

Idioms used in a Business Setting

<b>idiom</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>idiom_example</b>
A fresh pair of eyes	A person who is brought in to examine something carefully is a fresh pair of eyes.	After writing the proposal, the manager wanted a fresh pair of eyes to ensure it made sense.
A lot on my plate	If you have got a lot on your plate, you are very busy and have commitments.	I have a lot on my plate, so I can't commit to the deadline.
ABC's	ABC means the basics of something- knowing the ABC's of a subject.	He hasn't learned the ABCs of management, so we cannot promote him.
About face	If someone changes their mind completely, this is an about face. It can be used when companies, governments, etc, change their position on an issue.	The company did an about face and decided to produce only electric cards.
Above board	If things are done above board, they are carried out in a legal and proper manner.	All the numbers in the earnings report are above board.
Against the clock	If you do something against the clock, you are rushed and have very little time to do it.	With the deadline at COB, everyone was racing against the clock.
Ahead of the curve	Similar to ahead of the pack, ahead of the curve literally refers to your position on the statistical bell curve, where the top of the curve represents the median, average result. By being ahead of the curve you represent the top percentile of results that either has the advanced skills or understanding that sets you apart.	Their products are ahead of the curve and so will command a higher price.
All hands on deck	When there is a crisis, and everyone must appear.	With the product launch a failure, it was all hands on deck at headquarters.
All over the map	If something like a discussion is all over the map, it doesn't stick to the main topic and goes off on tangents.	His presentation was all over the map, and so everyone was confused.

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All your eggs in one basket	If you put all your eggs in one basket, you risk everything at once, instead of trying to spread the risk. (This is often used as a negative imperative- 'Don't put all your eggs in one basket'. 'Have your eggs in one basket' is also used.)	With this product we are putting all of our eggs in one basket.
Apples and oranges	Apples and oranges' used when people compare or describe two totally different things. ('Apples to oranges' is also used.)	In comparing these two products you are comparing apples to oranges; they are used for completely different tasks.
Back-of-the-envelope calculation	A back of the envelope calculation is a figure that was arrived at quickly or by using estimation--as if someone had grabbed the first scrap of paper they found and made a quick guess.	He did a back-of-the-envelope calculation for how much it would cost to recall the product.
Ball is in your court	If the ball is in your court, it is up to you to make the next decision or step.	Once we made our proposal, the ball was in their court.
Bean counter	A bean counter is an accountant.	We think the budget is balanced, but the bean counters will have the final say.
Beating a dead horse	(USA) If someone is trying to convince people to do or feel something without any hope of succeeding, they're beating a dead horse. This is used when someone is trying to raise interest in an issue that no-one supports anymore; beating a dead horse will not make it do any more work.	Resurrecting that idea is beating a dead horse.
Big picture	The big picture of something is the overall perspective or objective, not the fine detail.	You have to look at the big picture to understand why we are following this strategy.
Blank cheque	If you are given a blank cheque, you are allowed to use as much money as you need for a project.	That department has been given a blank check for their project.
Blind-sided	If you are blind-sided, an event with a negative impact takes you completely by surprise.	We were blind-sided when he went back on his previous commitment to our project.

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Blow out of proportion	If something is blown out of proportion, it is exaggerated and people see it as more serious, worse, etc, than it really is.	The failure of the component test is being blown all out of proportion.
Blue skies	A overly enthusiastic outlook or disposition. The sales team had blue skies projections for their deals, although not many of those deals were signed.	When starting a new product, you usually want a blue skies discussion.
Bounce ideas	If you bounce ideas off someone, you share your ideas with them to know whether they think they would work.	We decided to bounce our ideas off the software designers before making a decision.
Break even	If you break even, you don't make any money, but you don't lose any either.	Despite the great sales report, we were barely breaking even.
Bring to the table	If you bring something to the table, you make a contribution or an offer in a discussion or negotiation.	Unless you have something to bring to the table, you don't need to be at this meeting.