

Reading and language

slang expression or word used in informal conversation

jargon words and expressions used by a particular profession or group of people, and which are difficult for other people to understand

buzzword a word or phrase that suddenly everyone thinks is very important and uses all the time



➔ **Grammar reference:**
Business idioms
page 118

A Look at the dictionary entries and say whether the examples indicated in *italics* in the text below are a) slang or b) buzzwords/jargon.

- 1 *Hey guys!* Anyone *fancy* a coffee?
- 2 This *cutting-edge* technology will *radically transform* the way we work.
- 3 Just 25 per cent of the company's *turnover* comes from the *home market*.
- 4 Could you *pop into* my office, I'd like to *bounce* some ideas *off you*?
- 5 The *cracker* somehow *hacked into* the bank's computer system during *downtime* by using a *backdoor*.
- 6 We aim to *empower* the customer to make informed choices.

B Read the magazine article about giving international presentations and answer these questions.

- 1 Why does the writer use the quote at the start of his article?
- 2 How could the speaker say this differently so that people could understand him?
- 3 What does *delivery* refer to in the second paragraph?
- 4 Find two examples where the writer helped other people with their presentations.
- 5 Where can you get help when preparing your talk?
- 6 What should you do when members of the audience ask you questions?
- 7 What examples of 'non-verbal messages' (paragraph 11) can you think of?

C Read the article again and find business idioms and expressions that mean the following.

- 1 it is potentially problematic and dangerous (paragraph 2)
- 2 an unsafe strategy (paragraph 3)
- 3 make possible or happen (paragraph 3)
- 4 most complete (paragraph 4)
- 5 not do things correctly (paragraph 4)
- 6 make as much use as possible of (paragraph 5)
- 7 explaining too much (paragraph 9)
- 8 don't understand (paragraph 11)

D Using the word given, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use a maximum of five words.

- 1 His speeches have inspired thousands of people. (*proved*)
His speeches *have proved an inspiration* to thousands.
- 2 Can you explain this to us simply? (*give*)
Can you of this?
- 3 They've arranged the annual conference. (*made*)
They have the annual conference.
- 4 He has summarised his presentation in this handout. (*provided*)
He's his presentation in this handout.
- 5 You could hire an intercultural communication specialist to help you prepare your talk. (*someone*)
You could hire intercultural communication to help you prepare your talk.
- 6 We have to conclude the seminar now. (*bring*)
It's time a conclusion.
- 7 An international audience's non-verbal messages can be misinterpreted. (*open*)
An international audience's non-verbal messages can be
- 8 You can't assume anything with an international audience. (*any*)
You can't with an international audience.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

HOW NOT TO SOUND LIKE A FOOL

Author and coach Tom Leech describes how careful crafting of your message and style to appeal to international audiences can serve as a passport to success.

- 1 "We really appreciate the chance to talk to you folks from Japan. We have some new ideas we want to bounce off you that we think will really blow your minds."
- 2 Given today's high degree of business and governmental linkages, presenters often find themselves speaking to audiences from countries other than their own. Language and cultural differences make this a vastly different presentation situation from what speakers may be used to. The stakes can be high and the pitfalls many, so wise presenters will consider these differences in preparation and delivery.
- 3 When presenting internationally, the fundamental requirement is to recognize that business as usual is risky business. "They" are not the same as "we." We speak different languages, even if we both speak English. In addition to alternative meanings for the same words, we also act differently and view things from different perspectives. These issues set the stage for communication difficulties and potential misunderstandings.
- 4 The concept of presentations differs among cultures. In the United States, full-blown graphic presentations are a standard part of business. This style of presentation may not apply in countries where business proceeds in a less structured, slower manner and often on a one-to-one basis rather than in groups. Without knowing your audience, you can easily head down the wrong track.

Plan, Plan, Plan

- 5 The importance of careful planning cannot be overemphasized. Learn all you can about your listeners and how

they do business. Use experts, such as the Department of Commerce and embassies that know the specific country well. Tap into advice from other local business people with relevant experience. Review the dos and don'ts guidance available in many publications. Organizations specializing in international meetings or managers of international hotel chains can provide valuable consulting and handle arrangements in other countries.

Pre-meeting Tune-Ups

- 6 Rehearse your presentation, preferably with listeners who are knowledgeable about the target country and culture. Adjust your speaking pace so participants can readily follow you. When necessary, rework your spoken message so it flows better. Simplify convoluted phrases that even English speakers can barely follow. In coaching an executive for whom English was a second language, we identified several phrases he kept stumbling over. We replaced these with words he could pronounce more easily.
- 7 Allow time to meet with interpreters, if they will be used. Especially review any technical terminology to help them stay with you.

On the Scene

- 8 You and your audience need to have presentation content that is understandable, accurate, and received positively. Use explanatory titles to increase comprehension. Tie your words closely to the visual aids, using a pointer to help them track you.
- 9 Summarize frequently and be aware of information overload. Whilst coaching a presenter heading for Japan, I immediately concluded that he was trying to cover too much, so we significantly reduced the amount of material. Reporting back later, he



Tom Leech, author and coach

said he quickly realized he still had too much information.

- 10 Watch your language. Avoid slang, colloquialisms, clichés, metaphors, and other expressions that mean nothing to the listeners. Limit acronyms and jargon, and then explain those you do use, checking for mutual understanding. Explain key concepts or data in several ways and allow ample soak-in time.
- 11 Listen intently to questions and comments. As appropriate, paraphrase them before responding to make sure that the question is understood correctly. Be patient if it takes a while for your audience to comprehend your message. Be aware that your audience's non-verbal messages may mean different things from what you think. Facial expression, eye contact, hand movements, touching, use of space, and timing are all ripe areas for misinterpretation and irritation. Be slow to make assumptions on the basis of non-verbal messages. Keep checking and be patient—they can't figure you out either.

▲ Adapted from *Executive Update Online*
<http://www.gwsae.org>

B Complete the sentences with words from the box. You will not need all the words, and you may use some of the words more than once.

get do input keep go kick make run stick track

- 1 Right. Everyone's here, so let's ...*get*... down to business.
- 2 I'd like you to over these figures with me before I hand in my report.
- 3 I'm afraid we've gone off at a tangent. Let's get back on
- 4 Sandra will off with an overview, and I'll continue with an analysis of the sales figures.
- 5 The speaker was a bit incoherent. I couldn't always track of what he was saying.
- 6 Those details are completely irrelevant, I'm afraid. I suggest you to the point.
- 7 I'll skip the slide show, otherwise we'll out of time.
- 8 Would you like me to over the main points again?
- 9 As we always value your, we'd like to have your views on this proposal.
- 10 To back to what my colleague was saying in the introduction, we need to build on the existing local expertise.

C Match each item on the left with an item on the right.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Jim's behaviour is a complete mystery to us. 2 We'll have to prepare as best we can for this negotiation. 3 I knew most of the delegates would be from the States. 4 Make sure you avoid talking politics or religion. 5 It may not be necessary to fly in yet another specialist. 6 In some cultures, people do not like conducting negotiations in large groups. 7 The talk was crammed full of facts. 8 He tried telling a few personal anecdotes to relax the atmosphere, but to no avail. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) At MaxiMarket, however, it was business as usual. b) I think he soon realised he was heading down the wrong track. c) Not preparing adequately for your presentation is a risky business. d) So I assumed a full-blown graphic presentation would be appropriate. e) We all suffered from information overload afterwards. f) This could set the stage for bitter arguments. g) They may even expect business to proceed on a one-to-one basis. |
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