

## Phrasal Verbs in Business Situations

Match the phrasal verbs with their definitions.

**get down to** | **come up with** | **sum up** | **cut down on** | **look forward to**

\_\_\_\_\_ – reduce the amount, number, or frequency of something.  
(e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ *sugar* = *consume less sugar*)

\_\_\_\_\_ – produce or think of an idea, plan, or solution.  
(e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ *a strategy* = *create a strategy*)

\_\_\_\_\_ – start doing something seriously or focus on an important task.  
(e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ *work* = *begin working seriously*)

\_\_\_\_\_ – feel pleased or excited about something that will happen in the future.  
(e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ *the meeting* = *expect it with positive anticipation*)

\_\_\_\_\_ – briefly state the main points; summarize.  
(e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ *the discussion* = *give a short summary*)

In pairs, answer the following questions.

1. What strategies do you use to **cut down on** unnecessary expenses in your personal or professional life?
2. When was the last time you **came up with** a creative solution to a problem at work?
3. How do you **get down to** work when you're feeling unmotivated or distracted?
4. What aspects of your job are you most **looking forward to** in the coming months?
5. Can you **sum up** your main responsibilities at your current job?



## Reading

In pairs, read and compare the two meeting extracts in this task.

### Conversation A

**Jack:** If we are all here, let's get started. First of all, I'd like you to join me in welcoming Ravi Nawaz, from our London office.

**Ravi:** Thank you for having me, I'm **eagerly waiting** for today's meeting.

**Jack:** We're here today to discuss ways of **reducing** spending. First, let's examine the report from the last meeting which was held on April 4th. Right, Tom, over to you.

**Tom:** Thank you, Jack. Let me just **summarize** the main points. We began the meeting by approving the changes in our accounts department **proposed** on May 30th. After briefly revising the changes that will take place, we moved on to a brainstorming session. You'll find a copy of the different ideas discussed in the photocopies that I've **distributed**.

**Jack:** Thank you, Tom. So now I'd like to get some ideas from all of you.

**Anne:** I definitely think we need to **dismiss** a few staff members. I don't think we have a choice.

**Jenny:** Anne, I think we need all our employees. What about negotiating a lower price with our suppliers?

**Jack:** Yes, that might be a good idea. We should **make contact with** our suppliers right away.



## Conversation B

**Jack:** If we are all here, let's get started. First of all, I'd like you to join me in welcoming Ravi Nawaz, from our London office.

**Ravi:** Thank you for having me, I'm **looking forward to** today's meeting.

**Jack:** We're here today to discuss ways of **cutting down on** spending. First, let's go over the report from the last meeting which was held on April 4th. Right, Tom, over to you.

**Tom:** Thank you, Jack. Let me just **sum up** the main points. We began the meeting by approving the changes in our accounts department **put forward** on May 30th. After briefly revising the changes that will take place, we moved on to a brainstorming session. You'll find a copy of the different ideas discussed in the photocopies that I've **handed out**.

**Jack:** Thank you, Tom. So now I'd like to get some ideas from all of you.

**Anne:** I definitely think we need to **lay off** a few staff members. I don't think we have a choice.

**Jenny:** Anne, I think we need all our employees. What about negotiating a lower price with our suppliers?

**Jack:** Yes, that might be a good idea. We should **get on to** our suppliers right away.

**Which conversation sounds more formal? Which sounds more natural?**

## Practice

Now complete the questions below with the phrasal verbs from Conversation B in the correct form.

1. Do you \_\_\_\_\_ business meetings? (eagerly wait for)
2. How does your company \_\_\_\_\_ spending? (reduce)
3. Is somebody responsible for \_\_\_\_\_ meetings in your company? (summarizing)
4. Does your company's director always accept ideas that are \_\_\_\_\_? (suggested)
5. When is it a good idea to \_\_\_\_\_ workers? (dismiss)
6. When did you last \_\_\_\_\_ a customer or supplier? What was it about?  
(make contact with)

In pairs, ask and answer the questions, then report your answers to the class.

## Common phrasal verbs in business

In pairs, look at the sentences below. Match the phrasal verbs in bold to their meaning without using a dictionary. Try to discover their meaning from the context.

### Group 1

1. I've been stuck in the office all day. I wish I could **get out** for 30 minutes.
2. I've got lots of work to do. I need to **get down to it**.
3. Jackie never seems to do much work. I don't know how she **gets away with it**.
4. Joanne always tries to **come up with** great ideas at meetings. Unfortunately, nobody likes them.
5. In the end, they decided to **pull out of** the deal. It wasn't a favorable agreement.

- a. escape blame or punishment
- b. withdraw from
- c. begin to do something
- d. leave, escape
- e. think of or produce (an idea, solution, etc.)

### Group 2

1. There isn't much work to do. I think I'll **head out** early.
2. Our new product will really make us **stand out** in the market.
3. Karl tends to **slack off** in the afternoon. He doesn't have much energy late in the day.
4. If we can't survive the financial crisis, we are likely to **go under**.
5. Bad news. It looks like the deal is going to **fall through**.

- a. be noticeable
- b. work less hard than usual
- c. go bankrupt
- d. fail
- e. leave work to go home



## Sentence transformations

Rewrite the sentences using phrasal verbs from the previous exercises. Ensure that the meaning remains the same.

1. We need to reduce our marketing expenses.

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2. The project failed because the budget was too low.

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3. I'm excited about our upcoming vacation.

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4. The company closed due to financial problems.

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5. The boss summarized the meeting in a few sentences.

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6. The manager contacted the client to discuss the proposal.

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7. We have to find a solution to this issue.

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8. Let's start working on the new project now.

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9. The team finished work for the day at 6 PM.

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10. I managed to leave the meeting early.

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Look at the pictures below. Choose one, and then describe it to your partner using phrase verbs from the previous exercises. You should use at least five.

