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Episode #034

Business English Idioms
examples #2

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Hi! I am very happy today because I have a huge announcement! A **new course** is now available to help you with your pronunciation. And **it's for all levels!**

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I repeat: PronunciationCourse.com

In today's episode:

- I'll talk again about the most common business expressions.
- Later, you'll practice your English speaking with a funny story with questions and answers.

Awesome! Let's get started!

➡A long shot

If you describe a **solution to a problem** as a remote possibility, it means there is **little chance of success**, but **you think it's worth a try**.

The idiom originates from the concept of a **shot at a target** from a great distance, therefore difficult to make.

Example:

"You could try to find that mysterious man. It's a long shot, but you could start surfing the internet."

➡To go broke

If you **go broke**, you experience a **financial collapse**. You'll lose most or all of your money.

Example:

"Our company is going to go broke anytime unless you stop spending money foolishly."

➡Start from scratch

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The meaning of this expression is to start doing something over from the beginning. The root of the expression comes from races in which the **scratch line** was the **starting point and wouldn't offer any advantage to anyone**. Disabled people would be given shorter distances to run, but they would always **start from scratch**.

Example:

"The company expects me to start from scratch and redo the entire task because I missed a key point.

➡Down the drain

This metaphoric term refers to water going down a drain and being carried off.

If something is going down the drain, it means that it's getting worse or being destroyed, and it's unlikely to recover.

Example:

"Everything's ruined! My big plans, my great company. All those years of work are down the drain."

➡Go Out of Business

When a company **goes out of business** or **something puts it out of business**, it stops operating, especially because of financial problems.

Example:

"Highest interest rates can drive small companies out of business."

➡At stake

When something's at stake, it means that it's at risk. It could be lost or damaged unless you succeed.

Example:

"This surely seems like a risky investment. There's plenty of money at stake."

➡ **Corner the market**

If a company corners the market in a particular type of product, it's more successful than any other company at selling that particular product.

Example:

"Our company has effectively cornered the market. By reducing our prices, our competitors won't be able to compete, and they'll soon go out of business."

➡ **Go the extra mile**

When you're willing to go the extra mile, it means you're ready to make a major effort in order to accomplish something.

Example:

"People with a clear goal in mind are more willing to go the extra mile."

➡ **Throw in the towel / Toss the towel**

When someone throws in the towel, they admit that they are defeated or can't do something any longer.

This idiom comes from boxing: throwing in the towel is a sign that a fighter accepts defeat.

Example:

"It's a little early to throw in the towel; you've just started working on this project."

➡ **Thumbs up / down**

Thumbs up is an expression of acceptance or approval, and thumbs down express the opposite, rejection or failure.

Example:

"Our boss gave us the thumbs up to continue with our project."

I hope you're enjoying yourself. Let's continue with a story with questions and answers!

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Mini-Story

(Practice your Speaking)

I've prepared a mini-story using all the expressions that I've mentioned in the first part of the episode.

Let's see how it works:

- I'll give you some information. (A phrase or two).
- I'll ask simple questions.
- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question! Just try to give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- After you answer, I'll give you a correct answer.

This process will continue, and little by little, I'll be telling a story using questions and answers.

Let's get started!

Steven was only 26 when he founded his own startup video game company starting from scratch.

How old was Steven?

26. He was only 26 years old.

Was he old?

No. No. He wasn't old. He was only 26. He was young.

Who founded his own video game company? Jake?

Not Jake. Steven. He founded his own company.

Steven started a toy company? Right?

No. No. Not a toy company. He started a video game company.

How did he start his business?

From scratch. He started his video game company from scratch.

He definitely took a long shot investing all his savings. Moreover, his family gave him the thumbs down.

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Did Steven invest anything?

Yes. He invested all his savings.

Who got shot?

No one got shot. Taking a long shot means taking a risk.

Did he invest all his savings or only some of it?

Not only some of it. He invested all his savings.

His family supported him. Right?

No. No. His family didn't support him. They gave him the thumbs down. They disapproved of his new business.

Who gave the thumbs down? Steven?

No. Not Steven. His family gave him the thumbs down.

One time he almost went broke. His company was about to go out of business because there was too much at stake. Steven dropped prices by 200% by selling video games online.

How many times did Steven go broke? Ten times?

No. No. He didn't go broke ten times. He almost went broke one time.

Did Steven's company go out of business?

No. Luckily, his company didn't go out of business.

Who's eaten a stake?

No one has eaten any stake. When something's at stake, it means that it's at risk.

Did Steven drop or raise the prices by 200%?

He didn't raise the prices by 200%. He dropped the prices.

What did Steven sell online? His house?

No. No. Not his house. He sold video games online.

Who started selling video games? Steven's family?

No. Not his family. It was Steven who decided to start selling video games online.

After this rather risky decision, everyone except Steven assumed that his entire work would go down the drain.

When did everyone assume that his work would go down the drain? After making the decision or before?

After making the decision. Not before.

How was the decision? Was it risky or safe?

Risky. It wasn't safe at all. It was a risky decision.

Who assumed that his entire work would go down the drain?

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Everyone except Steven assumed that his entire work would go down the drain.

However, things finally turned out well for Steven. By dropping prices, he managed to corner the market.

How did things turn out for Steven? Well or badly?

Not badly. Things turned out well for Steven.

For whom did things turn out well?

For Steven. Things turned out well for Steven.

Did he lower the prices?

Yes. He lowered the prices. Steven dropped the prices of video games.

Who went to the corner of a market?

No one went to any market. Steven managed to corner the market.

His company was selling more video games than any other company.

How did Steven corner the market?

By dropping the prices. He cornered the market by dropping the prices.

Steven really went the extra mile to build a successful international online business.

How did Steven's business become successful?

By going the extra mile.

Where did he go?

He didn't go anywhere. Steven worked hard and made some risky decisions. That's why we say that he went the extra mile.

Did Steven build a successful or unsuccessful international business?

Not unsuccessful. He built a successful international business.

Did Steven sell video games online or in a physical store?

Steven sold video games online. He had an online business.

Although his family didn't support his business from day one, they never wanted to see Steven throwing in the towel.

Who didn't support Steven's business?

His family. His family didn't support his business.

Did his family want to see him throwing in the towel?

No. No. His family never wanted to see him throw in the towel.

Did Steven throw in the towel?

Absolutely not! Steven didn't throw in the towel. He went the extra mile until his business became a successful international company.

Well, we're finished with our short practice. Answering many simple questions can improve your speaking, just like talking in real life.

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Georgiana

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