personnel Manager, I **was given to understand that** the salary would be paid on the basis of 13 months per year, not 12.

**the ins and outs of sth**

Topfer was completely familiar with **the ins and outs** of purchasing and manufacturing, so he was exactly the right man to handle day-to-day operations.

**let me get this straight**

**Let me get this straight:** you're saying that success can be disastrous if the company isn't prepared for it. Is that right?

**get to the bottom of a matter**

We've had four complaints this week from customers who say they've received goods they didn't order. I want you to **get to the bottom of this matter** and put it right.

**get the message**

From now on, I want safety regulations to be strictly observed. If a worker refuses to wear hearing protection when he should be wearing it, dismiss him. The others will soon **get the message**.

**no entender****la necesidad de hacer algo**

No entiendo por qué es necesario equipar a nuestras secretarías con los ordenadores más potentes y sofisticados del mercado si sólo van a llevar a cabo tareas sencillas como escribir notas y cartas.

**perder el hilo**

Me pregunto si te importaría repasar esos últimos puntos una vez más, por favor. Creo que he perdido el hilo en medio de tus explicaciones.

**los árboles****no dejan ver el bosque**

Cuando la gente está profundamente inmersa en este tipo de investigación, suele perder la noción del objetivo principal. Se obsesionan de tal forma con los detalles que los árboles no les dejan ver el bosque.

**dar a entender que ...**

En mi entrevista con el Director de Personal, me dio a entender que el sueldo se pagaría sobre una base anual de 13 meses, no de 12.

**los pormenores de algo**

Topfer estaba completamente familiarizado con los pormenores de las compras y de la fabricación, así que era exactamente el hombre indicado para llevar a cabo las operaciones diarias.

**a ver si me aclaro**

A ver si me aclaro: ¿estás diciendo que el éxito puede ser desastroso si la empresa no está preparada para ello? ¿Es así?

**llegar al fondo de un asunto**

Hemos tenido esta semana cuatro quejas de clientes diciendo que han recibido materiales que no han pedido. Quiero que llegues al fondo de este asunto y lo arregles.

**coger la onda, captar el mensaje**

De ahora en adelante, quiero que se cumplan estrictamente las medidas de seguridad. Si un obrero se niega a ponerse protección de oídos cuando debería hacerlo, despidéle. Los demás pronto cogerán la onda.



## 10. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To understand the situation: Léete esto, enseguida te harás una idea.
- 2** To be in a situation one cannot understand because of lack of knowledge, experience, etc: *Traté de leer a Marx pero pronto me perdí.*
- 3** (*an expression of incomprehension or disbelief*) My mind cannot accept that!: *Se quedó boquiabierto pensando en esa cantidad de dinero.*
- 4** To be unable to make any sense of something: *No le veo ni pies ni cabeza a este diagrama.*
- 5** To know a great deal about one's job or a particular subject: *Parece saber de lo que está hablando.*
- 6** To be beyond somebody's ability to understand: *No entendí nada de su conferencia.*
- 7** To understand, to realise: *Aquí no eres bienvenido. ¿Me explico?*
- 8** To misunderstand what another person means or wants: *Me parece que no hablamos de lo mismo.*
- 9** The meaning of something, e.g. a remark or a joke, is finally understood: *Al final se dio cuenta.*
- 10** (*idea, process, person, etc.*) This is more complicated than it seems: *Ese software es más difícil de lo que parece.*
- 11** To misunderstand something completely: *Como de costumbre, tomó el rábano por las hojas.*
- 12** Not to understand the purpose or use of something: *No entiendo por qué es necesario hacerlo.*
- 13** Not to know anything at all about a subject: *No sabes nada en absoluto de esto.*
- 14** To fail to follow the course of an argument or conversation: *Perdí el hilo de su razonamiento.*
- 15** To fail to have a clear understanding of something because of a large number of unimportant and distracting details: *Los árboles no les dejan ver el bosque.*
- 16** To understand more than is actually written or spoken: *Leyendo entre líneas, yo diría que tienen problemas económicos.*
- 17** To cause someone to believe something: *Me ha dado a entender que se marcha.*
- 18** To be clever at doing something, e.g. mathematics, figures: *Tiene cabeza para los negocios.*
- 19** The intricate details of something: *Cuesta entender todos los detalles del funcionamiento de la ley.*
- 20** (*facts, events, etc.*) To be seen in its correct place, so that the whole thing can be fully understood: *Las cosas empiezan a cuadrar.*
- 21** To understand how to do something: *Nunca le cogí el tranquillo al golf.*
- 22** Let me understand this correctly: *A ver si nos entendemos, ¿nos faltan mil libras para alcanzar nuestro objetivo?*
- 23** To take mitigating circumstances into account: *Tienes que ser indulgente con él, es muy joven.*
- 24** Find out the reason for something: *Estaba dispuesta a llegar al fondo del asunto.*
- 25** To be incomprehensible to someone: *Me suena a chino.*

# 11. Discussions

1,000 everyday idioms in business

---

## face to face

A sales pitch delivered over the telephone is definitely different from one given **face to face**. But it is not necessarily less effective.

---

## pick sb's brains

To identify areas of opportunity, *Business Week* **picked the brains** of leading market strategists.

---

## beg to differ

Most analysts said they believed the Budget to be neutral for the stock market. Investors in tobacco stocks might **beg to differ** however, following the chancellor's decision to increase cigarette duty.

---

## agree to differ

We spent two hours trying to reach an agreement on the best strategy to employ, but our positions were simply irreconcilable. In the end, we **agreed to differ** and moved on to the next subject.

---

## split hairs

Instead of addressing the first item on the agenda, they wasted nearly half an hour **splitting hairs** about the wording of the minutes of the previous meeting.

---

## be all ears

- I think I may have found a way to increase our profits substantially.  
- Tell me more, **I'm all ears**.

---

## talk at cross-purposes

Wait a minute, Bill, I think we're **talking at cross-purposes here**. I wasn't referring to last year's production figures but to this year's.

---

## talk through one's hat

You're talking **through your hat**. It's obvious that you don't know the first thing about modern production methods.

---

## not to mention ...

According to Intel, the computer will emerge as the central processing unit for every entertainment and information apparatus in the house — **not to mention** the lights and thermostat.

---

## set the record straight

Just to **set the record straight**, it was I who wrote the report you quoted from earlier, and not Mr Auger as you seem to think.

---

## cara a cara

Una presentación comercial por teléfono es completamente distinta a una presentada cara a cara. Pero no por ello es menos eficaz.

---

## hacer una consulta a alguien

Para identificar áreas de oportunidad, *Business Week* consultó a los principales estrategias de mercados.

---

## lamentar no estar de acuerdo

La mayoría de los analistas dijeron que creían que el presupuesto era neutral para la bolsa. Sin embargo los inversores en acciones de tabaco podrían no estar de acuerdo, tras la decisión del canciller de incrementar el impuesto sobre el tabaco.

---

## estar de acuerdo en discrepar

Pasamos dos horas intentando llegar a un acuerdo sobre la mejor estrategia a emplear, pero nuestras posturas eran sencillamente irreconciliables. Al final, nos pusimos de acuerdo en discrepar, y pasamos al siguiente tema.

---

## rizar el rizo

En vez de tratar el primer punto del temario, perdieron casi media hora rizando el rizo sobre la redacción del resumen de la reunión anterior.

---

## ser todo oídos

- Creo haber encontrado una forma de incrementar sustancialmente nuestros beneficios.  
- Cuéntamelo, soy todo oídos.

---

## hablar de cosas distintas

Espera un minuto, Bill, creo que estamos hablando de cosas distintas. No me refería a las cifras de producción del año pasado, sino a las de este año.

---

## decir tonterías

Estás diciendo tonterías. Es obvio que no sabes ni lo más mínimo sobre los métodos de producción modernos.

---

## además de...

De acuerdo con Intel, el ordenador constituirá la unidad central de proceso para cada uno de los aparatos domésticos de información y ocio, además de la iluminación y del termostato.

---

## aclarar un malentendido

Sólo para aclarar un malentendido, fui yo quien escribió el informe que citaste antes, y no Mr. Auger, como crees.

**for the sake of argument**

I think you're probably right and that we will make a substantial profit next year. But let's say, for the **sake of argument**, that we make a small profit or only break even. What happens then?

**put words into sb's mouth**

Now don't start **putting words into my mouth**. I didn't say that we're going to close down the Croydon plant. I said we're going to have to find a way to stop losing money there. That's a different matter entirely.

**get a word in edgeways**

Discussions with Goldman tend to be rather one-sided. Once he starts talking, you can't **get a word in edgeways**.

**scratch the surface**

Without detailed figures we can't hope to do more than **scratch the surface** of this problem. I suggest we have a proper discussion as soon as the figures are available.

**on the one hand ...  
on the other hand ...**

Since the 1950s, British policy has been marked by lack of enthusiasm for the European project **on the one hand**, and fear of exclusion **on the other**.

**for one thing**

What does the employee get out of a profit-sharing arrangement? **For one thing**, money. For another, a sense of pride and belonging.

**compare notes**

I'd like to have your opinion of the proposed advertising campaign. Why don't we get together **and compare notes**?

**put oneself in sb else's shoes**

**Put yourself in the customer's shoes**. If you're worrying about how to make things right, take a look at the situation from his perspective.

**off the record**

Most of our information was obtained by various unofficial means: rumours, **off-the-record** briefings, leaks, indiscretions, etc. Hence, it may not be entirely reliable.

**pongamos por caso...**

Creo que seguramente tienes razón y que sacaremos un beneficio sustancial el año que viene. Pero pongamos por caso que obtengamos un beneficio pequeño o que sólo salimos a la par. ¿Qué pasará entonces?

**poner palabras  
en boca de alguien**

No pongas en mi boca cosas que no he dicho. No dije que íbamos a cerrar la planta de Croydon. Dije que vamos a tener que encontrar una forma de dejar de perder dinero allí. Es algo completamente distinto.

**meter baza**

Las conversaciones con Goldman tienden a ser poco equilibradas. Una vez que empieza a hablar, no es posible meter baza.

**tratar algo muy por encima**

Sin cifras detalladas, no podemos esperar hacer nada más que tratar este problema muy por encima. Sugiero que tengamos una conversación como Dios manda en cuanto esas cifras estén disponibles.

**por una parte ... por otra ...**

Desde los años 50, la política británica ha estado marcada por una falta de entusiasmo hacia el proyecto europeo por una parte, y por el miedo a ser excluidos por otra.

**en primer lugar; entre otras cosas**

¿Qué consigue el empleado con un acuerdo de beneficios compartidos? Para empezar, dinero. Además, un sentimiento de orgullo y de pertenencia.

**cambiar impresiones**

Me gustaría conocer tu opinión sobre la propuesta para la campaña publicitaria. ¿Por qué no nos reunimos y cambiamos impresiones?

**ponerse en el lugar de alguien**

Ponte en el lugar del cliente. Si te estás preocupando por hacer las cosas bien, mira la situación desde su punto de vista.

**confidencialmente**

La mayor parte de nuestra información ha sido obtenida de forma extraoficial: rumores, información confidencial, filtraciones, indiscreciones, etc. Por lo tanto, puede que no sea del todo fiable.

**it stands to reason that ...**

---

In a world where the skills you have determine how successful you are, **it stands to reason** that the more skills you have, the better your chances for success.

**be beside the point**

---

The real issue is whether we need this equipment or not. The fact that it's being offered at a particularly low price is **quite beside the point**.

**be neither here nor there**

---

If he's the best man for the job, he'll get the job - and that's all there is to it. The fact that he's the GM's son is **neither here nor there**.

**at issue**

---

The point **at issue** is not how much we are going to invest in your company, but if we are going to invest in your company.

**that rings a bell**

---

- Do you remember Bill Johnson?  
- Well, **the name rings a bell**, but I can't quite think who he is.

**play devil's advocate**

---

It's possible, and even probable, that our enthusiasm for this project has blinded us to its weaknesses. That's why I want you **to play devil's advocate**. The more objections you can raise, the better.

**es lógico que ...**

---

En un mundo donde las habilidades que uno tiene determinan el éxito que se va a conseguir, es lógico que cuantas más habilidades se tengan, más posibilidades existen de alcanzar el éxito.

**no venir al caso**

---

Lo que estamos debatiendo es si necesitamos este equipo o no. El hecho de que lo ofrezcan a un precio muy bajo no viene al caso.

**no venir al caso**

---

Si es la persona más indicada para el puesto, conseguirá el puesto- y no hay más que decir. El hecho de que sea el hijo del director general no viene al caso.

**en cuestión, a debatir**

---

El tema en cuestión no es cuánto vamos a invertir en tu empresa, sino si vamos a invertir en ella.

**esto me suena**

---

- ¿Te acuerdas de Bill Johnson?  
- Pues, creo que me suena el nombre, pero no caigo en quién es.

**hacer de abogado del diablo**

---

Es posible, e incluso probable, que nuestro entusiasmo hacia este proyecto no nos haya dejado ver sus puntos débiles. Por eso quiero que hagas de abogado del diablo. Cuantas más pegadas puedas sugerir, mejor.

# 11. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To argue over small or unimportant details: Quejarse de la fecha sería hilar muy fino.
- 2** To question somebody to find out his knowledge and ideas about a subject: He obviously invited me to lunch so he could \_\_\_\_\_ about the Locksley Hall project; he talked about nothing else.
- 3** To correct erroneous information or beliefs: Before we go any further, I want to \_\_\_\_\_ on a few important points which you seem to have misunderstood.
- 4** In the first place, to start with, one reason is... : En primer lugar, se está haciendo muy tarde y estoy cansado.
- 5** To be extremely attentive to what someone is about to say: Soy todo oídos.
- 6** To exchange opinions with another person: You know what's happening in Kuwait, I know what's happening in Saudi Arabia, so why don't we get together and \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- 7** To imagine oneself in somebody else's position: The skilled negotiator knows how to \_\_\_\_\_ of his adversary.
- 8** In the actual presence of some other person: They had often spoken on the telephone but they did not meet \_\_\_\_\_ until a few months ago.
- 9** (used when the speaker does not want his words to be reported publicly) Unofficially: El ministro hablaba extraoficialmente.
- 10** (used to introduce another important element which hasn't been referred to so far) As well as, and also: Está el problema del tiempo y no digamos ya el costo.
- 11** It follows logically that..., it is obvious that... : Es evidente que no querrá volver a comprarlo.
- 12** In order to consider the possibility: Pongamos por caso que fuera culpable.
- 13** To be irrelevant: Your observations are interesting, but I'm afraid they're quite \_\_\_\_\_.
- 14** To agree not to argue any more because neither side will change its opinion: Dejémoslo, ni tú me vas a convencer a mí ni yo a ti.
- 15** Being discussed or being decided on: May I remind you that the point \_\_\_\_\_ is not where we are going to install the new machines, but if we really need to buy them.
- 16** To state that someone said something he didn't say, or to suggest that he is about to say something which, in fact, he has no intention of saying: Don't \_\_\_\_\_ into my mouth, that's not what I was going to say at all.
- 17** To say things that are incorrect or foolish: Está diciendo tonterías, como de costumbre.
- 18** To be unimportant or irrelevant: Sus objeciones no vienen al caso.
- 19** To misunderstand each other's point of view, intentions, etc: Estaban hablando de dos cosas distintas.
- 20** To disagree with somebody politely but firmly: Si me permite, en ese punto no estoy de acuerdo.
- 21** To remind someone vaguely of something: Arthur Ferguson? Yes, the name \_\_\_\_\_, but I can't put a face to it.
- 22** To deal with a subject superficially: Este artículo no profundiza en el problema.
- 23** To argue against an idea although one may agree with it to test its validity: O.K., John, I want you to \_\_\_\_\_ and to raise as many objections as you can to my plan.
- 24** (used to emphasize the difference between two statements or positions) In one case ... in the other case: \_\_\_\_\_ it's vital that we implement these measures, \_\_\_\_\_ we can't possibly afford to implement them.
- 25** To be unable to participate in a conversation because someone else is talking a great deal: No me dejaron meter baza.

## 12. Meetings

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### get down to business

---

In Arab countries, before **getting down to business**, you are generally expected to spend about half an hour making small talk and building a relationship.

### start the ball rolling

---

After a few general remarks, the director started **the ball rolling** by saying that annual profits were down by nearly 20% and that he would welcome suggestions on how to reverse this trend.

### take sth as read

---

Minutes of the last meeting have been circulated to you, so, if you all agree, I think we **can take them as read** and move on to the first item on the agenda.

### beat about the bush

---

Listen, why don't you stop **beating about the bush** and simply tell us how much all this is going to cost?

### get to the point

---

Excuse me for interrupting you, Graham. What you're saying is most interesting but I'm afraid our time is limited. Can you please **get to the point**?

### get one nowhere

---

He's a very clever man, but year after year he's been passed over for promotion. His abilities have **got him nowhere**.

### go over old ground

---

We have a very heavy agenda, Jones, so don't waste time **going over old ground**. Just bring us up to date on recent developments.

### put out heads together

---

Your plans are interesting but much too expensive. Why don't we **put our heads together** some day next week and see if we can't find some way to reduce the costs?

### speak to the purpose

---

Listen, we don't have much time. If you can't say anything that's **to the purpose**, it would be better if you said nothing at all.

### cover a lot of ground

---

The early Coca-Cola advertisement, stressing that the drink was delicious, delightful, healthy, and indispensable for the relief of

### entrar en materia

---

En los países árabes, antes de entrar en materia, se espera que pases media hora hablando de cosas intrascendentes, creando una relación personal.

### ir al grano, poner las cosas en marcha

---

Tras unos comentarios generales, el director fue al grano anunciando que los beneficios anuales habían bajado casi un 20% y que las sugerencias de cómo invertir esta tendencia serían bien recibidas.

### dar algo por sentado

---

El resumen de la última reunión ha sido repartido a todos vosotros, así que, si estáis de acuerdo, creo que podemos darlo por sentado y continuar con el primer punto del temario.

### andarse por las ramas

---

Escucha, ¿por qué no dejas de andarte por las ramas y terminas por decirnos cuánto nos va a costar todo esto?

### ir al grano

---

Discúlpame por interrumpirte, Graham. Lo que dices es de lo más interesante pero me temo que nos quedamos sin tiempo. Podrías ir al grano, ¿por favor?

### no conducir a nada

---

Es un hombre muy listo, pero año tras año han pasado por encima suyo, negándole el ascenso. Sus habilidades no le han conducido a nada.

### repetir la misma canción

---

Tenemos un temario muy apretado, Jones, así que no pierdas el tiempo repitiendo la misma canción. Limitate a informarnos de los últimos acontecimientos.

### tratar los dos de resolverlo

---

Tus planes son interesantes pero muy caros. ¿Por qué no nos reunimos la semana que viene y tratamos de encontrar alguna forma de reducir los costes?

### hablar muy a propósito

---

Escucha, no tenemos mucho tiempo. Si no puedes concentrarte en el tema sería mejor que no dijeras nada.

### tocar muchos puntos

---

El anuncio antiguo de Coca-Cola, que aseguraba que la bebida era deliciosa, agradable, sana e indispensable para aliviar el

mental and physical exhaustion, **covered a great deal of ground**.

### cut sth short

We got an emergency call saying there had been an explosion at one of the plants, so naturally we **cut the meeting short**.

### for the record

I wish to state **for the record** that I am completely opposed to this decision.

### when all is said and done

**When all is said and done**, Microsoft will probably make a great deal of money on its \$150 million investment in Apple.

### have one's say

You can defuse angry customer encounters by remaining positive, by letting people **have their say**, and then trying to reason things out.

### a show of hands

It was clear that the management team was divided on the question. To save time, the chairman suggested the matter be resolved by a **show of hands**.

### lose sight of sth

Hayes reminds his sales team that when they feel discouraged, it's probably because they've **lost sight of their goals**.

### I stand corrected

I was quite unaware of the situation you have just described. I realise now that I judged you unfairly and **stand corrected**. Please accept my apologies.

### go off at a tangent

The problem with Parker is that if anyone interrupts him with a question, **he'll go off at a tangent** and waste hours of everybody's time.

### hold forth

Soames is such a windbag! At the beginning of the meeting he **held forth** for nearly half an hour on the need to keep our arguments precise and to the point.

### lay it on the line

Let me **lay it on the line** for you, gentlemen. If there are any more accidents because basic safety measures are being ignored, I will hold you directly responsible.

agotamiento mental y físico, tocaba muchos puntos.

### cortar algo

Recibimos una llamada de emergencia diciendo que se había producido una explosión en una de las plantas, así que naturalmente corramos la **reunión**.

### que conste ...

Deseo **que conste** que estoy totalmente en contra de esta decisión.

### al final, al fin y al cabo

Al final, Microsoft ganará seguramente una gran cantidad de dinero con su inversión de 150 millones de dólares en Apple.

### dar su opinión

Se puede tranquilizar a los clientes airados siendo positivo, dejando que den su opinión, y luego intentar razonar con ellos.

### una votación a mano alzada

Estaba claro que el equipo directivo estaba dividido sobre este tema. Para ahorrar tiempo, el presidente sugirió que se resolviese el asunto con una votación a mano alzada.

### perder algo de vista

Hayes recuerda a su equipo comercial que si se sienten desanimados, es probablemente porque han perdido de vista sus metas.

### reconozco mi error

No estaba en absoluto al tanto de la situación que acabas de describir. Ahora me doy cuenta de que te había juzgado mal y reconozco mi error. Por favor, acepta mis disculpas.

### salirse por la tangente

El problema con Parker es que si alguien le interrumpe con una pregunta, se sale por la tangente y hace perder el tiempo a todo el mundo.

### hablar largo y tendido

¡Soames es un charlatán! Al principio de la reunión habló largo y tendido durante casi media hora sobre la necesidad de precisar nuestros argumentos y de ir al grano.

### dejar algo bien claro

Voy a dejarles algo bien claro, caballeros. Si hay algún accidente más porque no se han respetado las medidas de seguridad, les haré directamente responsables de ello.

**go round and round in circles**

The G7 seems to spend much of its time going **round and round in circles**. Once again, everyone was agreed that more should be done to stimulate global growth. And once again, opinions differed as to where the responsibility should lie.

**play it by ear**

Of course it's always better to prepare for meetings properly, but often you simply don't have time. And if you're unprepared, all you can **do is play it by ear**.

**tie up loose ends**

We've covered everything on the agenda. However, before I bring the meeting to a close, I'd like to **tie up** a few **loose ends**.

**short and sweet**

I realise you're all very busy men, so, although this is a highly complicated matter, I'll keep my remarks **short and sweet**.

**in a nutshell**

We are losing customers because we are unable to supply them quickly enough — that's the problem **in a nutshell**. The next question is: what are we going to do about it?

**dar vueltas sin llegar a nada**

El G7 parece pasar la mayor parte del tiempo dando vueltas sin llegar a una conclusión. Una vez más, todos estaban de acuerdo en que había que hacer algo más para estimular el crecimiento global. Una vez más, las opiniones diferían sobre quién debería asumir la responsabilidad.

**improvisar**

Claro que siempre es mejor prepararse adecuadamente para una reunión, pero muchas veces no se tiene tiempo. Y si no se está preparado, lo único que se puede hacer es improvisar.

**atar los cabos sueltos**

Hemos cubierto todo el temario. Sin embargo, antes de concluir la reunión, me gustaría atar los cabos sueltos.

**breve**

Me doy cuenta de que estais todos muy ocupados, así que aunque se trate de un tema muy complicado, seré breve.

**en pocas palabras**

Estamos perdiendo clientes porque no les podemos abastecer lo suficientemente rápido; en pocas palabras, ése es el problema. La siguiente pregunta es: ¿Qué vamos a hacer al respecto?



## 12. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To fail to help or be of no use to someone: Esto no conduce a nada.
- 2** When everything has been considered: Al fin y al cabo, es ella la que va a sufrir.
- 3** To say something which is highly relevant to the present situation, to the matter being discussed, etc: He has a clear, incisive mind. When he speaks, he \_\_\_\_\_ with no waste of time.
- 4** To express one's opinion, usually with determination: Ahora deja que dé su opinión.
- 5** To come to the most important thing that one wants to say: We don't have very much time, so I'd appreciate it if you could skip the introduction and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6** A vote in which each person shows his position by raising his hand: El presidente pidió una votación a mano alzada.
- 7** To speak for a long time, pompously, in front of others: Habló largo y tendido sobre la necesidad de actuar con moderación.
- 8** To deal with subjects that are already familiar to one's listeners: Estamos volviendo sobre lo mismo.
- 9** I admit that I was wrong: Reconozco mi error.
- 10** (a purpose, a target, etc.) To forget something, to fail to keep it in view: Han perdido de vista lo más importante.
- 11** To begin talking about serious matters: Vayamos directamente al grano.
- 12** To leave the subject of a discussion and start talking about something completely different: Se fue por las ramas y no terminó de dar su explicación.
- 13** To have discussions together in order to solve a problem: Nos pusimos a pensar juntos y surgió la idea.
- 14** To say something directly and forcefully: Te lo voy a decir claramente, tu trabajo no está a la altura de lo que se requiere.
- 15** To delay talking about the most important subject or point: No te andes con rodeos y dime qué pasó.
- 16** To keep going over the same ideas without reaching a satisfactory decision or outcome: Las negociaciones están estancadas.
- 17** (meetings, training courses, etc.) To deal with many different subjects or very thoroughly with a single subject: Tratamos muchos puntos en nuestras conversaciones.
- 18** To act according to the situation and without a definite plan, to improvise: No sé cómo van a reaccionar, tendré que ver qué hago sobre la marcha.
- 19** (meetings, discussions, etc.) To start something, to get it moving: ¿Quién va a comenzar?
- 20** To complete small jobs or take care of details that are still undecided: Todavía quedan algunos cabos sueltos por atar.
- 21** To end something prematurely: Tuvo que acortar sus vacaciones.
- 22** (speech, announcement, etc.) Without unnecessary detail or without waste of time: La reunión fue corta y provechosa.
- 23** In order to make one's position clear and public: Que conste que no estoy de acuerdo.
- 24** To assume that everyone knows something even though it hasn't been directly stated, or to take something for granted: Dimos por sentado que ya tenía un pasaporte válido.
- 25** Concisely, reduced to the essential facts: En dos palabras, ésa es la situación.

## 13. Speaking

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### not mince one's words

---

He didn't **mince his words**. He said that either we must increase our output or our budget would be drastically reduced.

### speak one's mind

---

Hiroshi Okuda is six feet tall, sings karaoke, **speaks his mind** — frequently in English — and prefers young, creative managers to established old guys. He's begun a revolution at Toyota.

### call a spade a spade

---

He's the sort of chap who always **calls a spade a spade**. If he thinks you're being stupid, he'll tell you so.

### a slip of the tongue

---

You referred to their Mr Brown as "Mr Brawn". It was obviously **a slip of the tongue**. You probably didn't even notice it yourself.

### it goes without saying that ...

---

George Soros, **it goes without saying**, is a very smart guy. You don't become a billionaire stock trader by being stupid.

### off the cuff

---

They showed us round the factory, then invited us to have lunch in their canteen. Jones made a short speech **off the cuff**, thanking them for their hospitality and looking forward to a fruitful relationship between our two companies.

### not in so many words

---

- Did he say he was going to cancel the order?  
- Well, **not in so many words**. But he hinted that he might.

### to cut a long story short

---

I asked him if he could remind me of the date of the meeting and, to my astonishment, he started screaming that I was always making unreasonable demands. Well, **to cut a long story short**, he stormed out of the office and hasn't returned.

### off the top of one's head

---

- Can you tell me how many units we can supply from stock?  
- Well, **not off the top of my head**. Let me speak to the warehouse foreman and I'll call you back.

### tongue in cheek

---

Two young guys were doing the calculations, which were taking forever. **Tongue in**

### no tener pelos en la lengua

---

No tuvo pelos en la lengua. Dijo que o bien aumentábamos la productividad o nuestro presupuesto se vería drásticamente recortado.

### hablar sin rodeos

---

Hiroshi Okuda mide 1,80 m, canta en karaoke y habla sin rodeos - con frecuencia en inglés - y prefiere a los jóvenes directivos creativos a los típicos empresarios. Ha iniciado una revolución en Toyota.

### llamar al pan, pan y al vino, vino

---

Es el tipo de hombre que le llama al pan, pan y al vino, vino. Si cree que estás portándote como un tonto te lo dirá.

### un lapsus (linguae)

---

Te dirigiste a su Mr. Brown como "Mr. Brawn". Eso fue un lapsus. Seguramente ni te diste cuenta.

### no hace falta ni decirlo ...

---

No hace falta decir que George Soros es un tipo muy listo. Uno no se convierte en corredor de bolsa multimillonario siendo tonto.

### improvisando, de improviso

---

Nos enseñaron la fábrica y luego nos invitaron a comer en su comedor. Jones improvisó un discurso, dándoles las gracias por su hospitalidad y augurando una relación fructífera entre nuestras dos empresas.

### no exactamente, no directamente

---

- ¿Dijo que iba a cancelar su pedido?  
- Pues, no exactamente. Pero dio a entender que quizás lo haría.

### en resumidas cuentas

---

Le pregunté si podría recordarme la fecha de la reunión y, para mi sorpresa, empezó a gritar que le estaba pidiendo lo imposible. Bueno, en resumidas cuentas, salió de la oficina hecho una furia y no ha vuelto.

### sin pensárselo

---

- ¿Me puedes decir cuantas unidades de nuestras existencias podemos suministrar?  
- Pues, no de buenas a primeras. Déjame hablar con el capataz del almacén y te llamaré.

### en broma, irónicamente

---

Dos chicos jóvenes estaban haciendo unos cálculos, lo cual les estaba llevando una eternidad. En broma, pregunté, "¿Qué tipo

**cheek**, I asked, "What kind of computer are you using?" I was told, seriously, that they were using a 286.

---

**say sth until one is blue in the face**

I can tell you what your faults are until I'm **blue in the face**, but it won't make the least difference if you can't see them for yourself. The first step must be for you to discover them.

---

**speak for itself**

Some question whether Dell's direct-sales model can be adapted to overseas markets. "I think our numbers **speak for themselves**," responds Topfer. "In Europe we're No. 3, and growing 32 times faster than the market."

---

**pay lip service to sth**

Everybody in our industry always **paid lip service** to safety, but nobody ever did much about it. We all assumed we had no control over whether accidents happened or not.

---

**tie oneself up in knots**

If you don't know the answer to an unexpected question, request time to think about it. This is much safer than bluffing, as you avoid the risk of **tying yourself up in knots** in public.

---

**waste one's breath**

I spent more than an hour trying to persuade him that our policy was self-defeating, but I was simply **wasting my breath**. His mind was already made up.

---

**hit the nail on the head**

I think you **hit the nail on the head** when you remarked earlier that profit is essentially a measure of growth or of contraction.

---

**pile it on thick**

He was a good accountant, certainly, but I felt that the GM was **piling it on a bit thick** when he called him "a financial wizard and an unparalleled genius with figures".

---

**straight from the shoulder**

I told him **straight from the shoulder** that I thought his behaviour was not only destructive, but also childish, silly and selfish.

de ordenador estáis usando?" Me dijeron, muy en serio, que estaban usando un 286.

---

**cansarse de repetir algo**

Te puedo decir dónde fallas una y otra vez, pero no significará nada. Lo importante es que seas tú quien descubra los fallos.

---

**ser evidente, hablar por sí solo**

Algunos se preguntan si el modelo de venta directa de Dell puede adaptarse a los mercados extranjeros. "Creo que las cifras son evidentes," respondió Topfer. "En Europa somos el núm.3, y estamos creciendo 32 veces más deprisa que el mercado."

---

**hablar largo y tendido**

Todos en nuestra industria han hablado siempre largo y tendido sobre la seguridad, pero nadie ha hecho nada al respecto. Todos dábamos por sentado que no controlábamos el hecho de que se produjeran accidentes.

---

**liarse, quedar mal**

Si no sabes la respuesta a una pregunta inesperada, solicita tiempo para pensarlo. Esto es mucho más seguro que farolear, ya que evitas el riesgo de quedar mal en público.

---

**gastar saliva en balde**

Me pasé más de una hora intentando persuadirle de que nuestra política era contraproducente, pero estaba gastando saliva en balde. Ya se había decidido.

---

**dar en el clavo**

Creo que has dado en el clavo al comentar antes que los beneficios son, en esencia, una medida de crecimiento o de contracción.

---

**exagerar**

Era sin duda un buen contable pero pensé que el director general estaba exagerando cuando le llamó "un mago de las finanzas y un genio sin igual con las cifras".

---

**sin rodeos**

Le dije sin rodeos que pensaba que su comportamiento no solamente era negativo sino también infantil, tonto y egoísta.

### take the words out of one's mouth

- A budget is not a forecast, it's a commitment.
- You took **the words right out of my mouth**. That's exactly what I was going to say.

### take sb's word for it

- I have the feeling he's really keen to sign.
- Well, **I'll take your word for it**. Let's hope he's just as keen when we meet next week.

### have the gift of the gab

It's all very well to be naturally charming and to have **the gift of the gab**, and so on, but what really separates the good salesman from the mediocre one is stamina and perseverance.

### a sweeping statement

- Everybody in administration is lazy, incompetent and uncooperative.
- That's a rather **sweeping statement**, isn't it?

### learn sth by heart

Nerves can cause your mind to go suddenly blank, so if you are making an important presentation for the first time, it is often useful **to learn your opening remarks by heart**.

### have sth on the tip of one's tongue

What on earth is their Manager called? Give me a second, **I have her name on the tip of my tongue!**

### not to put too fine a point on it

**Not to put too fine a point on it**, I think your report is one of the most carelessly written and one of the most inaccurate and useless documents I have ever had the misfortune to read.

### quitarle a uno la palabra de la boca

- Un presupuesto no es un pronóstico, es un compromiso.
- Me has quitado las palabras de la boca. Eso es exactamente lo que iba a decir.

### aceptar lo que alguien dice

- Tengo la sensación de que está deseando firmar.
- Bueno, aceptaré lo que me dices. Esperemos que tenga las mismas ganas cuando nos reunamos con el la semana que viene.

### tener mucha labia

Está muy bien tener encanto natural, labia y demás, pero lo que realmente marca la diferencia entre un buen comercial y otro mediocre es el aguante y la perseverancia.

### una declaración demasiado general, generalizar

- Todos en la administración son vagos, incompetentes y no tienen ganas de cooperar.
- Eso es generalizar, ¿no crees?

### aprender algo de memoria

Los nervios pueden hacer que te quedes de repente en blanco, así que, si llevas a cabo una presentación importante por vez primera es útil aprenderse las primeras líneas de memoria.

### tener algo en la punta de la lengua

¿Cómo diablos se llama su director de formación? Dame un segundo, ¡tengo su nombre en la punta de la lengua!

### hablando sin rodeos

Hablando sin rodeos, creo que tu informe es uno de los más descuidados que se han escrito y uno de los documentos más inexactos e inútiles que he tenido la desgracia de leer nunca.

## 13. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés:

- 1** To say something repeatedly but without results: Me canso de repetírselo, no cambia nada.
- 2** To express agreement with an idea or policy insincerely and without taking action in support of it: Ralph \_\_\_\_\_ to his firm's efforts to change but failed to alter his own behavior or to encourage employees in his department to change.
- 3** Guessing, without proper preparation: Me iba sugiriendo cosas tal y como le iban viniendo a la cabeza.
- 4** To become more and more confused as one speaks: Instead of simply admitting that he didn't know the answer, he started a long, complicated explanation and quickly \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5** To speak honestly and forcefully without trying to be kind: No tiene pelos en la lengua.
- 6** To speak without effect while trying to persuade someone of something: Pierdes el tiempo intentando convencerlo.
- 7** (*facts, figures, etc.*) To need no additional details or explanation: Creo que los hechos hablan por sí mismos.
- 8** To say something that exactly describes a situation: Has dado en el clavo.
- 9** To be understood and agreed without needing to be mentioned or proved: Huelga decir que los gastos te los pagamos nosotros.
- 10** To greatly exaggerate matters, making them seem much better or worse than they really are: When you said morale was so low that half of us were actively looking for another job, you were \_\_\_\_\_, weren't you?
- 11** Not so clearly or explicitly: No lo dijo con esas palabras, pero eso es lo que quiso decir.
- 12** To be on the point of remembering something but still unable to do so: Tengo su nombre en la punta de la lengua.
- 13** To speak plainly and directly, avoiding euphemisms: Instead of talking about "restructuring", "rationalising", "downsizing", "re-engineering" and so on, why not \_\_\_\_\_ and simply admit you're going to make a lot of people jobless.
- 14** Ironically, jokingly: Hizo varios comentarios irónicos.
- 15** (*used when someone says exactly what one was going to say oneself*) To say what one was about to say: Me quitaste la palabra de la boca.
- 16** (*making a speech*) Without preparation: Habló improvisando.
- 17** To believe somebody when there is no proof that what he says is true: Tendrás que creerme.
- 18** To be a naturally fluent and persuasive speaker: Tiene un pico de oro.
- 19** To say what one thinks clearly and openly: Siempre digo lo que pienso.
- 20** An excessively general statement: ¿No estás generalizando demasiado?
- 21** (*used to indicate that one is skipping many details to go directly to the most important part of a story*) Well, \_\_\_\_\_, after screaming insults for half an hour, he said he would never do business with us again and hung up.
- 22** To learn something so that one can remember it exactly: His technique was to \_\_\_\_\_ the first sentence of every paragraph \_\_\_\_\_.
- 23** Something said by mistake: Lo siento, ha sido un lapsus desafortunado.
- 24** Speaking openly and bluntly: Hablando en plata, es tonto.
- 25** With complete honesty: Díselo sin rodeos.

## 14. Decisions

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### make up one's mind

---

My employer offered me a huge incentive package to stay, but I turned it down. My mind **was made up**.

### the pros and cons

---

Leasing seems an easy, trouble-free way to always have a brand-new vehicle. However, there are **pros and cons** to every decision, and lease contracts vary from dealer to dealer.

### take the plunge

---

People who have started their own company are unanimous on one point: they all wish they had **taken the plunge** sooner.

### be in a quandary

---

Shoe buyers **are in a quandary**. They can purchase mass-produced, brand-name shoes that aren't exactly tailored to the individual when it comes to style and fit. Or they can pay remarkably high prices for custom-made shoes.

### be in two minds about sth

---

**I was in two minds about** whether to tell you or not. I didn't want to spoil your holidays; on the other hand, I felt you ought to have a much advance warning as possible.

### toss a coin

---

If you are unable to decide between two equally attractive or two equally disagreeable courses of action, and if the issue is not critical, save time by **tossing a coin**. Heads you do one, tails you do the other.

### take sth into account

---

We use an elaborate formula that **takes into account** market conditions, capacity constraints, and how long it's likely to be before any investment pays off.

### strike a balance

---

The difficulty of **striking a balance** between stopping criminals and safeguarding privacy is not a new one.

### give sb the benefit of the doubt

---

Operate on the premise that the customer is always right. Never argue; instead, give the customer **the benefit of the doubt**. You'll have a devoted customer for life.

### decidirse

---

Mi jefe me ofreció una gran cantidad de incentivos para que me quedase pero los rechacé. Estaba decidido.

### los pros y los contras

---

El leasing parece ser una forma fácil y sin complicaciones para tener siempre un vehículo nuevo. Sin embargo, están los pros y los contras de cada decisión, y los contratos de leasing varían de un concesionario a otro.

### dar el paso decisivo

---

Las personas que han creado su propio negocio están de acuerdo en un punto: todos desearían haber dado antes el paso decisivo.

### estar en un dilema

---

Los compradores de zapatos están en un dilema. Pueden comprar zapatos de marca producidos en serie que no están exactamente hechos a la medida del individuo en cuanto a estilo o tamaño. O bien deben pagar precios desorbitantes por zapatos hechos a medida.

### estar indeciso respecto a algo

---

Estaba indeciso respecto a si decírtelo o no. No quería estropear tus vacaciones, pero, por otra parte, pensé que deberías estar avisado lo antes posible.

### echar a cara o cruz

---

Si no puedes decidir entre dos líneas de acción igual de atractivas o desagradables y si el asunto no es crucial, ahorra tiempo echándolo a cara y cruz. Cara, optas por la una, cruz, por la otra.

### tener en cuenta algo

---

Usamos una fórmula elaborada que tiene en cuenta las condiciones del mercado, la capacidad límite y el tiempo que puede transcurrir antes de que la inversión sea rentable.

### buscar un término medio

---

La dificultad de buscar un término medio entre poner coto a la criminalidad y salvaguardar la intimidad no es nada nueva.

### conceder a alguien el beneficio de la duda

---

Debes actuar con la idea de que el cliente siempre tiene razón. Jamás discutas; en lugar de ello, concede al cliente el beneficio de la duda. Tendrás un cliente seguro para toda la vida.

**tip the scales in sb's favour**

Both applicants were well qualified for the post, *but one of them spoke fluent Russian*. Since we expect to do a lot of business in eastern Europe, **that tipped the scales** in his favour.

**take the bull by the horns**

When the boss asked her what was on her mind, she **took the bull by the horns**: as she had been responsible for improved productivity and increased sales, she felt she was entitled to a higher salary.

**sit on the fence**

Continually update and add to your prospect list. Send information to prospects **sitting on the fence** that will help them jump off in your direction.

**stick to one's guns**

Everybody said no one would buy vodka that was 50% more expensive than competing brands. But Roux **stuck to his guns**. The payoff: Absolut Vodka is among the top 10 liquor brands, selling more than 3 million cases a year.

**on the spur of the moment**

Before you decide anything important, study all the available facts. A decision made **on the spur of the moment** will probably be the wrong decision.

**on the strength of sth**

We chose their company **on the strength of the work** they had done for 3M and for Hewlett-Packard, among others.

**think better of doing sth**

Initially we intended to send Ogilby to represent us in Munich but when we saw how unenthusiastic he was, we **thought better of it** and sent Laffin instead.

**have second thoughts**

Today the biggest concern faced by multinational chiefs is cost. If rents keep on climbing, a lot of people will **have second thoughts** about setting up their next operation in Hong Kong.

**keep one's options open**

We can buy, we can sell, or we can hold our position and consolidate. We are **keeping all our options open**.

**inclinarse a favor de alguien**

Ambos aspirantes estaban bien cualificados para el puesto, *pero uno de ellos hablaba ruso correctamente*. Como esperamos hacer muchos negocios con Europa del Este, eso inclinó la balanza a su favor.

**coger el toro por los cuernos**

Cuando el jefe le preguntó lo que tenía en mente, ella cogió el toro por los cuernos: como era la responsable de haber mejorado la productividad y del incremento en las ventas, creía que se merecía un aumento de sueldo.

**no querer mojarse, estar indeciso**

Ponte al día constantemente y añade nombres a tu lista de posibles clientes. Envía información a clientes *indecisos* para que decidan a tu favor.

**mantenerse en sus trece**

Todos dijeron que nadie compraría vodka que fuera 50% más caro que las otras marcas. Pero Roux se mantuvo en sus trece. El resultado: Absolut Vodka está entre las 10 primeras marcas de licor, con unas ventas de más de 3 millones de cajas al año.

**impulsivamente, sin reflexionar**

Antes de tomar una decisión importante, estudia toda la información disponible. Una decisión tomada impulsivamente puede dar lugar a una decisión equivocada.

**basándose en algo**

Escogimos su empresa basándonos en el trabajo que habían hecho para 3M y para Hewlett-Packard, entre otros.

**pensarse algo mejor**

Inicialmente pensábamos enviar a Ogilby para representarnos en Munich pero cuando vimos el poco entusiasmo que mostró, nos lo pensamos mejor y enviamos a Laffin en su lugar.

**cambiar de opinión**

La mayor preocupación a la que se enfrentan hoy las multinacionales es el coste. Si los alquileres siguen subiendo mucha gente se lo pensará dos veces antes de llevar a cabo sus próximas operaciones en Hong Kong.

**no comprometerse**

Podemos comprar, podemos vender o podemos mantener nuestra posición y consolidarnos. *No nos vamos a comprometer a nada*.

**change one's tune**

Fredricks was a strong advocate of modernising production methods, but he soon **changed his tune** when he found out how much it would cost.

**argue the toss**

Look, it's pointless to stand here **arguing the toss**. You'll just have to accept that the job has been given to someone else.

**strike a happy medium**

Although Danone's worldwide brand image tends to give more weight to health than to pleasure, it must not become an exclusively "healthy" brand: it also has to taste good. In the U.S., the company **strikes a happy medium** between health and pleasure.

**the small print**

One advantage of leasing is a clause guaranteeing that the dealer will supply a replacement vehicle should the leased car or truck break down. Check **the small print** on the lease to ensure this clause is included.

**be at a crossroads**

Like many 50-year-old executives, I found I **was at a crossroads** in my career: should I hold on to my secure, well-paid position, or should I do what I had always dreamed of doing and launch my own company?

**be up in the air**

Babel.com is really just another superstore that sells books. Maybe, eventually, we'll sell other things too, like music and movies, but that's still very much **up in the air**.

**have mixed feelings**

I **have mixed feelings** about expanding the company just now. On the one hand, we have more business than we can cope with. On the other hand, there's always the risk that our market will suddenly contract.

**cambiar de parecer**

Fredricks era un fuerte defensor de modernizar los medios de producción, pero rápidamente cambió de parecer cuando se enteró de lo que costaría.

**andar en dimes y diretes**

Mira, no tiene sentido andarse en dimes y diretes. Tendrás que aceptar que le han dado el puesto a otro.

**lograr un término medio**

Aunque la imagen global de la marca Danone tiende a dar más peso a la salud que al placer, no debe convertirse en una marca exclusivamente "sana": también tiene que saber bien. En los Estados Unidos, la empresa logra un término medio entre salud y placer.

**la letra menuda**

Una de las ventajas del leasing es una cláusula que garantiza que el concesionario suministrará un vehículo de repuesto si el coche o el camión arrendado se avería. Fíjate en la letra menuda del leasing para asegurarte de que esta cláusula esté incluida.

**encontrarse en una encrucijada**

Como muchos ejecutivos de 50 años, descubrí que mi carrera estaba en una encrucijada: ¿debería aferrarme a mi puesto seguro y bien pagado, o debería hacer lo que siempre he soñado y crear mi propia empresa?

**estar en el aire**

En realidad Babel.com es sólo otro gran almacén que vende libros. Quizás terminaremos también por vender otras cosas, como música y películas, pero eso aún está en el aire.

**tener****sentimientos contradictorios**

Tengo sentimientos contradictorios sobre la expansión de la empresa en este momento. Por una parte, tenemos más negocio del que podemos atender. Por otra, siempre existe el riesgo de que nuestro mercado se reduzca repentinamente.



## 14. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To accept that someone is probably right if he cannot be proved wrong: Te concederemos el beneficio de la duda.
- 2** To refuse to change one's opinions, especially under pressure: Se mantuvo en sus trece.
- 3** To influence the result of a decision in a particular direction, when several directions are possible: Su dominio del ruso inclinó la balanza a su favor.
- 4** To make the decision to do something risky or dangerous: No tuve valor para dar el paso decisivo.
- 5** Suddenly, without thinking: Decidimos ir a Vigo de improviso.
- 6** Because of the favourable impression made by something: Elegí esta marca basándome en tu recomendación.
- 7** To be unable to decide about something, to be doubtful or uncertain: No sabía si decírselo o no.
- 8** To think about something when making a decision: Deberías haberlo tenido en cuenta.
- 9** To decide not to do something: Estuvo a punto de solicitar el puesto, pero se lo pensó mejor.
- 10** To avoid or postpone making a decision about something: Dejamos todas las puertas abiertas.
- 11** To be in a position where it is difficult to decide whether to do something or not: Estaba en el dilema de si ir o no.
- 12** After reflexion, to change one's mind about something: He cambiado de idea, no quiero vender la empresa.
- 13** To change one's opinion and then act or talk in a different way: ¡Pues sí que has cambiado de parecer!
- 14** To decide, to come to a decision: Dile que se decida.
- 15** To argue with a decision that has already been taken and cannot be changed: No vale la pena seguir discutiendo, estoy decidido.
- 16** To take the middle course between two extremes: Logran un término medio entre la formalidad y la excesiva confianza.
- 17** To find a satisfactory arrangement which lies between two choices or courses of action: Hay que conseguir un equilibrio entre calidad y precio.
- 18** The parts of a legal document which are difficult to read because of the small type, and which often contain important exceptions, etc: Lee la letra pequeña antes de firmar el contrato.
- 19** To be at a turning point where a decision must be made: Había llegado a una encrucijada en su carrera.
- 20** The arguments for and against something: Discutían los pros y los contras de comprar un ordenador.
- 21** To be still undecided or not definite: No hay nada resuelto, todo está todavía en el aire.
- 22** To deal with something difficult boldly and without delay: Tenemos que agarrar al toro por los cuernos y tomar medidas inmediatamente.
- 23** To see both the positive and negative sides of something: Tengo sentimientos contradictorios sobre el asunto.
- 24** To decide between two possibilities by throwing a coin in the air: Decidieron echarlo a cara o cruz.
- 25** To refuse to take sides between two opposing groups, ideas, etc: Acusaron al ministro de no querer mojarse.

# 15. Priorities

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## **first things first**

Certainly we can relate salary increases to improved productivity, but **first things first**: the simple fact is that we have to increase output before we can afford to increase salaries.

## **in the first place**

The next time you buy a feature-laden gadget, bear in mind that when a complicated machine breaks down, the culprit is usually a function you never wanted **in the first place**.

## **first and foremost**

Don't choose a consultant simply because you like his personality. Check his background. Ask for references. Consider his work **first and foremost**.

## **put the cart before the horse**

Introducing the euro before establishing political union is **putting the cart before the horse**. How can you have a common currency without a common state?

## **above all**

**Above all**, remember that the interview is about finding out about the candidate, not publicising your business. So, let the candidate do the talking.

## **the be-all and end-all**

Our supervisors and managers are evaluated on how they do in four areas. Safety — formerly an afterthought, with no impact on paycheques — is now one of the four and carries the same weight as that old **be-all and end-all**, production.

## **have other fish to fry**

After work on Friday evenings, he usually goes to the pub with his colleagues for an hour or two, but last Friday he **had other fish to fry**: a leading firm of headhunters had invited him to dinner.

## **last but not least**

And last **but not least**, I would like to thank our departmental secretary, Molly, who did such a splendid job co-ordinating the many and varied aspects of the project.

## **lo primero es lo primero**

Sin duda podemos relacionar los aumentos de sueldo con el incremento de la productividad, pero lo primero es lo primero: el hecho es que necesitamos incrementar la productividad antes de que nos podamos permitir aumentar los sueldos.

## **en primer lugar, en principio**

La próxima vez que compres un aparato con gran cantidad de funciones, ten en cuenta que cuando una máquina complicada se avería, el culpable suele ser una función que en principio no deseabas.

## **ante todo**

No escojas a un consultor simplemente porque te guste su personalidad. Investiga sus antecedentes. Pide referencias. Ten en cuenta ante todo su trabajo.

## **empezar la casa por el tejado**

Introducir el euro antes de establecer la unión política es como empezar la casa por el tejado. ¿Cómo se puede tener una moneda única sin un estado único?

## **sobre todo**

Sobre todo, recuerda que la entrevista es para averiguar cosas sobre el aspirante, no para hacer publicidad de tu negocio. Así que deja que el aspirante hable.

## **lo único que importa**

Nuestros supervisores y directivos son evaluados en cuanto a su rendimiento en cuatro áreas. La seguridad —antiguamente algo secundario, que no afectaba a los sueldos— es ahora una de las cuatro y tiene el mismo peso que lo único que importaba antes, que era la fabricación.

## **tener cosas más importantes que hacer**

Después del trabajo los viernes por la tarde, suele irse al pub con sus colegas durante una hora o dos, pero el viernes pasado tenía cosas más importantes que hacer: una empresa especializada en la contratación de ejecutivos le había invitado a cenar.

## **en último lugar, pero no por eso menos importante**

Y en último lugar, pero no por eso menos importante, me gustaría dar las gracias a Molly, la secretaria de nuestro departamento, que ha hecho un trabajo espléndido coordinando los múltiples y variados aspectos del proyecto.

**better late than never**

Microsoft failed to realise the enormous potential of Internet until relatively late in the game, but **better late than never**. Once they entered the market, they worked vigorously to make up for lost time.

**put a premium on sth**

Vision, leadership, innovation, and quality remain vital in creating a successful business, even in the most turbulent environments. The bewildering pace of the Internet may even **put a premium on** these old-fashioned virtues.

**have pride of place**

Among the EU countries contributing to the economies of Bulgaria and Romania, Italy has **pride of place**.

**first thing**

**First thing** tomorrow, I want you to call Henderson at the bank and get me an appointment. Tell him it's urgent.

**first come, first served**

As we are currently updating computers throughout the company, a certain number of older PCs are being offered for sale to employees on a **first come, first served** basis.

**prevention is better than cure**

Regarding accidents in the workplace, there is one simple rule: no matter how much it costs, **prevention is always better than cure**.

**better safe than sorry!**

When I have a meeting with really important clients, I prepare for it thoroughly. Indeed perhaps I over-prepare, but I work on the principle that it's **better to be safe than sorry**.

**don't count your chickens before they're hatched**

I think we'll probably be awarded the contract, but **let's not count our chickens before they're hatched**. Let's wait until the tender board has announced its decision.

**we'll cross that bridge when we come to it**

- If we give in to the blue-collar workers' demands, we're going to have similar trouble with the office workers.  
 - **We'll cross that bridge when we come to it**. The main thing is not to disrupt production.

**más vale tarde que nunca**

Microsoft ha cometido un error al no darse cuenta del tremendo potencial de Internet hasta hace relativamente poco, pero **más vale tarde que nunca**. Una vez que han entrado en el mercado, han trabajado a tope para recuperar el tiempo perdido.

**darle mucha importancia a algo**

La visión, el liderazgo y la calidad siguen siendo vitales para crear una empresa con éxito, incluso en los ambientes más agitados. El ritmo frenético de Internet puede que incluso recompense estas anticuadas virtudes.

**ocupar el lugar de honor**

Entre los países de la UE que contribuyen a las economías de Bulgaria y Rumania, Italia ocupa el lugar de honor.

**lo primero**

Lo primero que harás mañana es llamar a Henderson al banco y conseguirme una cita. Dile que es urgente.

**por riguroso orden de llegada**

Como actualmente estamos modernizando los ordenadores de toda la empresa, cierto número de PCs viejos van a ser ofrecidos a la venta a los empleados por riguroso orden de solicitud.

**más vale prevenir que lamentar**

En cuanto a los accidentes laborales, hay una regla sencilla: no importa cuánto cuesta, **más vale prevenir que lamentar**.

**¡la prudencia ante todo!**

Cuando tengo una reunión con clientes muy importantes, me preparo con minuciosidad. Quizás incluso me preparo en exceso, pero trabajo bajo el lema de **¡la prudencia ante todo!**

**no hay que vender la piel de oso antes de cazarlo**

Creo que nos adjudicarán el contrato, pero no hay que vender la piel del oso antes de cazarlo. Esperemos hasta que la junta haya anunciado su decisión.

**nos ocuparemos del problema cuando surja**

- Si cedemos ante las demandas de los obreros, tendremos un problema similar con los trabajadores de oficina.  
 - Nos ocuparemos de ese problema cuando surja. Lo importante es no interrumpir la producción.

**throw the baby out with the bath water**

The danger with downsizing any company is that you may cancel a whole department when, in fact, some parts of that department are performing very well. In which case, you risk **throwing the baby out with the bath water**.

**have a sense of proportion**

If you have a sense of humour, you don't let stress lead to distress. You **have a sense of proportion**, you don't exaggerate the importance of trivial incidents.

**make a big thing out of sth**

Listen, Debbie, I don't want to **make a big thing out of this** but, when I'm in a meeting with clients, I think it would be better if you addressed me as "Mr Kernan" rather than as "Jimbo".

**the thin end of the wedge**

To date we've received 9 complaints from customers about the TRX-2 malfunctioning seriously. I have a terrible feeling that this is only **the thin end of the wedge**. Let's hope I'm wrong.

**make a mountain out of a molehill**

I agree that he was a bit tactless, but I'm sure he wasn't deliberately trying to insult you. There's no need to **make a mountain out of a molehill**.

**if the worst comes to the worst**

We're in the middle of a cash flow crisis at the moment. If I can convince one of our main customers to pay up, we'll survive. But if the **worst comes to the worst**, I'll have to go to the bank and ask for another loan.

**the lesser of two evils**

I don't like making these men redundant any more than you do, but I consider it **the lesser of two evils**. If we don't do it, there's a real possibility we'll go bankrupt.

**there's only one thing for it**

Over the past few years, our raw materials have become steadily more expensive. Now, I'm afraid, **there's only one thing for it**: we're going to have to increase our prices by at least 10%.

**tirar las frutas frescas con las podridas**

El peligro de disminuir el tamaño de la empresa es que quizás haya que suprimir un departamento entero cuando, de hecho, algunas partes de ese departamento están funcionando muy bien. En tal caso, se arriesga uno a tirar las frutas frescas con las podridas.

**tener el sentido de la medida**

Si tienes sentido del humor, no dejes que el estrés te lleve a la ansiedad. Tienes el sentido de la medida, no exageres la importancia de incidentes triviales.

**armar un escándalo por algo**

Escucha, Debbie, no quiero armar un escándalo por esto, pero cuando estoy reunido con clientes, creo que sería mejor que me llamaras "Mr. Kernan" en lugar de "Jimbo".

**sólo el principio**

Hasta la fecha hemos recibido 9 quejas de clientes sobre el mal funcionamiento del TRX-2. Tengo la terrible sensación de que esto es sólo el principio. Esperemos que me equivoque.

**hacer una montaña de un grano de arena**

Estoy de acuerdo en que tuvo muy poco tacto, pero estoy seguro de que no intentaba insultarte a propósito. No hay que hacer una montaña de un grano de arena.

**si pasa lo peor**

Estamos en este momento en medio de una crisis de liquidez. Si puedo convencer a uno de nuestros principales clientes de que pague, sobreviviremos. Pero si ocurre lo peor, tendré que ir al banco y pedir otro préstamo.

**el menor de dos males**

Al igual que a ti, no me gusta tener que enviar a estos hombres al paro, pero lo considero el menor de dos males. Si no lo hacemos, existe la posibilidad real de que tengamos que declararnos en quiebra.

**no hay más remedio que ...**

Durante los últimos años, nuestra materia prima se ha encarecido. Ahora, me temo que no hay más remedio que incrementar nuestros precios de al menos un 10%.

## 15. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To have something more important to do: No puedo ir, tengo cosas más importantes que hacer.
- 2** (*saying*) It is better that something should happen late than not happen at all: Más vale tarde que nunca.
- 3** We'll not worry about that problem now, but deal with it when it arises: Nos ocuparemos del problema cuando surja.
- 4** To say or do things in the wrong order, e.g. by putting the last thing first: No empieces la casa por el tejado.
- 5** To lose the most important part of something while trying to get rid of the bad part of it: Estás tirando las frutas frescas con las podridas.
- 6** (*saying*) Action taken to prevent a problem is preferable to action that must be taken to correct its consequences later: Más vale prevenir que curar.
- 7** Something more important must be done first, discussed first, etc: Primero lo más importante, ¿qué tal te va con la traducción?
- 8** To see things in their correct relation to each other: Tienes que guardar el sentido de la medida.
- 9** (*used to introduce the last person or thing in a list*) At the end, but not less important than those that have preceded: Y en último lugar, pero no por ello menos importante, mi hijita.
- 10** To give great importance to something: Su campaña hizo mucho hincapié en la bajada de los impuestos.
- 11** To make a fuss about something: ¿Por qué tiene que armar tanto escándalo?
- 12** A small event which is thought to be the first stage of something much more important: Esta decisión no es más que el principio de lo que está por venir.
- 13** Before everything else: Coventry era ante todo una ciudad industrial.
- 14** (*saying*) It is better to be careful than to risk danger or loss: ¡La prudencia ante todo!
- 15** Early in the morning, as soon as one starts working: Lo haré a primera hora de la mañana.
- 16** Whoever comes first has priority : Lo hicieron por riguroso orden de llegada.
- 17** To become upset or excited about something trivial: Siempre hace una montaña de un grano de arena.
- 18** Most important of all, especially: Our new policy is to target the youth market, \_\_\_\_\_ children between the ages of 11 and 15.
- 19** If the most unfavourable thing that can happen actually does happen: En el peor de los casos, podríamos ponernos en contacto con él en su casa.
- 20** To start with: En primer lugar, tú no deberías haber estado allí.
- 21** Of two possibilities, the one which does least damage or harm: Me parecía ser el mal menor.
- 22** To be in first place or have a leading position: El último galardón ocupa el lugar de honor de su colección.
- 23** Only one course of action is possible: No hay más remedio que ir a pie.
- 24** An aim or purpose so important that it excludes all others: Hay otras cosas en la vida que tener posesiones.
- 25** (*saying*) Don't count on success until it has actually happened: It's still too early to open the champagne because they haven't actually signed the contract yet. And we don't want to \_\_\_\_\_, do we?

## 16. Planning

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### be in the pipeline

Windows' market dominance is already assured for the next year or two by existing products as well as new **ones in the pipeline**, such as Windows 2000 for business users.

### look forward to doing sth

It's been a pleasure talking to you, Mr Beretta. I **look forward to seeing you** again when you get back from Miami.

### do one's homework

Lots of places say that they'll refund the difference between their price and someone else's, but only if you, the customer, will **do the homework**: pore over everybody's ads, compare the prices, go to the store, deal with a surly salesclerk.... Right.

### be on the cards

At a press conference, Schrempp gave an undertaking to his employees that big job cuts **aren't on the cards**.

### hedge one's bets

By choosing this kind of course, students can put off committing to a specific industry. They can **hedge their bets** while gaining contacts and experience.

### build castles in the air

Most of his great moneymaking schemes are just **castles in the air**. You have to give him credit for imagination, though.

### go through sth with a fine-tooth comb

The next step is to **go through the Training Needs Analysis with a fine-tooth comb**, to see which courses are really necessary. On that basis, we can start preparing the Training Plan itself.

### count the cost of sth

The offer of the job in Brazil came so unexpectedly that I had no time **to count the cost**. It was only after I'd been there for a month that I realised what a mistake I'd made.

### estar proyectado

El dominio del mercado por parte de Windows ya está asegurado durante el próximo año o los 2 años siguientes gracias a los productos ya en existencia y a los nuevos que están proyectados, como Windows 2000 para los usuarios de empresas.

### esperar (con ilusión)

Ha sido un placer hablar con usted, Mr. Beretta. Espero tener el agrado de volverle a ver cuando regrese de Miami.

### prepararse, documentarse

En muchos sitios te dicen que te devolverán la diferencia entre su precio y el de la competencia, pero sólo si el cliente se documenta: examinar los anuncios de todos, comparar precios, ir a la tienda, tratar con un dependiente malhumorado... Sí, seguro que te devuelven el dinero...

### estar previsto

Durante la rueda de prensa, Schrempp dio a entender a sus empleados que un recorte en el número de los puestos de trabajo no estaba previsto.

### cubrir las apuestas

Al escoger este tipo de curso, los estudiantes pueden aplazar su compromiso con una industria específica. Pueden cubrir sus apuestas mientras consiguen contactos y experiencia.

### construir castillos en el aire

La mayoría de sus grandes proyectos para ganar dinero sólo son castillos en el aire. Aunque tienes que reconocer su imaginación.

### mirar algo con lupa

El siguiente paso es revisar con lupa el análisis de necesidades de formación, para ver cuáles son los cursos que son realmente necesarios. En base a ello, podemos empezar a preparar el plan de formación en sí.

### considerar todos los posibles riesgos de algo

La oferta del puesto en Brasil llegó tan inesperadamente que no tuve tiempo de considerar todos los posibles riesgos. Sólo fue tras haber estado allí un mes que me di cuenta del error que había cometido.

### **save sth for a rainy day**

Obtaining quick access to your funds is especially important with money-market funds since they're most often used as liquid assets or **put aside for a rainy day**. All money-fund accounts should be set up with telephone redemption privileges.

### **In any event**

If you can't deal with the insecurity of being unemployed, you probably can't deal with the insecurity of starting a business. **In any event**, you should look hard at the financial risks involved.

### **put out feelers**

Adgers isn't very popular with his colleagues, you know. So before you go organising his farewell party, maybe you should **put out feelers** to see how many people will want to come.

### **cannot see beyond the end of one's nose**

Most twenty-year-olds have no idea where their careers will be ten years from now. They live for immediate gratification. **They can't see beyond** the end of their noses.

### **the nuts and bolts**

What will each of you be doing in the partnership? *Who will handle bookkeeping? Who's in charge of customer service? Will one of you do long-term planning while the other takes care of the nuts and bolts?*

### **as a last resort**

"**As a last resort**, the government could consider devaluation," said a senior official, "but only as a last resort."

### **to be on the safe side**

You must make at least two backup copies of essential files, and preferably three. **And to be on the safe side**, store them in different locations.

### **set the stage for sth**

The monthly employment report, which was much better than expected, **set the stage for a rally** in bonds and stocks.

### **guardar algo para los tiempos difíciles**

El conseguir un acceso rápido a tus fondos es especialmente importante con los fondos del mercado monetario ya que suelen ser utilizados como activo líquido o guardados para los tiempos difíciles. Todas las cuentas de fondos monetarios deberían abrirse con la condición de poder ser liquidadas por teléfono.

### **en cualquier caso**

Si no puedes aguantar la inseguridad de estar sin empleo, no podrás tampoco aguantar la inseguridad de poner en marcha un negocio. En cualquier caso, deberías considerar atentamente los riesgos financieros que implica.

### **tantear el terreno**

Adgers no es muy popular entre sus compañeros, sabes. Así que, antes de que te pongas a organizar su fiesta de despedida, quizás deberías **tantear el terreno** para ver cuánta gente podría acudir.

### **no ver más allá de sus narices**

La mayoría de los jóvenes de 20 años no tienen ni idea de dónde estarán dentro de diez años. Viven al día. No pueden ver más allá de sus narices.

### **lo básico**

¿Qué es lo que haréis cada uno de vosotros en la sociedad? ¿Quién llevará la contabilidad? ¿Quién se encargará de la atención al cliente? ¿Hará uno de vosotros la planificación a largo plazo mientras el otro se hace cargo del día a día?

### **como último recurso**

"Como último recurso, el gobierno podría considerar una devaluación," dijo un alto funcionario, "pero sólo como último recurso."

### **para mayor seguridad,**

Tienes que hacer al menos dos copias de seguridad de los ficheros esenciales, y a ser posible tres. Y para mayor seguridad, guárdalos en distintos lugares.

### **crear el marco para algo.**

El informe mensual de empleo, que era mucho mejor de lo esperado, creó el marco para una recuperación de los bonos y de las acciones.

**step by step**

Analysis should always support action. It should lead you **step by step** to a decision and to action.

**take sth for granted**

The 1990s will go down in history as the decade in which the Internet started **to be taken for granted**.

**have sth in view**

- Do you **have anything in view** for next week?  
- Yes, I have to start preparing the departmental budget.

**take the long view of sth**

Few people in investing **take the long view**. Much of Wall Street concentrates on short-term, quarterly performance. We don't.

**go a long way towards doing sth**

If these machines are as successful as our market research says they will be, they should **go a long way towards** establishing us as the leading manufacturer in our field.

**you can't have it both ways**

You want to cut the R&D budget, but at the same time you're asking us to find more innovative solutions. **You can't have it both ways**, you know.

**it's a whole new ball game**

If we can get the DX-01 into the shops quickly, we can expect sales of £ 100,000 by the end of the year. But if the competition gets their model on to the market first, **it's a whole new ball game**.

**not hold water**

I've rarely seen such an implausible sales plan. It's full of inconsistencies and unlikely assumptions. I'm sorry, but it just **doesn't hold water**.

**take shape**

We decided not to focus on revenues but on purpose, mission, and values. We had a business plan, of course, but things really began **to take shape** when we agreed that this company would exist to build great things.

**paso a paso**

Los análisis deberían apoyar siempre la acción. Deberían llevarte paso a paso a tomar una decisión y a emprender una acción.

**dar algo por sentado**

Los años 90 pasarán a la historia como la década en la cual Internet comenzó a darse por sentado.

**tener pensado algo**

- ¿Tienes algo pensado para la semana que viene?  
- Sí, tengo que empezar a preparar el presupuesto del departamento.

**planear algo a largo plazo**

Pocas personas dedicadas a la inversión hacen planes a largo plazo. La mayoría de la bolsa de Wall Street se concentra en el rendimiento trimestral, a corto plazo. Nosotros no.

**contribuir en gran medida a algo**

Si estas máquinas tienen tanto éxito como nos lo indica nuestro estudio de mercado, deberían contribuir en gran medida a asentarnos como el principal fabricante de nuestro sector.

**tienes que optar por lo uno o lo otro**

Queréis recortar el presupuesto de I+D, pero a la vez nos estáis pidiendo que encontremos soluciones más innovadoras. Tenéis que optar por lo uno o por lo otro.

**ha cambiado totalmente el panorama**

Si conseguimos introducir el DX-01 en las tiendas rápidamente, podemos esperar ventas de 100.000 libras para final de año. Pero si la competencia saca antes su modelo al mercado, cambiaría totalmente el panorama.

**no tenerse en pie, no ser lógico**

Rara vez he visto un plan de ventas tan poco plausible. Está lleno de contradicciones y de suposiciones poco probables. Lo siento, pero no es lógico.

**tomar forma**

Hemos decidido no centrarnos en los ingresos, sino en los objetivos, en las tareas y en los valores. Teníamos un plan de empresa, claro, pero las cosas empezaron a tomar forma cuando nos pusimos de acuerdo en que esta empresa estaba destinada a llevar a cabo grandes cosas.



## 16. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** The basic practical details of a plan, system, etc: El folleto explica los elementos básicos de contabilidad.
- 2** To keep something in reserve, especially money, for a time of misfortune: Están ahorrando por si llega la época de las vacas flacas.
- 3** To be possible, to be likely to happen: Se veía venir que iba a pasar algo así.
- 4** Having no other hope of help or success: Como último recurso pusimos un anuncio en el periódico.
- 5** Gradually, bit by bit: Compró un libro para aprender inglés paso a paso.
- 6** In preparation, being developed: We have several important new products \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To assume that something is true without checking: Da por sentado que le apoyarán
- 8** To consider the risks of something before doing it: Hay que considerar todos los posibles riesgos antes de lanzar este producto en este momento.
- 9** To have a plan for the future or to intend to do something: Veamos qué tenemos en perspectiva para la semana que viene.
- 10** Dreams and desires that can never become reality: Siempre está construyendo castillos en el aire.
- 11** To think of possible results in the distant future when considering something: El jefe adopta una perspectiva más amplia.
- 12** To examine something meticulously: Convinced that there had been fraud, the tax inspectors \_\_\_\_\_ the books \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** To be a great help in doing something: Esto contribuirá en gran medida a resolver el problema.
- 14** To try to protect oneself against loss by investing in several ventures simultaneously: Va a ir a las dos entrevistas para cubrirse las espaldas.
- 15** To wait eagerly for some future action or experience: We \_\_\_\_\_ to seeing you in person when you next visit London.
- 16** You can't have the advantages of two opposing things at the same time: Tienes que optar por lo uno o por lo otro.
- 17** To be unable to withstand critical investigation: Esa teoría hace agua por todos lados.
- 18** To find out what other people think of something by making discreet enquiries: Dice que va a tantear el terreno para ver lo que puede hacer.
- 19** It's a completely different situation: Esto es otra historia distinta.
- 20** (an idea, a plan, etc.) To materialize, to become real: Mi informe está comenzando a cobrar forma.
- 21** Whatever happens, whatever happened: En cualquier caso házmelo saber.
- 22** In order to be completely sure of doing something: Mejor salgamos a las dos por si acaso.
- 23** To make conditions right for a more important development: I believe this agreement \_\_\_\_\_ for even closer ties between our two companies.
- 24** To learn the details of a subject before talking to someone about it: Se notaba que no se había documentado bien.
- 25** To be too unintelligent to foresee the consequences of one's actions: A salesman who lies to a customer to make a sale is one who \_\_\_\_\_, because at best he will never sell to that customer again.

# 17. Problems

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## be one of those days

I arrived early this morning for my first interview with a new client, only to discover that my appointment was yesterday. On the way back, my car broke down, so I took a taxi. And left my briefcase in it. All things considered, **it's been one of those days**.

## be out of order

You'll have to use the photocopier on the second floor, this **one's out of order**.

## go on the blink

Your fax machine seems to have **gone on the blink** again. I've been trying to send you my monthly report all morning.

## be up the creek

We were awarded the contract because we said we could do the work quickly. Please note that there are penalty clauses. If we are delayed for any reason at all, we'll **be up the creek**.

## be heavy going

The laptop itself is very nice, but frankly the instruction manual is very **heavy going**. I only understand one word in five.

## go haywire

Suddenly the printer **went haywire**. I only wanted three copies but it started turning out hundreds of them, and I didn't know how to stop it.

## the tip of the iceberg

Many companies have created web sites to promote their products but promotion is only the **tip of the iceberg**. The web is about customer service, selling products directly, establishing a dialogue with consumers, and expanding the geographic base of a business.

## have sth on one's mind

- Jim, could I have a word with you in private?  
- Of course, **what's on your mind?**

## be a tough nut to crack

Technically it was a very **tough nut to crack**, but with hard work and persistence we managed in the end.

## not be out of the woods

Although IBM has clearly been turned around, the company is **not completely out of the**

## ser un día de aquéllos, un día para olvidar

Llegué temprano esta mañana para mi primera entrevista con un cliente nuevo, hasta que me di cuenta de que mi cita era ayer. De regreso, mi coche se averió y tuve que coger un taxi. Para colmo, me dejé el maletín dentro. Teniendo todo esto en cuenta, fué un día para olvidar.

## no funcionar

Tendrás que usar la fotocopidora del segundo piso, ésta no funciona.

## descomponerse, estropearse

Tu fax parece haberse estropeado otra vez. He estado intentando enviarte mi informe mensual toda la mañana.

## estar en un apuro

Nos adjudicaron el contrato porque dijimos que podríamos hacer el trabajo rápidamente. Toma nota de que hay cláusulas penales. Si nos retrasamos por cualquier motivo, estaremos en un apuro.

## ser pesado

El ordenador portátil en sí está muy bien pero francamente el manual de instrucciones es muy pesado. Sólo entiendo una de cada cinco palabras.

## estropearse

De repente, la impresora se estropeó. Sólo quería tres copias pero empezó a imprimir cientos, y no sabía como pararla.

## la punta del iceberg

Muchas empresas han creado páginas web para promocionar sus productos pero la promoción es sólo la punta del iceberg. La web es para la atención al cliente, la venta directa de productos, la expansión del territorio de una empresa y para establecer un diálogo con los consumidores.

## estar preocupado por algo

- Jim, ¿podría hablar contigo en privado?  
- Claro, ¿qué te preocupa?

## ser un hueso duro de roer

Técnicamente, va a ser un hueso duro de roer, pero trabajando duro y machacando al final nos las apañaremos.

## no estar fuera de peligro

Aunque IBM ha dado ya un giro de 180 grados, la empresa aún no está completamente

**woods.** Sales of mainframes depend upon the business cycle in the economically developed world, and economic growth is slowing.

### **come up against a brick wall**

In Brazil, the government's economic recovery plan has **come up against a brick wall** with its parliament rejecting key measures in the austerity budget.

### **go through a bad patch**

Apart from the giants like Schlumberger, there are many small companies that provide specialised services to the oil industry. However, with oil projects drying up, these smaller firms have been going **through a bad patch**.

### **go from bad to worse**

The Stock Exchange lost 10% of its value in the first three months of the year. Then, in April, the situation suddenly went from **bad to worse** with the loss of a further 7%.

### **be hard hit**

Burberry has **been hard hit** by the Asian recession. With 75% of sales in the Far East, profits at Burberry tumbled to £2m from £19.9m last year.

### **be hard pressed to do sth**

All companies involved in mergers should be anticipating where clashes may arise and training employees. But they're not. We'd **be hard pressed** to name more than a handful of companies that are tackling these issues.

### **make ends meet**

In many Chinese cities, the government is now encouraging the swelling ranks of the unemployed **to make ends meet** by running street stalls, free of taxes.

### **it can't be helped**

The Japanese have a phrase by which they learned long ago to live with their disappointments: "Shiyo ga nai," they say, **it can't be helped**. It expresses one of their most basic emotions: desire without hope.

### **be the last straw**

It was bad enough that he was unpunctual, insolent and no good at his job, but when he started returning from lunch half drunk, **that**

fuera de peligro. La venta de ordenadores depende del ciclo empresarial en el mundo desarrollado y el crecimiento económico se está ralentizando.

### **tener por delante una barrera infranqueable**

En Brasil, el plan gubernamental de recuperación económica tiene por delante una barrera infranqueable al rechazar su parlamento medidas clave del presupuesto de austeridad.

### **pasar por una mala racha**

Aparte de gigantes como Schlumberger, hay muchas empresas pequeñas que ofrecen servicios especializados a la industria del petróleo. Sin embargo, con la escasez de proyectos petrolíferos, estas pequeñas empresas han estado pasando una mala racha.

### **ir de mal en peor**

La bolsa perdió el 10% de su valor en los tres primeros meses del año. Luego, en abril, la situación fue de mal en peor con una pérdida adicional del 7%.

### **verse muy afectado**

Burberry se ha visto muy afectado por la recesión asiática. Con el 75% de sus ventas en Asia, los beneficios de Burberry cayeron el año pasado de 19,9 millones de libras a 2 millones de libras.

### **resultar difícil a uno hacer algo**

Todas las empresas involucradas en fusiones deberían prever dónde surgirán conflictos y preparar a sus empleados para ello. Pero no lo hacen. Resultaría difícil encontrar más de un puñado de empresas que estén preparándose para esta eventualidad.

### **(poder) llegar a fin de mes**

En muchas ciudades chinas, el gobierno está animando a la creciente masa de parados a montar puestos callejeros, libres de impuestos, para poder llegar a fin de mes.

### **no hay más remedio, qué le vamos a hacer**

Los japoneses tienen una expresión gracias a la cual aprendieron a vivir hace mucho con sus desilusiones: "Shiyo ga nai," dicen, ¡qué le vamos a hacer! Expresa una de sus emociones más básicas: el deseo sin esperanza.

### **ser la gota que colma el vaso**

Bastante malo era que no fuese puntual ni eficiente en su trabajo, además de insolente, pero cuando comenzó a llegar a la oficina medio

**was the last straw:** he had to go!

### **a vicious circle**

Service providers in particular often get caught up in their work and neglect to market. It's a **vicious circle**: because they don't market systematically, they get erratic results, so they don't market systematically.

### **be behind schedule**

Be sure you accurately estimate how much time a task will take. If meetings which are supposed to last an hour end up taking the whole afternoon, you'll constantly feel frustrated and **behind schedule**.

### **jump out of the frying pan into the fire**

He left his last job because the pressure of work was too much for him, but it seems his new job's even more hectic. It's a case of jumping out of the **frying pan into the fire**.

### **be up in arms about sth**

Poland's conservative parliament has passed a law banning all television and radio adverts aimed specifically at under-eighteens and the country's advertisers **are up in arms**, accusing the parliament of limiting consumer choice.

### **one's Achilles' heel**

The economy was booming but there **was an Achilles' Heel**. If the stock market ever fell — or even stopped rising — the boom would end. Japan's companies would be forced to repay all their loans in real money, not paper shares. They would be burdened with a mountain of debt.

### **by the skin of one's teeth**

We worked feverishly to get our tender prepared and I delivered it to their head office personally. We made it **by the skin of our teeth**, just half an hour before the deadline for submissions.

### **take the easy way out**

I was accused of taking **the easy way out** by declaring bankruptcy. But let's be clear about this point: there isn't anything remotely easy about bankruptcy.

borracho después de comer, fue la gota de agua que colmó el vaso: ¡había que despedirlo!

### **círculo vicioso**

Los proveedores de servicios se suelen ver tan involucrados en su trabajo que se olvidan del mercado. Es un círculo vicioso: como no realizan una comercialización sistemática, obtienen resultados irregulares, por lo que no realizan una comercialización sistemática.

### **llevar retraso, ir atrasado**

Asegúrate de calcular con precisión el tiempo que tardarás en llevar a cabo una tarea. Si las reuniones que deberían durar una hora terminan durando toda la tarde, te sentirás constantemente frustrado y con la sensación de ir retrasado.

### **salir del fuego y meterse en las brasas**

Dejó su último empleo porque tenía demasiada presión, pero ahora parece que su nuevo puesto es incluso más ajetreado. Es un caso de salirse del fuego y meterse en las brasas.

### **poner el grito en el cielo a causa de algo**

El parlamento conservador de Polonia ha aprobado una ley que prohíbe todos los anuncios de radio y televisión específicamente creados para los menores de 18 años. Los anunciantes del país han puesto el grito en el cielo, acusando al parlamento de limitar las opciones del consumidor.

### **el talón de Aquiles**

La economía estaba en auge pero había un talón de Aquiles. Si la bolsa bajaba, o incluso dejaba de subir, el auge finalizaría. Las empresas japonesas estarían obligadas a reembolsar sus préstamos en efectivo, no con acciones. Estarían agobiados con una inmensa deuda.

### **por los pelos, por un pelo**

Trabajamos febrilmente para preparar nuestra oferta y la entregué personalmente en su oficina principal. Llegamos por los pelos, sólo media hora antes de la hora límite para la entrega de las ofertas.

### **optar por la solución más fácil**

Fui acusado de optar por la solución más fácil al declararme en quiebra. Pero aclaremos este punto: no hay nada tan difícil como declararse en quiebra.

## 17. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** In trouble, in a difficult situation: If he doesn't pay us before the end of the month, we'll really be \_\_\_\_.
- 2** To have great difficulty doing something: Nos va a costar mucho reemplazarlo.
- 3** To be not yet out of difficulties, trouble or danger: Todavía no estamos a salvo.
- 4** It's unfortunate but nobody can change it: No tiene arreglo, tendremos que comprar uno nuevo.
- 5** (of a machine) Not working: El teléfono no funciona.
- 6** To be the ultimate provocation or one additional problem which makes the situation intolerable: Que dijera que el precio había subido fue la gota que colmó el vaso.
- 7** To manage to survive with what one earns: No podía llegar a fin de mes.
- 8** To go out of control, to malfunction seriously: De repente el ordenador se volvió loco.
- 9** A situation in which the effects of a problem lead back to and increase the causes of the problem: Era un círculo vicioso.
- 10** To meet an insuperable obstacle: They intended to sell their technology to the Chinese but they \_\_\_\_ when the government refused to grant them permission.
- 11** To deteriorate still further: Su situación económica fue de mal en peor.
- 12** To be a day when everything goes wrong: Ha sido un día para olvidar.
- 13** To do something later than the time planned or agreed: Nos estamos atrasando con respecto al programa.
- 14** To have a period of difficulty and unhappiness: El equipo pasa por una mala racha.
- 15** To escape from a bad situation into one that is even worse: Salió de Guatemala para meterse en Guatepeor.
- 16** (of a machine) Not operating correctly: La fotocopidora está averiada.
- 17** A fatal weakness in a person, organization, system, etc: What we must do is find our competitors' \_\_\_\_, and attack them there.
- 18** Only just, by a very narrow margin, with little time to spare: No perdió el avión por los pelos.
- 19** (book, report, etc.) To be dense and difficult to assimilate: Su presentación de las cifras de ventas fue pesada.
- 20** (used disapprovingly) To choose the easiest solution to a problem because of laziness, cowardice, etc: He didn't have the guts to tell me to my face, so he \_\_\_\_ and left a note on my desk.
- 21** To have something worrying in one's thoughts: No puedo relajarme con todos estos problemas dándome vueltas en la cabeza.
- 22** To protest angrily about something: Estaban furiosos por el retraso.
- 23** To be severely affected by something bad: La empresa sufrió mucho debido a la recesión.
- 24** A small part of a much larger question: Estos casos representan tan sólo una pequeña parte del problema.
- 25** A difficult problem: All our best people have worked on this problem but we haven't found a solution yet. It's an extremely \_\_\_\_.

## 18. Emergencias

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### come to a head

The conflict at Micron **came to a head** in September 1994, a week before the company was set to release yearly results.

### come to the boil

A bitter row between the miners' union and the government over their latest pay offer **came to the boil** yesterday.

### have one's back to the wall

He explained to the demoralised Chrysler workforce that now they had **their backs to the wall**. If the company was to survive, drastic measures were necessary; among others, widespread layoffs and pay cuts at all levels.

### tighten one's belt

Belgium's finance minister is not loved at home. For years Belgians have been forced to **tighten their belts** to get public finances into shape.

### get out of hand

The notion that people need to communicate more is widely accepted, but Farson argues that it has **got out of hand** — meetings, conferences, memos, E-mail and phone calls overwhelm us with too much information.

### keep one's head

Krongard has several high-energy hobbies, such as parachuting out of airplanes: "These activities give me stamina and endurance, and help me **keep my head** when things start going badly wrong".

### see the light at the end of the tunnel

After a meeting of foreign ministers, Mr Fischer said there was finally "**light at the end of the tunnel**" in negotiations on farm prices and regional aid.

### feel the pinch

Consumer confidence is at a low ebb. Even Marks and Spencer has been **feeling the pinch**. The UK's largest retailer announced a 23% first half profits slump.

### when the chips are down

The great strength of American industry has always been its resilience. Americans feel that

### alcanzar un punto álgido

El conflicto de Micron llegó a su punto álgido en septiembre de 1994, una semana antes de que la empresa publicara sus resultados anuales.

### estallar

Una disputa estalló ayer entre el sindicato de los mineros y el gobierno sobre su última oferta de salarios.

### estar entre la espada y la pared

Explicó a los empleados desmoralizados de Chrysler que estaban entre la espada y la pared. Si la empresa quería sobrevivir, sería necesario aplicar medidas drásticas, entre otras, despidos generalizados y recortes salariales a todos los niveles.

### apretarse el cinturón

El ministro belga de economía no es apreciado en su país. Durante años los belgas se han visto obligados a apretarse el cinturón para poner al día sus finanzas públicas.

### descontrolarse, desmadrarse

La idea de que la gente necesita comunicarse más es un concepto ampliamente aceptado, pero Farson insiste en que se ha descontrolado - reuniones, conferencias, notas, correo electrónico y llamadas telefónicas nos abruma con demasiada información.

### no perder la cabeza

Krongard tiene varias aficiones en las que gasta mucha energía, como por ejemplo lanzarse en paracaídas desde aviones: "Estas actividades me proporcionan aguante y resistencia, y me ayudan a no perder la cabeza cuando las cosas empiezan a ir mal".

### ver la luz al final del túnel

Tras una reunión con los ministros de asuntos exteriores, Mr Fischer dijo que finalmente veía "una luz al final del túnel" en las negociaciones sobre los precios de la agricultura y las ayudas regionales.

### pasar apuros, pasar estrecheces

La confianza de los consumidores está en un momento bajo. Incluso Marks and Spencer ha estado pasando apuros. El principal minorista del Reino Unido ha anunciado una caída del 23% en sus beneficios.

### en horas bajas

La gran fuerza de la industria americana ha sido siempre su poder de recuperación. Los

when **the chips are really down**, there's nothing they can't do.

### **fiddle while Rome burns**

The Bank of Japan continued to **fiddle while the economy burned** yesterday. Although data showed the Japanese economy shrank by 0.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1998 — the fifth successive quarter of falling growth — the BoJ left monetary policy unchanged.

### **weather the storm**

Management has made it clear that the firm cannot hope to **weather this storm** unless at least 50 employees are laid off.

### **the calm before the storm**

Inflation in Russia now seems to be under control. Many economists believe, however, that this is only **the calm before the storm** and that new inflationary pressures are unavoidable.

### **all hell breaks loose**

Some managers do just fine as long as the growth curve's heading up, but when **all hell breaks loose**, you see their personality change. They panic and lose control.

### **be taken short**

I was **taken short right** in the middle of my sales presentation, it was terribly embarrassing.

### **be on one's last legs**

King Hussein of Jordan was rare among Arab leaders in admitting his health problem. In fact, a whole generation of ageing and ailing Arab leaders **is on its last legs**.

### **at short notice**

Patterson used to walk into his departments and order the managers to take two-week vacations. His motive: to see whether a team member had been adequately trained to take over the supervisor's job **at such short notice**.

### **thick and fast**

It started this morning at 9 o'clock when the main computer crashed. Since then, problems have been flooding **in thick and fast**.

americanos creen que en horas bajas, no hay nada que no puedan hacer.

### **tocar la flauta (mientras algo grave sucede)**

Ayer, el Banco de Japón siguió tocando la flauta mientras la economía ardía. Aunque los datos demostraron que la economía japonesa se había reducido un 0,8% en el último trimestre de 1998 - el quinto trimestre sucesivo de retroceso- el Banco de Japón no alteró su política monetaria.

### **capear el temporal**

Los directivos dejaron claro que la empresa no puede esperar capear el temporal sin despedir al menos a 50 empleados.

### **la calma antes de la tormenta**

La inflación en Rusia parece estar ahora bajo control. Sin embargo, muchos economistas creen que esto es sólo la calma antes de la tormenta y que no se podrán evitar nuevas presiones inflacionistas.

### **se arma la gorda**

Algunos gerentes van muy bien mientras la curva de crecimiento va hacia arriba, pero cuando se arma la gorda, se ve cómo cambian sus personalidades. Cunde el pánico y pierden el control.

### **entrarle ganas a alguien de ir al lavabo**

Me entraron ganas de ir al lavabo justo en medio de mi presentación comercial, fue horriblemente embarazoso.

### **estar en las últimas**

El rey Hussein de Jordania fue el único líder árabe en admitir sus problemas de salud. De hecho, una generación entera de líderes árabes ancianos y enfermos está en las últimas.

### **con poca antelación**

Patterson solía entrar en sus departamentos y ordenar a sus directivos que se fueran de vacaciones durante dos semanas. Su motivo: comprobar si un miembro del equipo había sido adecuadamente formado para cubrir el puesto del supervisor con tan poca antelación.

### **uno detrás de otro, en cantidad**

Todo empezó esta mañana a las 9, cuando el ordenador central se averió. Desde entonces, los problemas nos han estado inundando uno detrás de otro.

**be up to one's ears in sth**

Believe me, I'd really like to help you. But we're short-staffed at the moment and **up to our ears in work**.

**pull the rug out from under sb's feet**

The major problem with using celebrities to advertise your product is that they are people, and people are unpredictable. Any scandal, for example, immediately **pulls the rug out from under your feet**.

**be in dire straits**

Reed calculated that if the recession deepened to a negative 3% growth, Citibank would be **in dire straits**. If that happened, he would be forced to consider selling his crown jewels — the credit-card business.

**be at one's wits' end**

The airport's closed because of fog, the roads are blocked because of the truck-drivers' strike, there are only two trains a week — **I'm at my wits' end** trying to find a way to get to Bonn in time for the conference.

**on the brink of sth**

Rumours were rampant: reengineering was merely a euphemism for massive layoffs; the company **was on the brink of bankruptcy**; workloads would be dramatically increased.

**hang by a thread**

Clothes manufacturers love female consumers for their willingness to update their wardrobes so regularly, but the market is so competitive that profit margins **hang by a thread**.

**have one's hands full**

Following the passage of Hurricane Andrew in August 1992, the nation's insurance companies **had their hands full**. It proved to be the costliest disaster in American history.

**when it comes to the crunch**

Sooner or later every ambitious man has to choose between his family and his career. And when **it comes to the crunch**, most choose their career.

**estar hasta el cuello de algo**

Créeme, me gustaría realmente ayudarte. Pero nos falta personal en este momento y estamos hasta el cuello de trabajo.

**fastidiarle los planes a alguien**

Cuando se recurre a personas famosas para promocionar un producto el problema principal es que son personas, y las personas son imprevisibles. Cualquier escándalo, por ejemplo, podría dar al traste con los planes.

**estar en una situación desesperada**

Reed calculó que si la recesión empeoraba hasta alcanzar un 3% de crecimiento negativo, Citibank estaría en una situación desesperada. Si eso ocurriese, se vería obligado a considerar la posibilidad de vender su empresa estrella: el negocio de las tarjetas de crédito.

**no saber qué hacer**

El aeropuerto está cerrado por la niebla, las carreteras están bloqueadas por la huelga de transportistas, sólo hay dos trenes por semana: **no sé qué hacer para llegar a Bonn a tiempo para la conferencia**.

**al borde de algo**

Los rumores se habían disparado: la reestructuración era sólo un eufemismo para los despidos masivos; la empresa estaba al borde de la quiebra; la carga de trabajo se vería radicalmente incrementada.

**pende de un hilo**

A los fabricantes de ropa les encantan las consumidoras por su predisposición a renovar su vestuario con regularidad, pero el mercado es tan competitivo que los beneficios penden de un hilo.

**estar desbordado de trabajo**

Tras el paso del huracán Andrés en agosto de 1992, las compañías de seguros del país se vieron desbordadas. Resultó ser el desastre más caro en la historia de los Estados Unidos.

**a la hora de la verdad**

Tarde o temprano todo hombre ambicioso tiene que escoger entre su familia y su carrera. Y a la hora de la verdad, la mayoría escoge su carrera.



## 18. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** *To remain calm, to not panic:* Remember that the important thing in any crisis is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2** *A period of peacefulness preceding one of turmoil and crisis:* I wouldn't be too optimistic if I were you, this may only be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3** *To see the possibility of emerging from a long period of hardship or unhappiness:* Vislumbramos el fin de nuestros problemas.
- 4** *Suddenly a major crisis occurs and there is confusion on every side:* Cuando se supo la noticia, se armó un gran revuelo.
- 5** *To suffer because of lack of money:* Cuando sus ahorros se acabaron, empezó a pasar estrecheces.
- 6** *(euphemism)* Suddenly to feel the need to go to the toilet when this is most inconvenient: Unfortunately, right in the middle of the interview, I \_\_\_\_\_ and had to ask the recruiting panel to excuse me for a few minutes.
- 7** *When a situation has reached the stage where vital decisions or action must be taken:* A la hora de la verdad, lo que cuenta son los contactos.
- 8** *If the most difficult situation arises, and especially if a vital decision must be taken:* I wouldn't give them the satisfaction of firing me. If \_\_\_\_\_, I'll resign.
- 9** *(person)* To be extremely tired or ill or about to die, *(organisation)* to be close to ruin: A las siete, estaba que no me tenía.
- 10** *To be obliged to defend oneself or to fight for survival:* No había otro remedio, estaba entre la espada y la pared. Tuve que hacerlo.
- 11** *With little warning:* Es imposible hacerlo a tan corto plazo.
- 12** *To endure a difficult situation and to escape unharmed:* We have built up important cash reserves, and hopefully these will enable us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** *In large numbers and quickly:* Llovían las respuestas.
- 14** *(events, etc.) To reach a crisis:* La situación ya pasa de castaño oscuro.
- 15** *To be in very serious trouble, usually because of lack of money:* La compañía está en serios apuros y va camino de la ruina.
- 16** *To consume less, especially during a period of hardship or scarcity:* Tuvo que apretarse el cinturón cuando perdió el trabajo.
- 17** *To be so exhausted by problems that one doesn't know what to do next:* Estaba desesperado, no sabía qué hacer.
- 18** *To do nothing, or to do trivial things, while something important is being destroyed:* The company is losing millions of dollars but these press releases prove that its management is still \_\_\_\_\_.
- 19** *To embarrass someone by unexpectedly withdrawing one's support:* We had hoped to show that the board was united but Murphy's sudden resignation \_\_\_\_\_.
- 20** *To reach the point of greatest violence:* With the publication of the latest unemployment figures, relations between the two sides have again \_\_\_\_\_.
- 21** *About to experience something, usually bad:* Estábamos al borde del desastre.
- 22** *(work, problems, etc.) To be completely immersed in or overwhelmed by something:* Estoy de trabajo hasta el cuello.
- 23** *To be extremely busy; to have more to do than one can properly cope with:* Ahora mismo está ocupadísima.
- 24** *To become uncontrollable:* La situación se nos va de las manos
- 25** *To be in a very delicate position, unlikely to survive or succeed:* Su ascenso pende de un hilo.

# 19. Action

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## actions speak louder than words

It's not enough to promise to deliver top-quality service. When it comes to customer service, **actions speak louder than words**.

## get the show on the road

We've been discussing these plans for nearly two years - if we don't **get the show on the road** soon, they'll be out of date and worthless.

## no sooner said than done

- Can you let me have your monthly expense sheet as soon as possible?
- **No sooner said than done**. I have it here.

## a step in the right direction

In a large company good communications are vital. Every measure that promotes cheap and universal connection (e-mail, for example) is a **step in the right direction**.

## a stitch in time (saves nine)

The chancellor portrayed this week's decision to raise interest rates as an economic **stitch in time**: it was, he said, clear evidence of his determination to resist inflation.

## pull out all the stops

The Chinese government has warned that a hard battle lies ahead to meet this year's 7% growth target and that state enterprises must **pull out all the stops** to boost efficiency.

## there's no time like the present

- I ought to start answering all these enquiries.
- Yes, you should. And **there's no time like the present**.

## a means to an end

In high-technology industries, IBM's experience demonstrates that technology comes third, behind marketing and motivation. In business, technology is only a **means to an end** - not the end itself.

## follow suit

In 1987, Nike boosted its image with a highly successful TV ad campaign using the Beatles' song 'Revolution.' Reebok and Adidas immedi-

## dicho sin hecho no trae provecho

No es suficiente con prometer un servicio de primera calidad. En lo referente a la atención al cliente, **dicho sin hecho no trae provecho**.

## ponerse manos a la obra

Hemos estado discutiendo estos planes durante casi dos años - si no los ponemos pronto en práctica, se desfazarán y no valdrán para nada.

## dicho y hecho

- ¿Me podías pasar tu hoja de gastos mensuales lo antes posible?
- Dicho y hecho. La tengo aquí.

## un paso hacia adelante

En una gran empresa una buena comunicación resulta vital. Toda medida que fomente una conexión barata y universal (correo electrónico, por ejemplo) es un paso hacia adelante.

## un remiendo a tiempo ahorra ciento

El canciller presentó esta semana su decisión de subir los tipos de interés: un remiendo económico a tiempo ahorra ciento. Era evidencia clara, dijo, de su determinación a resistirse a la inflación.

## tocar todos los registros

El gobierno chino ha advertido que les espera una batalla difícil para llegar a la meta que se han fijado este año de crecer un 7% y que las empresas estatales han de tocar todas las teclas para incrementar la productividad.

## no dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy

- Debería empezar a contestar a todas estas solicitudes de información.
- Sí, claro. No dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy.

## un medio para conseguir un fin

En las industrias de alta tecnología, la experiencia de IBM demuestra que la tecnología está en tercera posición, después de la comercialización y la motivación. En los negocios, la tecnología es únicamente un medio de conseguir un fin, no el fin en sí.

## seguir su ejemplo

En 1987, Nike impulsó su imagen con una campaña de publicidad televisiva de mucho éxito utilizando la canción de los Beatles

ately **followed suit** with their own TV campaigns.

### cut corners

Insurance isn't a good place to **cut corners**: *doing without it could cost you a lot more in the long run.*

### make a point of doing sth

In Hong Kong we are more aggressive in giving people incentives than even the Americans. We **make a point of saying** we want to attract people whose alternative would be to run their own business.

### take steps

This strike has been long and disruptive. However, we intend to **take all the necessary steps** to get back to full production as soon as possible.

### take the bit between one's teeth

Bernard often stays late at the office when there's a lot of work to be done. Once **he takes the bit between his teeth**, not even his wife can persuade him to come home.

### nip sth in the bud

Low morale disrupts production and costs money. You should therefore stay alert to potential problems and take steps to **nip them in the bud**.

### throw caution to the winds

**Throwing caution to the winds**, he hired her on the spot — without even checking her references.

### meet a deadline

Production workers who worked the Fourth of July weekend **to meet** a Monday **delivery deadline** for an important customer got a neat reward: a weekend cruise to the Bahamas.

### get to first base

Why do people fall short of their goals? Most people stop before they ever **get to first base** — they never commit themselves fully.

### out of action

Iraq resumed pumping crude oil to Turkey three days after the pipeline from north Iraq was **put out of action** by US warplanes.

"Revolution". Reebok y Adidas siguieron inmediatamente su ejemplo con otras campañas en televisión.

### reducir gastos como sea

Un seguro no es algo en lo que se deba **reducir gastos**: *hacerlo podría salirte a la larga muy caro.*

### insistir en hacer algo

En Hong Kong somos más agresivos que los americanos cuando se trata de dar incentivos a la gente. Insistimos en que queremos atraer a personas cuya alternativa sea la de montar su propio negocio.

### tomar medidas

Esta huelga ha sido larga y perjudicial. Sin embargo, tenemos la intención de tomar todas las medidas necesarias para volver cuanto antes a la plena producción.

### desbocarse, liarse

Bernard se suele quedar hasta muy tarde en la oficina cuando hay mucho trabajo que hacer. Una vez que se **lía**, ni siquiera su esposa le puede convencer de que vuelva a casa.

### cortar algo de raíz

La moral baja perturba la producción y cuesta dinero. Por lo tanto, deberías mantenerte al tanto de los problemas potenciales y tomar medidas para **cortarlos de raíz**.

### abandonar la prudencia

Haciendo caso omiso de la prudencia, la contrató allí mismo sin comprobar siquiera sus referencias.

### cumplir con un plazo

Los obreros que trabajaron el fin de semana del 4 de julio para **cumplir con una entrega** de un cliente importante para el lunes, recibieron una fantástica recompensa: un crucero de fin de semana a las Bahamas.

### superar el primer reto

¿Por qué la gente no alcanza sus objetivos? La mayoría se detiene antes de haber **superado el primer reto**; nunca se comprometen por completo.

### fuera de servicio

Irak reanudó su envío de petróleo crudo a Turquía tres días después de que el oleoducto del norte de Irak se quedara fuera de servicio por la intervención de los aviones estadounidenses.

**it's easier said than done**

Indonesia needs to let unhealthy companies go bankrupt, reduce capacity, and cancel big projects that are unnecessary. That, however, **is easier said than done**.

**in fits and starts**

In most plants, workers try to overproduce because once they fill their quotas, they can take it easy. As a result, the flow of work proceeds **in fits and starts**.

**come to grips with sth**

A key problem that the Japanese face - and which I don't think **they've come to grips with yet** - is that, in order to clean up their problems, a lot of their very large banking organisations have to disappear.

**not do things by halves**

Barcelona **has never done things by halves** in the past and the Sagrera-Sant Andreu plan for the high-speed train is no exception.

**in the heat of the moment**

There was havoc in Wall Street trading rooms as fund managers began to unload anything that smelled of technology. It didn't matter anymore whether the stock was Cascade or Microsoft — all such distinctions were lost **in the heat of the moment**.

**practise what one preaches**

Managers must **practise what they preach**, for if employees see that the company deals with customers and suppliers unethically or is concerned only with short-term profitability, they too will adopt that attitude.

**start from scratch**

Going into business for yourself doesn't necessarily require building a company **from scratch**. You can take the plunge a different way: buy an existing business.

**más fácil es decirlo que hacerlo**

Indonesia debe dejar que las empresas poco saneadas se declaren en quiebra, reduzcan su capacidad y cancelen los grandes proyectos que son innecesarios. Sin embargo, es más fácil decirlo que hacerlo.

**a trompicones**

En la mayoría de las plantas, los obreros intentan producir de más porque una vez que han cumplido con su cuota, se lo pueden tomar con calma. Como resultado, el ritmo de trabajo avanza a trompicones.

**abordar algo, atacar algo**

Un problema clave con el que se enfrentan los japoneses - y que según creo aún no han abordado - es que, para solucionar sus problemas, muchas de sus principales entidades bancarias tienen que desaparecer.

**no hacer las cosas a medias**

Barcelona nunca ha hecho las cosas a medias y el proyecto del tren de alta velocidad Sagrera-Sant Andreu no es una excepción.

**en el calor del momento**

Reinaba el caos en el parquet de Wall Street cuando los gestores de fondos empezaron a quitarse de encima cualquier cosa que oliera a tecnología. Ya no importaba si la acción era Cascade o Microsoft - todas las diferencias se evaporaron en el calor del momento.

**predicar con el ejemplo**

Los directivos han de predicar con el ejemplo, ya que si los empleados ven que la empresa trata de forma poco ética a los clientes y a los proveedores, o si sólo les preocupa el beneficio a corto plazo, ellos también adoptarán esa actitud.

**empezar de cero**

Poner en marcha tu propio negocio no requiere necesariamente crear una empresa desde cero. Puedes lanzarte al ruedo de otra forma: comprando una empresa ya existente.

## 19. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To act as one advises others to act: No hace lo que predica.
- 2** An action which helps to accomplish the desired objective: Fue un paso hacia adelante.
- 3** To do a particular job by or before a specified time: Trabajamos contra reloj para cumplir con el plazo fijado.
- 4** (saying) Repairing a fault as soon as it is noticed will save time, money and energy: Un remiendo a tiempo ahorra ciento.
- 5** (saying) A person is better judged by what he does than by what he says he will do: Dicho sin hecho no trae provecho.
- 6** To start from the beginning, usually with nothing: Tuvimos que volver a empezar desde cero.
- 7** To do something thoroughly, with enthusiasm: Nunca hace las cosas a medias.
- 8** To use all one's energy or to do everything possible to achieve one's aim: No escatimamos esfuerzos para que la fiesta fuera un éxito.
- 9** To take action: El gobierno está tomando medidas para poner fin al conflicto.
- 10** (plan, idea, task, etc.) To put something into operation: ¡Manos a la obra!
- 11** While influenced by the excitement of the event or by one's emotions: I realize that you said it \_\_\_\_\_, but it was inexcusable nevertheless.
- 12** To reach the first important stage of a process: They're talking about setting up an on-line store but they're so inefficient they'll probably not even \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** (saying) If something must be done, it is better to do it now rather than later: No dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy.
- 14** To be so keen or determined to do something that one cannot be restrained: Está que no la para nadie.
- 15** Something you do only because it enables you to reach an objective, not because you are interested in doing the thing itself: Su aparente generosidad era un recurso para conseguir su objetivo.
- 16** (used in answer to someone who is giving advice) It is easier to say how to do something than to actually do it: Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho.
- 17** (used to express willingness to comply with a request) What you want to be done will be done as soon as you ask: Dicho y hecho.
- 18** To do the same thing that someone else has just done: Vendió todas sus acciones y los demás siguieron su ejemplo.
- 19** To put a stop to an action or situation before it has properly started: Hay que cortar de raíz ese tipo de comportamiento.
- 20** To begin to deal seriously with a problem: Tenemos que afrontar el problema.
- 21** To do something the easiest or quickest way, often disregarding rules, safety, etc: Siempre hace las cosas deprisa y corriendo.
- 22** Temporarily unable to work because of damage or illness: I called the technician because the computer is \_\_\_\_\_ again.
- 23** To make sure one does something because one thinks it is important: Siempre se preocupaba por conversar con todo el mundo.
- 24** To act thoughtlessly, without taking basic precautions: Echó la precaución por la borda.
- 25** Stopping and starting, not continuously: Esta máquina sólo funciona a trompicones.

## 20. Success

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **nothing succeeds like success**

Confidence in oneself generates success, and success increases confidence in oneself. Hence the saying: **nothing succeeds like success**.

### **come out on top**

That's Rupert Murdoch for you: breaking the rules, defying convention, waging war by any means necessary — and usually **coming out on top**.

### **do the trick**

Korean officials tried to downplay their needs, saying they thought that only 20 billion from the IMF would **do the trick**.

### **make a go of sth**

Worth believed in his concept and was committed to **making a go of it**. He did countless interviews, appeared on talk shows and wasn't shy about attacking the food industry for its lack of creativity.

### **rise from the ashes**

In 1997, Apple lost \$1 billion and no one believed it could survive. In its first fiscal year since Steve Jobs took over as interim C.E.O., the company **rose from the ashes**, making a profit of \$309 million.

### **get on top of sth**

When you're faced with some large, intimidating job, you have to learn to break it into small, specific tasks. If you don't **get on top of it**, you'll get buried underneath.

### **that's half the battle**

Finding out where your problems are is **half the battle**. Once you know that, you can start to deal with them.

### **a flash in the pan**

At first it seemed the craze for health foods would be just another **flash in the pan**. But apparently not. Sales of natural products are climbing steadily, say industry experts.

### **hit the jackpot**

It is difficult to understand how this Korean company, producing a wide range of authentic oriental dishes, managed to **hit the jackpot** in the U.S., for Americans are notoriously wary when it comes to foreign food.

### **el éxito llama al éxito**

La confianza en uno mismo genera éxito, y el éxito genera la confianza en uno mismo. De ahí el dicho: el éxito llama al éxito.

### **sallir ganando**

Así es Rupert Murdoch: rompe las normas, desafía los convencionalismos, lucha con cualquier medio y normalmente sale ganando.

### **funcionar, ser la solución**

Los delegados coreanos intentaron quitar importancia a sus necesidades, diciendo que creían que con sólo 20 mil millones del FMI se solucionarían sus problemas.

### **tener éxito en algo**

Worth creía en su idea y estaba decidido a tener éxito. Concedió infinidad de entrevistas, apareció en programas de debate y atacó sin piedad a la industria de la alimentación por su falta de creatividad.

### **renacer de las cenizas**

En 1997, Apple perdió mil millones de dólares y nadie creyó que podría sobrevivir. En el primer ejercicio fiscal desde que Steve Jobs se hizo con la presidencia temporal, la empresa renació de sus cenizas, consiguiendo un beneficio de 309 millones de dólares.

### **poder con algo**

Cuando te enfrentas a un trabajo importante que te asusta, tienes que aprender a dividirlo en tareas pequeñas y específicas. Si no puedes con él, te aplastará.

### **ya hay medio camino andado**

Al descubrir dónde están tus problemas, ya has recorrido medio camino. Una vez que sabes esto, puedes empezar a enfrentarte a ellos.

### **un triunfo fugaz, un éxito pasajero**

Al principio, parecía que la locura por la comida sana sería tan sólo un éxito pasajero. Pero, por lo visto, no es así. La venta de productos naturales se está incrementando de forma regular, según los expertos.

### **tocarle a alguien el gordo**

Es difícil entender cómo esta empresa coreana, que ofrece una gran variedad de auténticos platos orientales, consiguió que le tocara el gordo en los Estados Unidos, ya que los americanos tienen fama de ser desconfiados en lo que se refiere a la comida extranjera.

**make a killing**

Until Bill Gates and his fellow shareholders **made a killing** at Microsoft, increasing returns were thought to exist only in textbooks. Now their existence in high-tech markets (like software and multimedia) is widely acknowledged.

**go from strength to strength**

While new media companies such as America Online **go from strength to strength**, the old ones look on enviously.

**by leaps and bounds**

The market for our products is growing **by leaps and bounds** in Europe. Revenues are expected to rise from \$4 million last year to \$18 million by 2004.

**make or break sb**

Knowing what's happening in your industry and what's likely to happen tomorrow, what consumers want and what they need — these things can **make or break** your business.

**have it made**

Don Simpson, co-producer of hit movies like *Flashdance*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, and *Top Gun*, **had it made** — by everyone's standards except his own. Simpson died of a drug overdose a few months ago.

**get off to a flying start**

We have advance orders of approximately 10,000 units, so we're sure of getting **off to a flying start** when the machine is officially put on the market.

**make a splash**

Donatella Versace **made a splash** with her fourth collection since the death of her brother Gianni, shown yesterday in Milan.

**make one's mark**

A simple and memorable electronic address is essential for any company or organisation trying to **make its mark** on the Internet.

**all's well that ends well**

An unusually sunny October has more than compensated for the dismal weather at the start of the season. The hotels and restaurants are doing great business, **so all's well that ends well**, I suppose.

**ganar una fortuna**

Hasta que Bill Gates y sus socios accionistas ganaron una fortuna con Microsoft, se pensaba que los rendimientos crecientes sólo existían en los libros académicos. Ahora su existencia en los mercados de alta tecnología (como los de software y multimedia) está ampliamente reconocida.

**ir cobrando fuerzas**

Mientras que las nuevas empresas de comunicación, como America Online, van cobrando fuerza, las antiguas las contemplan con envidia.

**a pasos agigantados**

El mercado para nuestros productos está creciendo a pasos agigantados en Europa. Se espera que los ingresos se incrementen de los 4 millones de dólares del año pasado a los 18 millones de dólares en el año 2004.

**significar la consagración o la ruina de alguien**

Saber lo que está ocurriendo en tu industria y lo que puede ocurrir mañana, lo que quieren los consumidores y lo que necesitan, éstas son cosas que pueden marcar la diferencia entre la consagración o la ruina de tu negocio.

**tener el éxito asegurado**

Don Simpson, el co-productor de películas de éxito como *Flashdance*, *Beverly Hills Cop* y *Top Gun*, tenía el éxito asegurado, de acuerdo con el criterio de todo el mundo menos el suyo. Simpson murió hace unos meses de una sobredosis de drogas.

**empezar con buen pie**

Tenemos pedidos anticipados de unas 10.000 unidades, así que estamos seguros de empezar con buen pie cuando la máquina salga oficialmente al mercado.

**causar sensación**

Donatella Versace causó sensación con su colección presentada ayer en Milán, la cuarta desde la muerte de su hermano Gianni.

**dejar su huella en algo**

Una dirección electrónica sencilla y fácil de recordar es esencial para una empresa u organización que quiera dejar su huella en Internet.

**bien está lo que bien acaba**

Un octubre más soleado de lo normal ha compensado de sobra el mal tiempo del inicio de la temporada. A los hoteles y a los restaurantes les va muy bien, así que bien está lo que bien acaba.

**a short cut**

Banking is not a glamorous profession and there are few **short cuts** to success, just honesty, attention to detail, hard work and perseverance.

**one thing leads to another**

Word-of-mouth, direct mailings and aggressive networking brought us our first customers. After that one thing **led to another**. Now we're one of the largest stationery retailers in the country.

**a sure-fire method**

I have no illusions about myself as a coach. I learned long ago that coaches can be successful using many different philosophies and that there is **no sure-fire method** to succeed.

**be home and dry**

I've been informed unofficially that we've been awarded the contract. The meeting tomorrow is merely a formality, so you can all relax. We're **already home and dry**.

**get sth off the ground**

I started the company entirely on my own, but it was tiny for the first couple of years. I could never **have got it off the ground** without a good sales manager.

**land on one's feet**

When he unexpectedly lost his first job, he didn't just **land on his feet**; he found another position with a salary which was 25% higher.

**a self-made man**

Sir Clive Sinclair is a **self-made multimillionaire** inventor and businessman. Among his better know inventions are a personal computer, a flat screen television and an electric car.

**un método fácil,  
una fórmula mágica**

La banca no es una profesión elegante y hay pocos atajos para alcanzar el éxito, únicamente la honradez, el cuidado por los detalles, el trabajo duro y la perseverancia.

**una cosa lleva a otra**

Gracias al boca a boca, a los envíos por correo y a la creación agresiva de una red de contactos conseguimos nuestros primeros clientes. Después de eso, una cosa llevó a la otra. Ahora somos uno de los más importantes minoristas de papelería del país.

**un método de éxito seguro**

No me hago muchas ilusiones como entrenador. Aprendí hace mucho que los entrenadores pueden tener éxito utilizando filosofías diferentes y que no hay un método de éxito seguro.

**llegar a buen puerto**

He sido informado de forma extraoficial de que nos han concedido el contrato. La próxima reunión es una mera formalidad, así que os podéis relajar. Ya hemos llegado a buen puerto.

**hacer funcionar algo**

Inicié el negocio completamente solo, pero era muy poca cosa durante los primeros años. Nunca hubiese podido hacerlo funcionar sin un buen director de ventas.

**salir adelante, tener suerte**

Cuando inesperadamente perdió su primer empleo, no sólo salió adelante, sino que encontró otro puesto con un sueldo 25% más elevado que el anterior.

**un hombre que ha triunfado  
por su propio esfuerzo,  
hecho a sí mismo**

Sir Clive Sinclair es un multimillonario que ha triunfado por su propio esfuerzo como inventor y empresario. Entre sus inventos más conocidos están el ordenador personal, una pantalla de televisión plana y un coche eléctrico.



## 20. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** That's a large part of doing something difficult: Si has convencido al jefe, ya tienes medio camino andado.
- 2** To have a great success, especially to win or earn a lot of money: Le tocó la lotería.
- 3** To have the desired effect: Gracias por las pastillas, me fueron muy bien.
- 4** To make a large profit: Ganó una fortuna.
- 5** A success that lasts only a very short time and is unlikely to happen again: Es muy probable que sea sólo un éxito pasajero.
- 6** To increase one's success by rapid stages: Nuestra campaña marcha viento en popa.
- 7** (*saying*) Success in one area invariably leads to success in other areas: El éxito llama al éxito.
- 8** Very quickly: Está progresando a pasos agigantados.
- 9** To be no longer in danger of failing, but sure of success: Una vez que hayan aceptado las condiciones, el trato es prácticamente un hecho.
- 10** To cause a sensation by showing one's abilities or qualities: The new range of multicoloured Macs \_\_\_\_\_ at the San Francisco Apple Expo.
- 11** (*a project, a company, etc.*) To make something start successfully: Pasará algún tiempo hasta que el sistema esté en funcionamiento.
- 12** To be able to deal with something, e.g. work or difficulties, successfully: Al final consiguieron controlar la situación.
- 13** To get out of a difficult or unpleasant situation because of luck: Siempre le sale todo redondo.
- 14** To cause either success or ruin: We've invested a great deal just to get this contract, and it can \_\_\_\_\_ us or \_\_\_\_\_ us.
- 15** One small event started a sequence of events: I accepted his offer to join the company as a trainee and \_\_\_\_\_ and now I'm the General Manager.
- 16** To develop out of ruin into new life and importance: Quebró tres veces y tres veces renació de sus cenizas.
- 17** To succeed or achieve recognition: Dejó su impronta en el mundo de los negocios.
- 18** (*saying*) When something difficult or unpleasant ends satisfactorily, there is no point in complaining about any trouble it may have caused: Bien está lo que bien acaba.
- 19** To make a success of something, e.g. a job, a company, etc: Está sacando adelante el negocio.
- 20** A method which is absolutely reliable: Apparently they're working on a \_\_\_\_\_ to transfer data on the Internet ten times more quickly than at present.
- 21** To have succeeded or to be totally certain of success: Si vas a cursar estudios en Harvard Business School, tienes el futuro asegurado.
- 22** To be successful or victorious: Terminamos ganando nosotros.
- 23** A person who has succeeded without any help or advantages, entirely by his own skill and efforts: He came from a working-class background and left school when he was 12. Nevertheless, he's now a multimillionaire and a \_\_\_\_\_ in every respect.
- 24** A quicker way of going somewhere or doing something: Tomé un atajo por el parque.
- 25** To make a fast and successful beginning to something: Empezó con muy buen pie en su nuevo trabajo.

## 21. Failure

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **you can't win them all**

The difficult part of salesmanship is handling so much rejection, so you must simply accept from the outset that **you can't win them all**. It's enough to win the big ones.

### **go back to the drawing board**

In one year, 30% of our revenues were used to pay back lock owners whose bikes had been stolen. So, we **went back to the drawing board** to find ways to improve the lock.

### **go back to square one**

The deal was almost finalised when the customer announced that he wanted to make some important structural changes. We had no choice but to **go back to square one** and start all over again.

### **hit rock bottom**

After years of contraction, zero growth counts as an achievement for Russian officials, who are hoping that the economy has **hit rock bottom** and will now begin to climb upwards.

### **go bust**

Aiwa, half-owned by Sony, almost **went bust** in the late 1980s when the yen rose sharply following the Plaza Accord of 1985.

### **go to the wall**

When Philip Morris knocked 40c off a packet of Marlboro, \$47 billion was instantly wiped off the market value of America's top twenty cigarette manufacturers. Lesser brands **went to the wall**.

### **come a cropper**

In the next 15 years we are bound to have a radical change in automotive technology, most likely in the engine. When that happens, most of the world's automakers will **come a cropper**.

### **make a dent in sth**

In the business of hooking people up to the internet, Microsoft is already trailing badly - unable to **make a dent** in the progress of America Online.

### **go to the dogs**

It used to be one of the most efficient firms in the city, but since Old Weston died and his

### **no se puede pretender ganarias todas**

La parte difícil de un comercial es acostumbrarse a los rechazos, así que debes aceptar desde el principio que no se puede pretender ganarias todas. Basta con ganar las más importantes.

### **volver a empezar**

En un año, el 30% de nuestros ingresos fueron destinados a pagar a los dueños de los candados cuyas bicis habían sido robadas. Así que volvimos al principio para encontrar un sistema para mejorar el candado.

### **volver al punto de partida**

El trato estaba casi finalizado cuando el cliente anunció que quería llevar a cabo algunos cambios estructurales importantes. No tuvimos más remedio que volver al punto de partida y empezar de nuevo.

### **tocar fondo**

Después de años de recesión, el crecimiento cero se considera como una hazaña para los rusos, quienes esperan que la economía haya tocado fondo y que inicie ahora su ascenso.

### **quebrar**

Aiwa, que pertenece en un 50% a Sony, casi quebró a finales de los años 80 cuando el yen subió repentinamente tras el Convenio Plaza de 1985.

### **arruinarse, quebrar**

Cuando Philip Morris bajó el precio del paquete de Marlboro de 40 centavos, 47 mil millones de dólares fueron borrados al instante del valor comercial de los 20 principales fabricantes de cigarrillos americanos. Las pequeñas marcas se arruinaron.

### **fracasar**

En los 15 próximos años vamos a experimentar un cambio radical en la tecnología del automóvil, probablemente en el motor. Cuando esto ocurra, la mayoría de los fabricantes de coches del mundo se arruinarán.

### **hacer estragos en algo**

En el negocio de enganchar a la gente a Internet, Microsoft ya está perdiendo terreno, incapaz de detener el avance de America Online.

### **ir a la ruina, hundirse**

Era una de las empresas más eficientes de la ciudad, pero desde que el viejo Weston

son took over, it's **gone to the dogs**. Now half the time they don't even answer the phone.

### **go downhill**

After peaking at \$87 last December — the week Microsoft declared war — Netscape's shares have **gone steadily downhill**, recently trading in the mid-30s.

### **go down the drain**

You owe it to yourself and your family to provide for the future of your business. Don't let all your hard work and investment **go down the drain** for lack of insurance.

### **reach a dead end**

We spent years trying to develop a prototype but simply couldn't resolve the technical problems. Finally we realised we had **reached a dead end** and abandoned the project entirely.

### **fall flat (on one's face)**

Intuit **fell flat** on its face in early 1995 when hundreds of customers called to tell stories about how bugs in its TurboTax product were making a mess of their income tax returns.

### **shoot sth down in flames**

I had developed an elaborate plan to reorganise the department's workload, but the management **shot it down** in flames. They said it was too elaborate to be feasible.

### **give sth up as a bad job**

The fact is, I'm not very good at languages. I tried to learn Norwegian once but after a few months I **gave it up as a bad job**. I wasn't making any progress at all.

### **come to nothing**

In the five years since filing the patents, Michaels has been turned down by more than 100 companies. Negotiations with Nasa, the US space agency, also **came to nothing**.

### **a damp squib**

Tesco's rivals were dismissive of its recent price cuts. "It is a **damp squib**," Asda said. "They are only playing catch-up and we are still cheaper even after the new prices."

murió y su hijo se hizo cargo del negocio, se ha hundido. Ahora ni siquiera contestan el teléfono.

### **empeorar**

Tras llegar a un máximo de 87 dólares el pasado diciembre - la semana que Microsoft declaró la guerra - las acciones de Netscape han ido empeorando, cotizándose últimamente en treinta y tantos dólares.

### **irse al garete, venirse abajo**

Por ti mismo y por tu familia, debes asegurar el futuro de tu empresa. No dejes que se vaya al garete todo el trabajo y la inversión que has realizado por no haber contratado una póliza de seguro.

### **llegar a un punto muerto**

Nos pasamos años intentando desarrollar un prototipo pero no pudimos resolver los problemas técnicos. Al final nos dimos cuenta de que habíamos llegado a un punto muerto y abandonamos totalmente el proyecto.

### **fracasar,**

### **no tener el éxito deseado**

Intuit no tuvo el éxito deseado a principios de 1995 cuando cientos de clientes llamaron para contarles que los fallos en su producto TurboTax estaban ocasionando un desastre en sus declaraciones de la renta.

### **rebatir algo, echar abajo algo**

Había desarrollado un plan minucioso para reorganizar las tareas del departamento pero los directivos lo echaron abajo. Dijeron que era demasiado complicado para ser factible.

### **dejar algo por imposible**

El hecho es que no se me dan bien los idiomas. Intenté aprender noruego una vez pero después de unos meses lo dejé por imposible. No estaba progresando en absoluto.

### **llegar a nada, quedar en nada**

En los cinco años transcurridos desde que solicitó las patentes, Michaels ha sido rechazado por más de 100 empresas. Las negociaciones con la Nasa, la agencia espacial de los EE UU, también quedaron en nada.

### **un fiasco**

Los rivales de Tesco restaban importancia a sus últimos recortes de precios. "Es un fiasco," dijo Asda. "Sólo están intentando alcanzarnos y somos incluso más baratos a pesar de éstos últimos recortes."

---

### throw in the towel

Morale in the company had hit rock bottom, so my first six months were very bleak. At times I got close to **throwing in the towel**.

---

### see the writing on the wall

Perhaps Iranian traditionalists **have seen the writing on the wall**. They know that if they continue to block reformist legislation, they risk being thrown out by voters in next year's general elections.

---

### serve no purpose

There are a few common sense rules about using visual aids in a presentation. And most are commonly ignored. The most important is this: if a visual aid **serves no clear purpose**, it should be removed.

---

### lose one's touch

He used to be our best salesman but I think he must be **losing his touch**; in the past six months his results have been merely average.

---

### come away empty-handed

We lowered our prices and improved on the delivery dates we had proposed initially. We also offered a training package. Even so, the negotiations were unsuccessful and we came away **empty-handed**.

---

### fight a losing battle

In the 1950s the mighty British Motor Corporation commanded 50% of the UK market - although even then it was fighting a **losing battle** against imported cars.

---

### a has-been

Meetings are disliked because they are usually futile, boring, time-wasting, dull, and inconvenient with nothing for most people to do except doodle while some opinionated **has-been** goes on and on about his last great idea.

---

### the beginning of the end

Sometimes I think my most important job as a chief executive is to listen for bad news. If you don't act on it, your people will eventually stop bringing bad news to your attention. And that's **the beginning of the end**.

---

### arrojar la toalla

La moral en la empresa tocó fondo, así que mis primeros seis meses fueron muy poco prometedores. Hubo veces en las que estuve a punto de arrojar la toalla.

---

### ver los malos presagios

Quizá los tradicionalistas iraníes han visto malos presagios. Saben que si continúan bloqueando la legislación reformista, se arriesgan a ser rechazados por los votantes en las elecciones generales del año que viene.

---

### no servir para nada

Hay algunas reglas básicas de sentido común sobre el uso de las ayudas visuales en una presentación. Y la mayoría no suelen ser respetadas. La más importante es ésta: si una ayuda visual no tiene un propósito claro, debe ser eliminada.

---

### perder la habilidad

Antes era nuestro mejor comercial pero creo que está perdiendo facultades; en los seis últimos meses sus resultados han sido muy mediocres.

---

### volver con las manos vacías

Bajamos nuestros precios y mejoramos las fechas de entrega que habíamos propuesto inicialmente. También ofrecimos un paquete de formación. Aún así las negociaciones no tuvieron éxito y nos volvimos con las manos vacías.

---

### luchar por una causa perdida

En los años 50 la poderosa British Motor Corporation controlaba el 50% del mercado del Reino Unido, aunque ya entonces, estaba luchando por una causa perdida en contra de las importaciones de coches.

---

### una persona acabada, una vieja gloria

No gustan las reuniones porque normalmente son inútiles, aburridas, lentas y molestas y constituyen una pérdida de tiempo; en ellas la gente se entretiene haciendo garabatos mientras alguna vieja gloria habla sin parar sobre su última gran idea.

---

### el principio del fin

A veces creo que el trabajo más importante que tengo como presidente, es escuchar las malas noticias. Si no actúas de inmediato, tu gente dejará de traerte malas noticias. Y eso es el principio del fin.

## 21. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To be no longer of good quality, to be in decline or near ruin: El país se va al garete.
- 2** (*opinions, suggestions, etc.*) To reject something, usually criticizing it severely: Clearly they had no intention of compromising. Every time I made a suggestion, they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3** To stop trying to do something because one's efforts so far have been unproductive: Lo dejó porque era un caso perdido.
- 4** To go back to the starting point after a failed attempt at something: Ya estamos otra vez como al principio.
- 5** (*plans, targets, ideas, etc.*) To fail to happen: He ended his life an impoverished and bitter old man. All his great ambitions had \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6** To become less successful or of lower quality: No cabe duda de que ese restaurante se ha venido abajo.
- 7** To suffer a sudden misfortune or failure: His luck was good for the first couple of years, but sooner or later he had to \_\_\_\_\_, and it happened when he invested heavily in Russia.
- 8** An attempt to do something which falls far short of the desired effect: Their competitors denounced the supposedly revolutionary new device as a \_\_\_\_\_, slow, expensive and technologically out of date.
- 9** (*said by or to a person who has failed in something*) You can't be successful all the time: No se puede pretender ganarlas todas.
- 10** To abandon all hope in a competition or fight and to give up: Al final, tuvieron que tirar la toalla.
- 11** To come to a point where no further progress can be made: Las conversaciones entraron en un callejón sin salida.
- 12** To see clear signs of impending danger or misfortune: Los inversores se la vieron venir y vendieron las acciones.
- 13** To go bankrupt, to be forced to stop operating: La empresa quebró el año pasado.
- 14** To be superfluous: No sirve para nada en especial, es simplemente decorativo.
- 15** (*an attempt, a joke*) To fail dismally: Sus chistes de secretarias no hicieron gracia.
- 16** (*an amount of money*) To reduce, (*a person's reputation, etc.*) to hurt or to lessen: Se ha comido una buena parte de nuestros ahorros.
- 17** To struggle against something with no chance of success: Llevábamos todas las de perder en la lucha contra la inflación.
- 18** To fall to the lowest possible level: Nuestra moral había tocado fondo.
- 19** A person whose achievements are in the past and who is no longer respected: Fifteen years after his retirement, he had lost touch with all his important contacts; the only people he knew now were other old \_\_\_\_\_ like himself.
- 20** (*money, effort, etc.*) To be wasted or lost: Es como tirar el dinero a la basura.
- 21** The initial stage of some undesirable event: Looking back, we can now see that Fradin's resignation was \_\_\_\_\_ as far as innovation was concerned.
- 22** (*used when a plan has not worked*) To start all over again from the beginning: ¡Vuelta a empezar!
- 23** To leave with nothing, without getting the result one had hoped for: La delegación volvió con las manos vacías.
- 24** (*companies, entrepreneurs, etc.*) To be ruined, to be pushed aside as worthless: Cada vez más negocios se declaraban en quiebra.
- 25** To no longer be as skillful as was: ¡Debo estar perdiendo facultades!

## 22. Mistakes

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### put one's foot in it

I've never met anyone so tactless. Every time he says something, he puts **his foot in it**.

### make a hash of sth

He dropped his papers, got his slides mixed up, forgot what he wanted to say — in short, **he made a real hash** of the presentation.

### bite off more than one can chew

I told the GM I'd be able to finalise details of the Oakland project before the end of the month, but now I realise **I've bitten off more than I can chew**. It'll be impossible unless someone helps me.

### put all one's eggs in one basket

Depending on one or two big clients for all your revenues is like putting **all your eggs in one basket**. Much wiser is to diversify and develop a broad client base.

### it's the blind leading the blind

When management forgets or becomes unsure of its mission, then a sense of indirection soon pervades the whole company. You have the worst possible scenario: **the blind leading the blind**.

### get off on the wrong foot

Listen, you and I seem to have **got off on the wrong foot**. It's silly because we're both on the same team. Let's have a quiet drink and settle our differences.

### get sb wrong

If you don't have the cash to motivate your staff, try some nonfinancial incentives. **Don't get me wrong**: money, when used properly, is a great motivator. But it's not the only one.

### go too far

Did privatisation of the alcohol industry in Russia **go too far**, too fast? After all, the state monopoly on vodka production used to account for 23% of government revenues.

### go wrong

It's vital to learn from mistakes. The key to future success is an honest assessment of what **went wrong** and a plan to make it right.

### meter la pata

Jamás he conocido a alguien con menos tacto. Cada vez que dice algo, mete la pata.

### estropear algo

Se le cayeron los papeles, desordenó sus diapositivas, olvidó lo que quería decir, en resumen, la presentación fue un desastre.

### abarcarse demasiado

Le dije al director general que podría finalizar los detalles del proyecto de Oakland antes de fin de mes, pero ahora me doy cuenta de que he abarcado demasiado. Será imposible sin que alguien me ayude.

### jugárselo todo a una carta

El depender de uno o dos clientes importantes para todos tus ingresos es como jugárselo todo a una carta. Es mucho más sensato diversificar y desarrollar una base amplia de clientes.

### están tan ciegos uno como otro

Cuando la dirección se olvida de su misión o no está segura de ella, una sensación de mala gestión se apodera pronto de toda la empresa, que se encuentra en la peor situación posible: están tan ciegos los unos como los otros.

### empezar con mal pie

Escucha, parece que tú y yo hemos empezado con mal pie. Es una tontería porque ambos estamos en el mismo equipo. Vamos a tomar una copa tranquilamente y aclaremos nuestras diferencias.

### malinterpretar a alguien

Si no tienes dinero en efectivo para motivar al personal, intenta usar algunos incentivos no financieros. No me malinterpretes: el dinero, cuando se usa debidamente, es un excelente incentivo. Pero no es el único.

### ir demasiado lejos

¿La privatización de la industria rusa del alcohol ha ido demasiado lejos, demasiado rápido? Después de todo, el monopolio estatal sobre la producción de vodka representaba anteriormente el 23% de los ingresos del gobierno.

### equivocarse, fallar, fracasar

Es esencial aprender de los errores. La clave de futuros éxitos es evaluar sinceramente lo que ha fallado y establecer un plan para remediarlo.

**dig one's own grave**

Finlay is notoriously dishonest. Anybody who goes into business with him as a partner is simply **digging his own grave**.

**cut one's own throat**

I know you don't like Roberts but we can't possibly get rid of him: he's handling the accounts of half of our most important clients, and they like him. If we fire him, we'll be **cutting our own throats**.

**back the wrong horse**

He was sure Mitchell would become the new head of department, so he spent several months trying to impress him. But as it happened, he had **backed the wrong horse**. It wasn't Mitchell who was appointed, but someone else.

**be wide of the mark**

One third of Singapore's stock exchange is controlled by the government. Those who claim that it is freer than Hong Kong's stock exchange are therefore **wide of the mark**.

**live beyond one's means**

We are in a state of permanent crisis because we are **living beyond our means**. The solution is simple: we must cut spending.

**go off the rails**

If it hadn't been for Lewis, this company would have **gone off the rails** years ago. He forced us to *remain focused and disciplined*.

**bark up the wrong tree**

If you think I'm the one who gave the competition those figures, you're **barking up the wrong tree**. I don't even have access to that information.

**bury one's head in the sand**

We can't go on **burying our heads in the sand** and pretending the problem doesn't exist. Sooner or later we have to do something about it.

**tread on sb's toes**

When I said that accountants were the dullest people on earth, I hope I didn't **tread on anyone's toes**. I was only joking.

**cavarse su propia tumba**

Finlay tiene fama de no ser honrado. Cualquiera que se embarque en un negocio con él como socio está cavando su propia tumba.

**tirar piedras al tejado**

Ya sé que no te cae bien Roberts pero no hay forma de deshacerse de él: lleva la mitad de nuestros clientes más importantes, y a ellos les cae bien. Si le despedimos, estaríamos tirando piedras a nuestro propio tejado.

**hacer una mala elección**

Estaba convencido de que Mitchell sería el nuevo jefe del departamento, así que pasó varios meses intentando impresionarle. Pero resultó que había elegido mal. No nombraron a Mitchell, sino a otra persona.

**estar equivocado,  
no dar en el blanco**

Un tercio de la bolsa de Singapur está controlada por el gobierno. Por lo tanto, aquellos que aseguran que es más libre que la bolsa de Hong Kong están muy equivocados.

**vivir por encima  
de sus posibilidades**

Nos encontramos en un estado de crisis permanente porque estamos viviendo por encima de nuestras posibilidades. La solución es sencilla: debemos recortar gastos.

**irse al garete, descarriarse**

Si no habría sido por Lewis, esta empresa se hubiese ido al garete hace años. Él nos obligó a *mantenernos concentrados y disciplinados*.

**tomar el rábano por las hojas**

Si crees que soy yo el que facilitó estas cifras a la competencia, estás tomando el rábano por las hojas. Ni siquiera tengo acceso a esa información.

**meter la cabeza debajo del ala**

No podemos meter la cabeza debajo del ala y hacer como si el problema no existiera. Tarde o temprano tendremos que hacer algo al respecto.

**ofender a alguien**

Cuando dije que los contables eran las personas más insipidas de la tierra, espero que no ofendiera a nadie. Sólo estaba bromeando.

### **a wild goose chase**

He thought he had left the plans in the foreman's office on the building site, so he sent his secretary off to look for them there. But it was a **wild goose chase**, as they were in the back of his car all the time.

### **blow up in sb's face**

Goizueta changed the sacred formula of Coca-Cola, a move that would have been previously unthinkable; New Coké **blew up in his face** and became the biggest consumer product disaster of the '80s. But he quickly reversed his decision.

### **be on the wrong track**

Management gurus often claim we should change a person's performance by building his motivation. But I say that if somebody's **on the wrong track**, and then he gets motivated, he's just going to get to disaster quicker.

### **be out of tune with sth**

Management is **completely out of tune with** feelings on the shop floor. This strike is not only about higher wages, it's about issues which go much further than that.

### **a half-baked idea**

Brainstorming is about liberating creative energy, so I want you to say whatever comes into your mind. In this first stage, it doesn't matter how **half-baked** you think your **ideas** may be.

### **rub sb the wrong way**

At a dinner with top executives and their spouses, the newly appointed C.E.O. **rubbed some people the wrong way** by making several joking references to "the long period of managerial incompetence" which had preceded his arrival.

### **shoot one's mouth off**

This matter is highly confidential and the trouble with Yates is that once he's had a drink or two, he starts **shooting his mouth off**. I think it's better if we don't inform him for the time being.

### **una búsqueda inútil, una empresa descabellada**

Creía que había dejado los planos en la oficina del capataz de la obra, así que envió a su secretaria a buscarlos allí. Pero fue una **búsqueda inútil**, ya que estaban en la parte de atrás de su coche.

### **ser un fracaso lamentable, estrellarse**

Goizueta cambió la fórmula sagrada de Coca-Cola, una maniobra que antes hubiera sido impensable: la Coca-Cola nueva fue un fracaso lamentable y se convirtió en el mayor desastre de los años 80 en un producto de consumo. Pero rápidamente revocó su decisión.

### **estar mal encaminado**

Los gurús de la dirección suelen afirmar que debemos cambiar el rendimiento de una persona incrementando su motivación. Pero yo digo que si alguien está mal encaminado y se le motiva, sólo va a llegar antes al desastre.

### **no estar en sintonía con algo**

Los directivos no están en absoluto en sintonía con lo que sienten los obreros. Esta huelga no sólo tiene que ver con un aumento de sueldo sino que trata de temas mucho más profundos.

### **una idea mal concebida**

Las sesiones de creatividad tratan de liberar la energía creativa, así que quiero que digáis lo primero que se os ocurra. En esta etapa, no importa que creáis que vuestras ideas son malas.

### **sacar a uno de quicio**

En una cena con los altos ejecutivos y sus esposas, el presidente recientemente nombrado sacó a algunas personas de quicio al hacer varios chistes que hacían referencia al "largo período de incompetencia directiva" que había precedido su llegada.

### **irse de la lengua**

Este tema es altamente confidencial y el problema con Yates es que en cuanto se ha tomado una o dos copas, empieza a irse de la lengua. Creo que será mejor si de momento no le informamos.



## 22. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To harm oneself by the way one acts, usually because of pride or anger: Irte ahora sería suicida.
- 2** To make a bad start with someone or something: He \_\_\_\_\_ by arriving an hour and a half late for his first day at work.
- 3** To support the wrong person i.e. the eventual loser in a competition: Don't get involved in office politics. If you \_\_\_\_\_, you'll pay for it later.
- 4** To make a wrong assumption or blame the wrong person: If you think I'm the one who told the boss what you did, you're \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5** To risk everything one has in a single venture or business: No te lo juegues todo a una carta.
- 6** To refuse to admit that something is a problem in the hope that it will get better by itself: When are you going to stop \_\_\_\_\_ and recognise that this is a major problem, and that it's not just going to go away?
- 7** To do or say something that goes beyond accepted limits: Esta situación ha ido demasiado lejos.
- 8** To offend someone by doing or saying something that is against his interests or beliefs: Cuando hicimos aquellos cambios, tuvimos cuidado de no ofender a nadie.
- 9** (*figures, calculations, guesses, etc.*) To be incorrect, far from the truth or correct amount: Erró por mucho en su cálculo.
- 10** To say something unintentionally which offends or upsets another person: Metió la pata.
- 11** To misunderstand somebody: No me interpretes mal, no estamos en contra del plan.
- 12** A search for something that has no hope of success: No pienso ir otra vez al aeropuerto a perder el tiempo para nada.
- 13** To spend more than one earns: Vivía por encima de sus posibilidades.
- 14** To start doing something that is much too difficult: Ha querido abarcar demasiado.
- 15** (*scheme, arrangement, etc.*) To fail disastrously because of an unexpected event, so causing embarrassment to the person responsible: Their plans to flood the market with cheaper models \_\_\_\_\_ when the machines proved to have major defects.
- 16** (*business, etc.*) To become disorganised, confused, (*person*) to become mad: Empezó a actuar de forma extraña cuando se quedó sin trabajo.
- 17** To make a mistake, to take the wrong direction: Siga las instrucciones y no se equivocará.
- 18** To be going in the wrong direction: Me parece que así vamos por mal camino.
- 19** To not be in agreement or harmony with something: El edificio no está en armonía con su entorno.
- 20** To spoil a job or a piece of work: Hizo una verdadera chapuza al escribir el informe.
- 21** An idea which has not been fully thought out, and so is foolish or impractical: I wish you would stop wasting our time with your \_\_\_\_\_.
- 22** To cause one's own misfortunes: Estás cavando tu propia tumba.
- 23** To talk carelessly about confidential matters, to boast or exaggerate: Siempre está presumiendo de lo que hizo en el ejército.
- 24** A situation in which a leader knows as little as someone else who is being led: Están tan ciegos uno como otro.
- 25** To make somebody angry or hostile by behaving in a way that annoys them: I don't know why he dislikes me so much, I suppose I just \_\_\_\_\_.

## 23. Criticism

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **tear sth to pieces**

I made one or two suggestions at the beginning of the meeting but the others **tore them to pieces**, so I didn't contribute much after that.

### **a bone of contention**

The ownership of Gibraltar has long been a **bone of contention** between Britain and Spain.

### **have a bone to pick with sb**

**I have a bone to pick with Clive.** The figures he gave me were completely false. Because of him, I made a fool of myself in front of the client.

### **drive a coach and horses through sth**

I want to emphasise that the plan is still in a very early stage. I'm perfectly aware that at the moment you could **drive a coach and horses through it**. The only reason I'm presenting it today is to give you an idea of where we're heading.

### **put a damper on sth**

The bank's refusal to lend us the money **put a damper on our plans** to expand.

### **lay the blame for sth on sb**

Sooner or later someone is going to **lay the blame** for the company's continued poor performance on the current management.

### **pick holes in sth**

You've been sitting there **picking holes in our plan** all morning. But do you have anything better to propose?

### **tell sb a few home truths**

We recruit them directly from university, so they sometimes arrive here thinking they're pretty smart. In that case, you have to take them aside and **tell them a few home truths**, in particular that they don't know as much as they think they do.

### **put one's own house in order**

The Americans are accusing us of dumping cheap steel on the Asian market. Let them **put their own house in order** before they start criticising us.

### **poner por los suelos**

Hice una sugerencia o dos al principio de la reunión pero los demás las rechazaron, así que no pude hacer muchas aportaciones después de eso.

### **la manzana de la discordia**

La posesión de Gibraltar es desde hace mucho la manzana de la discordia entre Inglaterra y España.

### **tener que ajustar le cuentas a alguien**

Tengo que ajustar le cuentas a Clive. Las cifras que me dio eran completamente falsas. Por su culpa, quedé como un idiota delante del cliente.

### **tener agujeros, arrasar con algo**

Quiero dejar claro que el plan aún está en una fase inicial. Me doy perfectamente cuenta de que en este momento tiene más agujeros que un colador. La única razón por la cual lo estoy presentando hoy es para que tengais una idea de la dirección en la que vamos.

### **amargar algo**

El rechazo del banco para prestarnos dinero ha amargado nuestros planes de expansión.

### **echar la culpa de algo a alguien**

Tarde o temprano alguien echará la culpa del bajo rendimiento de la empresa a los actuales directivos.

### **encontrar defectos en algo**

Has estado encontrando defectos en nuestro plan durante toda la mañana. ¿Tienes algo mejor que proponernos?

### **decirle a alguien cuatro verdades**

Les reclutamos directamente de la universidad, así que a veces llegan aquí pensando que son bastante listos. En ese caso, les tienes que llamar la atención y decirles cuatro verdades, sobre todo si no saben tanto como creen.

### **cuidarse de sus asuntos propios**

Los americanos nos están acusando de inundar el mercado asiático con acero barato. Que arreglen sus asuntos antes de criticarnos.

### **to add insult to injury**

The much-heralded measures to boost corporate investment turn out to be relatively unimportant. **To add insult to injury**, they are only temporary.

### **lay oneself wide open to sth**

Taking established customers for granted is an easy way to lose business. *Why?* Because you **lay yourself wide open** to competitors who are looking at the customer the way you did when you were starting out.

### **be in the firing line**

I enjoy the excitement of working in a crisis atmosphere. In this job, you have nothing but problems. **You're always in the firing line.** You're juggling a dozen balls, and you can't afford to let any of them drop. Everybody is counting on you.

### **it's no use crying over spilt milk**

We missed the deadline because you didn't start preparing our proposal early enough. Well, **there's no point crying over spilt milk**, but let me make it clear: I won't tolerate this kind of slackness in future.

### **pour cold water over sth**

Mr Greenspan **poured cold water** on European proposals to harmonise the exchange rates of the world's main currencies.

### **a slap in the face**

The union for white-collar employees rejected an employers' offer, under which their members would have received a one-off payment of £300 each, describing it as **"a slap in the face"** for the bank workers.

### **give sth short shrift**

They give **short shrift** to our recent efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiency, mentioning them only in the final paragraph of their report.

### **clear the air**

The last thing I need is undue conversation concerning my health. I just want **to clear the air** and not let there be a lot of untrue rumours floating around.

### **por si fuera poco**

Las medidas tan pregonadas para aumentar la inversión corporativa han resultado ser de poca importancia. Por si fuera poco, sólo son temporales.

### **exponerse a algo**

Considerar a antiguos clientes como seguros es una forma fácil de perder contratos. ¿Por qué? Porque estás expuesto a la competencia que busca clientes del mismo modo que los buscabas tú cuando empezaste.

### **estar en la línea de fuego**

Disfruto con la emoción de trabajar en un ambiente de crisis. En este trabajo, no tienes más que problemas. Siempre estás en la línea de fuego. Estás haciendo juegos malabares con varias pelotas y no te puedes permitir el lujo de que se caiga ninguna. Todo el mundo cuenta contigo.

### **a lo hecho, pecho**

No conseguimos cumplir los plazos porque no empezaste a preparar nuestra propuesta a tiempo. Bueno, a lo hecho, pecho, pero deja que aclare una cosa: no toleraré este tipo de negligencia en el futuro.

### **echar un jarro de agua fría, poner trabas a algo**

Mr Greenspan echó un jarro de agua fría a las propuestas europeas para fijar los tipos de cambio entre las principales divisas del mundo.

### **un desaire, una bofetada**

El sindicato de trabajadores de oficina rechazó la oferta de una empresa según la cual sus miembros hubiesen recibido una bonificación de 300 libras cada uno, describiéndola como "una bofetada para los empleados de la banca".

### **desestimar de plano algo**

Desestimaron de plano nuestros últimos esfuerzos por reducir costes y mejorar la eficacia, mencionándolos sólo en el último párrafo de su informe.

### **aclarar las cosas**

Lo último que necesito es que se hable sin ton ni son sobre mi salud. Sólo quiero aclarar las cosas y no dejar que circulen un montón de falsos rumores.

**tell sb where to get off**

These files are strictly confidential. The next time Wainwright starts poking through them, come and tell me immediately. I'll **tell him where to get off**.

**make amends for sth**

Wall Street rallied, with strong gains among telecommunication and bank stocks more than **making amends for** yesterday's losses.

**have no hard feelings**

Frazer had some hard things to say about our working methods, but **I have no hard feelings**. In fact, after the meeting, I thanked him for being so frank and direct.

**let bygones be bygones**

We've often disagreed on professional matters, but I have nothing against you personally. Now we're working together, I suggest we concentrate on the present and **let bygones be bygones**.

**be in sb's bad books**

The blonde you kept contradicting at lunch is Sandra, the boss's personal assistant. This is your first day here, so let me give you some advice: you don't want **to be in her bad books** if you can help it.

**make no bones about sth**

**I'll make no bones about it**, Malone — I have no intention of recommending you for promotion. Because quite frankly I don't think you deserve it.

**take sth to heart**

Okuda had heard that in the tiny Suzuki Motor Corporation it took just five minutes to convey a top executive's decision to the whole company, while it took weeks for Toyota. **Taking this complaint to heart**, he started making changes.

**vote with one's feet**

There's only one way we'll convince the management of this company that salaries are too low, and that's by **voting with our feet**. When enough of us start leaving, they'll start listening.

**cantarle las cuarenta a alguien**

Estos ficheros son estrictamente confidenciales. La próxima vez que Wainwright se ponga a fisgar en ellos, ven y dímelo de inmediato. Ya le cantaré yo las cuarenta.

**compensar por algo**

La bolsa se animó, con fuertes ganancias en las acciones de telecomunicaciones y bancos, compensando de sobra las pérdidas de ayer.

**no guardar rencor**

Frazer hizo unos comentarios muy duros sobre nuestros métodos de trabajo, pero no le guardo rencor. De hecho, después de la reunión, le di las gracias por ser tan franco y directo.

**olvidar el pasado**

Con frecuencia hemos estado en desacuerdo sobre temas profesionales pero personalmente no tengo nada contra tí. Ahora que estamos trabajando juntos, sugiero que nos concentremos en el presente y olvidemos el pasado.

**estar en la lista negra de alguien**

La rubia a la que estabas llevando la contraria durante el almuerzo es Sandra, la ayudante personal del jefe. Éste es tu primer día aquí, así que deja que te dé un consejo: trata de no estar en su lista negra si lo puedes evitar.

**no vacilar en hacer algo**

Te lo diré muy claro, Malone: no tengo ninguna intención de recomendarte para un ascenso. Porque, francamente, no creo que te lo merezcas.

**tomarse algo a pecho**

Okuda había oído decir que en la pequeña Suzuki Motor Corporation sólo se tardaba cinco minutos en transmitir una decisión de los altos ejecutivos a toda la empresa, mientras que en Toyota se tardaba semanas. Tomándose esta queja a pecho, comenzó a realizar cambios.

**expresar su opinión abandonando la organización**

Sólo hay una manera de convencer a los directivos de esta empresa de que los sueldos son demasiado bajos: marcharnos de la empresa. Cuando bastantes de nosotros comencemos a irnos, deberán escucharnos.

## 23. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** In a position where one is likely to be attacked: Nuestro departamento va a ser el que va a recibir todas las críticas.
- 2** To tell someone things about himself which are unpleasant but true, often with the intention of helping him: Le dije cuatro verdades.
- 3** (*saying*) What is done is done and it is pointless complaining about it: A lo hecho, pecho.
- 4** To claim that a person or organisation is responsible for something bad: Le echó la culpa de todo a su socio.
- 5** (*a plan, an idea, etc.*) To discourage something by raising objections: We suggested that a number of changes be made, but the division heads \_\_\_\_\_ over our proposals.
- 6** An insult or rebuff: Union representatives said they considered management's offer to be a \_\_\_\_\_ for mine workers throughout the country.
- 7** To have something to complain about or reason for displeasure with someone: Dile a Marcus que tengo cuentas que ajustar con él.
- 8** To treat something quickly and unsympathetically: La idea fue rechazada de plano.
- 9** To cause offence to someone after already having harmed him in some other way: Y por si fuera poco tuve que pagarle la comida.
- 10** (*criticism, disappointment, etc.*) To be greatly upset or influenced by something: Se tomaron las críticas muy a pecho.
- 11** To depress, discourage or prevent something: La mala noticia estropeó las fiestas.
- 12** To show that you do not support a company's policies by leaving the company: Knowing it was pointless to protest against the pay cut, he decided to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** To ensure, before accusing others, that one is not guilty of the same faults: Before he starts criticizing us, let him \_\_\_\_\_.
- 14** To do or say something without restraint or deception: No oculta sus preferencias.
- 15** A subject that causes disagreement whenever it is discussed: Es la manzana de la discordia entre ellos.
- 16** To be out of favour with somebody: En este momento, está de malas con nosotros.
- 17** To forget past quarrels: Lo pasado, pasado está.
- 18** To find faults or mistakes in something: No cesaban de encontrar defectos a mi argumento.
- 19** To have no feelings of bitterness after being beaten in a fight or argument: No les guardo ningún rencor por cómo me trataron.
- 20** To expose oneself to attack, blame, etc: Esto nos expondría a las críticas.
- 21** (*an argument, a plan, a case, etc*) To destroy something completely by highlighting its weak points: I've rarely seen such a poorly conceived advertising campaign. My God, you could \_\_\_\_\_.
- 22** To compensate for some injury or insult: Debería compensarnos por su negligencia.
- 23** To tell someone that his behaviour is no longer tolerable: He may be the boss if he tries any sexual harassment with me, I'll soon \_\_\_\_\_.
- 24** To criticize every detail of something severely: He had not expected them to accept his project unreservedly, but neither had he expected them to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 25** To dispel tensions or worries, especially by discussing them: A furious argument of that kind is always disagreeable, but at least it \_\_\_\_\_ for a while.

## 24. Reactions

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **not bat an eyelid**

He listened to the chairman's criticism without **batting an eyelid**.

### **take a dim view of sth**

While the parents and kids **took a dim view of** liberal arts, business leaders called the humanities essential to developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

### **take sth lying down**

P&G's market share fell from 31.6% to 25.3%. Nobody expects P&G to **take this lying down**, but the company has not yet commented on how it will respond.

### **not lose any sleep over sth**

I'm not losing any sleep over one bad period of earnings. I'm **losing sleep over** meeting our future challenges.

### **be thankful for small mercies**

It is true that our profits have fallen sharply, but in a period of recession, when many small companies like ours are being driven into bankruptcy, we **must be thankful for small mercies**.

### **look on the bright side**

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi opened parliament on Tuesday pleading for people to snap out of their recession-fuelled gloom and **look on the bright side**.

### **stretch a point**

According to company policy, you aren't entitled to follow a training course of this kind until you've been employed with us for at least a year. But in your case, for operational reasons, we've decided **to stretch a point**.

### **be sick and tired of sth**

We are **sick and tired of** the very high level of taxation on German companies. If we are to be competitive, the government must cut taxes.

### **take sides with sb**

There are not many issues on which I **would take sides with** Walker rather than with Clark, but this is one of them. My figures support everything Walker said.

### **no pestañear, no inmutarse**

Escuchó la crítica del presidente sin pestañear.

### **ver algo con malos ojos**

Mientras que los padres y los hijos no veían con buenos ojos las humanidades, los líderes empresariales insistían en que eran esenciales para desarrollar la capacidad crítica para resolver los problemas.

### **aceptar algo sin rechistar**

La cuota de mercado de P&G cayó del 31,6% al 25,3%. Nadie espera que P&G acepte esto sin rechistar, pero la empresa aún no ha comentado nada sobre las soluciones que va a adoptar.

### **no perder el sueño por algo**

No pierdo el sueño por pasar por un período de pocos ingresos. Pero sí que lo pierdo por cumplir con nuestros futuros compromisos.

### **dar las gracias por ir tirando**

Es verdad que nuestros beneficios han caído mucho, pero en un período de recesión, cuando muchas empresas pequeñas como la nuestra están quebrando, debemos dar las gracias por ir tirando.

### **mirar el lado positivo de las cosas**

El primer ministro Keizo Obuchi abrió el martes el parlamento pidiendo que la gente dejara de ver a través de la bruma de la recesión y mirara el lado positivo de las cosas.

### **hacer una excepción**

De acuerdo con la política de la empresa, no puedes seguir un curso de formación de este tipo hasta que hayas estado con nosotros al menos un año. Pero en tu caso, por motivos operativos, hemos decidido hacer una excepción.

### **estar harto de algo**

Estamos hartos del alto nivel impositivo que grava las empresas alemanas. Si hemos de ser competitivos, el gobierno debe recortar los impuestos.

### **ponerse de parte de alguien**

No hay muchos temas sobre los cuales puedo ponerme de parte de Walker en lugar de Clark, pero éste es uno de ellos. Mis cifras respaldan todo lo que dijo Walker.

**cut one's losses**

Hiring people is an art, not a science. When you realise you've made a mistake, you need **to cut your losses** and start over again.

**clutch at straws**

There's absolutely no chance that the GM will reverse his decision, and Fulton knows it. It's true he's asked for a meeting to re-examine the matter, but **he's clutching at straws**. It's been decided, and that's that.

**put a brave face on sth**

Mr Marcus **puts a brave face on the past few years** of falling profits. "The company has not lost any of its big customers, nor has it seen staff turnover accelerate," he says.

**it's sour grapes**

When they took away his company car, he said he had never liked driving a Mercedes anyway - but of course, that was **just sour grapes**.

**get a grip on oneself**

When they rejected our revised proposals after only a few seconds' deliberation, I thought John was going to lose his temper. But he immediately **got a grip on himself** and even managed to thank them for their time and attention.

**dig one's heels in**

The problem with Angela is that the more you try to convince her she's wrong, **the more she digs her heels in** and refuses to listen.

**whet sb's appetite for sth**

With the privatisation of Deutsche Telekom, millions of individual investors have been brought into German stocks for the first time. DT's success should only **whet** the average German's **appetite for** equities.

**be glad to see the back of sb**

The financial markets were in no doubt about how to react to the resignation of the

**reducir las pérdidas**

Contratar a la gente es un arte, no una ciencia. Cuando te das cuenta de que has cometido un error, tienes que reducir las pérdidas y volver a empezar.

**aferrarse a una esperanza vana**

No hay la mínima posibilidad de que el director general cambie de parecer, y Fulton lo sabe. Es verdad que ha pedido una reunión para volver a examinar el asunto, pero se está aferrando a una esperanza vana. La decisión ha sido ya tomada y no hay vuelta de hoja.

**poner al mal tiempo buena cara**

Mr Marcus pone al mal tiempo buena cara sobre los cada vez más reducidos beneficios de los últimos años. "La empresa no ha perdido ninguno de sus grandes clientes, ni ha visto en ningún momento incrementarse la renovación de la plantilla", dijo.

**las uvas están verdes**

Cuando le quitaron su automóvil de empresa, dijo que nunca le había gustado conducir un Mercedes - pero claro, es que las uvas estaban verdes.

**controlarse**

Cuando rechazaron nuestras propuestas tras algunos segundos de deliberación, pensé que John iba a explotar. Pero enseguida logró controlarse e incluso consiguió darles las gracias por su tiempo y atención.

**ser tozudo, mantenerse en sus trece**

El problema con Ángela es que cuanto más se intenta convencerla de que está equivocada, más se mantiene en sus trece, y se niega a escuchar.

**hacer que uno tome el gusto por algo**

Con la privatización de Deutsche Telekom, millones de inversores individuales se han visto atraídos por primera vez por las acciones alemanas. El éxito de DT debería hacer que el alemán medio tome gusto por los valores del capital.

**estar contento de haberse quitado a alguien de encima.**

Los mercados financieros no dudaron de cómo reaccionar ante la renuncia del controvertido

controversial German finance minister — **they were glad to see the back of him**.

### **take a hard line on sth**

The Clinton administration **had taken a hard line** on China's membership of the WTO until this year. It now argues that disputes over trade with Beijing can be settled more easily in a multilateral framework.

### **grin and bear it**

There has not been any sustained period of economic growth since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. And the only thing the government can tell the people is **to grin and bear it**, growth is just around the corner.

### **at the drop of a hat**

If finding an attractive and appropriate location is important, many agencies can provide a short-list of suitable sites **at the drop of a hat**.

### **to make a virtue of necessity**

More than one middle-aged corporate employee, on losing his job, has learned **to make a virtue of necessity** and recycled himself as a consultant.

### **pick up the pieces**

Why do many so-called failures find success the second time around? How are so many entrepreneurs able **to pick up the pieces** and start all over again? You might say that they fail to succeed.

### **lose heart**

He's already shown his invention to dozens of companies, but they've all turned it down. After so many rejections, he's beginning **to lose heart**.

### **turn a blind eye**

I consider myself a reasonably tolerant and broad-minded person, but I cannot **turn a blind eye** to an office romance which is disrupting the day-to-day operation of this department.

### **turn a deaf ear**

**Turning a deaf ear** to government advice, rice farmers in Thailand have increased their cultivation areas by 45% above the state-recommended limit.

ministro de finanzas alemán; se alegraron de habérselo quitado de encima.

### **adoptar una postura firme con respecto a algo**

Hasta este año la administración Clinton había adoptado una postura firme con respecto a la inclusión de China en la OMC. Ahora insisten en que las disputas comerciales con Beijing se pueden resolver más fácilmente con una estructura multilateral.

### **aguantarse**

Desde que la Unión Soviética se hundió en 1991, no ha conocido ningún período de crecimiento económico. Y lo único que el gobierno puede decir a la gente es que aguante, que el crecimiento está a la vuelta de la esquina.

### **en cualquier momento**

Si resulta importante encontrar una ubicación atractiva y apropiada, muchas agencias pueden proporcionar en cualquier momento una lista reducida de lugares adecuados.

### **hacer de la necesidad virtud**

Al perder su empleo, más de un empleado corporativo de mediana edad ha aprendido a hacer de la necesidad virtud y se ha reciclado como consultor.

### **volver a empezar, rehacer su vida**

¿Por qué tantos supuestos fracasados tienen éxito la segunda vez que lo intentan? ¿Cómo es que tantos empresarios son capaces de volver a empezar? Se podría decir que han fracasado para tener éxito.

### **descorazonarse, desanimarse**

Ya ha mostrado su invento a docenas de empresas, pero todas lo han rechazado. Tras tantos rechazos, está empezando a desanimarse.

### **hacer la vista gorda**

Me considero una persona razonablemente tolerante y de mente abierta, pero no puedo hacer la vista gorda a un romance de oficina que está perturbando la rutina del departamento.

### **hacer oídos sordos**

Haciendo oídos sordos a los consejos del gobierno, los cultivadores de arroz de Tailandia han incrementado sus zonas de cultivo de un 45% por encima del límite recomendado por el estado.



## 24. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To limit one's losses by putting an end to their cause: Deberíamos cortar por lo sano y abandonar el negocio.
- 2** *(used when a person fails to get what he wants and then claims that he didn't want it anyway)* It's because of envy or bitterness: Dijo que en cualquier caso el trabajo habría resultado aburrido, pero era sólo por envidia.
- 3** To refuse to do something, e.g. change one's opinions, especially when one is under pressure to do so: Se mantuvo en sus trece y no hubo quien la convenciera.
- 4** To be willing to try anything to escape from a difficult or dangerous situation: Se ha aferrado a una esperanza vana.
- 5** To make someone eager to obtain (learn, hear, see, etc.) more of something: La experiencia habla hecho que le tomara el gusto a viajar por el extranjero.
- 6** To take firm control of oneself: Este tipo de comportamiento no conduce a nada. ¡Contrólatel
- 7** To try to appear happy or unworried in spite of difficulty or misfortune: Estaba muy desilusionada pero puso buena cara.
- 8** To pretend not to notice something: La compañía hace la vista gorda a las llamadas telefónicas particulares.
- 9** To refuse to listen to something, e.g. a request: Hicieron oídos sordos a nuestras advertencias.
- 10** To be happy to get rid of somebody: Me alegré mucho cuando se fueron.
- 11** *(in a bad situation)* To be grateful that some things are not as bad as the rest: Bueno, debemos dar las gracias por los pequeños favores.
- 12** To be uncompromising, to not give in: Whatever the situation, whatever the issue, Mrs Thatcher prided herself on her ability \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** To accept something done to harm one without opposition: Cuando se lo digas, no se va a quedar de brazos cruzados.
- 14** To make an exception: I'm prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ from time to time, if it's necessary, but I have no intention of making a habit of it.
- 15** To manage with something although it may not be what one wanted: Tendremos que arreglárnoslas con lo que tenemos.
- 16** To not worry excessively or be anxious about something: No voy a perder el sueño por ello.
- 17** To restore order to something after a fight or other unexpected event: Está tratando de rehacer su vida.
- 18** Not to show any signs of emotion: Cuando él anunció su dimisión, ella ni se inmutó.
- 19** To become discouraged: Han perdido la ilusión por el proyecto.
- 20** To concentrate on the advantages rather than the disadvantages of a situation: Siempre le ve el lado bueno a todo.
- 21** To disapprove of something: Ven este tipo de comportamiento con muy malos ojos.
- 22** At any moment, without warning: Podrían despedirnos a todos sin más ni más.
- 23** To support one person in an argument rather than another: Me niego a tomar partido por nadie cuando empiezan a discutir.
- 24** To suffer pain or disappointment without complaining: No tendrás más remedio que poner al mal tiempo buena cara.
- 25** To be very annoyed at something: Estamos hartos de tus quejas.

## 25. Opportunities

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### take advantage of sth

No European country has been more aggressive than Germany about **taking advantage of** new opportunities in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

### make the most of sth

Because the cost of travel can also be measured in lost work time, it's important to make sure you **make the most of** your travel time, by using modern devices like cellular phones, pagers and laptop computers.

### kill two birds with one stone

Go ahead and take your cellular phone and modem to the beach. On a working vacation you **kill two birds with one stone**: you get a relaxing change of scene and you get some work done.

### It's a blessing in disguise

Last year's crises in the emerging markets **were a blessing in disguise** for the US, as the economy benefited from cheaper imports and lower commodity prices.

### have the best of both worlds

The guidelines which the IRS uses to decide a worker's status, i.e. whether he's an employee or an independent contractor, say essentially that he can't **have the best of both worlds**. He's either one or the other.

### play one's cards right

**If he plays his cards right**, he'll be running this company when old Pierrie retires.

### have a crack at sth

Household goods, furniture, consumer electronics, drugs, toys, home mortgages, automobiles, insurance, health care: all are areas in which one or more companies **are having a crack at** being the next Amazon.com.

### let sth slip through one's fingers

Through a mixture of ignorance and complacency, they let the chance of a major contract **slip through their fingers**.

### while the going is good

Business is rather slack at the moment. *Why don't you take a couple of weeks' holiday **while the going's good**? Who can say when you'll get the chance again?*

### aprovechar algo

Ningún país europeo ha sido tan agresivo como Alemania a la hora de aprovechar las nuevas oportunidades en Europa del Este y en la antigua Unión Soviética.

### aprovechar algo al máximo

Como el coste de los viajes también se puede medir en tiempo de trabajo perdido, es importante asegurarse de que aprovechas al máximo tu tiempo durante el viaje, usando aparatos modernos como el móvil, el busca y el ordenador portátil.

### matar dos pájaros de un tiro

Ámate y llévate el móvil y el módem a la playa. Durante unas vacaciones de trabajo, puedes matar dos pájaros de un tiro: cambias un poco de ambiente y haces algo de trabajo.

### no hay mal que por bien no venga que por bien no venga

Como no hay mal que por bien no venga, para los Estados Unidos la crisis del año pasado en los mercados emergentes resultó beneficiosa, ya que la economía se benefició de importaciones más baratas y mercancías a precios más bajos.

### tener todas las ventajas

Las pautas que usa Hacienda para determinar la situación de un trabajador, es decir, si es empleado o autónomo, establecen que uno no puede tenerlo todo. Es una cosa u otra.

### jugar bien las cartas

Si juega bien sus cartas, estará al mando de esta empresa cuando el viejo Pierrie se retire.

### intentar algo

Los artículos para el hogar, los muebles, la electrónica, las medicinas, los juguetes, las hipotecas, los automóviles, los seguros, los servicios sanitarios: éstas son las áreas en las cuales una o más empresas están intentando convertirse en el próximo Amazon.com.

### dejar escapar una oportunidad

Por una mezcla de ignorancia y autocomplacencia, dejaron que se les escapara la oportunidad de conseguir un contrato importante.

### mientras podamos

El negocio está algo flojo de momento. ¿Por qué no te tomas unas vacaciones de un par de semanas **mientras puedas**? ¿Quién sabe cuándo volverás a tener esta oportunidad?

**break new ground**

When the Hubco project was negotiated in the mid-1980s, **it broke new ground** through the innovative use of World Bank guarantees and rapidly became a model for such projects.

**make hay while the sun shines**

Low interest rates, a bull market for stocks, massive profits - in short, this is as good as it gets on Wall Street. Smart investors are **making hay while the sun shines**.

**strike while the iron's hot**

The boss is in a really good mood this morning because of all the new orders we've received. If you still want to ask for a raise, I suggest you **strike while the iron is hot**.

**not look a gift horse in the mouth**

Seeing that I had so much work to do, he offered to help me. Well, I wasn't going to **look a gift horse in the mouth**, was I? I accepted immediately.

**hand sth to sb on a plate**

You have to make a lot of calls, you have to do a lot of travelling. It's damned hard work. But then you don't expect people to **hand you their business on a plate**, do you?

**out of the blue**

Even in today's world of giant mergers, yesterday's takeover of Rothmans International by British American Tobacco came **out of the blue**: a nice surprise or a nasty shock, depending on your viewpoint.

**miss the boat**

As any budding entrepreneur knows, growth is a tricky thing. Grow too slowly, **and you miss the boat**; expand too quickly, and you may harm the business.

**rise to the occasion**

During the three months the department head was in hospital, Henry had to run everything by himself. It can't have been easy for him, but he **rose to the occasion** splendidly.

**few and far between**

During the 1950s, a sort of golden age for the construction industry, builders and clients got along pretty well. Construction firms operated on margins of about 10%, and lawsuits **were few and far between**.

**abrir nuevos caminos**

Cuando se negoció el proyecto Hubco a mediados de los años 80, abrió nuevos caminos con el uso innovador de las garantías del Banco Mundial y se convirtió rápidamente en el modelo a seguir en proyectos de este tipo.

**a la ocasión la pintan calva**

Bajos tipos de interés, un mercado bursátil en auge, beneficios masivos - en resumen, la mejor situación posible en la bolsa. Los inversores inteligentes están al tanto, ya que a la ocasión la pintan calva.

**aprovechar la ocasión**

El jefe está de muy buen humor esta mañana por todos los nuevos pedidos que hemos recibido. Si aún quieres un aumento de sueldo, sugiero que no desaproveches la ocasión.

**a caballo regalado no le mires el diente**

Al ver que tenía tanto trabajo que hacer, se ofreció para ayudarme. Bueno, a caballo regalado no le mires el diente, ¿no? Así que acepté de inmediato.

**poner algo a alguien en bandeja**

Hay que hacer muchas llamadas, hay que viajar mucho. El trabajo es muy difícil. Pero, por otra parte, uno no espera que la gente le ponga sus contratos en bandeja, ¿verdad?

**como llovido del cielo**

Incluso en el mundo actual de las grandes fusiones, la adquisición de Rothmans International por British American Tobacco vino como llovida del cielo: una sorpresa agradable o un disgusto horroroso, depende de cómo se mire.

**perder el tren**

Como lo sabe cualquier empresario novato, el crecimiento es una cosa complicada. Si se crece demasiado despacio, se pierde el tren; si se crece demasiado rápido se puede perjudicar el negocio.

**estar a la altura de las circunstancias**

Durante los tres meses en los que el jefe del departamento estuvo en el hospital, Henry tuvo que llevarlo todo solo. No debió ser fácil, pero estuvo a la altura de las circunstancias.

**poquísimos, muy escasos**

Durante los años 50, una especie de época dorada para la industria de la construcción, los constructores y los clientes se llevaban bastante bien. Las empresas de construcción operaban con un margen de beneficio del 10% y las demandas judiciales eran muy escasas.

**gain a foothold**

P&G saw the need for a pleasant-smelling detergent in Eastern Europe (local detergents smelled of chemicals), so it introduced a low-priced version of its well-known European brand, Ariel. Its aim was **to gain a foothold** in the market.

**get in on the ground floor of sth**

"We hired Jeff in 1981," says Gates, "because he was a very energetic, sharp guy who wanted **to get in on the ground floor** of the software industry."

**be up for grabs**

As you all know, Dick Wallace will be retiring at the end of the year. That means, of course, that **his job will be up for grabs**. Any of you who are interested can get a standard application form from administration.

**you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink**

It's always sad when an apprentice refuses to make the most of the opportunities we offer him here. But there you are: **you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink**.

**every cloud has a silver lining**

Sometimes dismissal provides the push you need to break out of a rut. Don't be afraid to *look for work in a new industry or consider a new type of job*. **Look for the silver lining**.

**have a finger in every pie**

As well as being a member of the town council, he's on the board of four different companies, and he belongs to at least half a dozen clubs and societies. **He has a finger in every pie**.

**the sky's the limit**

In the past we sold exclusively to smaller businesses. The trend for the future will be to attract larger companies, including huge corporations, as clients. In terms of potential sales, **the sky's the limit**.

**lograr establecerse**

P&G vio la necesidad que tenía Europa del Este de un detergente de olor agradable (los detergentes locales oían a química), así que introdujeron una versión barata de Ariel, su conocida marca europea. Su meta era **lograr establecerse** en el mercado.

**meterse en algo desde el principio**

"Contratamos a Jeff en 1981," dice Gates, "porque era un tipo listo con mucha energía que quería introducirse desde el principio en la industria del software."

**estar libre, estar disponible**

Como todos sabéis, Dick Wallace se jubilará a finales de año. Eso significa naturalmente que su puesto quedará vacante. Todos aquellos que estéis interesados, podéis conseguir la solicitud standard en administración.

**puedes darle un consejo a alguien, pero no puedes obligarlo a que lo siga**

Siempre es triste cuando un aprendiz se niega a sacar el máximo provecho a las oportunidades que le ofrecemos. Pero, así es la vida: se le puede dar un consejo a alguien, pero no se le puede obligar a que lo siga.

**no hay mal que por bien no venga**

A veces un despido le ofrece a uno el empuje que necesita para salir de su rutina. No hay que *tener miedo de buscar trabajo en una industria nueva o de tener en mente un nuevo tipo de trabajo*. Hay que ser optimista.

**estar metido en todo**

Además de ser miembro del consejo municipal, está en la junta de cuatro empresas distintas y pertenece al menos a media docena de clubs y sociedades. Está **metido en todo**.

**todo es posible, no hay límite**

En el pasado vendíamos exclusivamente a empresas pequeñas. La tendencia en el futuro es la de atraer como clientes a empresas más grandes, incluyendo las multinacionales. En términos de ventas potenciales, **todo es posible**.

## 25. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To allow someone to obtain something easily, without having to work for it: If we want to increase our market share, we're going to have to take business from our competitors; they aren't going to \_\_\_\_.
- 2** Completely unexpectedly: La carta llegó cuando menos me lo esperaba.
- 3** To fulfil two purposes with one action: Así podríamos matar dos pájaros de un tiro.
- 4** Very infrequent, rare or uncommon: Los buenos profesores son contadísimos
- 5** To handle an unexpected situation well: Estuvieron a la altura de las circunstancias.
- 6** To act correctly or intelligently to gain an advantage in a particular situation: If you \_\_\_\_, he may appoint you as his successor.
- 7** To be involved in many activities, often for personal gain: Está metido en todo.
- 8** To not find fault with a gift or offer of help: A caballo regalado no le mires el dentado.
- 9** To be too late to profit from an opportunity: Se me pasó el plazo de solicitud.
- 10** To make good use of something: Aproveché al máximo la oportunidad.
- 11** To get a good position from which further progress can be made: Es difícil introducirse en el mercado japonés.
- 12** (*opportunities, money, etc.*) To lose something, usually through negligence or inactivity: Dejó escapar la oportunidad.
- 13** To participate in the early stages of something, with the promise of future rewards: He said the business would make thousands and offered me the chance \_\_\_\_.
- 14** To have the advantages of two different situations: Tienes todas las ventajas.
- 15** To pioneer something, to make a discovery: Están haciendo trabajo de pioneros en el tratamiento de esta enfermedad.
- 16** While conditions are favourable: Yo que tú lo compraría ahora, aprovechando el buen momento.
- 17** (*saying*) No matter how bad a situation is, something good will always come from it: No hay mal que por bien no venga.
- 18** To be obtainable by anybody: El puesto está vacante.
- 19** To profit from something while one has the chance, especially to have a good time while one can: A la ocasión la pintan calva.
- 20** Something that is disagreeable at first but later proves to be an advantage: No te preocupes, puede que todo sea para bien.
- 21** There are no limits, e.g. to the amount of money that can be earned: China's an inconceivably large market. If we can sell there, \_\_\_\_.
- 22** To make an attempt at something difficult: Déjame probar a ver si puedo arreglarlo.
- 23** (*saying*) You can advise and help a person, but you cannot make him do something he does not want to do: Puedes darle un consejo a alguien, pero no puedes obligarlo a que lo siga.
- 24** To act now, when one is ready and likely to succeed: Mejor que se lo digas ahora, en caliente.
- 25** To put something to the best possible use: Tenemos que aprovechar al máximo este buen tiempo.

## 26. Risk

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### keep one's fingers crossed

Our main competitor is in a better position than us to win this contract. But until they announce the result officially, we're **keeping our fingers crossed**.

### be touch and go

In the end we managed to get an agreement, but it **was touch and go** all the way. The negotiations could have broken down at any moment.

### a shot in the dark

They asked me how much I thought the company was worth and, without thinking, I named a figure. It was a complete **shot in the dark**, but it turned out to be pretty close to the truth.

### a long shot

We just called the magazine and asked them if they'd be interested in doing an article about our service. It was **a long shot**, of course, but it worked. They sent down a reporter and we got lots of free publicity.

### on the off-chance

I don't really know why I keep such detailed files on all my customers. I suppose I do it **on the off-chance** they'll come in useful some day.

### not have a dog's chance

At the beginning of the year they were predicting revenues of \$100 million. However, unless something remarkable happens in the last quarter, **they don't stand a dog's chance** of reaching their target.

### play with fire

Charlene Barshefsky, US trade representative, yesterday pledged to stand firm against domestic pressures to erect trade barriers. "It would be **playing with fire**," she said, "for Americans to limit imports artificially."

### it's anybody's guess

A new world of telecommunications is just opening up, and what will happen in the next five years **is anybody's guess**.

### esperar que todo salga bien

Nuestro principal competidor está en mejor posición para ganar este contrato. Pero hasta que anuncien el resultado oficial, esperemos que todo salga bien.

### no estar nada seguro

Al final conseguimos llegar a un acuerdo, pero, por un instante todo estuvo en el aire. Las negociaciones se podían haber roto en cualquier momento.

### un palo de ciego

Me preguntaron cuánto pensaba que valía la empresa y sin pensármelo, les di una cifra. Fue un palo de ciego, pero resultó estar bastante cerca de la verdad.

### una posibilidad remota

Llamamos a la revista y les preguntamos si estarían interesados en publicar un artículo sobre nuestro servicio. Era una posibilidad remota, claro está, pero funcionó. Enviaron un reportero y conseguimos mucha publicidad gratuita.

### por si acaso

No sé por qué mantengo unos ficheros tan detallados de todos mis clientes. Supongo que lo hago por si acaso algún día me resultan útiles.

### no tener

### ni la más remota posibilidad

A principios de año pensaban conseguir ingresos de 100 millones de dólares. Sin embargo, a no ser que ocurra algo extraordinario, no tienen ni la más remota posibilidad de alcanzar su meta.

### jugar con fuego

Charlene Barshefsky, la representante comercial de los EE UU, prometió ayer mantenerse firme contra las presiones nacionales para levantar las barreras comerciales. "Sería jugar con fuego," dijo, "que los americanos limitaran artificialmente las importaciones."

### vete tú a saber

Se está abriendo un nuevo mundo en el ámbito de las telecomunicaciones, y vete tú a saber lo que ocurrirá en los cinco próximos años.

**skate on thin ice**

I realise you wanted to make the sale, but you were **skating on very thin ice** when you said we could deliver the order in full by September. We have no idea what the production schedule at the plant is going to be.

**push one's luck**

They agreed to waive the penalty clauses when our last consignment was delivered late, but we'd be **pushing our luck** to expect them to do it again.

**be at the mercy of sth**

Once companies could go quietly about their business of manufacturing quality products, innovating, and making a profit without worrying much about the external world. No longer. Today's firms **are at the mercy of** a global economy.

**stick one's neck out**

He'd never risk making a suggestion like that himself. He prefers to let somebody else **stick their neck out** while he waits to see what the reaction is.

**put one's money where one's mouth is**

He talked so much about starting his own business, he had little choice but to **put his money where his mouth was**. "There were people I'd promised jobs to; vendors were coming to me," he said. "I was so far into it, I really couldn't turn back."

**against the odds**

Launching a product without first carefully defining your target market is like shooting with your eyes closed: you may score a hit if you're lucky, but it'll **be against all the odds**.

**leave sb to sink or swim**

In many large corporations, new employees are given a copy of the company handbook and more or less left to **sink or swim**. It's a terrible waste, and one which could so easily be avoided

**have a close shave**

My God, **that was a close shave!** I almost spilled my coffee all over the keyboard.

**pisar un terreno resbaladizo**

Me doy cuenta de que querías hacer la venta, pero estabas pisando un terreno resbaladizo cuando dijiste que podríamos entregar todo el pedido para septiembre. No tenemos ni idea de cuál va a ser el plan de producción de la planta.

**tentar la suerte**

Estuvieron de acuerdo en renunciar a las cláusulas de penalización cuando nuestro último envío fue entregado fuera de plazo, pero estaríamos tentando la suerte al esperar que lo vuelvan a hacer.

**estar a merced de algo**

Hubo un tiempo en que las empresas podían llevar a cabo tranquilamente sus negocios fabricando productos de calidad, innovando y consiguiendo beneficios sin preocuparse mucho por el mundo exterior. Ya no. Las empresas de hoy en día están a merced de la economía global.

**arriesgarse, aventurarse**

Nunca se arriesgaría a hacer una sugerencia semejante por su cuenta. Prefiere dejar que otro se arriesgue mientras él espera a ver cuál es la reacción.

**obrar de acuerdo con lo que uno dice**

Habló tanto sobre poner en marcha su propio negocio que no tuvo más remedio que obrar de acuerdo con lo que había dicho. "Había prometido puestos de trabajo a la gente; los vendedores acudían a mí", dijo. "Me había metido hasta tal punto, que ya no podía volverme atrás."

**contra todo pronóstico**

Lanzar un producto sin haber definido antes con precisión tus objetivos de mercado es como disparar con los ojos cerrados: puede que des en el blanco si tienes suerte, pero iría contra todo pronóstico.

**abandonar a alguien a su suerte**

En muchas empresas grandes, a los nuevos empleados se les entrega una copia del manual de la empresa y se les abandona a su suerte. Es una pena y es algo que se podría evitar fácilmente.

**salvarse por los pelos**

¡Dios mío, nos salvamos por los pelos! Casi se me cae el café encima del teclado.

**time will tell**

We've set ourselves an ambitious target. Whether we'll be able to meet it or not, only **time will tell**.

**cut it fine**

Are you sure you'll have enough time to attend the meeting at 11 and then get out to Heathrow for check-in at 12:30? That's **cutting it rather fine**, isn't it?

**play it safe**

Grubco's offer is tempting, but they're a new company, and we don't know much about them. I prefer **to play it safe** and give this contract to a well-established firm, someone we've already had dealings with.

**carry out a spot check**

If a storekeeper complains a product's not selling, it may be because it is badly displayed. Hence, the best sales reps **carry out spot checks** to see exactly where and how their products are shelved in the store.

**an unknown quantity**

We know how six of the members of the committee will vote, but Hedley, Forsythe and Patterson **are unknown quantities**. They could vote either way.

**hit and miss**

Their delivery service is very **hit and miss**; sometimes you get the goods within 24 hours and sometimes you have to wait for weeks.

**at random**

The survey involved 500 small and medium-sized companies selected by the computer **at random**.

**hang in the balance**

The sunflower seed crop is still **hanging in the balance**. Argentina's bees, which pollinate the flowers, have been busy, but in some areas the crop has been hit by rain and fungal infection.

**be out on a limb**

You can't achieve anything without good backup. It may be an economic crisis which causes you to fail, because you find **you're out on a limb** and can't do everything yourself. You have to have good people behind you.

**el tiempo lo dirá**

Nos hemos fijado una meta ambiciosa. Si la podemos alcanzar o no, sólo el tiempo lo dirá.

**dejar poco margen**

¿Estás seguro de que tendrás tiempo suficiente para llegar a la reunión a las 11 y después ir hasta Heathrow para coger el vuelo de las 12:30? Es dejar poco margen, ¿no crees?

**ir a lo seguro**

La oferta de Grubco es tentadora, pero es una empresa nueva y no sabemos mucho acerca de ellos. Prefiero ir a lo seguro y dar este contrato a una empresa bien establecida, alguien con quien ya hayamos tratado.

**hacer una inspección al azar**

Si el dueño de una tienda se queja de que un producto no se está vendiendo, puede que sea porque está mal presentado. Por lo tanto, los buenos comerciales llevan a cabo **inspecciones rutinarias** para ver exactamente dónde y cómo están expuestos sus productos en la tienda.

**una incógnita**

Sabemos cómo votarán seis de los miembros del comité, pero Hendley, Forsythe y Patterson son una **incógnita**. Podrían votar a favor de cualquiera.

**deja mucho al azar**

Su servicio de entrega deja mucho al azar; unas veces se recibe la mercancía en 24 horas y otras hay que esperar semanas.

**al azar**

La encuesta involucraba a 500 pequeñas y medianas empresas seleccionadas al azar por ordenador.

**estar en juego**

La cosecha de semillas de girasol aún está en el aire. Las abejas argentinas, que polinizan las flores, han estado muy ocupadas, pero en algunas zonas la cosecha se ha visto afectada por la lluvia y por una infección de hongos.

**estar en situación peligrosa**

No se puede conseguir nada sin un buen respaldo. Puede que una crisis económica te haga fracasar, porque te encuentras en una **situación peligrosa** y no puedes hacerlo todo tú solo. Tienes que tener a gente buena detrás tuyo.



## 26. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To perform a random test: We can't check every article that leaves the workshop, but we do \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that the highest level of quality is maintained.
- 2** In the hope (that something will happen): No pensaba encontrarlo en la oficina, pero fui por si acaso.
- 3** A factor which cannot be calculated or predicted: Todavía está por ver cómo es el nuevo director de ventas.
- 4** To rely too much on continuing good luck: Ten cuidado, estás tentando la suerte.
- 5** Inexact, random, sometimes good and sometimes bad: Todo es un poco a la buena de Dios.
- 6** To be defenceless against something: The world's stock markets are largely in the hands of people under 25 years of age, and, whether we like it or not, we are \_\_\_\_\_ of their hunches and impulses.
- 7** To wish for good luck by crossing two fingers of the same hand: -¿Vendrá mañana? -Toca madera.
- 8** Without a deliberate intention or according to any specific criteria: Fueron seleccionados al azar.
- 9** (an event, a person's future, etc.) To be undecided and at a critical point: Su carrera estaba en juego.
- 10** To not have even a very small chance of success: No teníamos la más mínima posibilidad de ganar.
- 11** To take a personal risk, e.g. by doing or saying something that might get one into trouble: Me arriesgué y le ofrecí el trabajo.
- 12** To be alone in a risky position: Se quedó solo defendiendo el proyecto de investigación.
- 13** To be a highly uncertain situation, close to both success and failure: Durante algún tiempo no estuvo nada seguro de que fuera a estar listo a tiempo.
- 14** To take no risks: It would have been cheaper to use a small agency, but we decided \_\_\_\_\_ and use one of the big ones, where quality was guaranteed.
- 15** To leave someone to succeed or to fail by his own efforts: After a three-day orientation course, new recruits are \_\_\_\_\_. Whether they survive depends entirely on them.
- 16** To be engaged in a risky activity: Están pisando un terreno resbaladizo.
- 17** To put one's declared intentions or promises into action: ¡A ver si obras en consecuencia con lo que dices!
- 18** To leave oneself with very little time to do something: ¿Aún no se ha ido? ¡Tiene muy poco margen de tiempo!
- 19** A random guess which is unlikely to be right: I had no idea where the goods had come from but I made a wild guess anyway. It was \_\_\_\_\_, but it proved to be correct.
- 20** (a danger, an injury, a failure, etc.) Something that was only just avoided, at the last moment: Al final ganamos, pero por los pelos.
- 21** (an event, a result, etc.) It's extremely uncertain: Vete tú a saber qué va a pasar.
- 22** In spite of the difficulties that would normally make something impossible: Obtuvieron el contrato contra todo pronóstico.
- 23** To take foolish and unnecessary risks: If you're borrowing money from the company account to cover your personal overdraft, all I can say is that you're \_\_\_\_\_.
- 24** (saying) Only the future can provide the answer: El tiempo lo dirá.
- 25** A remote possibility: No es seguro ni mucho menos pero en una de esas funciona.

## 27. Competition

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### give sb an edge

At one stage it was thought that the American car industry was doomed to disappear. New computer technologies, however, have once again **given it an edge** over the Japanese.

### gain ground

Many of the expensive assets large retailers have built up may become obsolete — especially as cheaper distribution channels, such as the Internet, **gain ground**.

### play into sb's hands

Why are they treating you so badly? It's because they can't dismiss you, so they want you to be so fed-up you'll leave by yourself. If you resign, you'll be **playing right into their hands**.

### stay one jump ahead of sb

Microsoft believes in **staying at least one jump ahead** of everybody. When you join the company's product planning division, you get a card saying: "Your job is to make our own products obsolete."

### meet one's match

Bill Bradley is one of the toughest negotiators I've ever known, but I have to admit that **he met his match** today. They forced him to make concessions on practically every issue.

### a nail in sb's coffin

Marks & Spencer, announcing that it intends to buy more goods from abroad, may be hammering the final **nail into the coffin** of large parts of the UK clothing industry, already weakened by the strong pound and a slowdown in demand.

### be neck and neck

Some studies suggest Chinese consumers would be willing to spend a year's salary on a PC, says Daniel Wong, China manager for AST, which is running **neck and neck** with Compaq for market leadership.

### beat sb to the punch

Waiting until your product is absolutely perfect is risky, since someone else could **beat you to the punch** by patenting a similar product while you're still working on it.

### dar a alguien una clara ventaja

En una época se pensó que la industria americana del automóvil estaba condenada a desaparecer. Sin embargo, las nuevas tecnologías por ordenador le han dado de nuevo una clara ventaja sobre los japoneses.

### ganar terreno

Muchos de los productos caros que los grandes minoristas han ido almacenando pueden hacerse obsoletos, especialmente si los canales de distribución más baratos como el de Internet ganan terreno.

### hacerle el juego a alguien

¿Por qué te tratan tan mal? Es porque no te pueden despedir, así que quieren que te hartes hasta que te marches. Si renuncias, estarás haciéndoles el juego.

### ir un paso por delante de alguien

Microsoft espera ir al menos un paso por delante de los demás. Cuando te unes a la división de planificación de la empresa, te dan una tarjeta que pone: "Tu trabajo es conseguir que nuestros productos se queden pronto obsoletos."

### encontrar la horma de su zapato

Bill Bradley es uno de los negociadores más duros que he conocido jamás, pero tengo que admitir que hoy ha encontrado la horma de su zapato. Le obligaron a hacer concesiones en casi todos los puntos.

### un clavo en el ataúd de alguien

Al anunciar que piensa comprar más mercancía en el extranjero, Marks & Spencer puede que esté metiendo el último clavo en el ataúd de gran parte de la industria textil del Reino Unido, ya debilitada por una libra fuerte y una desaceleración de la demanda.

### ir parejos

Algunos estudios sugieren que los consumidores chinos estarían dispuestos a gastarse el sueldo de un año en un PC, según Daniel Wong, el gerente chino de AST, que va emparejada con Compaq en el liderazgo del mercado.

### llegar antes que uno

Esperar a que tu producto sea absolutamente perfecto es un riesgo, ya que otro podría llegar antes que tú a patentar un producto similar mientras estás trabajando aún en ello.

**keep pace with sb**

As regards productivity, we must either **keep pace with** our main competitors or accept that we are going to lose our present market share.

**hold one's own**

With a new line of digital copiers, and a new focus on the bottom line, Xerox is showing that it can **hold its own** against the likes of Hewlett-Packard and Kodak.

**have a head start over sb**

Even if Compaq, Gateway and the others move into direct selling, Dell **has a huge head start**.

**give sb a run for his money**

As a large international firm, they're favourites to win this contract. On the other hand, as a local firm we're certainly in a position to give them a **run for their money**.

**be in the running**

Disney is **now in the running** to build theme parks in Hong Kong and possibly China.

**the rat race**

When I retired I felt like a burden had been taken off my shoulders. I never slept better in my life. I was out of **the rat race**.

**jump on the bandwagon**

Thanks to Honda, Sony, Seiko, Toyota and Nissan, Japanese industry is well known all over the world. All other brands subsequently **jumped on the bandwagon**. Aiwa and Sanyo, for example, managed to take advantage of the image created by the leaders.

**get in on the act**

This will almost certainly be the last time that 60 out of the World Cup's 64 games are broadcast live on terrestrial television. By 2002, subscription channels will have **got in on the act**.

**be streets ahead of sb**

From an engineering point of view, the Japanese are designing car engines which are **streets ahead** of ours in terms of performance and fuel consumption. All we can hope to do is offer something cheaper.

**llevar el mismo ritmo que alguien**

En cuanto a la productividad, debemos mantener el ritmo de nuestros principales competidores o bien aceptar que perdamos nuestra cuota actual de mercado.

**defenderse, saber defenderse**

Con una línea novedosa de copadoras digitales y un nuevo enfoque con respecto al precio, Xerox está mostrando que puede defenderse contra los productos similares de Hewlett-Packard y Kodak.

**empezar con gran ventaja con respecto a alguien**

Incluso si Compaq, Gateway y demás se lanzan a la venta directa, Dell ya tiene una gran ventaja con respecto a ellos.

**hacer sudar alguien**

Al ser una gran empresa internacional, ellos son los favoritos para conseguir este contrato. Por otra parte, al ser una empresa local, nos encontramos sin duda en una buena posición para hacerles sudar.

**tener posibilidades de ganar**

Ahora Disney tiene la posibilidad de ganar los contratos para la creación de parques temáticos en Hong Kong y posiblemente en China.

**la competitividad despiadada**

Cuando me jubilé, sentí como si me hubiesen quitado un gran peso de encima. Nunca había dormido mejor en mi vida. Me había librado de la competitividad despiadada.

**subirse al tren**

Gracias a Honda, Sony, Seiko, Toyota y Nissan, la industria japonesa es muy conocida en todo el mundo. Todas las demás marcas se han subido al tren. Aiwa y Sanyo, por ejemplo, consiguieron aprovecharse de la imagen creada por los líderes.

**subirse al carro**

Ésta será, sin duda, la última vez que 60 de los 64 partidos del Mundial sean transmitidos por televisión terrestre. Para el 2002, los canales de pago se habrán subido al carro.

**estar muy por encima de alguien**

Desde el punto de vista de la ingeniería, los japoneses están diseñando motores de coches que están muy por encima de los nuestros en cuanto a rendimiento y consumo. Lo único que podemos hacer es ofrecer algo más barato.

**knock spots off sb**

Fujitsu is still predicting profits. On this score alone, **it knocks spots off** its rivals among Japan's big-five electronics groups, all of whom are predicting substantial losses.

**come off second best**

She's one of the most aggressive and competitive people I've ever met. She hates **coming off second best** — in business, in sports, in arguments, in anything.

**be out of the running**

Of the 15 candidates we interviewed, 11 had no experience of Computer Aided Design at all, so they were automatically **out of the running**. That left us with a shortlist of 4.

**set the pace**

Today, hundreds of new bioengineering firms are **setting the pace** for the biotechnical revolution. These pioneers are blazing a trail for what many regard as the second great technological revolution in world history.

**stand the pace**

Actually working in the Stock Exchange, buying and selling, is one of the most stressful jobs you can imagine. Only young people can do it because once you reach a certain age, you just can't **stand the pace** any more.

**in the teeth of sth**

It is a highly prestigious contract and we can congratulate ourselves on having won it **in the teeth of** fierce competition.

**no holds barred**

In the modern era of tough customers, **no-holds-barred** competition, and relentless change, it is vital that every single employee understands the economic structure and strategy of the company.

**be on the cutting edge of sth**

Separated from the centre of information and creative exchanges, film companies outside Hollywood generally have more trouble remaining **on the cutting edge** of business practices and technical virtuosity.

**vencer fácilmente a alguien**

Fujitsu sigue pronosticando beneficios. Aunque sólo sea por eso, vencerá fácilmente a sus rivales, que están entre los cinco grandes grupos electrónicos de Japón, quienes prevén grandes pérdidas.

**salir derrotado**

Ella es una de las personas más agresivas y competitivas que conozco. Le sabe muy mal que le derroten en los negocios, en los deportes, en las discusiones, en todo.

**no tener posibilidades de ganar**

De los 15 aspirantes que entrevistamos, 11 no tenían experiencia alguna con el Diseño Asistido por Ordenador (CAD), así que no tenían ninguna posibilidad de ganar. Eso nos dejó con una corta lista de 4.

**marcar la pauta**

Actualmente, cientos de nuevas empresas de bio-ingeniería están marcando la pauta de la revolución bio-técnica. Estos pioneros están abriendo el camino hacia lo que muchos consideran la segunda gran revolución tecnológica de la historia mundial.

**soportar el ritmo**

Trabajar en la bolsa comprando y vendiendo es uno de los trabajos más estresantes que puede uno imaginarse. Sólo lo pueden hacer los jóvenes porque una vez que se llega a cierta edad, ya no se puede soportar el ritmo.

**a pesar de algo**

Es un contrato muy prestigioso y podemos felicitarlos por haberlo conseguido a pesar de la competencia feroz.

**sin restricción, sin cuartel**

En esta era moderna de los clientes duros, de la competencia sin cuartel y de los cambios incasantes, es vital que cada uno de los empleados entienda la estructura económica y la estrategia de la empresa.

**estar en la vanguardia de algo**

Alejadas del centro de información y de los intercambios creativos, las productoras cinematográficas establecidas fuera de Hollywood suelen tener más problemas para mantenerse en la vanguardia de las tendencias empresariales y de la tecnología.

## 27. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To have an advantage over others, especially at the beginning of a race: Nos llevan ventaja, así que es probable que ganen.
- 2** To be far better than someone: La compañía está muy por encima de la competencia.
- 3** To defeat someone very easily: According to Apple, their latest machines \_\_\_\_\_ all comparable PCs.
- 4** To do exactly what somebody, e.g. an opponent, wants one to do, usually involuntarily: No le hagas el juego, dile que no.
- 5** To be beaten in a fight or competition: No tengo intención de quedar en un segundo puesto.
- 6** To establish the speed or rate which others will try to follow: Europa ha marcado la pauta para la reforma.
- 7** To provide someone with strong competition: No importa, le hicimos sudar.
- 8** To be able to work or perform at the same level of achievement as others: Las cosas se desarrollan demasiado rápido para él.
- 9** To have a chance of winning: Todavía tenemos posibilidades de conseguir el contrato.
- 10** To no longer have a chance of winning: Han quedado eliminados.
- 11** No longer following any rules in one's efforts to win: Tiene que ser una discusión franca, sin ningún tipo de restricciones.
- 12** To give someone an advantage: Nos colocaría en una posición de ventaja con respecto a nuestros competidores.
- 13** To be in the forefront of something, especially to be in advance of one's competitors: Estamos en la vanguardia del desarrollo tecnológico.
- 14** In spite of something, especially opposition or competition: Los cambios se llevaron a cabo a pesar de la fuerte oposición.
- 15** To anticipate someone's next action and be prepared for it: Nos lleva siempre la delantera.
- 16** To continue to defend oneself in a difficult situation: Se defiende bien con los socios principales.
- 17** To progress at the same speed as someone else: No le puedo seguir el ritmo.
- 18** To begin to do something that others are doing because it seems to be profitable or advantageous: Se nos acusó de subirnos al carro.
- 19** To do something started by others, in order to enjoy the same success: Trató de meterse en el asunto.
- 20** To do or obtain something before someone else has time to: Alguien se le había adelantado.
- 21** To be even in a race or other competition: Los dos corredores van parejos.
- 22** To come up against an opponent who is likely to beat one: Dennis Bartley es la horma de su zapato.
- 23** Another contribution to someone's failure or destruction: éste es otro paso hacia su destrucción.
- 24** To make progress, to become more important: El movimiento de protección del medio ambiente está ganando terreno.
- 25** The pitiless struggle for success in business: Estaba decidido a escapar de la excesiva competitividad de la vida moderna.

## 28. Teamwork

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **two heads are better than one**

I enjoy working with John on this kind of project, not only because **two heads are better than one**, but also because we have different and complementary ways of looking at things.

### **too many cooks spoil the broth**

Each team member is free to express his opinion, but once the team leader has made a decision, everybody has to accept it. That's the only way to prevent **too many cooks from spoiling the broth**.

### **pull one's weight**

If one person's not **pulling his weight** in a small company, it can affect the productivity and morale of everybody else. People think, "Why am I doing this person's work?"

### **be on the same wavelength**

A code of ethics gives you a structure within which to make decisions. That code will help ensure everyone in your company is **on the same wavelength**.

### **have a hand in sth**

Fundamentally, this is Weill's company. There is nothing of significance that goes on here that he doesn't personally **have a hand in**. He's involved in every detail of the business.

### **play ball with sb**

We tried to persuade him to forget about official company policy and treat the matter as an exceptional case, but he refused **to play ball**. For him, company policy is a sacred text.

### **be in the same boat**

Juggling career and family obligations, these women tend to empathise with employees who **are in the same boat**. Thus, firms owned by women are more likely to offer flexible schedules that make life a bit easier for working mothers.

### **be in good company**

The corporation was founded in 1925 by Walter P. Chrysler, a mechanic working for General Motors. He rose to division head, but couldn't get along with GM founder William Durant. In that, **he was in good company**, for Durant was a notoriously difficult man.

### **cuatro ojos ven más que dos**

Disfruto trabajando con John en este tipo de proyecto, no sólo porque cuatro ojos ven más que dos, sino también porque tenemos formas distintas y complementarias de ver las cosas.

### **muchas manos en un plato hacen mucho garabato**

Cada miembro del equipo es libre de expresar su opinión, pero una vez que el líder ha tomado una decisión, todos deben aceptarla. Es la única forma de evitar que el uno por el otro la casa se quede sin barrer.

### **poner de su parte**

Si una persona no está poniendo todo de su parte en una empresa pequeña, ello puede afectar a la productividad y a la moral de los demás. La gente piensa, "¿Por qué estoy haciendo el trabajo de esta persona?"

### **estar en la misma onda**

Un código ético proporciona un marco dentro del cual se toman las decisiones. Ese código ayudará a que todos en la empresa estén en la misma onda.

### **intervenir en algo, participar en algo**

Fundamentalmente, ésta es la empresa de Weill. No ocurre nada importante aquí sin que él intervenga personalmente. Está involucrado en cada detalle de la empresa.

### **cooperar con alguien**

Intentamos persuadirle de que olvidara la política oficial de la empresa y tratara el tema como un caso excepcional, pero se negó a cooperar. Para él, la política de la empresa es sagrada.

### **estar en el mismo barco**

Al compatibilizar las obligaciones laborales con las familiares, estas mujeres tienden a identificarse con las empleadas que están en el mismo barco. Por lo tanto, las empresas que pertenecen a mujeres tienden a ofrecer horarios más flexibles que facilitan la vida de las madres que trabajan fuera de casa.

### **no ser el único**

La empresa fue fundada en 1925 por Walter P. Chrysler, un mecánico que trabajaba para la General Motors. Llegó a ser jefe de división, pero no se llevaba bien con el fundador de GM, William Durant. En ese sentido, no era el único, ya que Durant tenía fama de ser un hombre difícil.

**see eye to eye with sb**

Vietnam and Japan haven't always **seen eye to eye**. But Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi, on an official visit to Vietnam, believes the two countries have much in common.

**the driving force**

When everyone else was tired and discouraged, Jim would always come up with new ideas and find new ways to tackle the problem. He was **the driving force** behind the whole project.

**give sb a hand**

If you have any problems writing the final section of the report, come and see me and I'll **give you a hand with it**.

**go hand in hand**

Global co-operation now **goes hand in hand** with global competition.

**be hand in glove**

Iraq kept up its defiant rhetoric, accusing France of working **hand in glove** with its British and US enemies and demanding an immediate lifting of UN sanctions.

**do sb a good turn**

If it doesn't cost you anything to **do somebody a good turn**, of course you should do it. You never know whose help you might need someday.

**jobs for the boys**

The split in the EU is not just about money and goods. It is also about attitudes to the way the EU is run, about **jobs for the boys** (and girls).

**let the side down**

After showing our Saudi visitors — all strict Moslems — around the works, we took them to lunch. There, I regret to say, Simpson **let the side down** by ordering wine with the meal and insisting that everybody try it.

**sit on the sidelines**

In the late 1980s, IBM **sat on the sidelines** as Toshiba and others created the laptop computer business and even today, Toshiba is still the leader in the laptop business.

**estar de acuerdo con alguien**

Vietnam y Japón no siempre han estado de acuerdo. Pero el primer ministro japonés Keizo Obuchi, en visita oficial a Vietnam, cree que ambos países tienen mucho en común.

**la fuerza motriz**

Cuando todos los demás estaban cansados y desanimados, a Jim siempre se le ocurrían ideas nuevas y nuevas formas de enfocar el problema. Era la fuerza motriz que estaba detrás del proyecto.

**echarle una mano a alguien**

Si tienes algún problema al escribir la sección final del informe, ven a verme y te echaré una mano.

**estar estrechamente relacionados**

La cooperación global está ahora estrechamente relacionada con la competencia global.

**ser uña y carne,  
ponerse de acuerdo**

Irak mantuvo su retórica desafiante, acusando a Francia de estar trabajando uña y carne con sus enemigos británicos y americanos, e insistiendo en que levantaran de inmediato las sanciones de la ONU.

**hacerle un favor a alguien**

Si no te cuesta nada hacerle un favor a alguien, claro que deberías hacerlo. Nunca sabes a quien tendrás que pedir ayuda algún día.

**amiguismo, enchufismo**

La división en la UE no sólo tiene que ver con dinero y mercancía. Tiene que ver también con la manera de gestionar la UE y con los enchufes.

**fallar a alguien,  
hacer quedar mal a alguien**

Tras mostrar la fábrica a nuestros visitantes Saudís, todos estrictos musulmanes, les llevamos a comer. Siento tener que informar que Simpson nos hizo quedar mal al pedir vino en la comida e insistir en que todos bebieran.

**mantenerse al margen,  
no intervenir**

A finales de los años 80, IBM se mantuvo al margen mientras que Toshiba y otros crearon el negocio de los ordenadores portátiles; aún hoy, Toshiba sigue siendo el líder en el negocio de los ordenadores portátiles.

**be a square peg in a round hole**

I don't know what Glover is doing on the sales team, because it's evident to everyone, especially clients, that he just doesn't enjoy selling. He's really a **square peg in a round hole**.

**on equal terms**

Everyone agrees that women should be allowed to compete with men **on equal terms**. In theory, at least.

**close ranks**

As the pollution scandal deepened, the directors of Sludgeco **closed ranks**, refusing to communicate with the press individually and issuing only carefully-worded joint statements.

**be as thick as thieves**

Those two have been **as thick as thieves** for years, so it's not surprising that when one of them hears something interesting, the other knows about it as well.

**many hands make light work**

This is an enormous project and we have very little time to complete it. However, I believe that if we all make a special effort, it can be done. After all, **many hands make light work**.

**the rank and file**

Branson was vacationing on his private Caribbean island with 20 employees from various Virgin companies: not senior executives, but the **rank and file** — a switchboard operator, a reservations clerk, a housekeeper — invited because of excellent performance.

**be in cahoots with sb**

You can have a situation where employers who **are in cahoots with each other** are able to hold down wages artificially. It sometimes happens in remote locations, but it's not the way business is generally done in America.

**do sth in tandem with sb**

In the first half of the Nineties, Grove and Gates **worked in tandem** to create increasingly powerful Intel microprocessor chips and Windows software, fortifying their position as leaders of the computer industry.

**no cuadrar (donde se está), no encajar**

No sé qué está haciendo Glover en el equipo de ventas, porque es evidente para todos, especialmente para los clientes, que no le gusta la venta. En realidad no encaja ahí.

**en igualdad de condiciones, en un pie de igualdad**

Todos están de acuerdo en que las mujeres deberían competir con los hombres en igualdad de condiciones. Al menos en teoría.

**cerrar filas, estrechar filas**

Según fue empeorando el escándalo de la contaminación, los directores de Sludgeco cerraron filas, negándose a dar ruedas de prensa a nivel individual y emitiendo únicamente declaraciones conjuntas cuidadosamente elaboradas.

**estar a partir un piñón**

Estos dos han estado a partir un piñón durante años, así que no es raro que cuando uno se entera de algo interesante, el otro también lo sabe.

**el trabajo compartido es más llevadero**

Este es un proyecto enorme y tenemos muy poco tiempo para terminarlo. Sin embargo, creo que si todos hacemos un esfuerzo, se podrá llevar a cabo. Después de todo, el trabajo compartido es más llevadero.

**las bases, la masa**

Branson estaba de vacaciones en su isla privada del Caribe con 20 empleados de varias empresas de Virgin: no eran ejecutivos de alto rango, sino las bases - una operadora de centralita, un oficinista encargado de las reservas de hoteles, una ama de llaves - todos ellos invitados por su excelente rendimiento.

**estar confabulado con alguien**

Puedes encontrarte con una situación en la que los empresarios están confabulados entre sí para impedir que suban artificialmente los sueldos. Esto suele ocurrir en lugares remotos, pero en general las negociaciones no se llevan a cabo de este modo en América.

**hacer algo conjuntamente con alguien**

En la primera mitad de los años 90, Grove y Gates trabajaron conjuntamente para crear chips de microprocesadores Intel y software de Windows cada vez más potentes, fortaleciendo su posición como líderes de la industria de la informática.



## 28. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To work in close association or partnership: Se dice que se han puesto de acuerdo con la competencia para fijar los precios.
- 2** (*saying*) It is easier to solve a problem with the help and advice of another person than by oneself alone: Cuatro ojos ven más que dos.
- 3** To help someone in some way: Me has hecho un gran favor.
- 4** To be in exactly the same situation as someone else: Todos estamos en el mismo barco.
- 5** To be connected or closely related: Estos asuntos están estrechamente relacionados.
- 6** A system by which jobs are given on the basis of friendships or personal connections, rather than on the basis of merit: It's sickening to see how political parties actually work; At every level it's nothing but \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To have similar tastes or opinions to another person: No estaba en la misma onda que los demás.
- 8** To disappoint one's team by doing something that causes the team not to win: Siempre nos hace quedar mal.
- 9** To be able to console oneself with the knowledge that others are in the same bad situation as oneself: No eres el único, nos han despedido a todos.
- 10** To watch events without taking any active part: Hacía años que se mantenía al margen de la vida pública.
- 11** To do one's fair share of the work: Cada uno tendrá que poner de su parte para sacar el trabajo adelante.
- 12** To be someone or something that cannot fit into a particular situation: Estaba totalmente fuera de su ambiente.
- 13** (*saying*) A job is easier if many people share the work: El trabajo compartido es más llevadero.
- 14** To co-operate with someone: Intentamos convencerlo, pero no quiso saber nada.
- 15** To do something by working together with another person: Tomamos las decisiones en tándem con su departamento.
- 16** The person who provides most of the energy behind an activity: Es la impulsora del proyecto.
- 17** To work in close co-operation with somebody, especially with the intention to harm somebody else: No puedes confiar en él, está confabulado con Neyrolles.
- 18** (*an organisation, a trade union, etc.*) The ordinary or less important members, i.e. as opposed to the leaders: Union leaders are in favour of accepting the offer but it is still not certain that the \_\_\_\_\_ will follow their recommendations.
- 19** (*saying*) The more people there are involved in a project, the more likely it is to fail: Muchas manos en un plato hacen mucho garabato.
- 20** To have a very close relationship: El año pasado no podían verse; ahora son uña y carne.
- 21** (*in a group*) To support each other so as to oppose any attack: Cierran filas cuando se les critica.
- 22** To agree with someone: Esos dos nunca han sido de la misma opinión.
- 23** Not having any advantage, not being regarded as superior in any way: Las dos compañías no competían en igualdad de condiciones.
- 24** To give help to someone: Nos echaron una mano.
- 25** (*a plan, an activity, etc.*) To play a part in something: I'm quite pleased with the new policy handbook, not least because I \_\_\_\_\_ in its creation.

## 29. Quality

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **not hold a candle to sb**

I don't know how you can mention the new office manager and her predecessor in the same breath. The new one **doesn't hold a candle** to Ms. Lerest.

### **be in a class of one's own**

If you use your PC for occasional desktop publishing, such as preparing promotional literature or an in-house newspaper, then this is the software for you. Inexpensive and easy to learn and use, it's **in a class of its own**.

### **not be all it's cracked up to be**

"Fame," says Michael Dell, "isn't everything it's **cracked up to be**." He should know. But Dell also knows this: the alternative is worse.

### **make the grade**

A person who is not among the very best will never be able to **make the grade** at Microsoft — and this disturbs people who think that success is merely a matter of will-power.

### **get one's money's worth**

I'm surprised that there isn't better measurement of the effectiveness of advertising on-line. After all, companies usually want to know that they're getting **their money's worth**.

### **not be up to much**

An exhibition of British oilfield products had been organised by the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, **but it wasn't up to much**. There were only a handful of exhibits and very little documentation.

### **be two a penny**

It's obvious that **these two-a-penny** Taiwanese imitations of our products are vastly inferior to the originals. But that doesn't mean they aren't going to eat into our market.

### **be up to scratch**

This is the third time I've had to speak to you about the quality of your work. If it isn't **up to scratch** before the end of the year, you can begin looking for employment elsewhere.

### **be second to none**

Merrill's CEO decided to make the firm's research department **second to none**. He went to all the best analysts on Wall Street and offered them jobs at Merrill Lynch — at double or triple their salaries.

### **no llegar a alguien a la suela del zapato**

No sé cómo puedes comparar a la nueva jefa de oficina con su antecesor. La nueva no le llega a Ms. Lerest ni a la suela del zapato.

### **ser único**

Si utilizas tu PC para publicar algo de vez en cuando, por ejemplo preparar textos publicitarios o un periódico de circulación interna, este es el software que necesitas. Es **único**: no es caro y es fácil de utilizar.

### **no ser tan bueno como se dice**

"La fama," dice Michael Dell, "no es tan buena como se dice." Él debería saberlo. Pero Dell sabe también que lo contrario es peor.

### **alcanzar el nivel necesario**

Una persona que no está entre las mejores jamás podrá alcanzar el nivel necesario para Microsoft, y esto molesta a la gente que cree que el éxito es sólo cuestión de fuerza de voluntad.

### **sacarle jugo al dinero**

Me sorprende que no haya un método mejor para medir la eficacia de la publicidad en la red. Después de todo, las empresas quieren saber si le están sacando jugo al dinero.

### **no valer gran cosa**

Una exhibición de productos petrolíferos británicos había sido organizada por la cámara de comercio de Abu Dhabi, pero no valía gran cosa. Sólo hubo unos pocos expositores y muy poca documentación.

### **del montón, baratas**

Es obvio que estas imitaciones taiwanesas baratas de nuestros productos son realmente inferiores a los originales. Pero eso no significa que no vayan a apoderarse de parte de nuestro mercado.

### **dar la talla**

Esta es la tercera vez que tengo que echarle en cara la calidad de tu trabajo. Si no das la talla para finales de año, puedes empezar a buscar trabajo en otro lugar.

### **no tener igual**

El presidente de Merrill decidió que el departamento de investigación de la empresa no tuviera igual. Se fue a ver a los mejores analistas de Wall Street y les ofreció un puesto en Merrill Lynch, duplicando o triplicando sus salarios.

**be no great shakes**

David Bangs is himself no **great shakes** as a businessman. But as an observer and commentator on the business scene, there is much in his favour — perhaps because he has made so many mistakes himself.

**put sb to shame**

Sadaaki Numata is so articulate and precise in his use of English that he **puts** most British and Americans **to shame**.

**praise sth to the skies**

It was one of the most obsequious speeches I ever heard. He mentioned everything the chairman had done over the past three years and **praised every act to the skies**.

**scrape the bottom of the barrel**

I know it's difficult to recruit good programmers these days, but even so, I don't intend **to scrape the bottom of the barrel**. If we can't find the right man, we'll subcontract.

**fly-by-night**

Cheap but improperly tested medicaments, manufactured by **fly-by-night** pharmaceutical companies based in Brazil, have already turned up in several South American countries.

**second-rate**

They wanted us to be their sole distributors in this country, but I turned them down. I felt their products were of inferior quality and didn't want our name to be associated with **second-rate** or third-rate products.

**beggar description**

In our laboratories we're testing machines running on the next generation of H6 processors. The performances are not comparable to anything we've seen so far, they simply **beggar description**.

**you can't keep a good man down**

Three times he was a multimillionaire and three times he lost it all. Now he is well on his way to becoming fabulously rich for the fourth time, living proof that **you can't keep a good man down**.

**go out of one's way to do sth**

When buying supplies from local vendors, O'Brien **went out of his way** to strike the best deals. No savings was too small to merit attention.

**no ser nada del otro mundo**

David Bangs no es nada del otro mundo como empresario. Pero como observador y comentarista del ámbito empresarial tiene mucho a su favor, quizás porque él mismo ha cometido muchos errores.

**hacer pasar vergüenza a alguien**

Sadaaki Numata es tan claro y preciso en su uso del inglés que hace pasar vergüenza a la mayoría de los británicos y americanos.

**poner algo por las nubes**

Fue uno de los discursos más chaqueteros que había escuchado nunca. Mencionó todo lo que el presidente había hecho durante los tres últimos años y lo puso por las nubes.

**rebañar las últimas migas**

Sé que hoy en día es difícil reclutar buenos programadores, pero aún así, no pienso rebañar las migas. Si no podemos encontrar al hombre indicado, subcontrataremos el servicio.

**que no inspira confianza**

En varios países de Sudamérica han aparecido medicamentos baratos fabricados por empresas farmacéuticas de poca confianza con base en Brasil, que no han sido sometidos a las pruebas adecuadas.

**de segunda categoría, inferior**

Querían que fuéramos su único distribuidor en este país, pero les dije que no. Pensé que sus productos eran de mala calidad y no quería que nuestro nombre se viera asociado a productos de segunda o tercera categoría.

**superar toda descripción**

En nuestros laboratorios estamos probando máquinas que funcionan con la próxima generación de procesadores H6. El rendimiento no es comparable a nada que hayamos visto hasta ahora, ya que supera toda descripción.

**los buenos siempre salen adelante**

Tres veces fue multimillonario y tres veces lo perdió todo. Ahora va camino de enriquecerse fabulosamente por cuarta vez, una prueba fehaciente de que los que valen siempre salen adelante.

**desvivirse por hacer algo**

Al adquirir suministros en las tiendas locales, O'Brien se desvivió por conseguir las mejores ofertas. Cualquier ahorro, por pequeño que fuera, merecía su atención.

**be out of this world**

Ty Inc., the Chicago company that produces the plush animal toys, does no advertising. All the same, from 1996 to 1997, Ty's sales **were out of this world**, growing more than 2,000%. And they've climbed even higher since.

**steal the show**

We have seen the future and it is pocket-sized, battery-operated, slim and seductive. We saw it at the annual IT fair in Hanover, where the giant consumer electronics groups **stole the show**.

**be the pick of the bunch**

We had more than 200 applications for this post. We interviewed 23 candidates and short-listed 7. We've now narrowed the field down to 2 candidates, and believe me, they're **the pick of the bunch**.

**make a clean sweep of sth**

Softwire Pro has **made a clean sweep** of PC Universe's best new product awards, winning in all five categories for which it was eligible.

**separate the men from the boys**

Each applicant is interviewed at least three times by our team of recruiters. It's an expensive and time-consuming process, but it does **separate the men from the boys**.

**worth one's salt**

I could never understand why any manager **worth his salt** would want to bring in a consultant to set business policy. For me, that's an admission of personal failure.

**be nothing to write home about**

Business books are hot. Between 1991 and 1999 sales shot up 36%, to \$617 million. Of course, most business how-to books are **nothing to write home about**. But there are exceptions.

**ser estupendo**

Ty Inc, la empresa de Chicago que fabrica animales de peluche, no hace publicidad. Aún así, entre 1996 -1997, las ventas de Ty fueron extraordinarias, creciendo más del 2.000%, y se han incrementado aún más desde entonces.

**ser protagonista**

Hemos visto el futuro y es de tamaño de bolsillo, funciona con pilas, es fino y tentador. Lo vimos en la feria anual IT de Hanover, donde los grandes grupos de electrónica doméstica fueron los protagonistas.

**ser el mejor de todos**

Tuvimos más de 200 solicitudes para este puesto. Entrevistamos a 23 aspirantes y preseleccionamos a 7. Ahora hemos reducido las opciones a 2 aspirantes y créeme, son los mejores.

**acaparar algo , llevarse todo**

Softwire Pro ha acaparado los premios PC Universe a los mejores productos innovadores, ganando en las cinco categorías a las que optaban.

**separar los que valen de los que no**

Cada solicitante es entrevistado al menos tres veces por nuestro equipo de recursos humanos. Es un proceso caro que lleva mucho tiempo, pero sirve para separar a los que valen y a los que no.

**que se precie de tal, digno de ese nombre**

Nunca he podido entender por qué un gerente que se precie quiera traer un consultor para determinar la política de empresa. Para mí, es reconocer su propio fracaso.

**no ser nada del otro mundo**

Los libros empresariales están de moda. Entre 1991 y 1999 las ventas subieron de un 36%, ascendiendo a 617 millones de dólares. Claro que la mayoría de los libros empresariales para autodidactas no son nada del otro mundo. Pero hay excepciones.

## 29. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To be better than all others: Nuestro servicio es insuperable.
- 2** To be not very impressive: La comida no era nada del otro mundo.
- 3** To cause something to be considered of inferior quality (or someone of inferior ability) by being much better: Habla tan bien inglés que me hace pasar vergüenza.
- 4** To succeed or to reach the desired standard: Nunca alcanzará el nivel requerido.
- 5** To be impossible to describe: Supera toda descripción.
- 6** To have to use people or things of the poorest quality because nothing else remains: Is that the best excuse you can find? You're really \_\_\_\_\_, aren't you?
- 7** To separate those who have great ability from those who have less: El entrenamiento inicial separa a los que valen de los que no.
- 8** To be not very good, of low standard: Su trabajo no valía gran cosa.
- 9** To be of strong character or to be worthy of the name (of something): Any engineer \_\_\_\_\_ would have seen the weaknesses in this plan immediately.
- 10** To be inferior in quality to something or someone else: No le llegas a la suela del zapato.
- 11** To be up to the required standard: Simplemente no da la talla.
- 12** (*prizes, etc.*) To win everything that can be won: Nuestro equipo se llevó todos los premios.
- 13** To get good value from something one has paid money for: Le he sacado mucho jugo a este coche.
- 14** Of inferior quality: Who is going to pay this kind of money for an essentially \_\_\_\_\_ product?
- 15** To be the best of a certain number: Este hotel es el mejor de todos.
- 16** To be not as good as people say: No es tan maravilloso como dicen.
- 17** To be cheap and easily obtained, to be very common: Academias de idiomas hay a montones.
- 18** To make a special effort to do something, especially when it's inconvenient: Se desvió para que me sintiera como en casa.
- 19** (*a business, a person*) Unreliable because only interested in making money quickly and probably illegally: I thought from the start that they were a \_\_\_\_\_ operation, and so wasn't at all happy about having to do business with them.
- 20** To get most of the attention or admiration in an exhibition or other event: We expect the NTXX-4 to \_\_\_\_\_ at the annual trade fair.
- 21** To be extremely good or impressive: Their after-sales service is fantastic, absolutely \_\_\_\_\_!
- 22** To be far better than other people or things of the same type: No tiene igual.
- 23** (*saying*) Nothing can discourage a man who is determined to succeed: Los buenos siempre salen adelante.
- 24** To be not at all special: No es nada del otro mundo.
- 25** To express great admiration for someone or something: Their new colour laser printer has been \_\_\_\_\_ for its design, its performance and its amazingly low price.

## 30. Negotiations

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### meet sb halfway

You've been supplying us for many years and we want to maintain that relationship — but you'll have to **meet us halfway** on pricing.

### give and take

On the surface, it looks like a joint venture, but when you get down to the details, you're doing all the work. There's no real **give and take**.

### common ground

I constantly try to think, "If I were the client, how would I feel about this?" That's step Number One if you're going to find **common ground**.

### have an ace up one's sleeve

Financiers will stress the problems in the government's plans to privatise the London Underground. But the government **has an ace up its sleeve**: past privatisations have delivered bonanzas to investors.

### the ball is in your court

We've made our initial offer, now the **ball is in their court**. All we can do is wait and see if they accept it or not.

### have sb over a barrel

Since you are the sole distributor of these goods, **you have us over a barrel**. We have no choice but to accept your prices.

### beggars can't be choosers

They desperately need our business, so they will not be dictating terms to us. On the contrary, they will take whatever we decide to give them. **Beggars can't be choosers**.

### a stumbling block

Spain has suggested that an EU programme worth about £3bn a year be set up for member states that face pressure of immigration from eastern and central Europe. The funds would mainly help Germany, which wants to reduce its £11bn net contribution to the EU, and would remove one of the main **stumbling blocks** in the Agenda 2000 negotiations on reform of the EU's budget.

### call sb's bluff

Nothing quite gets your boss's attention like dangling another job offer in front of him and

### llegar a un acuerdo mutuo, hacer concesiones

Lleváis muchos años suministrándonos y queremos mantener esa relación, pero tendremos que llegar a un acuerdo mutuo sobre los precios.

### toma y daca

En apariencia, tiene aspecto de ser un negocio llevado conjuntamente, pero cuando miras los detalles, tú haces todo el trabajo. No es un toma y daca.

### puntos en común

Constantemente intento pensar, "Si fuera el cliente, ¿qué opinaría de esto?" Ése es el Primer Paso si quieres encontrar puntos en común.

### guardarse un as en la manga

Los financieros señalan los problemas que tiene el gobierno para privatizar el metro de Londres. Pero el gobierno se guarda un as en la manga: las anteriores privatizaciones han sido un buen negocio para los inversores.

### ahora te toca a ti hacer algo

Hemos hecho nuestra oferta inicial, ahora les toca a ellos. Todo lo que podemos hacer es esperar y ver si la aceptan o no.

### poner a alguien entre la espada y la pared

Como eres el único distribuidor de estas mercancías, nos pones entre la espada y la pared. No nos queda otra alternativa que aceptar vuestros precios.

### a quien se da no escoge, no estar en situación de exigir

Necesitan de nosotros desesperadamente, así que no nos dictarán sus condiciones. Todo lo contrario, tomarán cualquier cosa que les ofrezcamos. No están en situación de exigir.

### un escollo, un tropiezo

España ha sugerido crear un programa europeo por valor de 3 mil millones de euros anuales para los países miembros que se enfrentan a la presión de la inmigración del este y del centro de Europa. Los fondos ayudarían principalmente a Alemania, que quiere reducir su contribución neta de 11 mil millones de euros a la UE, y que eliminaría uno de los principales escollos en las negociaciones de la Agenda 2000 para reformar el presupuesto.

### aceptar el envite, el farol

No hay nada como mostrarle a tu jefe otra oferta de empleo que has recibido y decirle

telling him you plan to accept it if he doesn't pay you more. But be careful what you ask for, because he may just **call your bluff**.

### **lay one's cards on the table**

It is important always to hold something in reserve. If you **lay all your cards on the table** at the beginning of the negotiation, and the other side says no, you cannot regain control of the situation.

### **play cat and mouse with sb**

I have the feeling they're **playing cat and mouse** with us. At bottom, they want to reach an agreement as much as we do, but every time an agreement is within reach, they raise a new objection.

### **split the difference**

Let's settle the question of cost. We're asking \$500 per unit, and you're offering \$400. To save time, I suggest **we split the difference** — \$450 per unit.

### **lose face**

You should always ensure that your opponent does **not lose face**, for this causes bitterness and resentment.

### **stand one's ground**

Luc Guyau, the chairman of the national farmers' union, praised the government for **standing its ground** against "co-financing" - a German move to shift agricultural support from the EU budget on to national government budgets.

### **grind to a halt**

With neither side willing to compromise even on relatively minor issues, the talks inevitably **ground to a halt**.

### **have the upper hand**

At Netscape's urging, the U.S. Department of Justice began *investigating whether Microsoft was using its near monopoly in PC operating systems to **gain the upper hand** in what has come to be known as "the browser wars."*

que piensas aceptarlo si no te paga más. Pero ten cuidado con lo que pides, porque es posible que acepte el envite.

### **poner las cartas boca arriba**

Es importante mantener siempre algo en reserva. Si pones todas tus cartas boca arriba al principio de la negociación y la otra parte dice que no, no puedes volver a hacerte con el control de la situación.

### **Jugar al gato y al ratón con alguien**

Tengo la sensación de que están jugando al gato y al ratón con nosotros. En el fondo, quieren llegar a un acuerdo tanto como nosotros, pero cada vez que estamos cerca de conseguir un acuerdo, presentan una nueva objeción.

### **repartirse la diferencia (a partes iguales)**

Vamos a zanjar el asunto del coste. Nosotros estamos pidiendo 500 dólares por unidad, y vosotros nos estáis ofreciendo 400 dólares. Para ahorrar tiempo, sugiero que nos repartamos la diferencia a partes iguales: 450 dólares por unidad.

### **desprestigiarse, quedar mal**

Debes siempre asegurarte de que tu adversario nunca quede mal, ya que eso causa amargura y resentimiento.

### **mantenerse firme**

Luc Guyau, el presidente del sindicato nacional de agricultores, alabó al gobierno por mantenerse firme en su postura en contra de la "co-financiación", una maniobra alemana para trasladar las ayudas agrícolas del presupuesto de la UE a los presupuestos de los gobiernos nacionales.

### **estancarse, llegar a un punto muerto**

Como ninguno de los dos lados estaba dispuesto a hacer concesiones, incluso en temas de relativamente poca importancia, las conversaciones llegaron inevitablemente a un punto muerto.

### **llevar ventaja**

A petición de Netscape, el Departamento de Justicia de los EE UU comenzó a *investigar si Microsoft estaba utilizando su casi monopolio en los sistemas operativos de los PC para conseguir ventajas en lo que se ha llegado a conocer como "la guerra de los buscadores"*.

**draw the line at sth**

If you buy a minimum of 500 units, we're willing to offer you a reduction of 20%, but that's our best and final offer. We have **to draw the line** somewhere.

**take sb's point**

- How can we possibly guarantee delivery dates in the middle of a rail strike?  
- Yes, **I take your point**, but we must have some assurance that the goods will reach us before Christmas.

**be poles apart**

I'm afraid there's no sign of an agreement yet. The two sides **are still poles apart**.

**behind the scenes**

Coaches offer a one-on-one relationship with executives that is far more personal than in other consulting arrangements. They work **behind the scenes**. Their primary mission is to support and develop their client.

**get down to brass tacks**

I think we're all in agreement on the general framework of the deal. Now **let's get down to brass tacks**: how much is it going to cost us and how soon will we see a return on our investment?

**take it or leave it**

For a long time IBM refused to give discounts on its machines. Its attitude to the customer was: **take it or leave it**. Today there is more flexibility.

**not budge an inch**

There is an absolutely predictable point in all negotiations when it seems neither side **will budge an inch**. When this moment comes, don't be surprised, and don't get frustrated.

**strengthen one's hand**

A deal may not be coming quite so soon as investors are hoping, but the waiting period certainly **strengthens Cable & Wireless' hand** if the share price continues to rise because of speculation.

**turn the tables on sb**

If the other side refuses to improve its offer, remember that the single most important tool for winning a negotiation is the ability to walk away without a deal. If you do that and they call you back, you'll have **turned the tables on them** and be in a much stronger position.

**decir basta a algo**

Si compráis un mínimo de 500 unidades, estamos dispuestos a ofrecer os un descuento del 20%, pero ésa es nuestra mejor y última oferta. En algún momento tenemos que decir basta.

**aceptar lo que dice alguien**

- ¿Cómo vamos a poder garantizar las fechas de entrega en medio de una huelga de trenes?  
- Sí, eso lo entiendo, pero debemos tener algún tipo de garantía de que la mercancía nos llegue antes de Navidad.

**estar a años luz, ser polos opuestos**

Me temo que aún no hay ninguna señal de acuerdo. Las dos partes están a años luz.

**entre bastidores**

Los formadores ofrecen una relación individual que es mucho más personal que otros acuerdos con consultores. Trabajan **entre bastidores**. Su misión principal es apoyar y ayudar a su cliente.

**ir al grano**

Creo que estamos todos de acuerdo en cuanto a la estructura general del trato. Ahora vamos al grano: ¿Cuánto nos va a costar y cuándo podremos ver los beneficios de nuestra inversión?

**lo tomas o lo dejas**

Durante mucho tiempo IBM se negó a conceder descuentos en sus aparatos. Su actitud hacia el cliente era: lo tomas o lo dejas. Hoy hay mucha más flexibilidad.

**no ceder un ápice**

Hay un punto absolutamente predecible en toda negociación cuando parece que ninguna de las partes va a ceder un ápice. Cuando llegue este momento, no te sorprendas y no te sientas frustrada.

**fortalecer su posición**

Puede que un acuerdo no llegue tan pronto como esperan los inversores, pero el período de espera, fortalece sin duda la posición de Cable & Wireless si el precio de la acción continúa subiendo debido a la especulación.

**volver las tornas a alguien**

Si la otra parte se niega a mejorar su oferta, recuerda que la herramienta más importante para ganar en una negociación es la capacidad de marcharse sin lograr un acuerdo. Si puedes hacer eso y vuelven a llamarte, les habrás vuelto las tornas y estarás en una posición mucho más fuerte.



## 30. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** It is your turn to take action: Te corresponde a ti dar el próximo paso.
- 2** (*in a discussion, etc.*) To accept what someone is saying: Acepto lo que dices pero nuestras tarifas no son negociables.
- 3** To lose speed and eventually stop: Las negociaciones han llegado a un punto muerto.
- 4** To be widely divided, e.g. in opinions or characteristics: Su hermano y él son polos opuestos.
- 5** To have someone in a position where he is obliged to do what one wants: We \_\_\_\_\_ him \_\_\_\_\_ and he knows it, now he has to sign.
- 6** Out of the public eye: Lo ha estado organizando todo entre bastidores.
- 7** To agree with another person on a figure halfway between two figures: He told me how much he wanted, I told him what I was willing to pay, and we \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8** Willingness to compromise in order to obtain a satisfactory agreement: Tiene que haber un toma y daca.
- 9** To stop generalizing and start discussing essential matters: Let's \_\_\_\_\_, how much will it cost and when can you deliver?
- 10** To reveal all one's plans or intentions: I'm prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ and tell you exactly what I want, provided, of course, that you will do the same.
- 11** (*said by someone stating a price to show that he does not intend to change it*) You can accept this price or refuse it: Lo tomas o lo dejas.
- 12** To have an advantage or piece of information which one keeps secret in order to use it at the best moment: Tenía un triunfo guardado en la manga.
- 13** To refuse to make the least concession: No cedió ni lo más mínimo.
- 14** To confuse someone intentionally: Creo que juegan al gato y al ratón con nosotros.
- 15** To improve one's position or increase one's power: The chancellor's recent announcements have considerably \_\_\_\_\_. In fact we are in a much better position now than at the beginning of the talks.
- 16** Opinions, experiences, etc. that are shared by two or more people: The discussions lasted long into the night, with each side struggling to find \_\_\_\_\_ with the other.
- 17** To reverse the situation so that one's opponent loses his advantage and finds himself in the weaker position: Lograron volverles las tornas a sus adversarios.
- 18** To refuse to go beyond certain limits in the way one behaves or permits others to behave: En algún momento hay que decir basta.
- 19** An impediment or obstacle: We have overcome the most important \_\_\_\_\_ and are now very close to an agreement.
- 20** To have an advantage over an opponent: He thinks he \_\_\_\_\_, but I have a few surprises in store for him.
- 21** To compromise with someone: Si no accede a esto, tendremos que llegar a un compromiso.
- 22** To be firm, to not yield under pressure: Se mantuvo firme.
- 23** To make someone prove that what he claims to be true is indeed true: Anda, ponlo en un aprieto, que demuestre que lo que dice es cierto.
- 24** To be humiliated publicly: Always try to arrange matters so that your adversary does not \_\_\_\_\_.
- 25** (*saying*) People who really need something can't afford to be concerned about quality but must accept what they are given: A caballo regalado no le mires el diente.

## 31. Results

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### the acid test

This is a valuable Budget for enterprise and employment. It is both prudent and positive. However, **the acid test** will be its impact on inflation, interest rates and the strength of sterling.

### a mixed bag

The European Central Bank report is a bit of a **mixed bag**, with something for everybody.

### not by a long chalk

- We've never had such good sales figures before.  
- No, indeed. **Not by a long chalk.**

### be a far cry from sth

A trip abroad in 1962 opened his eyes to the way fine wines were produced in Europe. It was a **far cry from** the California mass-production practices of the time.

### at the end of the day

Most of us want our lives to amount to something. It's easy to be cynical, but **at the end of the day**, you'd like to say "I did good work."

### come full circle

The International Olympic Committee has chosen Athens to be the venue for the games of 2004. Thus, the event will **come full circle**, back to Greece, home of the original Olympic games.

### fall short of sth

Lyubov Vonyagina, 54, a veteran seamstress, is part of a team that must produce 2,000 T-shirts a day. When **they fall short**, they stay late.

### so far, so good

His assignment has been to help a work force of about 300,000, mostly sales clerks and blue-collar workers, learn to focus on customers. **So far, so good**: total return to shareholders has averaged over 30% for five years.

### bear fruit

What stimulates success? The most important single thing is having an idea and putting it into practice and seeing **it bear fruit**.

### la prueba decisiva

Éste es un Presupuesto valioso para las empresas y para el empleo. Es a la vez prudente y positivo. Sin embargo, la prueba decisiva será su impacto en la inflación, en los tipos de interés y en la fuerza de la libra esterlina.

### un batiburrillo, una mezcla

El informe del Banco Central Europeo es un batiburrillo, con algo para todos.

### ni mucho menos, ni de lejos

- Nunca hemos conseguido unas cifras de ventas tan buenas.  
- No, desde luego. Ni de lejos.

### ser muy distinto de algo

Un viaje al extranjero realizado en 1962 le abrió los ojos sobre la forma en que se elaboraban los vinos finos en Europa. Era muy distinta a la práctica californiana de producción en serie de aquel entonces.

### al fin y al cabo, al final

La mayoría de nosotros queremos que nuestras vidas signifiquen algo. Es fácil ser cínico, pero al final, te gustaría decir, "Hice un buen trabajo."

### volver al punto de partida

El Comité Olímpico Internacional ha seleccionado Atenas para ser la sede de los Juegos del 2004. Por lo tanto, el evento volverá a su punto de partida, a Grecia, sede de los primeros juegos Olímpicos.

### no alcanzar algo

Lyubov Vonyagina, de 54 años, una experta costurera, forma parte del equipo que debe fabricar 2.000 camisetas al día. Cuando no alcanzan esta cifra, se quedan trabajando hasta muy tarde.

### hasta aquí bien

Su tarea ha sido la de ayudar a un grupo de unos 300.000 trabajadores, en su mayoría dependientes y trabajadores manuales, a aprender a enfocar su trabajo en los clientes. Hasta aquí, bien: los beneficios de los accionistas en los cinco últimos años se han incrementado de un 30%.

### dar fruto, dar resultados

¿Qué es lo que estimula el éxito? Lo más importante de todo es tener una idea, ponerla en práctica y ver sus resultados.

**make headway**

The two best known management tools of the 1980s were total quality management (TQM) and reengineering. Applying these techniques, American businesses **made enormous headway** in overcoming their process problems.

**flog a dead horse**

This is the seventh or eighth time we've visited them and they've never given us even a small order. I think we're **flogging a dead horse**: they're never going to buy from us.

**be a household name**

In the 1960s David Bailey became a **household name** overnight and revolutionised the fashion industry by creating the miniskirt.

**the icing on the cake**

The package they were offering was extremely attractive: high tax-free salary, 10 weeks' annual vacation, free medical cover, free accommodation, etc. The end-of-year bonus was just **the icing on the cake**. I would have signed up anyway.

**make inroads into sth**

Foreign competitors like Toyota, Honda, and now Volkswagen are continuing **to make inroads** into the U.S. market.

**one swallow doesn't make a summer**

It's the first time in four years that we've shown a profit and, of course, that's a good sign. But **one swallow doesn't make a summer**, so let's not get too optimistic too soon.

**serve sb right**

You shouldn't leave your laptop lying around like that when you're out of the office. It'll **serve you right** if somebody steals it.

**not have a leg to stand on**

If recent sales figures had been good, you could have used them to justify your policies. But they're as disastrous as the previous ones. So, I'm afraid **you don't have a leg to stand on**.

**take its toll on sth**

The flooding in Central America **has taken a very heavy toll** on coffee production, so we can certainly expect prices to rise in the near future.

**avanzar, progresar**

Las dos herramientas de gestión más conocidas de los años 80 fueron la Gestión de Calidad Total (GCT) y la re-ingeniería. Aplicando estas técnicas, las empresas americanas consiguieron progresar muchísimo en la solución de sus problemas de fabricación.

**perder el tiempo**

Esta es la séptima u octava vez que les visitamos y *nunca nos han hecho el mínimo pedido*. Creo que estamos perdiendo el tiempo: nunca van a comprarnos nada.

**ser muy conocido**

En los años 60, David Bailey se hizo famoso de la noche a la mañana y revolucionó la industria de la moda al crear la minifalda.

**la guinda encima del pastel**

El paquete que ofrecían era sumamente atractivo: un buen sueldo libre de impuestos, 10 semanas de vacaciones al año, seguro médico gratuito, alojamiento gratuito, etc. El bonus de fin de año era sólo *la guinda del pastel*. Hubiese firmado igualmente.

**hacer avances en algo**

Los competidores extranjeros como Toyota, Honda y ahora Volkswagen siguen avanzando en el mercado de los EE UU.

**una golondrina no hace verano**

Es la primera vez en cuatro años que hemos visto un beneficio y, claro está, es una buena señal. Pero una golondrina no hace verano, así que no seamos demasiado optimistas antes de tiempo.

**tenerlo bien merecido**

No deberías dejar tu ordenador portátil por ahí tirado cuando sales de la oficina. Si alguien te lo robara lo tendrías bien merecido.

**no tener en qué basarse**

Si las últimas cifras de ventas hubiesen sido buenas, podrías haberlas utilizado para justificar tu política. Pero son tan desastrosas como las anteriores. Por lo tanto, me temo que no tienes en qué basarte.

**afectar algo negativamente, infligir pérdidas**

Las inundaciones en Centroamérica han afectado muy negativamente a la producción de café, así que podemos esperar que suban los precios en un futuro próximo.

### **have made one's bed and have to lie in it**

I warned you against hiring such a well-known union militant, but you wouldn't listen. And now he's threatening to call a strike. Well, **you've made your bed and you must lie in it.**

### **come up with the goods**

The French will give you their business much more readily than the Germans. But they will withdraw it just as fast if you fail **to come up with the goods.**

### **the bottom line**

The shortcut always fails, whether it's the easy way to lose weight or the instant way to get rich. **The bottom line** is this: nothing meaningful or lasting comes without working hard at it.

### **a can of worms**

The investigation into the causes of the accident opened up a real **can of worms**. Indeed it soon became evident that we were going to have to rewrite our safety procedures completely.

### **it makes no odds**

You can achieve dramatically better results. Whether it's at your job or in the classroom, whether it's a sport or other activity you're involved in, **it makes no odds**. The techniques are the same.

### **a foregone conclusion**

It's hard to believe now, but the acceptance of Microsoft's DOS as the operating system for the IBM PC wasn't a **foregone conclusion** when the machine was introduced in 1981. IBM also offered a version of the CP/M operating system.

### **pave the way for sth**

Monitoring 5,000 families for 20 years, Jencks studied all sorts of variables that might **pave the way** to wealth and power, including parental income, the neighbourhood a person grows up in, education, and occupation.

### **quien mala cama hace en ella yace**

Te avisé de que no contrataras a un militante sindicalista tan conocido, pero no quisiste escuchar. Y ahora amenaza con convocar una huelga. Pues quien mala cama hace en ella yace.

### **cumplir lo prometido**

Los franceses harán negocios contigo mucho antes que los alemanes. Pero se retirarán igual de rápido si no cumples lo prometido.

### **lo esencial, lo primordial**

El atajo siempre falla, bien sea la forma fácil de perder peso o la manera instantánea de hacerse rico. Lo esencial es esto: nada que sea importante o que dure se consigue sin trabajar.

### **un problema complicado**

La investigación sobre las causas del accidente dio paso a un sinfín de problemas. De hecho, pronto fue evidente que tendríamos que revisar por completo nuestros sistemas de seguridad.

### **da lo mismo, es igual**

Se pueden conseguir resultados muchísimo mejores. Bien sea en el trabajo o en el aula, bien sea en un deporte o en otra actividad en la que se esté involucrado, da lo mismo. Las técnicas son iguales.

### **un resultado inevitable**

Es difícil de creer ahora, pero la aceptación del DOS de Microsoft como sistema operativo del PC IBM no era de prever cuando el aparato fue presentado en 1981. IBM también ofreció una versión del sistema operativo CP/M.

### **allanar el terreno para algo**

Al estudiar los hábitos de 5.000 familias durante 20 años, Jenkins tuvo en cuenta todo tipo de factores que podían allanar el terreno hacia la riqueza y el poder, entre ellos los ingresos de los padres, el vecindario en el que se cría uno, la educación y la profesión.

## 31. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** A person or thing whose name is known by everybody: En poco tiempo se hizo famosísima.
- 2** Not by any means: Can we reach such unrealistic targets? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3** An extremely complicated problem or series of interrelated problems: La revisión salarial destapó una serie de problemas.
- 4** To begin to have an effect on something by reducing it or using it up: Entrenar me quita mucho tiempo libre.
- 5** To make progress: Por fin hemos conseguido hacer progresos.
- 6** To lead to something, to make everything ready for something: Este proyecto de ley preparó el terreno para una Europa unida.
- 7** To waste time by continuing to try to do something futile: Hablarles de reducir gastos es como machacar en hierro frío.
- 8** An entirely predictable result: El resultado era de prever.
- 9** A test which gives irrefutable proof that something has or does not have value: La prueba definitiva es si le gusta al público o no.
- 10** It makes no difference, it doesn't matter: We already have a large majority in our favour, so \_\_\_\_\_ whether you vote or not.
- 11** A desirable addition, often unnecessary: La bonificación de fin de año no era más que la guinda encima de un succulento pastel.
- 12** The essential result or outcome: Si no acabas a tiempo, no se te pagará, a eso se reduce.
- 13** When everything has happened or been settled: A fin de cuentas, la responsabilidad es suya.
- 14** To have good results or effects: Su esmerada planificación dio sus frutos.
- 15** To do what one has promised to do: No pudieron cumplir lo acordado.
- 16** A long way from something: Esto no es ni con mucho lo que yo esperaba.
- 17** To have chosen a particular course of action and so be forced to accept the results of it: We all told him he wouldn't be happy if he transferred to Finance but he did it anyway. Well, he \_\_\_\_\_.
- 18** To return to the situation from which one started: El curso de los acontecimientos ha vuelto al punto de partida.
- 19** To cause much harm and damage: Años de duro trabajo habían afectado su salud.
- 20** Up until now there have been no problems: Hasta ahora bien.
- 21** To have no possible justification for one's actions or opinions: No puede justificarse.
- 22** A varied mixture: En esta compañía hay de todo.
- 23** To be a just punishment for somebody: Lo tienes bien merecido.
- 24** (saying) It is unwise to generalize optimistically on the basis of a single fortunate event: Una golondrina no hace verano.
- 25** To be less than expected, or of a lower standard than expected: La calidad de sus productos está por debajo de nuestras exigencias.

## 32. Responsibility

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### carry the can

As your immediate supervisor, I've accepted responsibility for your mistakes in the past. It's time you understood, however, that I'm not going to go on **carrying the can** for you indefinitely.

### pass the buck

He has a tendency to **pass the buck** which, in my opinion, makes him quite unsuitable for a position of such responsibility.

### give sb a free hand

Although the business had been losing money for years, for sentimental reasons the owner was unable to reduce staffing levels. The only way to make the firm profitable again was to engage a manager and to **give him** a completely **free hand**.

### put one's foot down

Before the IMF **put its foot down**, an Indonesian state agency, known as Bulog, set the price of rice and handed out lucrative licenses to Suharto cronies like the Salim family.

### wash one's hands of sth

Neither side in the dispute would make the least concession. In the end the mediator was so fed up with their intransigence that he decided to **wash his hands** of the whole business and leave them to find their own solution.

### give sth the green light

At its December monthly meeting, the new group **gave the green light** to a "smart car" project based in Germany.

### give sb the go-ahead

The local authorities have finally **given them the go-ahead** for the new factory extension.

### pull rank

She can be a very persuasive person. And, in fact, she almost always gets what she wants without having to **pull rank**.

### rule the roost

The 78 year-old Spaniard **has ruled the roost** at the IOC (*International Olympics Committee*) for the past two decades, but the corruption scandal has prompted calls for him to resign before his term expires in 2001.

### pagar el pato

Como tu supervisor inmediato, he asumido la responsabilidad de tus errores en el pasado. Sin embargo, ya es hora de que entiendas que no voy a seguir pagando el pato indefinidamente.

### pasar la pelota

Tiene la costumbre de pasar la pelota lo cual, en mi opinión, le hace bastante inadecuado para un puesto de tanta responsabilidad.

### darle a alguien carta blanca

Aunque la empresa ha perdido dinero durante años, el dueño no ha sido capaz de reducir la plantilla por motivos sentimentales. La única forma de conseguir que la empresa vuelva a ser rentable es contratando a un director y dándole carta blanca.

### imponerse, ponerse firme

Antes de que el FMI se impusiese, una agencia estatal de Indonesia, conocida como Bulog, fijaba el precio del arroz y entregaba licencias lucrativas a los compinches de Suharto, como la familia Salim.

### desentenderse de algo, lavarse las manos

Ninguna de las dos partes en litigio estaba dispuesta a hacer la más mínima concesión. Al final el mediador estaba tan harto de su intransigencia que decidió desentenderse de todo el lío y dejarles que se arreglaran como pudieran.

### dar luz verde a algo

En su reunión mensual de diciembre, el nuevo grupo dio luz verde a un proyecto de "coche inteligente" elaborado en Alemania.

### darle el visto bueno a alguien

Las autoridades locales les han dado, por fin, el visto bueno para la expansión de la fábrica.

### abusar de su autoridad, hacer valer sus privilegios

Puede llegar a ser una persona muy persuasiva. De hecho, casi siempre consigue lo que quiere sin tener que recurrir a su autoridad.

### llevar la batuta

Este español de 78 años ha llevado la batuta del COI (*Comité Olímpico Internacional*) durante las dos últimas décadas, pero el escándalo de corrupción exige que renuncie antes de que su mandato concluya en el 2001.

**call the shots**

Basically, you start your own business so you can **call the shots**, set your own hours and earn unlimited income.

**have a lot to answer for**

Puno, a town on the western shores of Lake Titicaca in the Peruvian Andes, **has a lot to answer** for. Pollution produced by its rapidly expanding population has caused huge environmental damage.

**take a back seat**

After three disastrous years, shareholders demanded that he **relinquish the chief executive's role and take a back seat**.

**have friends in high places**

The master manipulator spends years cultivating a network of **friends in high places**. You go over this person's head at your own peril. If you complain to his boss, the manipulator will use his influence to make you look like a whiner or worse.

**kick sb upstairs**

After heavy losses caused by the Russian financial crisis, their chief executive paid the price. He was **kicked upstairs** to the new job of co-chairman.

**a sleeping partner (US silent partner)**

In 1990, Lane finished his MBA and, with the help of a **silent partner**, he and MacHardy launched Coed Sportswear.

**be saddled with sth**

In those days IBM **was saddled with** 405,000 loyal workers and a sacrosanct no-layoffs policy. Their more nimble competitors loved it.

**the pecking order**

In most companies, the public relations person is down at number 20 in **the pecking order**, but not here. A high profile is vital for our business, so our PR man is one of the most important and highest paid employees.

**mandar**

Básicamente, uno crea su propia empresa para establecer **mandar**, fijar su propio horario y obtener ingresos ilimitados.

**tener la culpa de muchas cosas**

Puno, un pueblo situado a orillas del lago Titicaca en los Andes peruanos, tiene la culpa de muchas cosas. La contaminación producida por el rápido crecimiento de su población ha causado un daño tremendo al medio ambiente.

**pasar a un segundo plano**

Tras tres años desastrosos, los accionistas insistieron en que **renunciara al puesto de presidente** y pasara a un segundo plano.

**tener amistades en las altas esferas**

Un maestro de la manipulación se pasa años enteros construyendo una red de amistades en las altas esferas. El pasar por encima de esta persona supone un riesgo. Si te quejas a su jefe, el manipulador utilizará su influencia para que parezcas un quejica o algo peor a los ojos del jefe.

**deshacerse de uno ascendiéndole**

Tras las fuertes pérdidas ocasionadas por la crisis financiera rusa, su presidente pagó el pato. **Se deshicieron de él ascendiéndole** al nuevo puesto de presidente adjunto.

**un socio comanditario**

En 1990, Lane terminó su MBA y con la ayuda de un socio comanditario él y MacHardy crearon Coed Sportswear.

**tener que cargar con algo**

Por aquellos días IBM tenía que cargar con 405.000 empleados leales y la sacrosanta política de no despedirles. A sus competidores más hábiles les encantaba.

**la jerarquía**

En la mayoría de las empresas, la persona encargada de las relaciones públicas está en el ranking número 20, pero aquí no. Un buen perfil es vital para nuestra empresa, así que nuestro encargado de relaciones públicas es uno de los empleados más importantes y mejor pagados.

**know where one stands**

Never start a partnership with just a vague agreement on who does what. Put it down on paper, in detail. That way, both parties **know** exactly **where they stand**.

**the top brass**

It's a really important event. All **the top brass** will be there.

**have a say in sth**

Involve people in decisions that affect their jobs. Give them **a say in how** they perform their work, and be sure they understand how the business works, where the company is going, and their individual role in the company's goals.

**stand on one's own two feet**

If you need advice, my door is always open. That doesn't mean I want you to come to me with every single problem you encounter. On the contrary, the sooner you can **stand on your own two feet**, the better.

**have the final say on sth**

My goal is to turn 90% of my authority over to my management team. I still **have the final say on** some issues — major financial commitments, for example, or hiring new staff, but generally I'm trying to make as few decisions as possible.

**sb's say-so**

You can't start loading the containers without the **boss's say-so**.

**play second fiddle to sb**

Why am I resigning? Because I'm fed up **playing second fiddle** to Butley. I do all the work and he takes all the credit, and I'm sick of it.

**be quits with sb**

He gave us a lot of help when we were setting up the company, it's true. But we've put thousands of dollars' worth of business his way since then. I consider we **were quits** years ago.

**saber a qué atenerse**

Nunca pongas en marcha una sociedad únicamente con un acuerdo ambiguo sobre los puestos y las tareas. Pónlo por escrito, detalladamente. De esa forma, ambas partes sabrán exactamente a qué atenerse.

**el alto mando**

Es un evento muy importante. Todo el alto mando estará allí.

**tener voz y voto en algo**

Involucra a la gente en las decisiones que afectan a su trabajo. Han de tener voz y voto en el modo de realizar su trabajo, y asegúrate de que entienden el funcionamiento del negocio, los objetivos de la empresa y su papel individual en estos objetivos.

**valerse por sí mismo**

Si necesitas consejos, mi puerta está siempre abierta. Eso no significa que quiero que vengas con todos los problemas a los que te enfrentes. Todo lo contrario, cuanto antes puedas valerte por ti mismo, mejor.

**tener la última palabra en algo**

Mi meta es traspasar el 90% de mi autoridad al equipo de gerencia. Aún tengo la última palabra en algunos temas - importantes compromisos financieros, por ejemplo, o contratar a nuevos miembros del equipo, pero, en general, estoy intentando tomar el menor número posible de decisiones.

**el visto bueno de alguien**

No puedes empezar a cargar los contenedores sin el visto bueno del jefe.

**estar a la sombra**

¿Por qué dimito? Porque estoy harto de **estar a la sombra** de Butley. Hago todo el trabajo y él se queda con todo el mérito, ya no puedo más.

**estar en paz con alguien**

Nos ayudó mucho cuando estábamos montando la empresa, es verdad. Pero le hemos hecho ganar miles de dólares desde entonces. Estamos en paz.



## 32. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To be forced, against one's will, to take the responsibility for something: Nos cargaron con todas las facturas.
- 2** A hierarchical system which determines who dominates and who is dominated: Luchaban por hacerse un lugar en la jerarquía.
- 3** To misuse one's position of authority in an organization to force someone of lower rank to do what one wants: No es de las que abusan de su autoridad.
- 4** To know what someone else expects from one, what one's position is: Me gusta saber a qué atenerme.
- 5** To take a position of less importance: Ha resuelto dejar que otros asuman las responsabilidades de ahora en adelante.
- 6** Somebody's permission or authorisation: No podemos hacerlo sin que él nos dé el visto bueno.
- 7** To be the most powerful person in a group: Es él quien lleva la batuta.
- 8** To be even with someone, to be no longer in someone's debt: Ahora estamos en paz.
- 9** To know people in positions of influence and power: Tiene amistades en las altas esferas.
- 10** To accept the responsibility for something that someone else has done: Como siempre tuve que pagar el pato.
- 11** To have the authority to decide something: Es el director quien tiene la última palabra en estas cuestiones.
- 12** To be independent: Tienes que aprender a valerte por ti mismo.
- 13** To give someone freedom to do what he wants: The board assured him that they would \_\_\_\_\_ to introduce any policies or make any changes he considered necessary.
- 14** To have the chance to influence a decision: Yo no tengo ni voz ni voto en el asunto.
- 15** To give somebody permission to put a plan into action: Han dado luz verde a la construcción del nuevo bloque de oficinas.
- 16** To give somebody permission to do something: Dieron el visto bueno a nuestros planes.
- 17** To insist on something, to be firm: Se mantuvo firme y se negó a firmar.
- 18** The important people in control of something: He coaches the \_\_\_\_\_ in such companies as Intel, Microsoft and AT&T.
- 19** To be second in importance to someone: After years of \_\_\_\_\_ to others, he decided to start a company of his own.
- 20** To be responsible for bad things that have happened: As regards pollution, the mining industry \_\_\_\_\_.
- 21** A partner who does not play an active role in running a business but who invests money in it: Unless he could find a \_\_\_\_\_, he would be unable to start the company.
- 22** To avoid a responsibility by passing it on to someone else: Le acusaron de querer pasar la pelota.
- 23** To remove someone from a position of power by promoting him to a position where his power is reduced: If they wanted to bring in a new CEO, the only solution was to \_\_\_\_\_ the present one \_\_\_\_\_.
- 24** To decide what should be done, how, when, etc: Cronin es quien manda ahora.
- 25** To refuse to accept any further responsibility for something: Después de eso, no quiso saber nada de ellos.

## 33. Ethics

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### honesty is the best policy

---

While **honesty is usually the best policy**, some managers find that subterfuge and indirection work even better, especially when dealing with the prima donnas in their company.

### be fair and square

---

The last thing in the world I want is for you to feel that we've deceived or tricked you in any way. On the contrary, I want an agreement which **is fair and square for** both parties.

### in good faith

---

The director of the company said that although his organisation was responsible for the error, no disciplinary action would be taken. He insisted that at all times his staff had acted **in good faith**.

### be on the level

---

Starting any business has risks, and those risks aren't entirely offset by the advantages of the franchise relationship. How can you be sure the company you are dealing with **is on the level**?

### cook the books

---

He was forced to resign when it was discovered that one of his subordinates had been **cooking the books** to pay off gambling losses.

### sweep sth under the carpet

---

There are irregularities in these accounts which you can't afford to simply **sweep under the carpet**. You may want to ignore them but the external auditor won't.

### have the courage of one's convictions

---

Jeff Franklin expressed bitter opposition to the policies the new CEO had imposed. Moreover, he **had the courage of his convictions**: immediately after the meeting he resigned from his highly paid job on the board of directors.

### go against the grain

---

Three million people out of work **goes against the grain** of a socialist Britain haunted by the ravages of the 1930s.

### a man of his word

---

Don't worry about Francis Jameson, he's a **man of his word**. If he says he'll help us, he will help us.

### lo mejor es ser franco

---

Aunque *normalmente* lo mejor es ser franco, algunos directivos piensan que el subterfugio y la indirecta funcionan incluso mejor, en especial al tratar con algunos de los "divos" de sus empresas.

### ser honrado a carta cabal

---

Lo que menos quiero del mundo es que creas que te hemos traicionado o engañado de alguna manera. Todo lo contrario, quiero un acuerdo que sea honrado a carta cabal para ambas partes.

### de buena fe

---

El director de la empresa dijo que aunque su organización era responsable del error, no se tomaría ninguna medida disciplinaria. Insistió en que en todo momento su equipo actuó de buena fe.

### ser de fiar, ser honrado

---

El inicio de cualquier negocio tiene sus riesgos, y esos riesgos no están completamente compensados por las ventajas de una relación de franquicia. ¿Cómo puedes estar seguro de que la empresa con la que estás tratando es de fiar?

### amañar las cuentas

---

Fue obligado a dimitir cuando se descubrió que uno de sus subordinados había estado amañando las cuentas para pagar sus deudas de juego.

### correr un velo sobre algo

---

Hay irregularidades en estas cuentas sobre las cuales no te puedes permitir correr un velo. Puedes ignorarlas pero el auditor externo no lo hará.

### tener el valor de atenerse a sus principios

---

Jeff Franklin expresó una oposición frontal hacia la política impuesta por el nuevo presidente. Es más, tuvo el valor de atenerse a sus principios: inmediatamente después de la reunión, dimitió de su bien remunerado puesto en la junta directiva.

### ir en contra de los principios de alguien

---

El hecho de que tres millones de personas estén sin empleo va en contra de los principios de una Gran Bretaña socialista amenazada por los estragos de los años 30.

### un hombre de palabra

---

No te preocupes por Francis Jameson, es un hombre de palabra. Si dice que nos ayudará, lo hará.

**feather one's nest**

Shareholders are kings, and the duty of a company's directors and officers is to make them rich kings. Things go wrong if managers forget who owns the company and **feather their own nests**.

**grease sb's palm**

We hypocritically criticise countries like Nigeria, where bribery and corruption are certainly widespread, as though in Europe it were unknown to **grease the palms** of government officials and business contacts.

**have an itchy palm**

Forget all about his smiles and obsequious manner. You need to know two things about Magdi Hassan: he's the one who's responsible for contracting suppliers like us, and **he has an itchy palm**. He'll help us all right, but not for nothing.

**on principle**

Burma's opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) yesterday denied charges that it had accepted foreign financial assistance. "The NLD does not accept foreign financial assistance **on principle**," said a spokesman.

**be as good as one's word**

He promised to send us a cheque and he was **as good as his word** - it arrived in this morning's mail.

**take sb's word for it**

It's not unknown for applicants to exaggerate the importance of their previous accomplishments. So if they tell you about wonderful things they've done in the past, don't just **take their word for it**. Check.

**pull the wool over sb's eyes**

Hermes, the UK's biggest pension fund manager, says that boardroom pay policies should be audited independently, so that companies do not use consultants to **pull the wool over** shareholders' eyes.

**come home to roost**

Their neglect of the environmental issue has now **come home to roost**: they will be obliged to spend millions bringing their factories into line with strict European regulations.

**barrer para casa**

Los accionistas son los reyes y el deber de los directores y altos cargos de una empresa es convertirlos en reyes ricos. Las cosas saldrán mal si los directivos se olvidan de a quién pertenece la empresa y barren para casa.

**untarle la mano a alguien**

Hipócriticamente criticamos a países como Nigeria, donde el soborno y la corrupción están sin duda a la orden del día, como si en Europa no se untase la mano a miembros del gobierno y a contactos empresariales.

**estar dispuesto a dejarse sobornar**

Olvidate por completo de sus sonrisas y de sus modales serviles. Necesitas saber dos cosas acerca de Magdi Hassan: él es el responsable de contratar a los proveedores como nosotros y está dispuesto a dejarse sobornar. Nos ayudará, sin duda, pero no por amor al arte.

**por principio**

La oposición de Burma, la Liga Nacional para la Democracia (National League for Democracy - NLD), negó ayer las acusaciones según las cuales había aceptado ayuda financiera extranjera. "La NLD no acepta ayuda financiera extranjera, por principio," dijo un portavoz.

**cumplir su palabra**

Prometió enviarnos un talón y cumplió su palabra: llegó con el correo de esta mañana.

**confiar en la palabra de alguien**

No es extraño que los aspirantes a un puesto exageren la importancia de sus logros. Así que si te hablan de las cosas maravillosas que han hecho en el pasado, no te fíes de su palabra. Compruébalo.

**engañar a alguien**

Hermes, el mayor gestor de fondos de pensiones del Reino Unido, dice que la política de pagos de los directivos debería ser auditada de manera independiente, para que las empresas no se escuden detrás de los consultores con el fin de engañar a los accionistas.

**producir su fruto amargo**

Su indiferencia por los temas medioambientales ha producido su fruto amargo: se verán obligados a gastarse millones para conseguir que sus fábricas estén a la altura de la estricta normativa europea.

**that's a different kettle of fish**

I don't mind stretching the rules a little in an emergency, but what you're suggesting is a criminal offence, and that's a **different kettle of fish** altogether.

**be above board**

It is difficult for a foreigner to do business in China. You must have a joint venture, a Chinese partner who knows how to deal with local government officials: **both above board** and under the table. There's bribery at every level.

**have the guts to do sth**

Leadership is not a basket of tricks or skills. It's strength of character and honesty **and having the guts to** make hard decisions. It's a matter of ethics and moral compass, the willingness to remain highly vulnerable.

**catch sb red-handed**

In 1994, General Motors felt it had discovered a major case of industrial espionage: a top executive **had been caught red-handed** delivering GM documents to Volkswagen.

**get cold feet**

Any money that came in we put back into the company. A couple of times we were approached by people who wanted to buy into the business. But to me that's like getting married to someone you don't know, and **I got cold feet**.

**under the table**

In most oil-producing countries, it is normal business practice to pay large sums of money **under the table** in order to obtain confidential information.

**be on the make**

He's one of those people you can't feel at ease with. You have the feeling that, whatever he says or does, **he's always on the make**, always looking for an angle to exploit.

**there are no two ways about it**

These figures make it perfectly clear that O'Neill has been embezzling us for years. **There are no two ways about it**.

**eso es harina de otro costal**

No me importa ser un poco flexible con las reglas en el caso de una emergencia, pero lo que me estás sugiriendo es un delito en toda regla y eso es harina de otro costal.

**ser legítimo, ser sin tapujos**

Para un extranjero es difícil hacer negocios en China. Tienes que asociarte con un socio chino que sepa cómo tratar con los funcionarios del gobierno local: por encima y por debajo de la mesa. Hay sobornos a todos los niveles.

**tener agallas de hacer algo**

El liderazgo no es una cesta de trucos ni de habilidades. Es personalidad y honradez y tener agallas para tomar decisiones difíciles. Es una cuestión de ámbito ético y moral, la predisposición a mantenerse vulnerable ante los demás.

**coger a uno****con las manos en la masa**

En 1944, General Motors creyó que había descubierto un caso importante de espionaje industrial: un alto ejecutivo había sido cogido con las manos en la masa entregando documentos de GM a Volkswagen.

**entrarle miedo a uno, dar marcha atrás**

Reinvertíamos en la empresa cualquier cantidad ingresada. Un par de veces fuimos contactados por personas que querían comprar el negocio. Pero para mí era como casarse con alguien a quien no conoces y **dar marcha atrás**.

**bajo cuerda, bajo mano**

En la mayoría de los países productores de petróleo, el pagar grandes cantidades de dinero **bajo mano** es una práctica habitual para obtener información confidencial.

**tratar de sacar tajada**

Es una de esas personas con quienes no se puede estar a gusto. Tienes la sensación de que, diga lo que diga o haga lo que haga, siempre está intentando sacar tajada, siempre buscando un ángulo que explotar.

**no tiene vuelta de hoja**

Estas cifras demuestran perfectamente que O'Neill ha estado malversando fondos desde hace años. No tiene vuelta de hoja.

### 33. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To falsify the accounts of a company: Alguien ha estado falsificando los libros.
- 2** To do what one has promised to do: He said he would let us know it there were any new developments and he \_\_\_\_\_, that's exactly what he did.
- 3** To have the courage to do what one believes to be right: No es consecuente con sus principios.
- 4** To deceive someone: Es inútil que intentes darle gato por liebre.
- 5** (*a mistake, a misdeed, etc.*) To return, after a long time, as an unpleasant effect on the person who initially made the mistake: Ahora su política produce su fruto amargo.
- 6** To conceal something shameful or unpleasant: Intentaron correr un velo sobre el asunto.
- 7** To accept what someone says as true, without checking the facts: Tendrás que creerme.
- 8** To make sure of one's own financial comfort, especially in a dishonest way and at someone else's expense: Se ha puesto las botas a costa del contribuyente.
- 9** There is no doubt at all about it: No tiene vuelta de hoja.
- 10** (*saying*) Being honest is ultimately more profitable: Lo mejor es ser franco.
- 11** To be concerned only with making a profit or gaining a personal advantage: The trouble with having salesmen for friends is that you never know when they're being sincere and when they're simply \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12** (*payments*) Secretly and usually illegally: Le pagaron 25.000 dólares bajo cuerda.
- 13** To bribe someone: You can \_\_\_\_\_ in more ways than one — it doesn't necessarily have to be with money.
- 14** To stop doing something or withdraw from something because one becomes afraid of the consequences: He had prepared a list of grievances which he intended to read at the monthly meeting, but at the last moment he \_\_\_\_\_ and said nothing.
- 15** (*used when the resulting situation is unsatisfactory*) With sincere or honest intentions: When we engaged Mr Hill as a consultant, we did so \_\_\_\_\_, with no knowledge of the fact that he was already employed by our main competitor.
- 16** To discover somebody doing something forbidden or illegal: Lo pillé con las manos en la masa.
- 17** A person who keeps his promises: Es un hombre de palabra.
- 18** To have the necessary courage to do something: Tuvo las agallas de decirselo a la cara.
- 19** (*a business, a deal, etc.*) To be entirely legal and proper, (*person*) to be honest: Todas las operaciones fueron legales.
- 20** To be honest and correct, honestly: Ganaron en buena ley.
- 21** To be easily bribed: Está dispuesto a dejarse sobornar.
- 22** To be in opposition to one's principles, to a natural tendency, etc: Apoyarlos va en contra de mis principios.
- 23** That's something completely different: Eso es harina de otro costal.
- 24** Because of a fixed moral rule: No lo hace por cuestión de principios.
- 25** To be honest and trustworthy, to be telling the truth: No te preocupes, Sam es honrado.

## 34. Psychology

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### what makes sb tick

---

To find out how something works you need to take it apart. That is a strong tradition in both psychology and self-help. Why do we behave as we do? **What makes us tick?**

### show what one is made of

---

It's true that he's young and that he doesn't have much experience, but he's been asking for a chance to show **what he's made of** and I think we should give him one.

### be able to think on one's feet

---

In this job, people are constantly coming to you with problems, questions, bad news and complaints. It's a steady flow, so you have to be able to stay calm and **to think on your feet**.

### be a bag of nerves

---

It was the first time he had given a presentation to such a large audience and an hour before it started **he was a bag of nerves**, pacing up and down the room, chain-smoking and biting his nails.

### have a screw loose

---

When he first suggested we could sell more perfume by raising the price, I thought he must **have a screw loose**. But it turned out he was right: normal logic doesn't apply to luxury goods.

### read sb like a book

---

Poor George! He thinks he's so clever with all his plotting and scheming, but **I can read him like a book**. I know exactly what he's up to.

### have a chip on one's shoulder

---

I found out that **if you have a chip on your shoulder** when you go into a meeting with the tax inspectors, it'll cost you money. You gain nothing by being defiant and confrontational.

### be on cloud nine

---

When they invited him to become a partner in the firm, he was **on cloud nine** for a week. It was the reward for a decade of grinding hard work, and an honour no one had ever refused.

### lo que mueve a alguien

---

Para saber cómo funcionan las cosas es necesario desmontarlas. Ésa es una fuerte tradición, tanto en psicología como en auto-ayuda. ¿Por qué nos comportamos como lo hacemos? ¿Qué es lo que nos mueve?

### demostrar

#### las cualidades que tiene uno

---

Es verdad que es joven y que no tiene mucha experiencia, pero ha estado pidiendo la oportunidad de demostrar las cualidades que tiene y creo que deberíamos dársela.

### ser capaz de pensar con rapidez

---

En este trabajo, la gente te viene constantemente con problemas, preguntas, malas noticias y quejas. Es un flujo continuo, así que tienes que poder mantenerte tranquilo y ser capaz de pensar con rapidez.

### ser un manojo de nervios

---

Era la primera vez que hacía una presentación ante un público tan numeroso y una hora antes de que empezara, estaba hecho un manojo de nervios, caminando en círculos, fumando sin parar y comiéndose las uñas.

### tener flojos los tornillos

---

Cuando al principio sugirió que podríamos vender más perfumes subiendo el precio, pensé que debía de tener flojos los tornillos. Pero resultó que tenía razón: la lógica normal no se aplica a la mercancía de lujo.

### leer el pensamiento de alguien

---

¡Pobre George! Se cree muy listo con todos sus complots y tramas, pero le puedo leer el pensamiento. Sé exactamente lo que está planeando.

### ser un / estar resentido

---

He averiguado que si estás resentido cuando estás en una reunión con inspectores de hacienda, te costará dinero. No ganarás nada con ser desafiante y buscar bronca.

### estar en el séptimo cielo

---

Cuando le invitaron a ser socio de la empresa, estuvo en el séptimo cielo durante una semana. Fue la recompensa por una década de trabajo durísimo y un honor que nadie había rechazado nunca.

---

**to show one's true colours**


---

He seemed liberal enough until they made him manager. Then, **showing his true colours**, he imposed a strict white-shirt-and-tie dress code on all male employees. And that was only the beginning.

---

**deep down**


---

Outwardly, I've always been rather conventional and traditional: Brooks Brothers clothes, knowing all the "right people," etc. But **deep down** I know I'm a contrarian who likes to challenge the orthodox way of looking at things.

---

**be fed up with sth**


---

My last place of employment was so horrible that everyone except the boss dreaded coming to work each day. I finally **got fed up** and quit.

---

**have both feet on the ground**


---

He's not one of these modern visionary leaders. He believes that management is a practical business, requiring you **to have both feet firmly on the ground** at all times.

---

**be nobody's fool**


---

Their chief negotiator is a smooth operator with a reputation for getting what he wants. But Michael **is nobody's fool** and I have every confidence that he'll defend our interests and get the best possible deal.

---

**blow hot and cold**


---

Because Wall Street **blows hot and cold** on biotech stocks, many biotech firms look to the \$110 billion pharmaceutical industry for help.

---

**go all to pieces**


---

It's terribly sad about Mathers. After his wife's death, he just **went all to pieces**. Now he takes weeks to complete tasks he used to do in days.

---

**be on pins and needles**


---

That lawsuit really scared us. If we had lost, we would have been bankrupt. **We were on pins and needles** the whole time.

---

**keep sb on tenterhooks**


---

General Electric Company has been keeping British Aerospace and Thomson-CSF of France

---

**mostrarse uno como es en realidad**


---

Parecía bastante liberal hasta que le hicieron gerente. Entonces, mostrándose como era en realidad, impuso una norma estricta de vestuario, camisa blanca y corbata para todos los empleados masculinos. Y eso fue tan sólo el comienzo.

---

**en el fondo (de su corazón)**


---

Por fuera, siempre he sido bastante clásico y tradicional: ropa de Brooks Brothers, trato con la gente "bien", etc. Pero, en el fondo, sé que soy una persona que lleva la contraria, a quien le gusta desafiar al orden establecido.

---

**estar harto de algo**


---

Mi último puesto de trabajo era tan horrible que todos salvo el jefe temían ir al trabajo cada día. Al final me harté y dimití.

---

**ser realista, ser práctico, tener los pies en el suelo**


---

No es uno de esos líderes modernos y visionarios. Cree que la gerencia es un negocio práctico, que exige tener siempre los pies en el suelo.

---

**no dejarse engañar por nadie**


---

Su principal negociador es un tipo hábil con fama de conseguir lo que quiere. Pero Michael no se deja engañar por nadie y tengo plena confianza en que defenderá nuestros intereses y conseguirá el mejor trato posible.

---

**vacilar, no saber qué hacer**


---

Como Wall Street no se siente segura en cuanto a las acciones de las empresas de biotecnología, muchas empresas de este sector miran hacia la industria farmacéutica de 110 mil millones de dólares en busca de ayuda.

---

**perder el control, quedarse deshecho**


---

Lo de Mathers es muy triste. Tras la muerte de su esposa, se quedó deshecho. Ahora tarda semanas en hacer lo que antes hacía en días.

---

**estar sobre ascuas**


---

Ese pleito realmente nos asustó. Si hubiésemos perdido, nos habríamos declarado en quiebra. Estuvimos todo el tiempo sobre ascuas.

---

**tener a uno sobre ascuas**


---

La General Electric Company ha mantenido sobre ascuas a British Aerospace y a

on **tenterhooks**. However, GEC is expected to decide within the next few days whether to sell its Marconi defence division to BAe or merge it with Thomson.

### **be quick on the uptake**

Your new assistant seems **very quick on the uptake**. She's only been here two weeks and already she understands all the intricacies of our office politics.

### **his bark is worse than his bite**

Don't let yourself be intimidated by old Ogden, **his bark's worse than his bite**. When you know him a bit better, you'll see he's not a bad sort to work for.

### **be set in one's ways**

The problem facing Fisher is how to transform a work force that is complacent, **set in its ways**, and slow to change into one that's able to cope in today's highly competitive market.

### **be out of one's mind**

How would their wives react if these normally level-headed businessmen announced they were having a midlife crisis? Every reaction imaginable was predicted. The most common was: "**Are you out of your mind?** Get back to work."

### **slip one's mind**

The last time I saw him, he said he would send me his new e-mail address, but that was two weeks ago and I haven't heard from him yet. I suppose it must have **slipped his mind**.

### **take it out on sb**

At bottom, he's a bully. If he's under pressure or things aren't going right, he **takes it out on his subordinates**.

### **fly off the handle**

Ever have a client **fly off the handle** at you for something that wasn't your fault? Rule number one: don't take it personally. Most difficult behaviour is a response to stress or some kind of perceived threat.

### **what's eating you?**

Bill's in a foul temper this morning, snapping at everyone. I wonder **what's eating him?**

Thomson-CSF de Francia. Sin embargo, se espera que GEC se decida en los próximos días si vende su división de defensa Marconi a BAe o se fusiona con Thomson.

### **pillarlas al vuelo**

Tu nueva ayudante parece **pillarlas al vuelo**. Sólo lleva aquí dos semanas y ya entiende todas las complejidades de nuestra política administrativa.

### **perro ladrador poco mordedor**

No te dejes intimidar por el viejo Ogden, ya que perro ladrador es poco mordedor. Cuando le conozcas un poco mejor, verás que no es un mal tipo para trabajar con él.

### **tener costumbres profundamente arraigadas**

El problema al que se enfrenta ahora Fisher es cómo transformar un equipo de trabajadores autocomplacientes, de piñón fijo y de reacciones tardías, en uno que sea capaz de hacer frente al mercado altamente competitivo de hoy en día.

### **estar loco**

¿Cómo reaccionarían sus esposas si estos empresarios normalmente sensatos anunciaran que sufren la crisis de los 45 años? Se pronosticaron toda clase de reacciones. La más común fue: "¿Estás loco? Vuelve a trabajar."

### **irsele de la memoria, pasársele algo a alguien**

La última vez que le vi, dijo que me enviaría su nueva dirección de correo electrónico, pero eso fue hace dos semanas. Supongo que se la ha pasado.

### **desquitarse con uno**

En el fondo, es un bruto. Si está bajo presión o las cosas no van bien, se **desquita con sus subordinados**.

### **sallirse de sus casillas, perder los estribos**

¿Alguna vez has tenido un cliente que ha perdido los estribos por algo que no era culpa tuya? Regla número uno: no te lo tomes a pecho. La mayoría de los comportamientos difíciles son una respuesta al estrés o a algún tipo de amenaza imaginaria.

### **¿qué mosca te ha picado?**

Bill está de muy mal humor esta mañana. ¿Me pregunto qué mosca le ha picado?



## 34. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To reveal one's true and usually bad character: Se mostró tal cual era en realidad.
- 2** To be in a state of excitement and anxiety: They \_\_\_\_\_ waiting for the results.
- 3** To keep somebody in a state of anxiety: Le encanta tener a la gente sobre ascuas.
- 4** To be extremely happy: Ha estado en el séptimo cielo desde que se enteró.
- 5** He is not as bad-tempered as he seems to be: Perro ladrador poco mordedor.
- 6** To show one's real abilities or worth: This is your chance to \_\_\_\_\_ the management \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7** To have fixed habits which are very unlikely to change: He's a sixty-five year old bachelor, so naturally he's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8** Deep in one's conscience, feelings, etc: En el fondo lo sentía.
- 9** To be mad: ¡Debes de estar loco!
- 10** What makes a person think and behave as he does: Me gustaría saber qué es lo que lo mueve.
- 11** To become suddenly confused or distressed: Quedó deshecho cuando se enteró.
- 12** To be forgotten: Lo siento, se me olvidó por completo.
- 13** To understand someone completely, to not be deceived by someone: A mí no me vengas con cuentos, que ya te conozco.
- 14** To treat somebody badly because of one's own personal troubles: Sé que estás molesto, pero no te desquites conmigo.
- 15** To alternate between liking and disliking something: It's infuriating to work for someone like Adnan, he \_\_\_\_\_ on every possible subject.
- 16** To be very nervous or anxious: Era un manojo de nervios antes de la entrevista.
- 17** What is worrying you, or making you nervous, bad tempered, etc?: ¿Qué mosca te ha picado?
- 18** To be realistic and practical: She \_\_\_\_\_, so she won't be impressed by big promises alone.
- 19** To be quick to understand or to learn new things: Las pilló al vuelo.
- 20** To feel angry or bitter because one believes others do not appreciate one's real worth, e.g. because of lack of money or education: Está muy complejo por su origen social.
- 21** To suddenly lose one's temper with someone: Cuando se lo dije, perdió los estribos.
- 22** To be able to react quickly to changing circumstances: En este puesto hay que ser capaz de pensar con rapidez.
- 23** To be a shrewd person, not easily deceived: Nadie le engaña.
- 24** To be bored and dissatisfied with something: Estoy harto de que me digan lo que tengo que hacer.
- 25** To be slightly mad: Le falta un tornillo.

## 35. Colleagues

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### an Aunt Sally

---

Topliss wasn't quite as inefficient as everybody claims. Perhaps his colleagues simply needed **an Aunt Sally** to divert attention from their own shortcomings.

### a whizz kid

---

Young Hall has been our top salesman four years in a row. He's a real **whizz kid**. If he continues like this, he'll be running the company by the time he's thirty.

### a live wire

---

Acquiring charisma isn't easy, and a lot of leaders shouldn't even bother. Who hasn't cringed at the sight of an awkward manager trying to be a **live wire**?

### a glutton for punishment

---

I don't understand why he goes to the office at the weekend. Either he's trying to impress somebody or he's a **real glutton for punishment**.

### a pain in the neck

---

Some people you meet in business are a **pain in the neck**. Like the client who demands that his project be completed overnight, but lets your bill go unpaid for 90 days.

### a fair-weather friend

---

There isn't anything easy about bankruptcy. But don't waste time crying over **fair-weather friends**. Instead, take strength from those who support you.

### be part of the furniture

---

Sam Mouldy has been down in the Accounts Department for so long, he's **part of the furniture**. I hear he's due to retire next year, but then that's what I heard last year as well.

### be down-to-earth

---

Bollenbach has another rare strength: a relaxed, jovial personality. His ruddy face and blue eyes radiate **down-to-earth** charm.

### be on the ball

---

There's always a certain anxiety in Singapore and this is a galvanising force. It keeps people **on the ball**.

### un blanco (de insultos, críticas, etc.)

---

Topliss no era tan inútil como se decía. Quizá sus compañeros necesitaban un blanco para desviar la atención de sus propios fallos.

### un lince, un prodigio

---

El joven Hall es desde hace cuatro años nuestro mejor comercial. Es un auténtico prodigio. Si continúa así, estará al cargo de la empresa cuando llegue a los 30.

### un nervio, un torbellino

---

Tener carisma no es fácil y muchos líderes no deberían ni siquiera intentarlo. ¿Quién no ha sentido vergüenza ajena al ver a un gerente torpe comportarse como un torbellino?

### un masoquista

---

No entiendo por qué se va a la oficina durante el fin de semana. O está intentando impresionar a alguien o es un auténtico masoquista.

### un pesado, un pelmazo

---

Algunas personas que conoce uno en el trabajo son unos auténticos pelmazos. Como el cliente que insiste en que su proyecto esté terminado para el día siguiente, pero deja que pasen 90 días sin pagar la factura.

### un amigo de conveniencia

---

No es nada fácil declararse en quiebra. Pero no pierdas el tiempo llorando por amigos de conveniencia. En su lugar, concéntrate en aquellos que te apoyan.

### formar parte del decorado

---

Sam Mouldy lleva tanto tiempo en el departamento de contabilidad que forma parte del decorado. He oído que le toca jubilarse el año que viene, pero eso es lo mismo que oí el año pasado.

### ser práctico, ser realista, bonachón

---

Bollenbach tiene otra rara habilidad: una personalidad relajada y jovial. Su cara rubicunda y sus ojos azules irradian un encanto bonachón.

### estar al caso, espabilar

---

Siempre hay una cierta ansiedad en Singapur, lo que constituye un gran incentivo. Mantiene a la gente a tope.

**be sb's right-hand man**

Ballmer, who is **Gates' right-hand man**, concluded that India was potentially a huge opportunity.

**be a dead ringer for sb**

Have you seen the boss's new PA? **She's a dead ringer** for the young Sharon Stone. The only difference is she wears glasses.

**give sb the sack**

At Morgan Grenfell, 18 fund managers **were given the sack** in November and morale is said to be low.

**put sb out to pasture**

"They didn't just **put us out to pasture**, they put a bullet through us," claimed McManus, who has filed an age-discrimination lawsuit against the company.

**pass the hat round**

As you all know, Dick Walton will be getting married next month. So, as is customary, we'll be **passing the hat round** the department to get him a wedding present. All contributions will be most welcome.

**keep oneself to oneself**

We don't really know what he's like. **He keeps himself to himself** — never comes to staff parties, or anything like that.

**get on sb's nerves**

Do you ever snap at a colleague or a customer who **gets on your nerves**? If so, it's probably evidence of stress.

**be all mouth**

You don't want to believe everything Conway tells you. **He's all mouth**, forever bragging about people he's never met and places he's never been.

**a skeleton staff**

We're open 7 days a week throughout the year. On weekends and holidays, of course, we operate with only **a skeleton staff**.

**across the board**

Mandini sought to placate employee worries, saying there would be no immediate salary reductions. Yet he also announced austerity measures **across the board** and hinted at personnel reductions.

**ser el brazo derecho de alguien**

Ballmer, la mano derecha de Gates, llegó a la conclusión de que la India ofrecía inmensas oportunidades.

**ser un doble a alguien**

¿Has visto la nueva relaciones públicas del jefe? Es la **doble de Sharon Stone**. La única diferencia es que ésta lleva gafas.

**despedir a uno**

En Morgan Grenfell, 18 gestores de fondos fueron despedidos en noviembre y se dice que la moral está baja.

**jubilarse a alguien**

"No sólo nos jubilaron, sino que nos pegaron un tiro," dijo McManis, que ha llevado a pleito a la empresa por discriminación de edad.

**asar el platillo, pasar la gorra**

Como todos sabéis, Dick Walton se va a casar el mes que viene. Así que, como de costumbre, pasaremos el platillo por el departamento para comprarle un regalo de boda. Todas las contribuciones serán bienvenidas.

**ser discreto**

Realmente no sabemos cómo es. Se mantiene apartado, nunca acude a las fiestas de la oficina ni nada por el estilo.

**crispar los nervios a alguien**

¿No has levantado nunca la voz a algún compañero o cliente que te crispa los nervios? Si es así, seguramente es una muestra de estrés.

**ser un fanfarrón**

No te creas todo lo que te diga Conway. Es un fanfarrón, siempre alardeando de gente que nunca ha conocido y de lugares en los que nunca ha estado.

**un personal mínimo**

Estamos abiertos 7 días a la semana durante todo el año. Pero durante los fines de semana y las vacaciones, funcionamos sólo con el **personal mínimo**.

**general, global**

Mandini quiso tranquilizar a los empleados, diciendo que no habría ninguna reducción inmediata de salarios. Pero también anunció medidas globales de austeridad e insinuó que podría haber ajustes de plantilla.

**give sb his due**

Whether you like Murdoch or dislike him, and most people working here can't stand him either as a person or as a manager, you still have to **give him his due**: he gets the job done on time and he gets it done well.

**be like a fish out of water**

I don't know why they put the new management trainee in the Data Processing Department, he doesn't know the first thing about computers. He must really **feel like fish out of water**.

**a dark horse**

No one expected him to be promoted to Division Head, but then he's always been a bit of **a dark horse**. Clearly the management have seen qualities in him that the rest of us were unaware of.

**new blood**

Employees who have been doing the same things the same way for twenty years or so aren't going to change overnight. That's why we need the kind of energy and ideas that come with regular infusions of **new blood**.

**hate sb's guts**

You can't possibly ask those two to share an office. Don't you know they **hate each other's guts**?

**have sth in store for sb**

Immediately he took over the company, it was obvious he had a number of major changes **in store for us**.

**ser justo con alguien**

Te guste Murdoch o no —y la mayoría de la gente no le puede aguantar ni como persona ni como gerente—, tienes que ser justo con él: consigue terminar el trabajo a tiempo y lo consigue hacer bien.

**estar como pez fuera del agua**

No sé por qué han puesto al joven en prácticas de dirección en el departamento de proceso de datos, no sabe ni lo más básico sobre ordenadores. Se tiene que sentir como un pez fuera del agua.

**una enigma, un ganador sorpresa**

Nadie esperaba que fuera ascendido a jefe de departamento, pero siempre ha sido un poco enigmático. Está claro que la dirección ha visto cualidades en él que el resto de nosotros desconocemos.

**sangre nueva, savia nueva**

Los empleados que han estado haciendo lo mismo de la misma forma durante veinte años no van a cambiar de la noche a la mañana. Por eso necesitamos la energía y las ideas generadas por la introducción de savia nueva.

**no poder ver a alguien**

No se puede pedir que esos dos compartan la misma oficina. ¿No sabes que no se pueden ver?

**tenerle algo preparado para alguien**

En cuanto se hizo cargo de la empresa, era evidente que tenía preparados para nosotros unos cuantos cambios importantes.

## 35. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To have something prepared or reserved for someone: ¿Qué nos deparará el destino?
- 2** To be boastful: You can't believe a fraction of what he tells you, he's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3** The smallest number of employees needed to keep a service operating, e.g. during holidays: We'll be open for business over Christmas and the New Year, but with a \_\_\_\_\_, of course.
- 4** A person who invites, or seems to invite, treatment usually considered unpleasant or painful: Eres masoquista, mira que ir a la oficina el fin de semana.
- 5** (*wages, prices, etc.*) Affecting everyone or everything, without exception: Los supermercados subirán los precios de todos sus productos.
- 6** To annoy someone: Ese ruido me crispa los nervios.
- 7** To collect gifts of money from people, e.g. in an office or company: When someone leaves the department, we usually \_\_\_\_\_ to buy them a little farewell gift.
- 8** To admit something positive about someone: Para ser justo con él, tienes que reconocer que es muy eficiente.
- 9** To not mix or communicate much with other people: She tends to \_\_\_\_\_, which explains why nobody really knows what kind of person she is.
- 10** Someone who is laughed at, blamed, insulted and despised: Every large office has an \_\_\_\_\_, some unfortunate person at whom others can direct their hostility.
- 11** To dislike someone intensely: No se pueden ver.
- 12** To look very much like another person: Es la viva imagen de su hermano.
- 13** To be a person no-one pays attention to because he has worked somewhere for so long: Hace tanto tiempo que trabaja en la oficina, que ya forma parte del decorado.
- 14** To be lively and alert, and usually highly competent: Parecía muy espabilada.
- 15** To dismiss somebody from his job: Los echaron a todos.
- 16** An annoying person: Es un pesado.
- 17** To force someone to retire: I don't know exactly how old he is, but I suppose they'll be \_\_\_\_\_ soon.
- 18** To be practical and realistic, to have both feet on the ground: You'll like Bill a lot, he's a very sensible, \_\_\_\_\_ person, not at all interested in grand theories of management.
- 19** A new person or new people brought into an organization to stimulate activity: Hace falta gente nueva en la compañía.
- 20** A young person with modern ideas working with energy and success: He's a real \_\_\_\_\_, it usually takes fifteen or twenty years to reach the position he's reached in five.
- 21** A person who doesn't talk much about himself or who has greater abilities than others think: Es una caja de sorpresas.
- 22** To be someone's most trusted helper: Llegó a ser el brazo derecho del patrón.
- 23** To feel uncomfortable in unfamiliar company or surroundings: Me siento como un pez fuera del agua.
- 24** A person who is only friendly while things are going well for one: It's bad enough to have major financial problems, but what is particularly painful is to discover how many \_\_\_\_\_ you had.
- 25** An extremely active, eager, lively person: Es una persona llena de vida.

## 36. Politics

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **pull strings**

My uncle knows people in high places. He may well be able to **pull a few strings** for us.

### **you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours**

For some members of the International Olympic Committee a "mutual understanding" is the equivalent of "**you scratch my back and I might vote for your city**".

### **every man for himself**

They've announced their intention to reduce the workforce by 40% over the next three years, so, as regards keeping your job, it's every **man for himself**.

### **stab sb in the back**

The word 'loyalty' isn't part of his vocabulary. However much you've done to help him, sooner or later he'll **stab you in the back**. It's his nature.

### **lick sb's boots**

Auge worked his way up through the ranks, **licking the boots of his supervisors** all the way. I never saw a man who could crawl to management the way he could.

### **have an axe to grind**

"Fishbowl" is a management exercise which brings everybody with **an axe to grind** on a given issue together in one room, with advocates of certain points of view in the centre of the "fishbowl" and executives responsible for the decision on the outside.

### **behind sb's back**

Every time I came into the office, they would suddenly stop talking. That happened three or four times, so I knew they were planning something **behind my back**.

### **take the credit for sth**

Brown wrote an excellent analysis of the situation but it was his boss who **took all the credit** for it.

### **curry favour with sb**

He's a talented golfer, so **he curries favour** with his superiors by giving them tips on how to improve their game, or even by letting them beat him from time to time.

### **tocar teclas**

Mi tío conoce a gente en las altas esferas. Es muy posible que pueda tocar unas cuantas teclas para favorecernos.

### **hoy por ti y mañana por mí**

Para algunos miembros del Comité Olímpico Internacional un "acuerdo mutuo" es el equivalente de "haz algo por mí y puede que vote por tu ciudad".

### **sálvese quien pueda**

Han anunciado su intención de reducir el personal de un 40% durante los tres próximos años, así que en cuanto a mantener el puesto de trabajo, **sálvese quien pueda**.

### **dar a uno una puñalada trapera**

La palabra "lealtad" no forma parte de su vocabulario. Por mucho que hayas hecho para ayudarlo, tarde o temprano te **dará una puñalada trapera**. Es su forma de ser.

### **hacer la pelota a alguien**

Auge fue ascendiendo desde abajo, haciendo constantemente la pelota a sus superiores. Jamás he visto un hombre capaz de arrastrarse ante los directivos como lo hace él.

### **tener intereses personales**

La "Pecera" es un ejercicio de gestión que reúne en una habitación a todos los que tienen un interés especial en un tema concreto, con los defensores de ciertos puntos de vista en el centro de la "pecera" y con los ejecutivos responsables de la decisión en el exterior.

### **a espaldas de alguien**

Cada vez que entraba en la oficina, dejaban de hablar. Eso ocurrió tres o cuatro veces, así que sabía que estaban planeando algo a mis espaldas.

### **atribuirse el mérito de algo**

Brown escribió un excelente análisis acerca de la situación pero fue su jefe quien se atribuyó todo el mérito.

### **tratar de congraciarse con alguien**

Es un golfista con talento, por eso trata de congraciarse con sus superiores dándoles consejos sobre cómo mejorar su juego, o incluso dejando que le ganen de vez en cuando.

**poke one's nose into sth**

What did Parker want this time? He's always snooping around our offices, **poking his nose into** matters that don't concern him.

**put sb's nose out of joint**

Julia used to work in his department, so it's bound to **put his nose out of joint** if she's promoted over him.

**look after number one**

If he's agreed to help you, it's because it's to his advantage to help you, you can be sure of that. He believes in **looking after number one** and only number one.

**keep a low profile**

Everybody makes mistakes. Just **keep a low profile** for the next few months and soon this whole unfortunate business will be forgotten.

**a snake in the grass**

Don't be deceived by all his talk of honesty and loyalty and so on, it's completely superficial. Believe me, he's **a real snake in the grass**.

**soft-soap sb**

Often it's not the cleverest or most able people who get promoted, but those who know best how to **soft-soap their superiors**.

**put a spoke in sb's wheel**

Even if it's 20% up on last year, there's a good chance the Training Plan will be approved at the next board meeting. Unless, of course, the Head of Finance manages to **put a spoke in our wheel** first.

**a storm in a teacup**

How *ridiculous* to see grown men shouting at each other like schoolboys! But don't let this silly row worry you — it's only **a storm in a teacup**. Tomorrow they won't even remember what they were shouting about.

**make waves**

Billionaire Ted Turner **made waves** in the mid-1980s when he bought the rights to classic black-and-white movies and colorized them to make them more appealing to young audiences.

**meter las narices en algo**

¿Qué es lo que Parker quería esta vez? Siempre está *figgando* en nuestras oficinas, *metiendo las narices* en donde no le llaman.

**molestar a alguien, ofender a alguien**

Antes Julia trabajaba en su departamento, así que se sentirá sin duda *dolido* si a ella le ascienden por encima de él.

**pensar ante todo en el propio interés**

Si está de acuerdo en ayudarte, es porque se va a beneficiar en algo, puedes estar *seguro*. Él piensa solamente en su propio interés y nada más.

**intentar pasar desapercibido**

Todo el mundo comete errores. Intenta *pasar desapercibido* durante los próximos meses y pronto este desgraciado asunto se habrá olvidado.

**un traidor, un Judas**

No te dejes engañar por su palabrería sobre la honradez, la lealtad, etc. Es muy superficial. Créeme, es un verdadero Judas.

**dar coba a alguien**

Muchas veces el que *asciende* no es ni el más listo ni el más capacitado, sino el que mejor sabe *dar coba* a sus superiores.

**poner trabas a alguien**

Incluso si sube un 20% en relación con el año anterior, hay una buena posibilidad de que se apruebe el Plan de Formación en la próxima reunión del consejo. A no ser, claro está, que el jefe de finanzas consiga ponernos trabas.

**una tempestad en un vaso de agua**

¡Qué *ridículo* es ver a hombres adultos gritando como niños! Pero no dejes que te preocupe esta discusión tonta, es tan sólo una *tempestad en un vaso de agua*. Mañana ni siquiera se acordarán por qué gritaban.

**hacer olas, causar problemas**

El multimillonario Ted Turner hizo *olas* a mediados de los años 80 cuando compró los derechos de películas clásicas en blanco y negro y las coloreó para hacerlas más atractivas al público joven.

### **put in a good word for sb**

I'd like to work in our Paris branch and I know the manager there is a personal friend of yours. I was wondering if you could **put in a good word** for me if any vacancies come up.

### **get even with sb**

Kicked out of the family business, Richards didn't get mad. He decided **to get even instead**. In such cases, founding your own successful company is the best revenge.

### **bury the hatchet**

The trend among retailers and oil companies is **to bury the hatchet** and try to maximise their returns by going into partnership. Thus, Elf, BP and Esso have joined forces with the Somerfield, Safeway and Tesco retail chains respectively.

### **a hatchet man**

Introducing the Time and Efficiency specialist to his employees, the GM insisted that he was interested only in improving procedures and that no one need fear for his job. The specialist was in no sense **a hatchet man**.

### **a vested interest**

Our employees have options on nearly 2 million shares of company stock. Sharing the wealth creates **a vested interest** for everyone to succeed.

### **give sb enough rope to hang himself**

Perhaps the best way to deal with any prima donnas working for you is **to give them enough rope to hang themselves**. Then they can either learn from their mistakes or move out of the company.

### **on the sly**

It seems that certain employees have been using the firm's Internet connection to play games **on the sly**.

### **interceder por alguien**

Me gustaría trabajar en nuestra sucursal de París y como ya sé que el gerente de allí es amigo personal tuyo, me preguntaba si podrías interceder por mí si se produce alguna vacante.

### **desquitarse con alguien**

Cuando le echaron de la empresa familiar, Richards no se enfadó, pero decidió desquitarse. En tales casos, la mejor venganza es crear tu propia empresa y tener éxito.

### **enterrar el hacha de guerra**

La tendencia entre los minoristas y las empresas del petróleo es la de enterrar el hacha de guerra e intentar conseguir el máximo beneficio asociándose. Así, Elf, BP y Esso han aunado fuerzas con las cadenas de minoristas Somerfield Safeway y Tesco respectivamente.

### **una persona contratada para "cortar cabezas"**

Al presentarles al especialista en Tiempo y Eficiencia, el director general insistió en que sólo le interesaba mejorar los procedimientos y que nadie tenía que temer por su trabajo. El especialista no era de ninguna manera una persona contratada para "cortar cabezas".

### **un interés adquirido**

Nuestros empleados tienen opciones sobre casi 2 millones de acciones de la empresa. El hecho de compartir la riqueza genera un interés adquirido para que todos tengan éxito.

### **dar completa libertad a alguien con la esperanza de que vaya a enredarse**

Quizá la única forma de tratar con cualquier tiburón que trabaje para ti es darle cuerda para que se ahorque a sí mismo. De este modo o aprende de sus errores o se marcha de la empresa.

### **a escondidas, a hurtadillas**

Parece ser que ciertos empleados han estado utilizando la conexión de la empresa con Internet para jugar a hurtadillas.



## 36 Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To take care of oneself exclusively or to look for one's own advantage: Sólo piensa en sí mismo.
- 2** To deliberately behave in a way that does not attract attention: *Trató de pasar desapercibida.*
- 3** To betray someone: *Esto fue una puñalada traperera para el director de exportaciones.*
- 4** A deceitful or treacherous person: *Nos delató algún judas.*
- 5** To flatter someone in order to gain something: *Susan le dio coba y logró que accediera.*
- 6** To cause someone to be offended because he no longer receives as much attention as in the past: *We succeeded where Fredricks failed, and of course that \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 7** To give someone a lot of freedom to do something his own way in order to see him fail or to make him look foolish: *Déjale actuar y él se condenará a sí mismo.*
- 8** To behave obsequiously to someone in power: *It makes me sick to see the way he \_\_\_\_\_ the boss's \_\_\_\_\_, and even sicker to see that it works.*
- 9** A personal interest: *Tienen un interés personal en promocionar estos productos.*
- 10** To accept praise for something, especially something done by someone else: *Su jefe se atribuyó el mérito de haber escrito el informe.*
- 11** To speak well of someone in order to recommend or defend him: *Prometió hablarle bien de mí al director.*
- 12** A person hired to reduce staff or costs in a company: *I'm a professional \_\_\_\_\_, so I don't expect to be popular.*
- 13** If you help me with something, I'll help you in return: *Hoy por ti y mañana por mí.*
- 14** To use personal influence to obtain something: *Tocó muchas teclas para conseguir ese trabajo.*
- 15** Secretly in order to deceive: *Se ha estado viendo con ella a escondidas.*
- 16** Without someone's knowledge or approval: *Tramaban algo a mis espaldas.*
- 17** To disturb a comfortable situation by causing trouble: *In the present economic climate, this isn't the moment to \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 18** To agree to be friends again after a quarrel: *Por fin han decidido hacer las paces.*
- 19** To have a person interest in something: *No estoy motivado por intereses personales en este asunto.*
- 20** To get one's revenge on someone: *Ya me las pagará algún día.*
- 21** An argument about something trivial: *Su pelea no es más que una tormenta en un vaso de agua.*
- 22** To ingratiate oneself with one's superiors: *He knows the boss's son collects stamps, so he always brings back some from his trips abroad. Of course, he's simply \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 23** A situation of extreme danger in which everybody must take care of himself: *Sálvese quien pueda.*
- 24** To prevent or hinder someone from reaching their objective: *Don't tell Morton what you're doing, because if he can, he'll try to \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 25** To concern oneself with someone else's affairs: *Siempre está metiendo las narices en nuestros asuntos.*

## 37. Careers

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### set one's sights on sth

Root **set his sights on** being a national sports broadcaster — and got rejected by hundreds of TV stations. But he persevered until FNN, a cable network, offered him a job as its weekend sports anchor.

### be cut out for sth

He's not really the adventurous sort. I don't know whether **he's cut out for** the expatriate life.

### have the makings of sth

I realised at once that these six individuals could work together as a cohesive unit and that **we had the makings of** a winning team.

### follow in sb's footsteps

He hoped that one day his son would **follow in his footsteps** and run the family business, but his son had other plans.

### fly high

It is less emotionally demanding to fire high-fliers than less gifted employees because high-fliers can always go and **fly high** somewhere else. But for most people, there is nowhere to go.

### go far

He is an ambitious and talented young man. I am sure he will **go far** in his chosen field.

### pull oneself up by one's bootstraps

**Pulling yourself up by the bootstraps**, you learn things that can't be taught in business school. So your chances of survival are much better than those of some guy who's had it all handed to him on a plate.

### come up through the ranks

Galvin **came up through the ranks**. He began by selling two-way radio systems in 1973, and by 1984 was head of the U.S. operations of Tegal.

### make a name for oneself

Since it was founded in 1971, Kryptonite Corp. has **made quite a name for itself**, selling more than one million locks and enjoying healthy success.

### tener la mira puesta en algo

Root tenía su mira puesta en ser presentador nacional de deportes y fue rechazado por cientos de cadenas de televisión. Pero perseveró hasta que la FNN, una cadena de televisión por cable, le ofreció un puesto como presentador de deportes de fin de semana.

### estar hecho para algo

No es realmente un tipo aventurero. No sé si está hecho para vivir expatriado.

### tener todo lo necesario para ser algo

Me di cuenta enseguida de que estos seis individuos podrían trabajar juntos como un solo hombre y que teníamos todo lo necesario para convertirnos en el equipo ganador.

### seguir los pasos a alguien

Esperaba que su hijo siguiera algún día sus pasos y llevara la empresa familiar, pero su hijo tenía otros planes.

### picar alto

Es menos estresante a nivel emocional el despedir a los que pican alto que a los empleados con menos talento porque los que pican alto siempre pueden ir a picar a otro lugar. Pero la mayoría de la gente no tiene dónde ir.

### llegar lejos

Es un joven ambicioso y con talento. Estoy seguro de que llegará lejos en el campo que elija.

### salir adelante sin ayuda de nadie

Al salir adelante sin ayuda de nadie, aprendes cosas que no se pueden enseñar en una escuela empresarial. Así, las posibilidades que tienes de sobrevivir son mucho mayores que las del tipo a quien se lo han dado todo en bandeja.

### empezar de cero

Galvin empezó de cero. Comenzó en 1973 vendiendo sistemas de radio bi-direccionales y para 1984 era ya director de operaciones de Tegal en EE UU.

### hacerse un nombre

Desde su fundación en 1971, Kryptonite Corp. se ha hecho un nombre, vendiendo más de un millón de candados y consiguiendo un gran éxito.

**be a feather in one's cap**

He was just a junior executive like many others until he clinched the deal with Newton. That was a **real feather in his cap**. The top men in the company knew who he was after that.

**give sb a pat on the back**

Anybody coming from a corporate environment is used to having a shoulder to cry on on a bad day or **getting a pat on the back** on a good day. You lose that when you go into business on your own. The isolation becomes your worst enemy.

**pull one's socks up**

This is the third time this week you've been late. If you want to continue working here, I seriously advise you to **pull your socks up**.

**out of sight, out of mind**

The problem with accepting an expatriate post in K.L. is that one is a very long way from the main office in London. **Out of sight, out of mind**, you know.

**get into one's stride**

It's unfair to criticise someone who has only just joined the company. Let's give him a couple of weeks to **get into his stride**, then I'm sure his performance will improve.

**a rolling stone gathers no moss**

Changing one's job frequently used to be frowned upon ("**a rolling stone gathers no moss**", etc.); now no-one can expect to spend one's whole working life in the same organisation.

**mark time**

You can **mark time** until some of the older men retire or leave the company, but there's absolutely no guarantee that you'll gain promotion this way.

**sb's track record**

Suharto's decision to resign in 1998, after 32 years in power, was greeted with little enthusiasm in financial markets. That was mainly because of the dubious **track record** of his successor, B.J. Habibie.

**ser un triunfo para alguien**

Sólo era un ejecutivo del montón como tantos otros hasta que consiguió el contrato con Newton. Eso fue un triunfo para él. Los altos cargos de la empresa sabían quién era después de eso.

**felicitar a alguien**

Cualquiera que venga del ambiente de una gran empresa está acostumbrado a tener un hombro en el que llorar cuando tiene un día malo, o ser felicitado cuando el día es bueno. Eso desaparece cuando uno pone en marcha su propio negocio. El aislamiento se convierte en su peor enemigo.

**hacer un esfuerzo, esforzarse**

Ésta es la tercera vez esta semana que has llegado tarde. Si quieres seguir trabajando aquí, sugiero que hagas un esfuerzo.

**ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente**

El problema de aceptar un puesto en el extranjero es que se está muy lejos de la oficina central de Londres. Ya ves, ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.

**coger el ritmo**

No es justo criticar a alguien que acaba de incorporarse a la empresa. Démosle un par de semanas para que coja el ritmo, estoy seguro de que su rendimiento mejorará.

**piedra movediza nunca moho la cobija**

Antes se miraba con desprecio el cambiar con frecuencia de trabajo ("**piedra movediza nunca moho la cobija**", etc.); ahora nadie puede esperar que uno se pase toda su vida laboral en la misma organización.

**hacer tiempo**

Puedes hacer tiempo hasta que algunos de los empleados más mayores se jubilen o dejen la empresa, pero no hay ninguna garantía de que consigas un ascenso de esa manera.

**el historial de alguien**

La decisión de Suharto de dimitir en 1998, tras 32 años en el poder, fue recibida con poco entusiasmo en los mercados financieros, debido principalmente al dudoso historial de su sucesor, B.J. Habibie.

### up-and-coming

You don't learn leadership in books, you learn it through experience. Here we believe in diversity of experience, so we move **up-and-coming** managers from division to division and from job to job.

### fall by the wayside

Some people get rich through multilevel marketing, but the overwhelming majority **fall by the wayside** — and that's no accident. It's how the system works.

### come up in the world

Slater has certainly **come up in the world** since the last time I saw him. He was only an accountant then, now he's running the Finance Department.

### step into sb's shoes

Have you groomed a successor? If you were to be promoted, is there someone who could **step into your shoes** right away?

### blot one's copybook

Harris seemed to be destined for great things until he **blotted his copybook** by getting drunk at the office party and insulting the GM in front of everyone.

### be in line for sth

Women are successful in high tech companies because there isn't a man with 20 years' experience **in line for the job** ahead of them. Things change so fast in high-tech businesses that new opportunities open faster there than in older kinds of work.

### a stepping stone

If the company pays for educational courses for employees, these are tax-free to the employee as long as they relate to his current position. But if the course is **a stepping stone** to another job, it's taxable.

### rest on one's laurels

Probably the reason the technology business is such fun is that no company is allowed **to rest on its laurels**. The moment you become complacent, the competition sprints ahead.

### que promete mucho

No se aprende a ser líder en los libros, sino con la experiencia. Aquí creemos en una experiencia diversificada, por eso trasladamos a los directivos que prometen mucho de división en división y de trabajo en trabajo.

### quedarse en el camino

Algunas personas se enriquecen a través del marketing de múltiples niveles, pero la inmensa mayoría se quedan en el camino, y eso no es ningún accidente. Es así como funciona el sistema.

### prosperar

Desde luego, Slater ha prosperado desde la última vez que le vi. Entonces era sólo un contable. Y ahora lleva el departamento de finanzas.

### pasar a ocupar el puesto de alguien

¿Has preparado a tu sucesor? Si te fueran a ascender, ¿hay alguna forma de que alguien pudiese ocupar tu puesto de inmediato?

### manchar su reputación

Harris parecía estar destinado a grandes cosas hasta que manchó su reputación emborrachándose en un fiesta de la oficina e insultó al director general delante de todos.

### estar a punto de recibir algo

Las mujeres tienen éxito en empresas de alta tecnología porque no hay ningún hombre con 20 años de experiencia delante de ellas para el puesto. Las cosas cambian tan rápido en los negocios de la alta tecnología que las nuevas oportunidades se presentan más rápidamente que en otra clase de trabajos.

### un trampolín, un escalón

Si la empresa paga a sus empleados el coste de los cursos de formación, éstos están libres de impuestos para el empleado siempre que tengan relación con su puesto actual. Pero si el curso es un trampolín para otro puesto, hay que pagar impuestos.

### dormirse en los laureles

Posiblemente la razón por la cual el negocio de la tecnología es tan divertido es porque no se permite que ninguna empresa se duerma en los laureles. En el momento que te relajas, la competencia se te adelanta.

## 37. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To become famous: Se dio a conocer como diseñador industria
- 2** (*saying*) Someone who is not seen is soon forgotten: Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.
- 3** To become successful through one's own efforts, without help from others and in spite of disadvantages: Your father had nothing when he started, not even a good education, but he worked hard and \_\_\_\_\_, so he deserves all the success he's had.
- 4** To become accustomed to an activity so that one starts doing it well: Estaba empezando a habituarme cuando me despidieron.
- 5** An achievement of which one can be proud: Es un triunfo para él.
- 6** (*saying*) A person who frequently changes his job will not become wealthy or successful: Piedra movediza nunca moho la cobija.
- 7** To reach a high position in an organisation, especially in the military, after starting in a low position: Starting in 1985 as a maintenance technician, he \_\_\_\_\_ and was appointed Head of Training in 1998.
- 8** To remain in one's present position until conditions permit further progress: He wasn't happy in that job, he was really just \_\_\_\_\_ until something better came along.
- 9** To do what another person, especially a relative, has already done: Quería seguir los pasos de su padre.
- 10** The list of a person's or organisation's successes: Esta compañía tiene un excelente historial comercial.
- 11** To aim at having or doing something: Tenía la mira puesta en convertirse en abogado.
- 12** To obtain a high position at work: Está volando alto.
- 13** To make a serious effort to improve the quality of one's work: Ya va siendo hora de que ponga un poco de empeño.
- 14** To be satisfied with successes already achieved and not attempt to go further: Se han dormido en los laureles.
- 15** A position on the way to something better: Es un peldaño en el camino del éxito.
- 16** To have suitable abilities for a particular job or activity: No estoy hecho para los negocios.
- 17** To have the necessary abilities to become something: Tiene madera de jefe de personal.
- 18** To be due to receive something, e.g. a promotion: Pronto le subirá el sueldo.
- 19** Likely to be successful, rising quickly (*in an organisation, etc.*): Don't you know him? He's one of our \_\_\_\_\_ young executives.
- 20** To spoil one's record: Fue una mancha en su historial.
- 21** To praise someone for something he has done: Se merece que la feliciten.
- 22** To take over someone else's job, responsibilities, etc.: It's not easy to \_\_\_\_\_ of a man like Christopher, so all I can say is that I'll try my best.
- 23** To be successful in one's work: Con dedicación llegarás lejos.
- 24** To improve one's rank, socially or professionally: Han prosperado mucho.
- 25** To become discouraged and abandon the struggle to succeed: Abandonaron a medio camino.

## 38. Contacts

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### it takes all sorts (to make a world)

Martin actually prefers travelling in economy to travelling in first class, because he doesn't like being near the front of the plane. Ah well, I suppose **it takes all sorts**.

### be on good terms with sb

It's never easy to get that kind of contract — unless, of course, **you happen to be on good terms** with someone important in the Ministry of Defence.

### be on firstname terms with sb

There are hundreds of salesmen working here, and I'm **on firstname terms** with each and every one of them.

### get in touch with sb

The secret of the mail order business is to offer a product people really want — and then learn how **to get in touch with** the people who want it.

### keep in touch with sb

Finding new customers costs money. On the other hand, **keeping in touch with** your satisfied customers and making them devotees costs you relatively little.

### the old pals act

He didn't pay much attention to me until someone mentioned that I was Head of Purchasing. Then he turned on **the old pals act**.

### have sb in the palm of one's hand

With our new presentation software, **you'll have the audience in the palm of your hand** every time.

### know sb to see

Jim Burton? Well, we both attend the same trade fairs, so **I know him to see**. But we've never been formally introduced or anything like that.

### none other than ...

You'll never guess who came over and sat down at our table. **None other than** the Vice President in person!

### de todo hay en la viña del Señor

En realidad, Martin prefiere viajar en clase turista que en primera clase, ya que no le gusta estar en la parte delantera del avión. En fin, de todo hay en la viña del Señor.

### estar en buenas relaciones con alguien

Nunca es fácil conseguir ese tipo de contrato, a no ser, claro está, que dé la casualidad de que estás en buenas relaciones con alguien del Ministerio de Defensa.

### tutear a uno

Hay cientos de comerciales trabajando aquí y yo me tuteo con todos ellos.

### ponerse en contacto con alguien

El secreto del negocio de las ventas por correo es ofrecer un producto que la gente quiera realmente y entonces aprender cómo ponerse en contacto con la gente que lo quiere.

### mantenerse en contacto con alguien

Encontrar nuevos clientes cuesta dinero. Por otra parte, mantenerte en contacto con los clientes más satisfechos y conseguir que te sean fieles te cuesta relativamente poco.

### amigos de toda la vida

No me hizo mucho caso hasta que alguien mencionó que era el director de compras. Entonces hizo la pantomima como si fuéramos amigos de toda la vida.

### tener a alguien en la palma de la mano

Con nuestra nueva presentación de software, tendrás al público en la palma de la mano.

### conocer a alguien de vista

¿Jim Burton? Pues los dos visitamos las mismas ferias, así que le conozco de vista. Pero nunca nos han presentado formalmente ni nada por el estilo.

### nadie más que ...

Nunca adivinarás quién vino a sentarse a nuestra mesa. ¡Ni más ni menos que el vice presidente en person!

**be the salt of the earth**

Why do truck drivers enjoy widespread public support, even in the middle of a strike? Partly because **they're the salt of the earth** and partly because everyone knows their working conditions are dreadful.

**It's a small world**

People in the oil industry are constantly bumping into each other, at intervals of maybe 10 or 20 years, in the most unlikely places. **It's a small world** for everybody, but particularly small in the oil industry.

**talk of the devil !**

You'll be working on this project with Jimmy Hargreaves and Sid Connors. Well, **talk of the devil**, here's Jimmy coming now.

**have a foot in both camps**

France is a net contributor to the European budget, although its farmers are still massive net recipients. That is why France has traditionally been such a successful negotiator: **it has a foot in both camps**.

**get on like a house on fire**

At first they didn't like each other much, probably because their styles were so different. But now Lucy sees how much her skills complement Harry's, and vice versa, and **they get on like a house on fire**.

**be in the know**

Barcelona and Dublin were successful conference venues for a while but conference organisers **in the know** are currently looking at central Europe, and at Prague in particular.

**give sb a leg up**

Bill Braden and I had been friends for years, so when his son joined the company, I naturally took an interest in him. He was a talented lad and I was able **to give him the leg up** he needed.

**sb's opposite number**

A meeting is rumoured to have taken place before Christmas between Sir Graham Hearne, the chairman of Enterprise, and Rudolph Agnew, **his opposite number** at Lasmo.

**ser la sal de la tierra**

¿Por qué los transportistas tienen el apoyo del público incluso en medio de una huelga? En parte porque son la sal de la tierra y en parte porque todo el mundo sabe que sus condiciones laborales son lamentables.

**el mundo es un pañuelo**

La gente de la industria petrolífera se suele encontrar cada 10 o 20 años en los lugares más insospechados. El mundo es un pañuelo para todos, pero en particular en la industria petrolífera.

**¡ hablando del rey de Roma !**

Trabajarás en este proyecto con Jimmy Hargreaves y Sid Connors. Mira, ¡hablando del rey de Roma!, por ahí viene Jimmy.

**tener intereses en ambos lados**

Francia es una contribuidora neta al presupuesto europeo, aunque sus granjeros son aún receptores en gran parte. Por tal motivo, Francia ha sido tradicionalmente un negociador con éxito: tiene intereses en ambos lados.

**llevarse de maravilla**

Al principio no se caían bien, probablemente porque sus estilos eran muy distintos. Pero ahora Lucy ve cómo sus habilidades se complementan con las de Harry y al revés, y se llevan de maravilla.

**estar enterado**

Barcelona y Dublin tuvieron éxito durante algún tiempo como destinos para conferencias pero los organizadores de conferencias que están al día están mirando ahora a Europa Central y a Praga en particular.

**echarle un cable a alguien**

Bill Braden y yo hemos sido amigos durante años, así que cuando su hijo ingresó en la empresa, me interesé por él. Era un chico con talento y pude echarle el cable que necesitaba.

**el homólogo de alguien**

Se rumorea que hubo una reunión antes de Navidad entre Sir Graham Hearne, el presidente de Enterprise, y Rudolph Agnew, su homólogo en Lasmo.

**hear sth on the grapevine**

Nothing's been announced officially, of course, but **I heard on the grapevine** that we'll soon be getting a new CEO.

**get wind of sth**

We must do everything possible to ensure that our competitors **don't get wind of this** project until it's too late for them to do anything about it.

**drop names**

One way of increasing your clientele is to casually **drop names** of previous customers. The operative word is "casually".

**once in a blue moon**

Carla and I work in the same company, it's true, but so do two thousand other people. And we work in different departments, so I only see her **once in a blue moon**. Which is why I hardly know her.

**put business sb's way**

Alan worked for us for fifteen years before leaving to start his own company. We still see each other from time to time. And if I get the chance **to put a little business his way**, I'm only too glad to help out.

**better the devil you know  
(than the devil you don't)**

To everyone's surprise the General Manager was not replaced. "I kept my job," he joked, "because the board prefers **the devil it knows to the devil it doesn't**. They're scared somebody else might lose even more money than me."

**not be sb's cup of tea**

Can you and your staff stay polite and fresh with each new customer? Can you establish good relationships? If not, you should think twice before going into a service-oriented industry. **It may not be your cup of tea**.

**give sb the lowdown on sth**

Why don't we have lunch sometime? You can give me **the lowdown on** why Clive Mendel resigned so suddenly.

**me lo ha dicho un pajarito**

No se ha anunciado nada de forma oficial, naturalmente, pero me ha dicho un pajarito que pronto tendremos nuevo presidente.

**olerse algo**

Tenemos que procurar que nuestros competidores no se huelan nada de este proyecto hasta que sea demasiado tarde para que puedan hacer algo al respecto.

**mencionar gente importante  
para impresionar**

Una forma de incrementar el número de clientes es mencionando como quien no quiere la cosa, los nombres de antiguos clientes importantes. La palabra clave es "como quien no quiere la cosa"

**de ciento en viento,  
de Pascuas a Ramos**

Carla y yo trabajamos en la misma empresa, es verdad, pero también lo hacen otras dos mil personas. Y trabajamos en distintos departamentos, así que sólo la veo de ciento en viento. Por eso casi ni la conozco.

**conseguirle clientes a alguien**

Alan trabajó para nosotros durante quince años antes de marcharse para crear su propia empresa. Aún le vemos de vez en cuando. Y si tengo la oportunidad de conseguirle algún cliente, estoy encantado de hacerlo.

**más vale malo conocido  
que bueno por conocer**

Para sorpresa de todos, el director general no fue sustituido. "Mantuve mi puesto," bromeó, "porque la junta de consejeros piensa que **más vale malo conocido que bueno por conocer**. Tienen miedo que otro pueda perder más dinero que yo".

**no ser plato de su gusto**

¿Tú y tu equipo podéis manteneros correctos y amables con los nuevos clientes? ¿Podeis establecer buenas relaciones? Si no es así, deberiais pensarlo dos veces antes de meteros en la industria de servicios. Puede que no sea un plato de vuestro gusto.

**poner a alguien al tanto de algo**

¿Por qué no comemos juntos algún día? Me puedes poner al tanto de por qué Clive Mendel dimitió tan repentinamente.



## 38. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To contact somebody: Ponte en contacto con nosotros cuando llegues.
- 2** To stay in contact with somebody: Intento mantenerme en contacto con mis amigos de la universidad.
- 3** To give someone the real information about something, as opposed to official information: I don't care how you do it, but I want you to \_\_\_\_\_ on what their R&D department is working on.
- 4** To have a person or group under one's complete control or influence: Se lo ha metido en el bolsillo.
- 5** To dislike something or some activity, and so prefer not to have or to do it: No es plato de mi gusto.
- 6** To have a good relationship or be friendly with someone: Nuestras relaciones no son muy cordiales en este momento.
- 7** (*saying*) It is preferable to suffer from something one knows than change it for something one doesn't know which might be worse: Más vale malo conocido...
- 8** To find customers for someone: We've known each other since we were at school, so I'm happy to \_\_\_\_\_ from time to time, and he does the same for me.
- 9** Very friendly behaviour used to gain a business advantage: We hardly know each other but when he saw me talking to Gates, he came over and turned on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10** Very, very rarely: Sólo va a la oficina de Pascuas a Ramos.
- 11** (*saying, used to express mild disapproval of a person's unconventional behaviour*) Any society consists of people whose characters, opinions, etc. vary greatly: De todo hay en la viña del Señor.
- 12** To have a good relationship with two opposing groups of people: Either you're on our side or you're on management's side, you can't \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** To mention the names of important people in order to impress others: Siempre está mencionando gente importante.
- 14** (*used to emphasize the name of a person or thing when it is surprising in a particular situation*) Who do you think I met at the airport in Hamburg? Why, \_\_\_\_\_ Bogdan Steplewski.
- 15** To hear about something others are trying to keep secret: That kind of information is highly confidential, so how on earth did you \_\_\_\_\_?
- 16** (*saying, used when one meets a person who has an unexpected connection with something or someone in one's past*) El mundo es un pañuelo.
- 17** To learn something in an indirect or roundabout way, e.g. through friends: Lo escuché en radio macuto.
- 18** A person who has the same post as oneself but in a different company: Se entrevistó con su homólogo francés.
- 19** (*used when a person one is talking about suddenly and unexpectedly appears*) ¡Hablando del rey de Roma!
- 20** To help someone to succeed: When he was starting out in business, I \_\_\_\_\_, but he seems to have forgotten that now.
- 21** To have the highest personal qualities, e.g. honesty, courage, etc: Son la sal de la tierra.
- 22** To be one of a small number of people who know secret information: Están en la onda.
- 23** (*of two people*) To enjoy each other's company very much, to have an excellent relationship: El director y yo nos llevamos de maravilla.
- 24** To have a relaxed and friendly relationship with somebody: Nos conocemos hace bastante tiempo como para tratarnos de tú.
- 25** To be able to recognise someone without knowing him well: Sólo la conozco de vista.

## 39. Socialising

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### **all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy**

Insist that everyone takes vacations. **All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.** Start worrying if Jack doesn't want to take a vacation.

### **break the ice**

It's important to establish a relationship, so talk about baseball or your favourite movie or anything else that will help you **to break the ice** and make a personal connection.

### **take it easy**

A large Chinese man points a finger at my half-empty glass. I shake my head: best **to take it easy** after a day under the tropical sun.

### **let one's hair down**

The annual office party is really the only chance we all have to get together, have a few drinks and **let our hair down**.

### **the more the merrier**

We're all going down to the King's Head for a drink after work. If you want to come with us, you're most welcome. **The more the merrier**, and all that.

### **put in an appearance**

When was the last time that a British chancellor of the exchequer turned up at Davos? This year, not only did Gordon Brown **put in an appearance** but so did his predecessor, Kenneth Clarke.

### **get away from it all**

A key to having it all — money, power, success, status — is knowing how **to get away from it all**. In this article we explore executives' ideas about leisure.

### **stand on ceremony**

Our chairman, although extremely wealthy, is a very modest man. You don't need **to stand on ceremony** with him. Just treat him like anyone else.

### **do the honours**

John, would **you do the honours**, please, and make sure everybody's glass is full?

### **hay que divertirse de vez en cuando**

Insiste en que todos se tomen unas vacaciones. Hay que divertirse de vez en cuando. Empieza a preocuparte si alguien no quiere irse de vacaciones.

### **romper el hielo**

Es importante establecer una relación, así que habla de béisbol o de tu película favorita o de cualquier otra cosa que te ayude a romper el hielo y establecer una relación personal.

### **descansar, ir despacio, tomárselo con calma**

Un chino grande señala con el dedo hacia mi vaso medio vacío. Digo que no con la cabeza: es mejor tomarlo con tranquilidad tras pasar un día bajo el sol tropical.

### **desmadrarse, soltarse el pelo**

La fiesta anual de la oficina es en realidad la única oportunidad que tenemos todos para reunirnos, tomar unas copas y desmadrarnos.

### **cuantos más mejor**

Vamos a ir al King's Head a tomar una copa después del trabajo. Si quieres venir con nosotros, bienvenido. Cuantos más, mejor.

### **hacer acto de presencia**

¿Cuándo fue la última vez que un ministro de hacienda británico apareció en Davos? Este año, Gordon Brown no sólo hizo acto de presencia, sino que también lo hizo su predecessor, Kenneth Clarke.

### **evadirse del bullicio**

La clave para tenerlo todo —dinero, poder, éxito, posición— es saber cómo evadirse del bullicio. En este artículo exploramos las ideas que tienen los ejecutivos sobre el descanso.

### **ser muy ceremonioso**

Nuestro presidente, aunque extremadamente rico, es un hombre muy modesto. No tienes por qué ser muy ceremonioso con él. Trátale como a cualquier otro.

### **hacer los honores**

John, ¿quieres hacer los honores, por favor, y asegurarte de que todo el mundo tenga la copa llena?

**the life and soul of the party**

He seems like such a quiet, timid fellow in the office but when he has a drink or two in him, he's **the life and soul of the party**.

**a drop of the hard stuff**

I never touch **a drop of the hard stuff**, only a glass of wine or beer from time to time.

**one for the road**

- Let's have **one for the road**.  
- No, thanks, I'm driving and I've already had more than enough.

**pull sb's leg**

Levine asked me what I thought of the proposal. I started reviewing it, but after just a few minutes decided that Levine must be **pulling my leg**. The deal was ridiculous.

**on the rocks**

When he was finally sure that his business really was **on the rocks**, he went into the nearest bar and *ordered a stiff whisky* — also on the rocks.

**talk shop**

If we have a colleague over for dinner, my wife complains that we **talk shop** all evening. But surely it's better to do that than just sit there saying nothing.

**rub shoulders with sb**

When you're a CEO, says Iacocca, you never **rub shoulders with the people** who make your cars, or buy them, or service them. Your life is so structured that you really become insulated.

**drown one's sorrows**

One way or another we'll be in the pub tomorrow night. Either because we've won the contract and we're celebrating, or because we haven't won it and we're **drowning our sorrows**.

**let off steam**

All work and no play will cause any executive to eventually burn himself out. You need to **let off steam** with regular, competitive games of tennis or squash.

**ser el alma de la fiesta**

Parece un tipo callado y tímido en la oficina, pero cuando se ha tomado una copa o dos, es el alma de la fiesta.

**un traguito de algo fuerte**

Nunca tomo bebidas fuertes, sólo un vaso de vino o una caña de cerveza de vez en cuando.

**la última copa**

- Tomemos la última copa.  
- No, gracias, tengo que conducir y ya he bebido demasiado.

**tomarle el pelo a alguien**

Levine me preguntó qué pensaba acerca de la propuesta. Empecé a revisarla, pero tras unos minutos decidí que Levine debía estar tomándome el pelo. El asunto era ridículo.

**irse a pique**

Cuando al fin tuvo la seguridad de que su negocio se había ido a pique, se fue al bar más cercano y se pidió un whisky doble con hielo.

**hablar del trabajo**

Si invitamos a un compañero a casa para cenar, mi esposa se queja de que hablamos del trabajo toda la noche. Pero es mejor que estar sentado sin decir nada.

**codearse con alguien**

Quando se es presidente, dice Iacocca, uno nunca se codea ni con la gente que fabrica los coches ni con los que los compran ni con los que los mantienen. Tu vida está tan estructurada que estás totalmente aislado.

**ahogar las penas**

De una forma u otra iremos a un pub mañana por la noche. Sea porque hemos conseguido el contrato y lo estaremos celebrando sea porque no lo hemos conseguido y estaremos ahogando nuestras penas.

**desfogarse, desahogarse**

Trabajar sin distraerse es la causa de que un ejecutivo se queme tarde o temprano. Uno necesita desahogarse con unos cuantos partidos de tenis o de squash.

**small talk**

Attending a Tom Peters seminar in Tampa, I made **small talk** with others at my table. Did they think he was worth the \$445 apiece they had paid to attend?

**wine and dine sb**

High ranking government officials **wined and dined** Toyota representatives for more than a year before the Japanese car manufacturer agreed to build the plant in France.

**a wet blanket**

Come on, Hilary, don't be such a **wet blanket**. Get a glass and join in the fun.

**make oneself at home**

Come in, come in. Sit down and **make yourselves at home**. What will you have to drink?

**take a hint**

We were yawning and looking at our watches every five minutes and saying what a hard day tomorrow was going to be, but they simply refused to **take a hint**. In the end, I just stood up and said it was late and I was going to bed.

**take a joke**

I can **take a joke** as well as the next man, only I don't happen to think that what you've done — sending out a fictitious memo with my signature on it — is particularly amusing.

**throw a party for sb**

Next Friday will be Fred Wallace's last day in the office before returning to headquarters in Sydney, so we're **throwing a little farewell party** for him at our place. Naturally, you're all invited.

**charla, charloteo**

Cuando asistí a un seminario de Tom Peters en Tampa, tuve una pequeña charla con los de mi mesa. ¿Pensaban ellos que se merecía los 445 dólares que habíamos pagado cada uno por asistir a su seminario?

**tratar a alguien por todo lo alto**

Altos funcionarios gubernamentales trataron a los representantes de Toyota por todo lo alto durante más de un año antes de que el fabricante japonés de coches decidiera construir una fábrica en Francia.

**ser aguafiestas**

Venga, Hilary, no seas aguafiestas. Coge una copa y únete a la diversión.

**sentirse como en su casa**

Pase, pase. Siéntese como si estuviera en su casa. ¿Qué quiere beber?

**darse por aludido, coger la indirecta**

Bostezábamos mirando nuestros relojes cada cinco minutos y diciendo que nos esperaba una dura jornada al día siguiente, pero no captaban la indirecta. Al final, me puse en pie, dije que era tarde y que me iba a la cama.

**saber aceptar las bromas**

Sé aceptar una broma tan bien como cualquier otro, sólo que no acabo de ver que lo que has hecho —enviar una nota ficticia con mi firma— sea especialmente gracioso.

**dar una fiesta en honor de alguien**

El viernes que viene será el último día de Fred Wallace en la oficina antes de volver a la central de Sydney, así que vamos a dar una fiesta en su honor en nuestra casa. Naturalmente, estáis todos invitados.

## 39. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To attend an event, e.g. a party, because one thinks one has a duty to do so: Hizo una breve aparición en la fiesta.
- 2** One last drink before leaving: In my experience, \_\_\_\_\_ is usually one too many.
- 3** To organise a party or celebration for somebody: Dieron una fiesta en su honor.
- 4** To escape from the difficulties and worries of work: Every so often the pressure becomes unbearable and I take a few days' holiday, just to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5** To not be offended by something said or done for fun: A ti no se te puede gastar una broma.
- 6** To do something to ease the tension of a formal occasion, e.g. by starting a conversation: Pusieron música para romper el hielo.
- 7** To understand what is stated only indirectly: Yo no dejaba de mirar el reloj, pero no se dio por aludido.
- 8** *(alcoholic drink)* With ice, *(marriage, business)* close to ruin: Su relación anda mal desde hace tiempo.
- 9** To act as if one were in one's own home: Siéntate y ponte cómodo, estás en tu casa.
- 10** To not hurry or become anxious, to not work too hard: ¡Tranquilo!
- 11** A person who spoils a happy atmosphere by refusing to join in the fun: There's no point in inviting him to the party, he's a real \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12** *(saying)* A person who spends all his time working will become a dull human being: My wife complains about me playing golf, but I tell her that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13** To act with excessive formality: Por favor, no te andes con cumplidos con nosotros.
- 14** To joke with someone by telling him something that isn't true: Me estás tomando el pelo, ¿no?
- 15** To offer someone expensive meals in a restaurant: El director y su mujer nos invitaron a una cena por todo lo alto.
- 16** Polite conversation about unimportant matters: Hablamos de trivialidades hasta que llegó.
- 17** The liveliest and most amusing person at a party or other social gathering: Fue el alma de la fiesta.
- 18** A drink of strong alcohol, especially whisky: He offered me a \_\_\_\_\_, but I had a long drive ahead of me and sensibly refused.
- 19** *(saying, used to invite or welcome others)* The more people there are, the more they will enjoy themselves: Cuantos más mejor.
- 20** To give free expression to one's feelings, e.g. by using strong language or doing violent physical exercise: Cuando se enfada, sale a correr para desahogarse.
- 21** To talk about one's work during a social event: Déjate de hablar de trabajo, estás de vacaciones.
- 22** To act as the host, e.g. to serve people drinks or food, or to introduce them to each other: John, could you open that bottle of champagne and \_\_\_\_\_, please?
- 23** To drink alcohol in order to forget unfortunate recent events: Está en el bar ahogando sus penas.
- 24** To be in the same group as someone rich, famous, powerful, etc: Se codea con estrellas del cine.
- 25** To enjoy oneself without reserve after a period of discipline and restraint: Se desmadró en la fiesta.

## 40. Miscellaneous

1,000 everyday idioms in business

### on no account

In a warning that says much about how local authorities handle problems in China, Mr Zhu said **on no account** should officials "use dictatorial means against people".

### let alone ...

You can never be certain of recovering an investment, **let alone** getting a return on it.

### all along

Management makes a big fuss about consulting the workers — then they announce that there's no consensus and do what they intended to do **all along**.

### by and large

**By and large**, top managers are optimistic about their own businesses. Nearly three-quarters of the CEOs we interviewed believe their companies' financial performance will improve this year.

### a case in point

Once your competitor starts discounting, your newly acquired customers are likely to flock to him. The long-distance phone market — with its confusing promotions and its migrating subscribers — **is a case in point**.

### know sth to one's cost

Competitive advantage brings growth, not the other way round, as many companies **have found to their cost**.

### have nothing to do with sth

The marketing and promotion of a product are greatly simplified when it stands out visually among competing products. This difference may **have nothing to do with** the product's function or effectiveness.

### on the face of it

**On the face of it**, the UK is merely following the European trend by introducing energy taxes. But many industrialists are painfully aware that large numbers of their international competitors, notably in the US, have no intention of doing so.

### be in favour of sth

The euro has not been widely popular in Europe, with relatively few Germans **in favour of** giving up the Deutschmark.

### bajo ningún concepto

En un aviso que dice mucho de cómo las autoridades resuelven los problemas en China, Mr. Zhu dijo que los funcionarios no deberían **bajo ningún concepto** "aplicar medidas dictatoriales contra el pueblo".

### y mucho menos ...

Nunca se puede estar seguro de recuperar una inversión, y mucho menos de conseguir beneficios.

### desde el principio

La dirección habla mucho de consultar a los trabajadores, y luego anuncia que no hay consenso y hace lo que pensaba hacer desde el principio.

### por lo general

Por lo general, los altos directivos son optimistas acerca de sus empresas. Casi las tres cuartas partes de los presidentes que entrevistamos creen que los resultados financieros de sus empresas van a mejorar este año.

### un buen ejemplo

En cuanto tu competidor empiece a ofrecer descuentos, tus nuevos clientes acudirán rápidamente a él. El mercado de las conferencias telefónicas - con sus campañas confusas y sus subscriptores errantes - es un buen ejemplo.

### saber algo por propia experiencia

La ventaja competitiva atrae el crecimiento y no al revés, como muchas empresas saben por propia experiencia.

### no tener nada que ver con algo

El marketing y la promoción de un producto se simplifican enormemente cuando destaca visualmente sobre los productos de la competencia. Esta diferencia puede que no tenga nada que ver con la eficacia o la función del producto.

### a primera vista

A primera vista, el Reino Unido se limita a seguir la tendencia europea al gravar la energía. Pero muchos empresarios son conscientes de que un gran número de sus competidores internacionales, en especial los de EE UU, no tienen ninguna intención de hacerlo.

### ser partidario de algo

El euro no ha sido muy popular en Europa, ya que pocos alemanes son partidarios de deshacerse del deutschmark.

**and so forth**

The sales rep has to fill out a special form which includes information on the customer, the deal, the volume, the competitive situation, **and so forth**.

**as good as**

Sometimes I would have a late-afternoon meeting. On those days I checked into a nearby hotel at lunchtime, took my hour's nap, and went back to work **as good as** new.

**hold good**

Our offer **holds good** until the end of July. Naturally we expect your answer before then.

**to say the least**

The directors *simply* cannot agree with each other. It's an embarrassing situation, **to say the least**, for a company that earns most of its revenue by telling others how to resolve problems.

**in the light of sth**

**In the light of** Asia's economic chaos, it's pretty clear that any return from our investment is still a long way off.

**the long and the short of it is ...**

He wrote a ten-page memo to the DHR explaining why we shouldn't send him to Saudi Arabia. But **the long and the short of it is** that he doesn't want to be separated from his girlfriend.

**as a matter of fact**

Being good friends is not a prerequisite to a successful partnership. **As a matter of fact**, it can add a stressful dimension.

**by all means**

If you love such gadgets, **by all means** get them. But legally, they're not required. Legally, you need only satisfy a court that you took "reasonable" care protecting your trade secret.

**by the way**

Inventory management, a key measure of how efficiently a manufacturer operates, hasn't improved for U.S. companies in the past 50 years. You see a similar situation in Europe and Japan, **by the way**. Nothing has happened.

**y demás**

El comercial tiene que rellenar un formulario especial que incluye información acerca del cliente, el tipo de transacción, el volumen, la situación competitiva y demás.

**como (si), prácticamente**

Algunas veces tenía reuniones hasta última hora de la tarde. Esos días me metía en un hotel a la hora de la comida, me echaba una siesta de una hora y regresaba al trabajo como nuevo.

**seguir válida**

Nuestra oferta sigue válida hasta finales de julio. Naturalmente esperamos que nos contesten ustedes antes.

**por no decir más**

Los directores no consiguen llegar a un acuerdo. Es una situación embarazosa, **por no decir más**, para una empresa que consigue la mayor parte de sus ingresos diciéndoles a los demás cómo resolver sus problemas.

**en vista de algo, teniendo algo en cuenta**

En vista del caos económico de Asia, está bastante claro que cualquier beneficio procedente de nuestra inversión está aún muy lejos.

**en resumidas cuentas ...**

Escribió un informe de diez páginas al Director de RR. HH. de por qué no deberíamos enviarle a Arabia Saudí. Pero en resumidas cuentas, lo que no quiere es separarse de su novia.

**en realidad, de hecho**

Ser buenos amigos no es un requisito para tener éxito en una asociación. De hecho, puede añadir un factor estresante.

**naturalmente, por supuesto**

Si te encantan ese tipo de chismes, por supuesto consíguelos. Pero legalmente, no son necesarios. Legalmente, sólo necesitas vencer a un tribunal de que has tomado unas medidas "razonables" para proteger tu secreto industrial.

**a propósito, por cierto**

La gestión de inventarios, una medida clave para conocer la eficiencia de un fabricante, no ha mejorado nada en las empresas de EE UU en los últimos 50 años. Se ve una situación similar en Europa y en Japón, **por cierto**. Nada ha ocurrido.

**out of place**

You're honest, intelligent, reliable, hard-working, loyal — and clearly quite **out of place** in a company like ours.

**in principle**

In November 1997, Gordon Brown, the chancellor, first expressed the government's support for joining the single currency **in principle**.

**on purpose**

I'm sorry I spilled coffee all over your papers but there's no need to make such a fuss. I didn't do it **on purpose**, you know.

**out of the question**

To reach its destination, the oil must pass through the Bosphorus strait — in other words, right through the middle of Istanbul. Turkey's government insists this is **out of the question** for environmental reasons.

**for starters**

He is one of the smartest people I've ever met. **For starters**, he has a wonderful talent for explaining complicated technology in terms anyone can understand.

**be under the weather**

I'm sorry I couldn't attend the meeting last week, but I had an awful cold. In fact, I'm still a bit **under the weather**.

**jump the gun**

The price increases should not come into effect before next month at the earliest. We've received reports, however, that some retailers **have jumped the gun** and are already charging the new prices.

**fuera de lugar**

Eres sincero, inteligente, responsable, trabajador y leal, y estás claramente fuera de lugar en una empresa como la nuestra.

**en principio**

En noviembre de 1997, Gordon Brown, Ministro de Hacienda, expresó por primera vez el apoyo del gobierno para unirse en principio a la moneda única.

**a propósito, adrede**

Siento haber derramado café sobre tus papeles pero no hay que armar tanto escándalo. No lo hice a propósito, sabes.

**imposible, impensable**

Para llegar a su destino, el petróleo tiene que pasar por el estrecho del Bósforo - en otras palabras, justo en medio de Estambul. El gobierno turco insiste en que esto es imposible por razones medioambientales.

**para empezar**

Es una de las personas más inteligentes que he conocido jamás. Para empezar, tiene un gran talento para explicar tecnología complicada en términos que todo el mundo comprenda.

**no estar muy bien**

Siento no haber asistido a la reunión la semana pasada, pero tenía un catarro terrible. De hecho, aún no estoy muy bien.

**adelantarse a los acontecimientos**

Los aumentos de precio no deberían entrar en vigor antes del mes que viene como muy pronto. Sin embargo, hemos recibido información, de que algunos minoristas se han adelantado a los acontecimientos y ya están cobrando los nuevos precios.



## 40. Exercise

1,000 everyday idioms in business

Encuentra los modismos presentados en este capítulo que mejor corresponden a las definiciones y descripciones que vienen a continuación. Si una frase contiene un espacio en blanco, complétalo con las palabras que faltan (poniendo atención al tiempo del verbo, pronombres, etc.). Si la frase está en español, tradúcela al inglés.

- 1** To have no connection or relationship with something: Eso no tiene nada que ver contigo.
- 2** Superficially, at first sight: Por lo que parece, la economía está mejorando.
- 3** From the beginning, all the time: I knew \_\_\_\_\_ that he was lying, but I had to wait until he contradicted himself to prove it.
- 4** To feel unwell: No se encontraba bien.
- 5** To act prematurely: No te adelantes.
- 6** To one's disadvantage or loss: No se puede conducir cuando se ha bebido, lección que le costó muy caro aprender.
- 7** Almost the same as, almost: El trabajo está casi acabado.
- 8** To begin with, first of all: What does the employee get out of this increased responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_, he gets a new sense of self-respect.
- 9** Impossible, not to be considered: The idea was appealing but financially \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10** Generally speaking, in general: En general, la organización es buena.
- 11** A very good example of what is being talked about: Su forma de llevar los asuntos es un ejemplo que viene al caso.
- 12** *(used to introduce something the speaker has just thought of)* ¡Ah, a propósito! Tienes una carta.
- 13** *(used to give permission)* Yes, certainly: Llévatelo, no faltaba más, pero por favor tráelo de vuelta.
- 14** And much less: He doesn't even know how to turn on the computer, \_\_\_\_\_ use the word processor.
- 15** Deliberately, with conscious intent: No fue un accidente, lo hizo a propósito.
- 16** Considering the knowledge gained from something: A la luz de lo que sabemos ahora, la idea parece extraña.
- 17** Etcetera, and continuing in a similar manner: Vendían libros, periódicos, y cosas así.
- 18** According to general principles: En principio, estoy de acuerdo con lo que dices.
- 19** To say no more than this: Estuvo grosero, y me quedo corto.
- 20** Unsuitable, inappropriate: In the modern workplace, it's considered \_\_\_\_\_ for a male boss to compliment a female subordinate on the way she dresses.
- 21** To continue to be valid: Mi promesa sigue en pie.
- 22** *(often used to introduce a piece of information that may surprise the listener)* As it happens: En realidad nunca he estado en España.
- 23** The only thing that needs to be said, the conclusion: En resumidas cuentas, hemos fracasado.
- 24** In no case, not for any reason: No debes volver a verla bajo ningún concepto.
- 25** To be in agreement with something: Estoy totalmente a favor de la libertad de expresión.

# **Answers**

*This page intentionally left blank*

## 1. Fundamentals

---

**1** A bad workman blames his tools. **2** Forewarned is forearmed. **3** To keep one's head above water: keep our heads above water. **4** Half a loaf is better than none. **5** Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today. **6** The ground rules: We can't change the ground rules at this stage. **7** Time is money. **8** If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. **9** Where there's a will, there's a way. **10** To take the rough with the smooth: You have to take the rough with the smooth. **11** A fool and his money are soon parted. **12** It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. **13** Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves. **14** What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts. **15** A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. **16** He who pays the piper calls the tune. **17** Easy come, easy go. **18** The grass is always greener on the other side of the hill. **19** Where there's a will, there's a way. **20** Ups and downs: His business has had its ups and downs. **21** To let sleeping dogs lie. **22** One good turn deserves another. **23** Waste not, want not. **24** The exception proves the rule. **25** That's the way the cookie crumbles.

## 2. Time

---

**1** In the long run. **2** Leave it there for the time being. **3** Till the cows come home. **4** It's high time that somebody did something. **5** The train left at half past two on the dot. **6** So you won't do it, not even for old time's sake. **7** Time flies: How time flies! **8** The sooner the better: The sooner this decision is

implemented, the better. **9** To call it a day: I clearly wasn't getting anywhere, so I called it a day and left. **10** Trams are a thing of the past. **11** Be ahead of one's time: He was ahead of his time. **12** To date. **13** Against the clock. **14** Do something at one's leisure: Read it at your leisure. **15** To move with the times: moving with the times. **16** To keep up to date with something: keep up to date. **17** It was about time. **18** For donkey's years: I haven't seen her for donkey's years. **19** At the best of times. **20** In the nick of time: I arrived at the airport in the nick of time. **21** To be out of date: out of date. **22** At the eleventh hour. **23** To take one's time: Just take your time. **24** Round the clock. **25** Once and for all.

## 3. Money

---

**1** The sixty-four thousand dollar question. **2** To be rolling in it: They were rolling in it. **3** To make a bomb: He made a fortune out of that business. **4** To go through the roof: The price of petrol went through the roof. **5** They operate on a shoestring. **6** To pay cash on the nail: paid cash on the nail. **7** Money doesn't grow on trees. **8** To foot the bill: The company will foot the bill. **9** To the tune of sth: He's in debt to the tune of £5,000. **10** To pay over the odds. **11** Money talks. **12** To be hard up: We were very hard up. **13** To throw good money after bad: throwing good money after bad. **14** They want the contract at any price. **15** To not have a penny to one's name: have a penny to his name. **16** To be in the black: Your account is in the black. **17** To be in the red: I'm

# Answers

1,000 everyday idioms in business

always in the red. **18** To see the colour of sb's money: seen the colour of his money. **19** They bought the company for a song. **20** To make a bomb: That must have cost you a bomb. **21** To be penny wise and pound foolish. **22** To be deep in debt: They're deep in debt. **23** Money is no object: He said money was no object. **24** Bet one's bottom dollar: bet your bottom dollar. **25** It's a drop in the ocean.

## 4. Information

**1** To keep something under one's hat: He kept his promotion under his hat for three months. **2** To keep somebody posted: keep each other posted. **3** There's no smoke without fire. **4** The news of his resignation spread like wildfire. **5** How did you know that? A little bird told me. **6** To keep something under wraps: kept under wraps. **7** To sell someone a bum steer: They've sold me a bum steer. **8** To take something with a pinch of salt: I would take anything he says with a pinch of salt. **9** To come to light. **10** To put somebody out of his misery: Put me out of my misery and tell me what happened. **11** To have something at one's fingertips: he has all the facts at his fingertips. **12** It's news to me: It was news to me. **13** Who let the cat out of the bag? *or* Who spilt the beans? **14** To be none of somebody's business: What I do is none of your business. **15** To put something down in black and white: I want to see your offer down in black and white. **16** To get something straight from the horse's mouth: I got it straight from the horse's mouth. **17** To play one's cards close to one's chest: he played his cards close to his

chest. **18** To put someone in the picture: He arrived late but we soon put him in the picture. **19** To keep one's ear to the ground: Keep your ear to the ground. **20** To keep something dark: keep it dark. **21** Cannot believe one's ears: I couldn't believe my ears. **22** Do you promise not to spill the beans? (*or* ...let the cat out of the bag?) **23** To shed light on something: Let's see if you can shed any light on this business for us. **24** A red herring: It turned out to be another red herring. **25** No news is good news.

## 5. Experience

**1** It's easy to be wise after the event. **2** (You) live and learn. **3** To go through the mill. **4** We solved it by trial and error. **5** An object lesson: It was an object lesson in how not to do it. **6** To get one's fingers burnt: many lenders got their fingers burnt. **7** To know one's onions: unless you really know your onions. **8** To learn one's lesson: we've certainly learnt our lesson. **9** He will need time to learn the ropes. **10** Once bitten, twice shy. **11** To know the score: I told him about my past, so he knows the score. **12** Under one's belt: They have a string of hits under their belt. **13** Seeing is believing. **14** A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. **15** To be in one's line of country: That's not in my line (of country). **16** To have a rough ride: The company has had a rough ride recently. **17** You can't teach an old dog new tricks. **18** You can rely on him through thick and thin. **19** To have another string to one's bow: He's also an electrician, so he has another string to his bow. **20**

# Answers

To be second nature to somebody: Don't worry, it'll soon be second nature to you. **21** To find out the hard way: He found out the hard way. **22** To take a leaf out of somebody's book: You ought to take a leaf out of Manolo's book. **23** To be an old hand at something: He's an old hand at climbing. **24** It's just one of those things. **25** To be wet behind the ears: The new manager is still a bit wet behind the ears.

## 6. Work

---

**1** The factory is working at full stretch. **2** To keep tabs on someone or something: We'll have to keep tabs on who enters and leaves the building. **3** To do the dirty work: I'm fed up doing his dirty work for him. **4** To make short work of something: She'll make short work of typing the reports. **5** To put one's back into something. **6** To not do a hand's turn: I can't get him to do a hand's turn. **7** To put one's shoulder to the wheel: If you put your shoulder to the wheel. **8** To burn the candle at both ends: He's burning the candle at both ends. **9** To do the spadework: ...without doing the spadework. **10** To sit on one's hands: They seem to be sitting on their hands. **11** To keep a tight rein on something: The government is keeping a tight rein on expenditure. **12** To swing the lead: ...as he does into swinging the lead. **13** To do the donkey work: I did all the donkey work but he got all the credit. **14** Persuading them to come was a piece of cake. **15** To keep one's nose to the grindstone: I'll have to keep my nose to the grindstone until the exams are over. **16** Three years' wear and tear made a complete overhaul necessary.

**17** To have one's work cut out (for one): She'll have her work cut out for her finishing the job on time. **18** To be snowed under with work: I'm snowed under with work at the moment. **19** To be on the dole: He's been on the dole for two years. **20** To burn the midnight oil: He's burning the midnight oil to get the job finished. **21** To down tools. **22** A blue-collar job: Blue-collar jobs won't be affected. **23** To breathe down somebody's neck: I had the boss breathing down my neck all day. **24** To be dead beat: You look dead beat. **25** To get one's teeth into something: You've got a new job to get your teeth into now.

## 7. Routine

---

**1** The economy is now on an even keel. **2** They're forcing him to toe the line. **3** Middle-of-the-road. **4** I listen to the same complaints day in, day out. **5** To go through the motions of doing something: They went through the motions of interviewing him. **6** All in a day's work. **7** His bad temper is par for the course. **8** True to form, he arrived late. **9** In theory we should reply to all letters, but in practice it's impossible. **10** To take something in one's stride: He takes everything in his stride. **11** You need to get out of the rut you're in. **12** We always keep a copy as a matter of course. **13** Practice makes perfect. **14** As a rule, she's very hardworking. **15** To get into the swing of something: You'll soon get into the swing of it. **16** As a rule of thumb, the journey takes three hours. **17** To kill time: I did the crossword puzzle to kill the time. **18** Short haircuts were the order of the day. **19** Red

# Answers

tape. **20** I've been going backwards and forwards all day between the house and the office. **21** Run-of-the-mill. **22** From day to day. **23** From now on it's all plain sailing. **24** Did you notice anything out of the ordinary? **25** In the normal course of events.

## 8. Trading

**1** To break even: Let's hope we can at least break even. **2** To run short of something: We're running short of money. **3** To put something on the market: We put the house on the market at £150,000. **4** To pay through the nose for something: We paid through the nose for it. **5** To cost an arm and a leg: That car cost me an arm and a leg. **6** To corner the market in something: They've cornered the market in electronic books. **7** To change hands: The company has changed hands. **8** That's the going rate. **9** To give someone first refusal: Can I have first refusal? **10** To wheel and deal: He eats, drinks, sleeps, wheels and deals. **11** To go window-shopping: Yesterday we went window shopping. **12** To price something out of the market: They've priced themselves out of the market. **13** Shall we do it today or tomorrow? It's six of the one and half a dozen of the other. **14** To sell oneself short: Don't sell yourself short. **15** To get one's foot in the door: It's a way of getting your foot in the door. **16** Chicken feed: They pay their staff chicken feed. **17** To be in the market for something: They're in the market for semiconductors. **18** To flood the market with something: They're flooding the market. **19** Getting money

from him is like getting blood from a stone. **20** To drive a hard bargain: He drives a hard bargain. **21** Be in short supply: Copper was in short supply. **22** At a price. **23** To be worth someone's while to do something: It could be worth your while to make a friend of him. **24** Go public. **25** To sell like hot cakes: His books are selling like hot cakes.

## 9. Thinking

**1** His boss's words gave him food for thought. **2** To have no idea: I have no idea what you're talking about. **3** Great minds think alike. **4** To be dead from the neck up: He's dead from the neck up. **5** To not have a clue: I don't have a clue how much it costs (*or I have no idea...*). **6** He refuses to see reason. **7** To think twice about (*or before*) doing something: She'll think twice before being rude to me again. **8** Use your grey matter! **9** I think we're on the right track here. **10** To have something (*or someone*) in mind: I had him in mind for that job. **11** To put two and two together: He soon put two and two together. **12** To rack one's brains: She racked her brains trying to think of an excuse. **13** To have a mind of one's own: He has a mind of his own. **14** To bear something in mind: Bear in mind that you have to be back before five. **15** More money? That's just wishful thinking. **16** To jump to conclusions: Don't jump to conclusions. **17** In one's heart of hearts: In his heart of hearts he knew it was hopeless. **18** To bear no relation to something: His answer bears no relation to the question. **19** To have something at the back of one's mind:

I've had the interview at the back of my mind all day. **20** To take something at face value: I took what he said at face value. *Why should he lie?* **21** To toy with an idea: I've been toying with the idea of buying a boat. **22** Come to think of it, I could have done it yesterday. **23** To have a brainwave: I had a brainwave. **24** He always insists on knowing the whys and wherefores. **25** To cross one's mind: It didn't even cross his mind.

## 10. Understanding

---

**1** To get the picture: Just read this, you'll soon get the picture. **2** To be out of one's depth: I tried reading Marx but I was soon out of my depth. **3** The mind boggles!: His mind boggled at the thought of all that money. **4** Cannot make head or tail of something: I can't make head or tail of this diagram. **5** To know one's stuff: He seems to know his stuff. **6** To go over someone's head: His lecture went right over my head. **7** To get the message: You're not welcome here, (do you) get the message? **8** To get one's wires crossed: I think we've got our wires crossed. **9** The penny (finally) dropped. **10** There's more to this than meets the eye: There's more to that software than meets the eye. **11** To get hold of the wrong end of the stick: As usual, he got hold of the wrong end of the stick. **12** To not see the point of doing something: I don't see the point of doing it. **13** To not know the first thing about something: You don't know the first thing about it. **14** To lose the thread: I lost the thread of his argument. **15** They cannot see the wood for the trees. **16** Reading between the lines, I'd say

they have financial problems. **17** To give someone to understand something: He gave me to understand that she was leaving. **18** To have a good head for something: He has a good head for business. **19** It is difficult to understand all the ins and outs of the legal system. **20** To fall into place: Things are beginning to fall into place. **21** To get the hang of something: I never got the hang of golf. **22** Let me get this straight: Let's get this straight, we're a thousand pounds short of our target? **23** To make allowances for someone (or something): You have to make allowances for him, he's very young. **24** To get to the bottom of something: He was resolved to get to the bottom of the matter. **25** To be all Greek to someone: It's all Greek to me.

## 11. Discussions

---

**1** To complain about the date would be to split hairs. **2** To pick somebody's brains: ...so he could pick my brains. **3** To set the record straight. **4** For one thing, it's getting very late and I'm tired. **5** To be all ears: I'm all ears. **6** To compare notes. **7** To put oneself into somebody's shoes: The skilled negotiator knows how to put himself into the shoes of his adversary. **8** Face to face. **9** Off the record: The minister was speaking off the record. **10** There's the problem of time, not to mention the cost. **11** It stands to reason that he won't want to buy it again. **12** For the sake of argument, let's suppose he's guilty. **13** To be beside the point: They're quite beside the point. **14** To agree to differ: Let's agree to differ, shall we? **15** At issue. **16** To



put words into someone's mouth: Don't put words into my mouth. **17** To talk through one's hat: He's talking through his hat, as usual. **18** To be neither here nor there: His objections are neither here nor there (*or are beside the point*). **19** To talk at cross-purposes: They were talking at cross-purposes. **20** To beg to differ: On that point I beg to differ. **21** To ring a bell: The name rings a bell. **22** To scratch the surface: This article doesn't even scratch the surface of the problem. **23** To play devil's advocate. **24** On the one hand..., on the other hand... **25** Cannot get a word in edgeways: I couldn't get a word in edgeways.

## 12. Meetings

**1** To get one nowhere: This is getting us nowhere. **2** When all's said and done, she's the one who's going to suffer. **3** To speak to the purpose: He speaks to the purpose. **4** To have one's say: Let him have his say now. **5** To get to the point. **6** The chairman asked for a show of hands. **7** To hold forth: He held forth on the need to act with moderation. **8** To go over old ground: We're going over old ground. **9** I stand corrected. **10** To lose sight of something: They've lost sight of the most important thing. **11** To get down to business: Let's get down to business straight away. **12** To go off at a tangent: He went off at a tangent and never finished his explanation. **13** We put our heads together and came up with the idea. **14** To lay it on the line: I'm going to lay it on the line with you, your work isn't up to scratch. **15** To beat about the bush: Stop beating about the bush and tell me what happened.

**16** The negotiations are going round in circles. **17** To cover a lot of ground: We covered a lot of ground in our discussions. **18** I don't know how they're going to react, I'll just have to play it by ear. **19** Who's going to start the ball rolling? **20** To tie up loose ends: There are still a few loose ends to tie up. **21** To cut something short: She had to cut her holiday short. **22** The meeting was short and sweet. **23** For the record, I don't agree. **24** To take something as read: We took it as read that he had a valid passport. **25** That's the situation in a nutshell.

## 13. Speaking

**1** To say something till one is blue in the face: I've told him till I'm blue in the face, it makes no difference. **2** To pay lip-service to something: Ralph paid lip-service to his firm's efforts to change. **3** Off the top of one's head: He gave me a few suggestions off the top of his head. **4** To tie oneself up in knots: He quickly tied himself up in knots. **5** To not mince one's words: He doesn't mince his words. **6** To waste one's breath: You're wasting your breath trying to convince him. **7** To speak for itself: I think that the facts speak for themselves. **8** To hit the nail on the head: You've hit the nail on the head. **9** It goes without saying that we'll pay your expenses. **10** To pile it on thick: You were piling it on thick. **11** Not in so many words: He didn't say it in so many words, but that's what he meant. **12** To have something on the tip of one's tongue: I have her name on the tip of my tongue. **13** To call a spade a spade. **14** Tongue in cheek (*adverbial expression*): He made several tongue-in-cheek remarks. **15** To take

the word out of one's mouth: You took the words right out of my mouth. **16** He spoke off the cuff. **17** To take somebody's word for something: You'll have to take my word for it. **18** To have the gift of the gab: He has the gift of the gab. **19** To speak one's mind: I always speak my mind. **20** That's a rather sweeping statement, isn't it? **21** To cut a long story short. **22** His technique was to learn the first sentence of every paragraph by heart. **23** I'm sorry, that was an unfortunate slip of the tongue. **24** Not to put too fine a point on it, he's stupid. **25** Give it to them straight from the shoulder.

## 14. Decisions

---

**1** To give someone the benefit of the doubt: We'll give you the benefit of the doubt. **2** To stick to one's guns: He stuck to his guns. **3** To tip the scales in somebody's favour: His fluency in Russian tipped the scales in his favour. **4** I wasn't brave enough to take the plunge. **5** We decided to go to Vigo on the spur of the moment. **6** I chose this make on the strength of your recommendation. **7** He was in two minds about whether to tell her. **8** To take something into account: You should have taken that into account. **9** To think better of (doing) something: She was on the point of applying for the post, but then thought better of it. **10** To keep one's options open: We're keeping all our options open. **11** I was in a quandary (or dilemma) about whether to go or not. **12** To have second thoughts about something: I've had second thoughts, I don't want to sell the company. **13** To change one's tune: You've changed your tune! **14** To make

one's mind up: Tell him to make his mind up. **15** To argue the toss: There's no point arguing the toss, my mind's made up. **16** To strike a happy balance: They strike a happy balance between formality and familiarity. **17** You have to strike a balance between quality and price. **18** Read the small print before signing the contract. **19** To be at a crossroads: He was at a crossroads in his career. **20** They were discussing the pros and cons of buying a computer. **21** To be up in the air: Nothing's settled, everything's still up in the air. **22** To take the bull by the horns: We must take the bull by the horns and act immediately. **23** To have mixed feelings about something: I have mixed feelings about it. **24** They decided to toss a coin for it. **25** To sit on the fence: The minister was accused of sitting on the fence

## 15. Priorities

---

**1** To have other fish to fry: I can't come, I've got other fish to fry. **2** Better late than never. **3** We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. **4** Don't put the cart before the horse. **5** You're throwing the baby out with the bath water. **6** Prevention is better than cure. **7** First things first, how are you getting on with the translation? **8** You have to keep a sense of proportion. **9** And last but not least, my wife. **10** Their campaign put a premium on lower taxation. **11** To make a big thing out of something? Why does he have to make such a big thing out of it? **12** This decision is only the thin end of the wedge. **13** Coventry was, first and foremost, an industrial city. **14** Better safe than sorry. **15** I'll do it

first thing. **16** First come, first served: It was done on a first-come-first-served basis. **17** To make a mountain out of a molehill: She's always making mountains out of molehills. **18** Above all. **19** If the worst comes to the worst, we could contact him at home. **20** You shouldn't have been there in the first place. **21** I thought it was the lesser of two evils (or the lesser evil). **22** To have pride of place: The latest award has pride of place in their collection. **23** There's only one thing for it, we'll have to go on foot. **24** Having possessions isn't the be-all and end-all in life. **25** Don't count your chickens before they're hatched: We don't want to count our chickens before they're hatched.

## 16. Planning

---

**1** The booklet explains the nuts and bolts of accounting. **2** To save something for a rainy day: They're saving for a rainy day. **3** To be on the cards: It was on the cards that something like this would happen. **4** As a last resort we put an advertisement in the paper. **5** He bought a book to learn English step by step. **6** In the pipeline. **7** To take something for granted: He takes it for granted that they'll support him. **8** To count the cost of (doing) something: We have to count the cost of launching this product now. **9** To have something in view: Let's see what we have in view for the week ahead. **10** To build castles in the air: He's always building castles in the air. **11** To take the long view: The boss take a longer view. **12** To go through something with a fine-tooth comb: They went through the books with a fine-tooth

comb. **13** This will go a long way towards solving the problem. **14** To hedge one's bets: He's hedging his bets by going to both interviews. **15** To look forward to doing something: We look forward to meeting you. **16** You can't have it both ways. **17** To not hold water: That theory just doesn't hold water. **18** He say he'll put out feelers and see what he can do. **19** It's a whole new ball game. **20** To take shape: My report is beginning to take shape. **21** In any event, let me know. **22** To be on the safe side, we'd better leave at two. **23** To set the stage for something: This agreement sets the stage for even closer ties. **24** To do one's homework: It was obvious he hadn't done his homework. **25** Cannot see beyond the end of his nose.

## 17. Problems

---

**1** Up the creek. **2** To be hard pressed to do something: We'll be hard pressed to replace him. **3** To not be out of the woods: We're not out of the woods yet. **4** It can't be helped, we'll have to buy a new one. **5** To be out of order: The telephone's out of order (or is on the blink). **6** It was the last straw when he said that the price had gone up. **7** He couldn't make ends meet. **8** To go haywire: The computer suddenly went haywire. **9** It was a vicious circle. **10** To come up against a brick wall: They came up against a brick wall. **11** To go from bad to worse: His financial situation went from bad to worse. **12** To be one of those days: It's just been one of those days. **13** To be behind schedule: We're falling behind schedule. **14** To go through a bad patch: The team is going through

a bad patch. **15** To jump out of the frying pan into the fire: He jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. **16** The photocopier is on the blink. **17** One's Achilles' heel: We must find their Achilles' heel. **18** By the skin of one's teeth: He caught the plane by the skin of his teeth. **19** To be heavy going: His presentation of the sales figures was heavy going. **20** To take the easy way out: He took the easy way out. **21** To have something on one's mind: I can't relax with all these problems on my mind. **22** To be up in arms about something: They were up in arms about the delay. **23** To be hard hit: The company was hard hit by the recession. **24** These cases are just the tip of the iceberg. **25** It's a tough nut to crack.

## 18. Emergencies

---

**1** To keep one's head: The important thing is to keep your head. **2** The calm before the storm. **3** We could see the light at the end of the tunnel. **4** All hell breaks loose: When the news became known, all hell broke loose. **5** When his savings ran out, he began to feel the pinch. **6** To be taken short: I was taken short. **7** When the chips are down, what matters is who you know. **8** If it comes to the crunch, I'll resign. **9** By seven o'clock, I was on my last legs. **10** To have one's back to the wall: There was no choice, I had my back to the wall. I had to do it. **11** It's impossible to do it at such short notice. **12** To weather the storm (*or* to ride out the storm). **13** Replies were coming in thick and fast. **14** To come to a head: Matters have come to a head. **15** The company is in dire straits and heading for bankruptcy. **16**

To tighten one's belt: He had to tighten his belt when he lost his job. **17** To be at one's wit's end: He was at his wit's end. **18** To fiddle while Rome burns: The management is fiddling while Rome burns. **19** To pull the rug out from under someone's feet: His resignation pulled the rug out from under our feet. **20** To come to the boil. **21** To be on the brink of something: We were on the brink of disaster. **22** To be up to one's ears (*or* eyes *or* neck) in something: I'm up to my ears in work. **23** To have one's hands full: She has her hands full right now. **24** To get out of hand: The situation is getting out of hand. **25** To hang by a thread: His promotion is hanging by a thread.

## 19. Action

---

**1** To practice what one preaches: He doesn't practice what he preaches. **2** It was a step in the right direction. **3** We worked against the clock to meet the deadline. **4** A stitch in time saves nine. **5** Actions speak louder than words. **6** We had to start again from scratch. **7** To not do something by halves: He never does things by halves. **8** To pull out all the stops: We pulled out all the stops to make the party a success. **9** To take steps: The government is taking steps to end the conflict. **10** To get the show on the road: Let's get this show on the road. **11** In the heat of the moment. **12** To reach first base: They'll probably not even reach first base. **13** There's no time like the present (*or* Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today). **14** To take the bit between one's teeth: She has (*taken*) the bit between her teeth. **15** His apparent generosity was a

means to an end. **16** Easier said than done. **17** No sooner said than done. **18** To follow suit: He sold all his shares and the others followed suit. **19** To nip something in the bud: That kind of behaviour must be nipped in the bud. **20** We have to come to grips with the problem. **21** To cut corners: He's always cutting corners to get things done. **22** Out of order. **23** To make a point of doing something: She always made a point of talking to everyone. **24** To throw caution to the winds: He threw caution to the winds. **25** This machine only works in fits and starts.

## 20. Success

---

**1** If you've convinced the boss, that's half the battle. **2** To hit the jackpot: He hit the jackpot. **3** To do the trick: Thanks for those pills, they did the trick. **4** To make a killing: He made a killing. **5** It's probably only a flash in the pan. **6** To go from strength to strength: Our campaign is going from strength to strength. **7** Nothing succeeds like success. **8** He's getting better by leaps and bounds. **9** To be home and dry: Once they agree to terms, we'll be practically home and dry. **10** To make a splash: The new range made a splash. **11** It'll take some time for the new system to get off the ground. **12** To get on top of something: They finally managed to get on top of the situation. **13** To land on one's feet: He always seems to land on his feet. **14** To make someone or break someone: It can make us or break us. **15** One thing led to another. **16** To rise from the ashes: He went bust three times, and three times rose from the ashes. **17** To make one's mark: He made his

mark in business. **18** All's well that ends well. **19** To make a go of something: He's making a go of the business. **20** A sure-fire method. **21** To have (got) it made: If you go to Harvard Business School, you've got it made. **22** To come out on top: Our team came out on top. **23** A self-made man. **24** I took a short cut across the park. **25** To get off to a flying start: He got off to a flying start in his new job.

## 21. Failure

---

**1** To go to the dogs: The country's going to the dogs. **2** To shoot something down in flames: They shot it down in flames. **3** To give something up as a bad job: He gave it up as a bad job. **4** To go back to square one: Now we're right back to square one. **5** To come to nothing: His ambitions had come to nothing. **6** To go downhill: That restaurant has certainly gone downhill. **7** To come a cropper. **8** A damp squib. **9** You can't win them all. **10** In the end they had to throw in the towel. **11** To reach a dead end: The talks reached a dead end. **12** To see the writing on the wall: Investors saw the writing on the wall and sold their shares. **13** To go bust: The firm went bust last year. **14** To serve no purpose: It serves no particular purpose, it's purely decorative. **15** To fall flat (on one's face): His jokes about secretaries fell flat. **16** To make a dent in something: It's made a big dent in our savings. **17** To fight a losing battle: We were fighting a losing battle against inflation. **18** To hit rock bottom: Morale had hit rock bottom. **19** A has-been: ...other old has-beens like himself. **20** To go down the drain: It's

money down the drain. **21** The beginning of the end. **22** To go back to the drawing board: Back to the drawing board! **23** To come away empty-handed: The delegation came back empty-handed. **24** To go to the wall: More and more companies were going to the wall. **25** To lose one's touch: I must be losing my touch.

## 22. Mistakes

---

**1** To cut one's own throat: If you leave now, you'll be cutting your own throat. **2** To get off on the wrong foot: He got off on the wrong foot. **3** To back the wrong horse. **4** To bark up the wrong tree: You're barking up the wrong tree. **5** To put all one's eggs in a one basket: Don't put all your eggs in one basket. **6** To bury one's head in the sand: When are you going to stop burying your head in the sand? **7** To go too far: This situation has gone too far. **8** To tread on someone's toes: When we made those changes, we were careful not to tread on anyone's toes. **9** To be wide of the mark: His estimate was wide of the mark. **10** To put one's foot in it: He put his foot in it. **11** To get somebody wrong: Don't get me wrong, we're not against the plan. **12** I don't intend to go out to the airport again on another wild goose chase. **13** To live beyond one's means: He was living beyond his means. **14** To bite off more than one can chew: He's bitten off more than he can chew. **15** To blow up in one's face: Their plans blew up in their faces. **16** To go off the rails: He went completely off the rails when he lost his job. **17** To go wrong: Follow the instructions and you can't go wrong. **18** To

be on the wrong track: I think we're on the wrong track here. **19** To be out of tune with something: The building is out of tune with its surroundings. **20** To make a hash of something: He made a real hash of writing the report. **21** A half-baked idea: Stop wasting our time with your half-baked ideas. **22** To dig one's own grave: You're digging your own grave. **23** To shoot one's mouth off: He's always shooting his mouth off about what he did in the army. **24** It's a case of the blind leading the blind. **25** To rub someone the wrong way: I suppose I just rub him the wrong way.

## 23. Criticism

---

**1** Our department will be in the firing line. **2** To tell somebody a few home truths: I told him a few home truths. **3** It's no use crying over spilt milk. **4** To lay the blame for something on somebody: He laid the blame for everything on his partner. **5** To pour cold water over something: The division heads poured cold water over our proposals. **6** A slap in the face. **7** To have a bone to pick with someone: Tell Marcus I have a bone to pick with him. **8** To give something (or someone) short shrift: The idea was given short shrift. **9** And, to add insult to injury, I had to pay for his meal. **10** They took our criticism to heart. **11** The bad news put a damper on the celebrations. **12** To vote with one's feet: He decided to vote with his feet. **13** To put one's own house in order: Let him put his own house in order. **14** To make no bones about something: He makes no bones about his sympathies. **15** It's a bone of contention between them. **16**

To be in somebody's bad books: We're in her bad books at the moment. **17** We should let bygones be bygones. **18** To pick holes in something: They kept picking holes in my argument. **19** I have no hard feelings about the way they treated me. **20** To lay oneself wide open to something: That would lay us wide open to criticism. **21** You could drive a horse and carriage through it. **22** To make amends for something: He should make amends to us for his negligence. **23** To tell someone where to get off: I'll soon tell him where to get off. **24** To tear something to pieces: Neither had he expected them to tear it to pieces. **25** To clear the air: It clears the air for a while.

## 24. Reactions

**1** To cut one's losses: We should cut our losses and drop the deal. **2** It's sour grapes: He said that the job would have been boring anyway, but that was just sour grapes. **3** To dig one's heels in: She dug her heels in and refused to be persuaded. **4** To clutch at straws: He's just clutching at straws. **5** To whet someone's appetite for something: The experience had whetted her appetite for foreign travel. **6** To get a grip on oneself: This type of behaviour is pointless. Get a grip on yourself! **7** To put on a brave face (or to put a brave face on something): She was very disappointed but she put a brave face on it. **8** To turn a blind eye to something: The company turns a blind eye to private phone calls. **9** To turn a deaf ear to something: They turned a deaf ear to our warnings. **10** To be glad to see the back of someone: I was glad

to see the back of them. **11** Well, we have to be thankful for small mercies. **12** To take a hard line. **13** To take something lying down: When you tell him, he won't take it lying down. **14** To stretch a point. **15** To make do with something: We'll have to make do with what we have. **16** To lose sleep over something: I'm not going to lose any sleep over it. **17** He's trying to pick up the pieces of his life. **18** To not bat an eyelid: When he announced his resignation, she didn't bat an eyelid. **19** To lose heart: They've lost heart in the project. **20** To look on the bright side: She always looks on the bright side of things. **21** To take a dim view of something: They take a very dim view of this type of behaviour. **22** We could all be sacked at the drop of a hat. **23** I refuse to take sides when they start to argue. **24** You'll just have to grin and bear it. **25** To be sick and tired of something: We're sick and tired of your complaints.

## 25. Opportunities

**1** To hand something to someone on a plate: They aren't going to hand it to us on a plate. **2** The letter arrived out of the blue. **3** That way we could kill two birds with one stone. **4** Good teachers are few and far between. **5** To rise to the occasion: They rose to the occasion. **6** To play one's cards right: If you play your cards right... **7** To have a finger in every pie: He has a finger in every pie. **8** To not look a gift horse in the mouth: (saying) Never look a gift horse in the mouth. **9** To miss the boat: I missed the boat with my application. **10** To take advantage of something: He took full advantage of something.

## Answers

tage (or he made the most) of the opportunity. **11** It is difficult to gain a foothold in the Japanese market. **12** He let the opportunity slip through his fingers. **13** To get in on the ground floor. **14** You have the best of both worlds. **15** To break new ground: They're breaking new ground in the treatment of this disease. **16** If I were you, I'd buy it while the going is good. **17** Every cloud has a silver lining. **18** To be up for grabs: The job is up for grabs. **19** To make hay while the sun shines: (*saying*) Make hay while the sun shines. **20** Don't worry, this may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. **21** The sky's the limit. **22** To have a crack at something: Let me have a crack at fixing it. **23** n **24** You'd better strike while the iron is hot and tell him now. **25** To make the most of something: We must make the most (or take full advantage) of this good weather.

### 26. Risk

**1** To carry out a spot check: We do carry out spot checks. **2** I didn't really think I'd find him in the office, but I went on the off-chance. **3** An unknown quantity: The new sales manager is a bit of an unknown quantity. **4** To push one's luck: Be careful, you're pushing your luck. **5** It's all a bit hit and miss. **6** To be at the mercy of something: We are at the mercy of their hunches. **7** To keep one's fingers crossed: - Will he come tomorrow? Keep your fingers crossed. **8** They were selected at random. **9** Her career hung in the balance. **10** To not stand a dog's chance: We didn't stand a dog's chance of winning. **11** To stick one's neck out: I stuck my neck out and

offered him a job. **12** To be (or to go) out on a limb: He went out on a limb defending the research. **13** To be touch and go: For a while it was touch and go whether it would be ready on time. **14** To play it safe. **15** To leave someone to sink or swim: New recruits are left to sink or swim. **16** To skate on thin ice: They're skating on thin ice. **17** To put one's money where one's mouth is: Let's see you put your money where your mouth is! **18** To cut it fine: Hasn't he left yet? He's cutting it very fine! **19** It was a shot in the dark but it proved to be right. **20** In the end we won, but it was a close shave. **21** It's anybody's guess: What will happen next is anybody's guess. **22** Against the odds: They won the contract against all the odds. **23** To play with fire: You're playing with fire. **24** Time will tell. **25** A long shot: It's a bit of a long shot, but it just might work.

### 27. Competition

**1** They have a head start over us, so they'll probably win. **2** To be streets ahead of someone (or something): The company is streets ahead of its competitors. **3** To knock spots off someone (or something): Their latest machines knock spots off all comparable PCs. **4** To play into somebody's hands: Don't play into his hands, tell him no. **5** To come off second best: I have no intention of coming off second best. **6** To set the pace: Europe has set the pace for reform. **7** To give someone a good run for his (her, their, etc.) money: Never mind, we gave him a good run for his money. **8** To stand the pace: He can't stand the pace. **9** To be in the running: We're still in the running



for the contract. **10** To be out of the running: They are out of the running. **11** It has to be a frank discussion, with no holds barred. **12** To give someone an edge (over someone else): It would give us an edge over our competitors. **13** To be on the cutting edge of something: We are on the cutting edge of technological development. **14** In the teeth of something: The changes were made in the teeth of strong resistance. **15** To stay (or to be) one jump ahead of someone: He's always one jump ahead of us. **16** To hold one's own: He holds his own with the senior partners. **17** To keep pace with somebody: I can't keep pace with him. **18** To jump on the bandwagon: We were accused of jumping on the bandwagon. **19** To get in on the act: He tried to get in on the act. **20** To beat someone to the punch: Somebody had beaten her to the punch. **21** To be neck and neck (with someone): The two runners were neck and neck. **22** To meet one's match: He has met his match in Dennis Bartley. **23** Another nail in someone's coffin: This is another nail in their coffin. **24** To gain ground: The campaign to protect the environment is gaining ground. **25** He was determined to get out of the rat race.

same wavelength: He wasn't on the same wavelength as the others. **8** To let the side down: He always lets the side down. **9** To be in good company: You're in good company, we've all been fired. **10** To sit on the sidelines: He has been sitting on the sidelines of public life for years. **11** To pull one's weight: Everyone will have to pull their weight to get the job done. **12** He was a square peg in a round hole. **13** Many hands make light work. **14** To play ball with someone: We tried to persuade him but he refused to play ball. **15** To do something in tandem with somebody: We make decisions in tandem with their department. **16** She's the driving force behind the project. **17** You can't trust him, he's in cahoots with Neyrolles. **18** The rank and file. **19** Too many cooks spoil the broth. **20** To be as thick as thieves: Last year they couldn't stand each other, now they're as thick as thieves. **21** They close ranks when they are criticised. **22** To see eye to eye: Those two have never seen eye to eye. **23** The two companies were not competing on equal terms. **24** To give someone a hand: They gave us a hand. **25** To have a hand in something: I had a hand in its creation.

## 28. Teamwork

---

**1** To be hand in glove: They're said to be hand in glove with their competitors to fix prices. **2** Two heads are better than one. **3** To do someone a good turn: You've done me a good turn. **4** To be in the same boat: We're all in the same boat. **5** To go hand in hand: These matters go hand in hand. **6** Jobs for the boys. **7** To be on the

## 29. Quality

---

**1** To be second to none: Our service is second to none. **2** To be no great shakes: The food was no great shakes. **3** To put something or someone to shame: He speaks English so well that he puts me to shame. **4** He'll never make the grade. **5** To beggar description: It beggars description. **6** To

## Answers

scrape the bottom of the barrel: You're really scraping the bottom of the barrel. **7** To separate the men from the boys: The initial training separates the men from the boys. **8** To not be up to much: His work wasn't up to much. **9** To be worth one's salt: Any engineer worth his salt would have seen it immediately. **10** You cannot hold a candle to him. **11** To be up to scratch: He's simply not up to scratch. **12** To make a clean sweep of something: Our team made a clean sweep of the awards. **13** To get one's money's worth: I've got (or had) my money's worth out of this car. **14** Second-rate. **15** This hotel is the pick of the bunch. **16** It's not all it's cracked up to be. **17** Language schools are two a penny. **18** To go out of one's way to do something: He went out of his way to make me feel at home. **19** Fly-by-night. **20** To steal the show. **21** It's absolutely out of this world. **22** To be in a class of one's own: He's in a class of his own (or it's in a class of its own). **23** You can't keep a good man down. **24** It's nothing to write home about (or It's no great shakes). **25** To praise someone or something to the skies: It has been praised to the skies.

### 30. Negotiations

**1** The ball is in your court. **2** To take someone's point: I take your point, but our prices are not negotiable. **3** To grind to a halt: The negotiations have ground to a halt. **4** To be poles apart: He and his brother are poles apart. **5** To have someone over a barrel: We have him over a barrel. **6** He has been organising everything behind the scenes. **7** We split the difference. **8**

There has to be some give and take. **9** To get down to brass tacks. **10** To lay one's cards on the table: I'm prepared to lay my cards on the table. **11** (You can) take it or leave it. **12** He had an ace up his sleeve. **13** To budge an inch: He wouldn't budge an inch. **14** To play cat and mouse with somebody: I think they're playing cat and mouse with us. **15** To strengthen one's hand: His announcements have strengthened our hand. **16** Common ground. **17** They managed to turn the tables on their adversaries. **18** You have to draw the line somewhere. **19** A stumbling block: We have overcome the most important stumbling block. **20** To have the upper hand: He thinks he has the upper hand. **21** To meet someone halfway: If he won't agree to this, we'll have to meet him halfway. **22** To stand one's ground: He stood his ground. **23** To call someone's bluff: Go ahead and call his bluff. **24** To lose face. **25** Beggars can't be choosers.

### 31. Results

**1** She soon became a household name. **2** Not by a long chalk. **3** A can of worms: The revaluation of salaries opened up a can of worms. **4** To make inroads into something: Training make serious inroads into my free time. **5** To make headway: We've finally managed to make some headway. **6** To pave the way for something: This bill paved the way for a united Europe. **7** To flog a dead horse: You're flogging a dead horse talking to them about cutting expenditure. **8** The result was a foregone conclusion. **9** The acid test is whether the public likes it

## Answers

or not. **10** It makes no odds. **11** The end-of-year bonus was just the icing on the cake. **12** If you don't finish on time, you won't be paid *ñ* that's the bottom line. **13** At the end of the day, it's his responsibility. **14** To bear fruit: His careful planning bore fruit. **15** They couldn't come up with the goods. **16** This is a far cry from what I expected. **17** He has made his bed and now he must lie in it. **18** The course of events has come full circle. **19** To take its toll: Years of hard work had taken their toll on his health. **20** So far, so good. **21** To not have a leg to stand on: He doesn't have a leg to stand on. **22** The employees in this company are a mixed bag. **23** To serve somebody right: It serves you right. **24** One swallow doesn't make a summer. **25** To fall short of something: The quality of their products falls short of our requirements.

### 32. Responsibility

**1** To be saddled with something: We were saddled with all the bills. **2** They were fighting for their place in the pecking order. **3** She's not the sort to pull rank. **4** To know where one stands: I like to know where I stand. **5** He has decided to take a back seat from now on. **6** We can't do it unless we have his say-so. **7** To rule the roost: He's the one who rules the roost. **8** To be quits with someone: Now we're quits. **9** To have friends in high places: He has friends in high places. **10** As usual I had to carry the can. **11** To have the final say in something: The manager has the final say in these matters. **12** To stand on one's own two feet: You have to learn to stand

on your own two feet. **13** To give someone a free hand: They would give him a free hand. **14** To have a say in something: I have no say in the matter. **15** To give someone the green light: Plans for the new tower block have been given the green light (*or go-ahead*). **16** To give someone the go-ahead: Our plans were given the go-ahead (*or green light*). **17** To put one's foot down: He put his foot down and refused to sign. **18** The top brass. **19** To play second fiddle to someone: After years of playing second fiddle to others... **20** To have a lot to answer for: The mining industry has a lot to answer for. **21** A sleeping partner *or* (US) a silent partner. **22** They accused him of trying to pass the buck. **23** To kick someone upstairs: The only solution was to kick the present one upstairs. **24** To call the shots: Cronin's calling the shots now. **25** To wash one's hand of something or someone: After that, he washed his hands of them.

### 33. Ethics

**1** To cook the books: Someone has been cooking the books. **2** To be as good as one's word: He was as good as his word. **3** He does not have the courage of his convictions. **4** To pull the wool over someone's eyes: There's no point trying to pull the wool over his eyes. **5** Now his policies have come home to roost. **6** To sweep something under the carpet: They attempted to sweep the affair under the carpet. **7** To take someone's word for it: You'll have to take my word for it. **8** To feather one's nest: He has feathered his nest at the tax payer's expense. **9**

# Answers

There are no two ways about it. **10** Honesty is the best policy. **11** You never know when they're being sincere and when they're simply on the make. **12** They paid him \$25,000 under the table. **13** To grease somebody's palm. **14** To get cold feet: He got cold feet and said nothing. **15** In good faith. **16** To catch someone red-handed: I caught him red-handed. **17** He's a man of his word. **18** To have the guts to do something: He had the guts to say it to his face. **19** All the transactions were above board. **20** They won fair and square. **21** He has an itchy palm. **22** To go against the grain: It goes against the grain for me to support them. **23** That's a different kettle of fish. **24** He doesn't do it on principle. **25** To be on the level: Don't worry, Sam's on the level.

## 34. Psychology

**1** To show one's true colours: He revealed his true colours. **2** To be on pins and needles: They were on pins and needles waiting for the results. **3** To keep somebody on tenterhooks: She loves keeping people on tenterhooks. **4** To be on cloud nine: He's been on cloud nine since he heard the news. **5** His bark is worse than his bite. **6** To show what one is made of: This is your chance to show the management what you're made of. **7** To be set in one's ways: Naturally he's set in his ways. **8** Deep down she regretted it. **9** To be out of one's mind: You must be out of your mind. **10** What makes someone tick: I'd like to know what makes him tick. **11** To go all to pieces: He went all to pieces when he found out. **12** To slip one's mind: I'm sorry,

it completely slipped my mind. **13** To read someone like a book: Don't tell me stories, I can read you like a book. **14** To take it out on somebody: I know you're upset, but don't take it out on me. **15** To blow hot and cold on something: He blows hot and cold on every subject. **16** He was a bag of nerves before the interview. **17** What's eating you? **18** She has both feet on the ground. **19** He's very quick on the uptake. **20** To have a chip on one's shoulder: He has a chip on his shoulder about his background. **21** To fly off the handle at someone: When I told her, she flew off the handle. **22** In this job you have to be able to think on your feet. **23** He's nobody's fool. **24** To be fed up with something: I'm fed up with being told what to do. **25** He has a screw loose.

## 35. Colleagues

**1** To have something in store for somebody: What does fate have in store for us? **2** To be all mouth: He's all mouth. **3** A skeleton staff. **4** You're a glutton for punishment, going into the office at the weekend. **5** Supermarkets will raise prices across the board. **6** To get on someone's nerves: That noise gets on my nerves. **7** To pass the hat round (or around). **8** To give someone his due: To give him his due, he is very efficient. **9** To keep oneself to oneself: She tends to keep herself to herself. **10** An Aunt Sally. **11** To hate somebody's guts: They hate each other's guts. **12** To be a dead ringer for someone: He's a dead ringer for his brother. **13** He's worked in this office so long, he's part of the furniture. **14** She seemed to be on the ball. **15** To

## Answers

give somebody the sack: They gave them all the sack. **16** He's a pain in the neck. **17** To put someone out to pasture: They'll be putting him out to pasture soon. **18** He's a sensible, down-to-earth person. **19** This company needs some new blood. **20** A whizz kid. **21** He's a dark horse. **22** He became the boss's right-hand man. **23** I feel like a fish out of water. **24** A fair-weather friend: It's painful to discover how many fair-weather friends you had. **25** He's a real live wire.

### 36. Politics

---

**1** He looks after number one. **2** She tried to keep a low profile. **3** To stab someone in the back: This was a stab in the back for the export manager. **4** A snake in the grass: Some snake in the grass informed on us. **5** To soft-soap someone: She soft-soaped him into agreeing. **6** To put someone's nose out of joint: That put his nose out of joint. **7** To give someone enough rope to hang himself: Give him enough rope and he'll hang himself. **8** To lick somebody's boots: It make me sick to see the way he licks the boss's boots. **9** They have a vested interest in promoting these products. **10** To take the credit for something: His boss took all the credit for writing the report. **11** To put in a good word for someone: He promised to put in a good word for me with the manager. **12** A hatchet man. **13** You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. **14** To pull strings: He pulled quite a few strings to get that job. **15** He has been seeing her on the sly. **16** Behind somebody's back: They were planning something behind my back. **17** To make waves. **18** They've fi-

nally decided to bury the hatchet. **19** To have an axe to grind: I have no axe to grind in this matter. **20** To get even with someone: I'll get even with him some day. **21** Their quarrel is only a storm in a teacup. **22** To curry favour: He's simply currying favour. **23** It's every man for himself. **24** To put a spoke in somebody's wheels: He'll try to put a spoke in your wheels. **25** To poke one's nose into something: He's always poking his nose into our business.

### 37. Careers

---

**1** To make a name for oneself: He made a name for himself as an industrial designer. **2** Out of sight, out of mind. **3** To pull oneself up by one's bootstraps: He pulled himself up by his bootstraps. **4** To get into one's stride: I was just getting into my stride when they fired me. **5** That's a feather in his cap. **6** A rolling stone gathers no moss. **7** To come up through the ranks: He came up through the ranks. **8** To mark time: He was really just marking time. **9** To follow in somebody's footsteps: He wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. **10** This company has an excellent track record. **11** To set one's sights on something: He had set his sights on becoming a lawyer. **12** To fly high: He's flying high. **13** To pull one's socks up: It's high time he pulled his socks up. **14** To rest on one's laurels: They've been resting on their laurels. **15** It's a stepping stone to success. **16** To be cut out for something: I'm not cut out for business. **17** To have the makings of something: He has the makings of a personnel manager. **18** He's in line for a raise soon.

## Answers

1,000 everyday idioms in business

**19** Up-and-coming. **20** To blot one's copybook: It was a blot on his copybook (*or* He blotted his copybook.) **21** To give someone a pat on the back: He deserves a pat on the back. **22** To step into somebody's shoes: It's not easy to step into the shoes of such a man. **23** With dedication you'll go far. **24** They've come up in the world. **25** To fall by the wayside: They fell by the wayside.

### 38. Contacts

**1** To get in touch with somebody: Get in touch with us when you arrive. **2** To stay in touch: I try to stay in touch with my friends from university. **3** To give someone the lowdown on something: I want you to give me the lowdown on their recent R&D. **4** To have someone in the palm of one's hand: She's got him in the palm of her hand. **5** To not be somebody's cup of tea: It isn't my cup of tea. **6** To be on good terms with somebody: We aren't on very good terms at the moment. **7** Better the devil you know (*than* the devil you don't). **8** To put business somebody's way: I'm happy to put business his way. **9** The old pals act. **10** He only goes to the office once in a blue moon. **11** It takes all sorts (*to* make a world). **12** To have a foot in both camps. **13** To drop names: He's always dropping names. **14** None other than. **15** To get wind of something: How on earth did you get wind of it? **16** It's a small world. **17** To hear something on the grapevine: I heard it on the grapevine. **18** He met with his French opposite number. **19** Talk of the devil! **20** To give someone a leg up: I gave him a leg up. **21** They're the

salt of the earth. **22** To be in the know: Are they in the know? **23** To get on like a house on fire: The manager and I get on like a house on fire. **24** We've known each other long enough to be on first name terms. **25** To know someone to see (*or* by sight): I only know him to see.

### 39. Socialising

**1** To put in an appearance: He put in a brief appearance at the party. **2** One for the road. **3** To throw a party for someone: They threw a party for him. **4** To get away from it all. **5** To take a joke: You can't take a joke. **6** They put on some music to break the ice. **7** To take a hint: I kept looking at my watch but he didn't take the hint. **8** Their relationship has been on the rocks for some time. **9** To make oneself at home: Sit down and make yourself at home. **10** To take it easy. **11** A wet blanket. **12** All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. **13** Please, there's no need to stand on ceremony with us. **14** To pull someone's leg: You're pulling my leg, aren't you? **15** We were wined and dined by the manager and his wife. **16** We made small talk until he arrived. **17** He was the life and soul of the party. **18** A drop of the hard stuff. **19** The more the merrier. **20** To let off steam: When he gets angry, he lets off steam by going for a run. **21** To talk shop: Stop talking shop, you're on holidays. **22** To do the honours. **23** To drown one's sorrows: He's in the bar drowning his sorrows. **24** To rub shoulders with somebody: He rubs shoulders with movie stars. **25** To let one's hair down: He really let his hair down at the party.

## 40. Miscellaneous

---

**1** To have nothing to do with something or someone: That has nothing to do with you. **2** On the face of it, the economy is improving. **3** All along. **4** To be (or to feel) under the weather: She was feeling under the weather. **5** To jump the gun: Don't jump the gun. **6** To one's cost: You can't drink and drive, as he found out to his cost. **7** The job's as good as finished. **8** For starters. **9** Out of the question. **10** By and large, the organisation is good. **11** Their way of doing business is a case in point. **12** Oh, by the way, there's a letter for you. **13** By all means take it, but please bring it back. **14** Let alone. **15** It wasn't an accident, he did it on purpose. **16** In the light of what we now know, the idea seems strange. **17** They sold book, newspapers, and so forth. **18** I agree in principle with what you say. **19** He was rude, to say the least. **20** Out of place. **21** To hold good: My promise still holds good. **22** As a matter of fact, I've never been to Spain. **23** The long and the short of it is that we've failed. **24** On no account are you to see her again. **25** To be in favour of something: I'm all in favour of freedom of speech.

# **Index**



*This page intentionally left blank*

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

The numbers in this index are chapter numbers, *not* page numbers.

## A

able 34  
account 14, 40  
ace 30  
Achilles 17  
acid 31  
act 27, 38  
action 19  
add 23  
advantage 25  
advocate 11  
again 1  
agree 11  
ahead 2, 27  
air 14, 16, 23  
alike 9  
allowance 10  
alone 40  
always 1  
amend 23  
another 1, 5, 20  
answer 32  
anybody 26  
apart 30  
appearance 39  
appetite 24  
argue 14  
argument 11  
arm 8, 17  
ash 20  
Aunt 35  
axe 36

## B

baby 15  
back 6, 9, 18, 21, 22, 24, 32, 36, 37  
backwards 7  
bad 1, 3, 17, 21, 23  
bag 4, 31, 34  
balance 14, 26  
ball 35  
ball 12, 16, 28, 30  
bandwagon 27  
bargain 8  
bark 22, 34  
barred 27  
barrel 29, 30  
base 19  
basket 22  
bat 24  
bath 15  
battle 20, 21  
bean 4  
bear 9, 24, 31  
beat 6, 12, 27  
bed 31  
beg 11  
beggar 29, 30  
beginning 21  
believe 4  
believing 5  
bell 11  
belt 5, 18  
benefit 14  
best 2, 25, 27, 33  
bet 3, 16  
better 1, 2, 14, 15, 28, 38  
big 15  
bill 3  
bird 1, 4, 25  
bit 19  
bite 22, 34  
bitten 5  
black 3, 4  
blame 1, 23  
blanket 39  
blessing 25  
blind 22, 24  
blink 17  
block 30  
blood 8, 35  
blot 37  
blow 1, 22, 34  
blue 13, 25, 38  
blue-collar 6  
bluff 30  
board 21, 33, 35  
boat 25, 28  
boggles 10  
boil 18  
bolts 16  
bomb 3  
bone 23  
book 5, 23, 33, 34  
boots 36  
bootstraps 37  
both 6, 16, 25, 38  
bottom 3, 10, 21, 29, 31  
bounds 20  
bow 5  
boy 28, 29, 39  
brains 9, 11  
brainwave 9  
brass 30, 32  
brave 24  
break 8, 18, 20, 25, 39  
breath 13  
breathe 6  
brick 17  
bridge 5, 15  
bright 24  
brink 18  
broth 28  
buck 32  
bud 19  
budge 30  
bull 14  
bum 4  
bunch 29  
burn 6, 18  
burnt 5  
bury 22, 36  
bush 1, 12  
business 4, 12, 38  
bust 21  
bygones 23

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## C

---

cahoots 28  
cake 6, 8, 31  
call 1, 2, 13, 30, 32  
calm 18  
camp 38  
can 1, 22, 25, 32  
candle 6, 29  
cap 37  
card 4, 16, 25, 30  
care 1  
carpet 33  
carry 26, 32  
cart 15  
case 40  
cash 3  
castles 16  
cat 4, 30  
catch 33  
caution 19  
ceremony 39  
chalk 31  
chance 26  
change 8, 14  
chase 22  
check 26  
cheek 13  
chest 4  
chew 22  
chicken 8, 15  
chip 18, 34  
chooser 30  
circle 12, 17, 31  
class 29  
clean 29  
clear 23  
clock 2  
close 4, 26, 28  
cloud 25, 34  
clue 9  
clutch 24  
coach 23  
coffin 27  
coin 14  
cold 23, 33, 34  
colour 3, 34  
comb 16  
come 1, 2, 4, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 31, 33, 37  
common 30  
company 28  
compare 11  
conclusion 9, 31  
cons 14  
contention 23  
conviction 33  
cook 33  
cookie 1  
cooks 28  
copybook 37  
corner 8, 19  
corrected 12  
cost 3, 8, 16, 40  
count 15, 16  
country 5  
courage 33  
course 7  
court 30  
cover 12  
cow 2

## D

---

crack 17, 25  
cracked 29  
credit 36  
creek 17  
cropper 21  
cross 9, 11, 15  
crossed 10, 26  
crossroads 14  
crumble 1  
crunch 18  
cry 31  
crying 23  
cuff 13  
cup 38  
cure 15  
curry 36  
cut 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26, 37  
cutting 27  
damp 21  
damper 23  
dark 4, 26  
dark 35  
date 2  
day 2, 7, 16, 17, 31  
dead 6, 9, 21, 31, 35  
deadline 19  
deaf 24  
deal 8  
debt 3  
deep 3, 34  
dent 21  
depth 10  
description 29  
deserve 1  
devil 11, 38  
differ 11  
difference 30  
different 33  
dig 22, 24  
dim 24  
dine 39  
dire 18  
direction 19  
dirty 6  
disguise 25  
dog 1, 5, 21, 26  
dole 6  
dollar 3  
done 2, 12, 19  
donkey 2, 6  
door 8  
dot 2

## E

doubt 14  
downhill 21  
down 6  
downs 1  
down-to-earth 35  
dozen 8  
drain 21  
draw 30  
drawing 21  
drink 25  
drive 8, 23  
driving 28  
drop 3, 24, 38, 39  
dropped 10  
drown 39  
dry 20  
due 35  
dull 39

ear 4, 5, 11, 18, 24  
earth 38  
easier 19  
easy 1, 17, 39  
eating 34  
edge 27  
edgeways 11  
egg 22  
eleventh 2  
empty 21  
end 6, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 31  
enough 36  
equal 28  
error 5  
even 7, 8, 36  
event 5, 7, 16  
every 25, 36  
evil 15  
exception 1  
eye 10, 24, 28, 33  
eyelid 24

## F

face 9, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 40  
fact 40  
fair 33  
fair-weather 35  
faith 33  
fall 10, 21, 31, 37  
far 22, 25, 31, 37  
fast 18  
favour 14, 36, 40  
feather 33, 37  
fed 34  
feed 8  
feel 18  
feeler 16  
feelings 14, 23  
feet 18, 20, 23, 32, 33, 34  
fence 14  
few 23, 25  
fiddle 18, 32  
fight 21  
file 28  
final 32  
find 5  
fine 13, 26  
fine-tooth 16  
finger 5, 25, 26  
fingertip 4  
fire 4, 17, 26, 38  
firing 23  
first 1, 8, 10, 15, 19  
firstname 38  
fish 15, 33, 35  
fit 19

flame 21  
flash 20  
flat 21  
flies 2  
flog 31  
flood 8  
floor 25  
flowed 5  
fly 34, 37  
fly-by-night 29  
flying 20  
follow 19, 37  
food 9  
fool 1, 34  
foolish 3  
foot 3, 8, 22, 32, 38  
foothold 25  
footsteps 37  
force 28  
forearmed 1  
foregone 31  
foremost 15  
forewarned 1  
form 7  
forth 12, 40  
forward 16  
forwards 7  
free 32  
friend 32, 35  
fruit 31  
fry 15  
frying 17  
full 6, 18, 31  
fun 2  
furniture 35

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## G

gab 13  
gain 1, 25, 27  
game 16  
gather 37  
get 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,  
10, 11, 12, 18,  
19, 20, 22, 23,  
24, 25, 27, 29,  
30, 33,  
35, 36, 37, 38, 39  
gift 13, 25  
give 8, 10, 14, 21,  
23, 27, 28, 30,  
32, 35, 36, 37,  
38  
glad 24  
glove 28  
glutton 35  
go 1, 3, 5, 7, 8,  
10, 12, 13, 16,  
17, 20, 21, 22,  
26, 28, 29, 33,  
34, 37  
go-ahead 32  
going 8, 17, 25  
good 1, 3, 4, 10,  
25, 28, 29, 31,  
33, 36, 38, 40  
goods 31  
goose 22  
grabs 25  
grade 29  
grain 33  
granted 16  
grapes 24  
grapevine 38  
grass 36  
grass 1  
grave 22  
grease 33  
great 9, 29  
Greek 10  
green 32  
greener 1  
grey 9  
grin 24  
grind 30, 36  
grindstone 6  
grip 19, 24  
ground 1, 4, 12,  
20, 25, 27, 30,  
34  
grow 3  
guess 26  
gun 14, 40  
guts 33, 35

## H

hair 11, 39  
half 1, 8, 20  
half-baked 22  
halfway 30  
halt 30  
halves 19  
hand 1, 5, 6, 8,  
11, 12, 18, 25,  
27, 28, 30, 32,  
38  
handed 21  
handle 34  
hang 10, 18, 26,  
36  
happy 14  
hard 3, 5, 8, 17,  
23, 24, 39  
has-been 21  
hash 22  
hat 4, 11, 24, 35  
hatched 15  
hatchet 36  
hate 35  
have 3, 4, 5, 6, 9,  
10, 12, 13, 14,  
15, 16, 17, 18,  
20, 23, 25, 27,  
28, 30, 31, 32,  
33, 34, 35, 36,  
37, 38, 40  
having 2  
hay 25  
haywire 17  
head 1, 10, 12,  
13, 18, 22, 27,  
28  
headway 31  
hear 4, 38  
heart 9, 13, 23,  
24  
heat 19  
heavy 17  
hedge 16  
heel 17, 24  
hell 18  
helped 17  
here 11  
herring 4  
high 2, 32, 37  
hill 1  
hint 39  
hit 13, 17, 20, 21,  
26  
hold 10, 12, 16,  
27, 29, 40  
hole 23, 28  
home 2, 20, 23,  
29, 33  
homework 16  
honesty 33  
honours 39  
horn 14  
horse 4, 15, 22,  
23, 25, 31, 35  
hot 8, 25, 34  
hour 2  
house 23, 38  
household 31

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## I

ice 26, 39  
iceberg 17  
icing 31  
idea 9, 22  
ill 1  
inch 30  
injury 23  
inroads 31  
ins 10  
insult 23  
interest 36  
iron 25  
issue 11  
itchy 33  
itself 13

## J

Jack 39  
jackpot 20  
job 6, 21, 28  
joint 36  
joke 39  
jump 9, 17, 27,  
40  
just 5

## K

keel 7  
keep 1, 2, 4, 6,  
14, 18, 26, 27,  
29, 34, 35, 36,  
38  
kettle 33  
kick 32  
kid 35  
kill 7, 25  
killing 20  
knock 27  
know 5, 10, 32,  
38

## L

land 20  
large 40  
last 15, 16, 17, 18  
late 15  
laurel 37  
lay 12, 23, 30  
lead 6, 25  
leading 22  
leaf 5  
leap 20  
learn 5, 13  
least 15, 40  
leave 26, 30  
led 20  
leg 8, 18, 31, 38,  
39  
leisure 2  
lesser 15  
lesson 5  
let 1, 4, 10, 23,  
25, 28, 39, 40  
level 33  
lick 36  
lie 1, 31  
life 39  
light 4, 18, 28,  
32, 40  
like 4, 8  
limb 26  
limit 25  
line 5, 7, 10, 12,  
23, 24, 30, 31,  
37  
lining 25  
lip 13  
little 4  
live 5, 22, 35

## M

loaf 1  
long 2, 13, 16, 26, 31, 40  
look 16, 24, 25, 36  
loose 12, 18, 34  
lose 1, 10, 12, 21, 24, 30  
losing 21  
losses 24  
lot 5, 12, 32  
louder 19  
low 36  
low-down 38  
luck 26  
lying 24

made 20, 31, 34  
make 3, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39  
makings 37  
man 20, 29, 33, 35, 36  
many 13, 28  
mark 20, 22, 37  
market 8  
match 27  
matter 9, 10  
matter 7, 40  
means 22, 19, 40  
medium 14  
meet 10, 17, 19, 27, 30  
mention 11  
mercy 24, 26  
merrier 39  
message 10  
method 20  
middle 7  
midnight 6  
milk 23  
mill 5, 7  
mince 13  
mind 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 34, 37  
misery 4  
miss 26  
miss 25  
mixed 14, 31  
molehill 15

## N

moment 14, 19  
money 1, 3, 26, 27, 29  
moon 38  
more 10, 22, 39  
moss 37  
most 25  
motions 7  
mountain 15  
mouse 30  
mouth 4, 11, 13, 22, 25, 26, 35  
move 2  
much 29

nail 3, 13, 27  
name 3, 31, 37, 38  
nature 5  
necessity 24  
neck 6, 9, 26, 27, 35  
needles 34  
neither 11  
nerves 34, 35  
nest 33  
never 1, 15  
new 5, 16, 25, 35  
news 4  
nick 2  
nine 19, 34  
nip 19  
nobody 1, 34  
none 1, 4, 29, 38  
normal 7  
nose 6, 8, 16, 36  
note 11  
nothing 20, 21, 29, 40  
notice 18  
nowhere 12  
number 36, 38  
nut 16, 17  
nutshell 12

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## O

object 3, 5  
occasion 25  
ocean 3  
odds 3, 26, 31  
off-chance 26  
oil 6  
old 2, 5, 12, 38  
once 2, 5, 38  
onions 5  
only 15  
open 14, 23  
opposite 38  
options 14  
order 7, 17, 23, 32  
ordinary 7  
other 8  
other 1, 11, 15, 38  
outs 10  
own 9, 22, 23, 27, 29, 32

## P

pace 27  
pain 35  
palm 33, 38  
pal 38  
pan 17, 20  
par 7  
part 35  
parted 1  
partner 32  
party 39  
pass 32, 35  
past 2  
pasture 35  
pat 37  
patch 17  
pave 31  
pay 1, 3, 8, 13  
pecking 32  
peg 28  
penny 1, 3, 10, 29  
perfect 7  
pick 11, 23, 24, 29  
picture 4, 10  
pie 25  
piece 6, 23, 24, 34  
pile 13  
pinch 4, 18  
pin 34  
pipeline 16  
piper 1  
place 10, 15, 32, 40  
place 32  
plain 7  
plate 25  
play 4, 11, 12, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 39  
plunge 14  
point 11, 12, 24, 30, 40  
point 10, 13, 19  
poke 36  
pole 30  
policy 33  
posted 4  
pound 1, 3  
pour 1, 23  
practice 7  
practise 19  
praise 29  
preach 19  
premium 15  
present 19  
pressed 17  
prevention 15  
price 3, 8  
pride 15  
principle 33, 40  
print 14  
profile 36  
proportion 15  
pros 14  
prove 1  
public 8  
pull 18, 19, 28, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39  
punch 27  
punishment 35

purpose 11, 12, 21, 40  
push 26  
put 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39



# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## Q

quandary 14  
quantity 26  
question 3, 40  
quick 34  
quits 32

## R

race 27  
rack 9  
rails 22  
rains 1  
rainy 16  
random 26  
rank 28, 32, 37  
rat 27  
rate 8  
reach 19, 21  
read 10, 12, 34  
reason 9, 11  
record 11, 12, 37  
red 3, 4, 7  
red-handed 33  
refusal 8  
rein 6  
relation 9  
resort 16  
rest 37  
ride 5  
right 9, 10, 19, 25, 31  
right-hand 35  
ring 11  
ringer 35  
rise 20, 25  
road 7, 19, 39  
rock 21, 39  
rolling 3, 12, 37  
Rome 18  
roof 3  
roost 32, 33  
rope 5, 36  
rough 1, 5

## S

round 2, 5, 12, 28, 35  
roundabouts 1  
rub 22, 39  
rug 18  
rule 1, 7, 32  
run 2, 7, 8, 27  
running 27  
rut 7  
sack 35  
saddled 32  
safe 15, 16, 26  
said 12, 19  
sailing 7  
sake 2, 11  
Sally 35  
salt 4, 29, 38  
same 28  
sand 22  
save 16, 19  
say 12, 13, 32, 40  
say-so 32  
scales 14  
scene 30  
schedule 17  
score 5  
scrape 29  
scratch 11, 19, 29, 36  
screw 34  
seat 32  
second 5, 14, 27, 29, 32  
second-rate 29  
see 3, 9, 10, 16, 18, 21, 24, 28, 38  
seeing 5  
self 20  
sell 4, 8  
sense 15  
separate 29  
serve 21, 31  
served 15  
service 13

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

- set 11, 16, 27, 34, 37  
shakes 29  
shame 29  
shape 16  
shave 26  
shed 4  
shines 25  
shoes 11, 37  
shoestring 3  
shoot 21, 22  
shop 39  
shopping 8  
short 6, 8, 12, 13, 18, 20, 23, 31, 40  
shot 26  
shots 32  
shoulder 6, 13, 34, 39  
show 12, 19, 29, 34  
shrift 23  
shy 5  
sick 24  
side 1, 16, 24, 28  
sidelines 28  
sight 12, 37  
sights 37  
silent 32  
silver 25  
sink 26  
sit 6, 14, 28  
six 8  
sixty-four 3  
skate 26  
skeleton 35  
skies 29  
skin 17  
sky 25  
slap 23  
sleep 24  
sleeping 1, 32  
sleeve 30  
slip 13, 25, 34  
sly 36  
small 14, 24, 38, 39  
smoke 4  
smooth 1  
snake 36  
snowed 6  
sock 37  
soft-soap 36  
song 3  
sooner 2, 19  
sorrow 39  
sorry 15  
sort 38  
soul 39  
sour 24  
spade 13  
spadework 6  
speak 12, 13, 19  
spill 4  
spilt 23  
splash 20  
split 11, 30  
spoil 28  
spoke 36  
spot 26, 27  
spread 4  
spur 14  
square 21, 28, 33  
squib 21  
stab 36  
staff 35  
stage 16  
stand 11, 12, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 39  
start 12, 19, 20, 27  
starters 40  
statement 13  
stay 27  
steal 29  
steam 39  
steer 4  
step 16, 19, 37  
stepping 37  
stick 10, 14, 26  
stitch 19  
stone 8, 25, 37  
stops 19  
store 35  
storm 18, 36  
story 13  
straight 4, 10, 11, 13  
straits 18  
straw 17, 24  
street 27  
strength 14, 20  
strengthen 30  
stretch 6, 24  
stride 7, 37  
strike 14, 25  
string 5, 36  
stuff 10, 39  
stumbling 30  
succeed 1, 20  
success 20  
suit 19  
summer 31  
sun 25  
supply 8  
sure-fire 20  
surface 11  
swallow 31  
sweep 29, 33  
sweeping 13  
sweet 12  
swim 26  
swing 6, 7  
swings 1

# Index

1,000 everyday idioms in business

## T

table 30, 33  
tabs 6  
tacks 30  
tail 10  
take 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39  
taken 18  
talk 3, 11, 38, 39  
tandem 28  
tangent 12  
tape 7  
tea 38  
teach 5  
teacup 36  
tear 6, 23  
teeth 6, 17, 19, 27  
tell 23, 26  
tenterhooks 34  
term 28, 38  
test 31  
thankful 24  
themselves 1  
there 11  
thick 13  
thick 5, 18, 28  
thieves 28  
thin 5, 15, 26  
thing 2, 5, 10, 11, 15, 19, 20  
think 9, 14, 34  
thinking 9  
thought 9, 14  
thousand 3  
thread 10, 18  
throat 22  
throw 3, 15, 19, 21, 39  
thumb 7  
tick 34  
tie 12, 13  
tight 6  
tighten 18  
time 2, 7, 37  
time 1, 2, 19, 26  
times 2  
tip 13, 14, 17  
tired 24  
today 1  
toe 7, 22  
together 9, 12  
told 4  
toll 31  
tomorrow 1  
tongue 13  
tool 1, 6  
top 13, 20, 32  
toss 14  
touch 21, 26, 38  
tough 17  
towards 16  
towel 21  
toy 9  
track 9, 22, 37  
tread 22  
tree 3, 10, 22  
trial 5  
trick 5, 20  
true 7, 34  
truths 23

## U

understand 10  
unknown 26  
up-and-coming 37  
upper 30  
ups 1  
upstairs 32  
uptake 34  
use 23

## V

value 9  
vested 36  
vicious 17  
virtue 24  
view 16, 24  
vote 23

## W

wall 17, 18, 21  
want 1  
wash 32  
waste 1, 13  
water 1, 5, 15, 16, 23, 25, 35  
wavelength 28  
waves 36  
way 1, 5, 16, 17, 22, 29, 31, 33, 38, 40  
wayside 37  
wear 6  
weather 18, 40  
wedge 15  
weight 28  
well 20  
wet 5, 39  
wheel 6, 8, 36  
wherefores 9  
white 4  
whizz 35  
whole 16  
whys 9  
wide 22, 23  
wild 22  
wildfire 4  
will 1  
win 21  
wind 1, 19, 38  
window 8  
wine 39  
wire 10, 35  
wise 3, 5  
wishful 9  
wit 18

## Y

year 2

wood 10, 17  
wool 33  
word 11, 13, 19, 33, 36  
work 6, 7, 28, 39  
workman 1  
world 25, 29, 37, 38  
worse 17, 34  
worst 15  
worth 1, 8, 29  
wraps 4  
write 29  
writing 21  
wrong 10, 22

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Other titles

## **Complementary books:**

- Elementary Tests · 3 levels
- Advanced Tests · 2 levels
- Structured Tests · 3 levels
- Bilingual Phrases · 5 levels
- Bilingual Translations · 5 levels
- Fill in the gaps · 3 levels
- Guide to Prepositions (English to Spanish)
- Guide to Prepositions - **exercises**
- Guide to Phrasal Verbs
- Phrasal Verbs - **exercises**
- English Verbs one by one
- My English telltale
- Conversation in Action - Let's Talk (for teachers)
- English irregular Verbs

## **Grammars:**

- English Grammar · 3 levels

## **Pastimes:**

- Didactical crosswords

## **Reading:**

- Graded reading - French

## **Textbooks:**

- Stanley
- Stanley, book of exercises
- Stanley, Teacher's book
- On Second Thoughts (children)
- In the Third Place (children)

## **Others:**

- Traveller's guide
  - English - French - Italian - German - Portuguese

## **Business:**

- Bilingual Business Letters
  - English - Spanish
  - Italian - Spanish
  - French - Spanish
  - 1,000 Everyday Idioms in Business

## **EDITORIAL STANLEY**

Apdo. 207 - 20302 IRUN - SPAIN · Telf. (943) 64 04 12 - Fax. (943) 64 38 63  
e-mail: rrossetg.stanley@nexo.es