

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.

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

3. I'm excited about our upcoming vacation.

4. The company closed due to financial problems.

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

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

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

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

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

10. I managed to leave the meeting early.

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.

