
EXERCISES

You seemed to enjoy the idioms exercise last month. Let's continue this month.

A. Some common negotiating idioms are shown **in bold** in these sentences. Do you know what they mean or can you guess their meaning from their use in the sentences?

1. *The negotiations for the contract failed so we had **to go back to the drawing board**.*
2. *We haven't even been able **to get to first base** with our vendor about the terms of the new contract.*
3. *Our proposals for further changes to the contract **went down like a lead balloon**.*
4. *It really looked as if the negotiations would fail but somehow we managed **to pull something out of the hat**.*
5. *I really have no idea how our sales manager **talked them into** accepting a 7.5% price increase.*
6. *My boss wanted to offer me a 10% pay rise but HR **talked him out of** it.*
7. *We finished the documents and sent them to the lawyer **right under the wire**.*
8. *The negotiations **continued down to the wire** but ended successfully.*
9. *After agreeing on the basic outline of the deal, we spent two hours **ironing out** the final details.*
10. *The talks **dragged on** all afternoon and I missed my flight home.*

B. Let's recap last month's idioms. Which idioms replace the phrases **in bold** in these sentences?:

1. *The negotiations **slowed down to a stop** once they mentioned the penalty clauses.*
2. *The employers **acted strongly** with the unions in the redundancy talks.*
3. *We **defended our opinion** during the meeting and refused to consider such a proposal.*
4. *The contract with the X Company **is certain**.*
5. *Germans have a reputation for **doing things exactly** in contract negotiations.*
6. *I was forced **to give in** to their demands for more overtime.*
7. *The whole situation seemed impossible but somehow we **succeeded**.*

Please scroll down to find the explanations.

NEGOTIATING: 10 DON'Ts

1. **DON'T talk too much.** You should listen more than you talk. As a non-native speaker, you may be forced into a position where you listen more. This is a good thing!
2. **DON'T believe the other side has the power and authority.** You may do this if you are negotiating in another language. Use your non-native speaker status to your advantage and recognise your strengths. Every negotiator has needs - take time to find out which needs the other side has. Limited authority can be a useful negotiating tool.
3. **DON'T want something too much.** People who look like they want something the least, get the most.
4. **DON'T talk round and round one point** and lose yourself and the negotiation in minor details. See the big picture.
5. **DON'T just see one option.** There are always many options and hypothetical alternatives. Be creative.
6. **DON'T negotiate too quickly.** This is linked to 5. and can also be a result of having no confidence in your ability to negotiate in English. Don't fall for false deadlines.
7. **DON'T accept positions as final.** This is linked to 5. and 6. If the positions were final, you would not be negotiating. Find an opening - this is linked to 1.
8. **DON'T take short-term victories and destroy a long-term relationship.** Always allow the other side to walk away with something.
9. **DON'T try to get too much and squeeze the other side dry.** This is linked to 8. Both sides can win at least something.
10. **DON'T accept opinions and feelings as facts.** Opinions are changeable and real facts are permanent and neutral.

7 STEPS TO BEST NEGOTIATIONS

3 DAYS

Düsseldorf

4 - 6 October 2006

Contents:

Step 1: It's all in the preparation

Step 2: Get onto the playing field

Step 3: Define

Step 4: Be Creative

Step 5: Design - we're getting there!

Step 6: Agreement

Step 7: Leave the playing field

Please see http://www.businessenglishst.com/2006_Seminars.htm for more details.

EXERCISE - EXPLANATIONS

A.

1. *The negotiations for the contract failed so we had **to go back to the drawing board**.*

(to go) back to the drawing board - to go back and start something from the beginning

2. *We haven't even been able **to get to first base** with our vendor about the terms of the new contract.*

to get to first base - to make a good start, to succeed with the beginning stage

3. *Our proposals for further changes to the contract **went down like a lead balloon**.*

to go down like a lead balloon - to fail to generate a positive response

4. *It really looked as if the negotiations would fail but somehow we managed to pull **something out of the hat**.*

to pull (something) out of the hat - to get something as if by magic, to invent, to imagine (like a magician)

5. *I really have no idea how our sales manager **talked them into** accepting a 7.5% price increase.*

to talk (someone) into (something) - to get someone to agree to something, to persuade someone

6. *My boss wanted to offer me a 10% pay rise but HR **talked him out of** it.*

to talk (someone) out of (something) - to persuade someone not to do something

7. *We finished the documents and sent them to the lawyer **right under the wire**.*

right under the wire - at the very last moment

8. *The negotiations **continued down to the wire** but ended successfully.*

(to go/continue) down to the wire - to run out of time, to get near a deadline

9. *After agreeing on the basic outline of the deal, we spent two hours **ironing***

out the final details.

to iron (something) out - to solve a problem

10. *The talks **dragged on** all afternoon and I missed my flight home.*

to drag on - to prolong, to make longer, to last a long time

B.

- 1. bogged down**
- 2. played hardball**
- 3. stuck to our guns**
- 4. is in the bag**
- 5. doing to the letter**
- 6. to cave in**
- 7. pulled it off**

WORLD CUP - TO KEEP THINGS TOPICAL!

It is just before the England v Brazil semi-final.

Ronaldinho goes into the Brazilian changing room to find all his team looking unhappy.

"What's up?" he asks.

"Well, we're having trouble getting motivated for this game. We know it's important but it's only England. They're no good and we really can't be bothered."

Ronaldinho looks at them and says, "Well, I reckon I can win the game by myself. You boys go down the pub."

So Ronaldinho goes out to play England by himself and the rest of the Brazilian team go off for a few pints.

After a few pints they wonder how the game is going, so they get the landlord to put the TV on. A big cheer goes up as the screen reads "Brazil 1 - England 0 (Ronaldinho 10 minutes)". He is beating England all by himself!

Anyway, a few pints later and the game is forgotten until someone remembers, "It must be full time now, let's see how he got on." They put the TV back on.

"Result from the stadium Brazil 1 (Ronaldinho 10 minutes) - England 1 (Lampard 89 minutes)."

They can't believe it; he has single-handedly got a draw against England!! They rush back to the stadium to congratulate Ronaldinho. They find him in the dressing room, still in his Brazilian football shirt, sitting with his head in his hands.

He refuses to look at them. "I've let you down, I've let you down."

"Don't be stupid, you got a draw against England, all by yourself. And they only scored at the very, very end!"

"No, no, I have, I've let you down. I got a red card after 12 minutes".

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B E S T

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