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<https://www.nativos.org/en/vocabulary-for-business-english>



# Vocabulary For Business English

If you've arrived here you're probably interested in **vocabulary for business English**.

Great!

Let's see what expressions business professionals actually still use.

The language used in the business world is sometimes overly complicated.

It's full of jargon – obscure and often pretentious language. And acronyms.

It's important to be familiar with the most common words, and use them in your business conversations.

Perhaps start learning a few that you don't know yet, and **add as you go along**.

You can download this business English vocabulary as a pdf, and pick a few words to practice each week.

## Popular Business English vocabulary

Keeping up with business English vocabulary brings more nuance to your conversations.

Yet when executives start using corporate jargon, they can easily get carried away.

“Jargon is the epic poetry of modern business. It can turn a bunch of windbags in a meeting room into a ‘quick wins taskforce.’ I once asked a handyman toiling in an office doorway whether he was installing a wheelchair ramp.

‘No,’ he said solemnly, ‘it’s a diversity access feature.’”

So while we do recommend you **study this list to learn** more Business English vocabulary... don't get too carried away 😊

# Word list of business English vocabulary

Let's get down to business!

It's time to learn some new vocabulary.

## Action points

You might hear this at the end of a business meeting. Actions points are simply **things that need to be done**, by someone. Perhaps by you?

## Added value

An increase in the value of a resource, product, or service as the result of a particular process. In marketing, added value is something which makes a product more appealing to your customers.

## Advertise

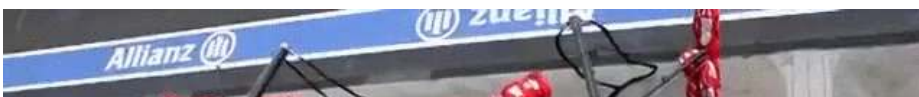
To describe or draw attention to something for promotion. "Let's advertise our event."

## Agenda

A written list of items or points to be discussed at a meeting.

## Agile

An agile business means a company can adapt to changing conditions and reinvent itself for continued success. Quick, smart and clever.





via GIFER (<https://gifer.com>)

## AGM

An annual general meeting (AGM) is a yearly gathering of a company's interested shareholders.

## Ahead of the pack

You can say that someone is ahead of the pack or *leading the pack* if they are ahead of everyone else in a race or competition

## Align

In a business setting, to align is to make sure that all levels and employees are clear about the company's purpose and make decisions accordingly.

## At the end of the day

It doesn't relate to time 😊 It means when everything is taken into consideration, or ultimately. "At the end of the day, we still need to open up new markets to sell more."

## Attached

An email attachment is a computer file sent within an email message.

## Authorisation

Official permission.

## Back to the drawing board

It's time to start again because something isn't working.



## **Bail out**

An injection of public money into a failing institution, to help someone with problems. It can also mean to stop doing something.

## **Ballot**

A system of secret voting. People place their ballot-papers in a ballot-box. In other words, the piece of paper you use in order to vote on something.

## **Bandwidth**

I'm afraid I don't have the bandwidth' a polite way of saying that you don't have the capacity to do something... or signaling that 'You aren't important enough for me to help you.'

## **Benchmarks**

Standard for measuring or judging other things of the same type: "Her performances set a new benchmark for our salesforce".

## **Best practice**

A best practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives.

Why? Because it produces results that are *superior* to those achieved by other means or because it has become a standard way of doing things. It could be related to a standard way of complying with legal

conditions or ethical needs.

## Best regards

A nice way to finish an email. Other similar closings include “best wishes,” “all the best” and “warmly.”

## Bleeding edge

The newest and most advanced part or position especially in technology.

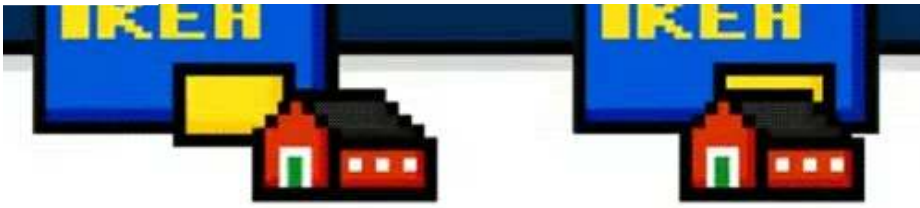
## Blockchain

A blockchain is a digitally distributed, decentralised, public ledger that exists across a network. It is most noteworthy in use with **cryptocurrencies**.

## Brand

The term refers to a business and marketing concept that helps people identify a particular company, product, or individual.





via GIFER (<https://gifer.com>)

## **Budget**

A budget is a way to balance income, expenses and financial goals for a specific length of time.

## **Business plan**

A document used for raising finance. It summarises the operational and financial objectives of a business. Think of it like a business's roadmap to success.

If you don't know what a roadmap is, check below!

## **By the book**

To do something according to standard procedure, strictly following the rules.

## **Call it a day**

To agree to stop doing something, like closing a meeting that's been going on for ages.

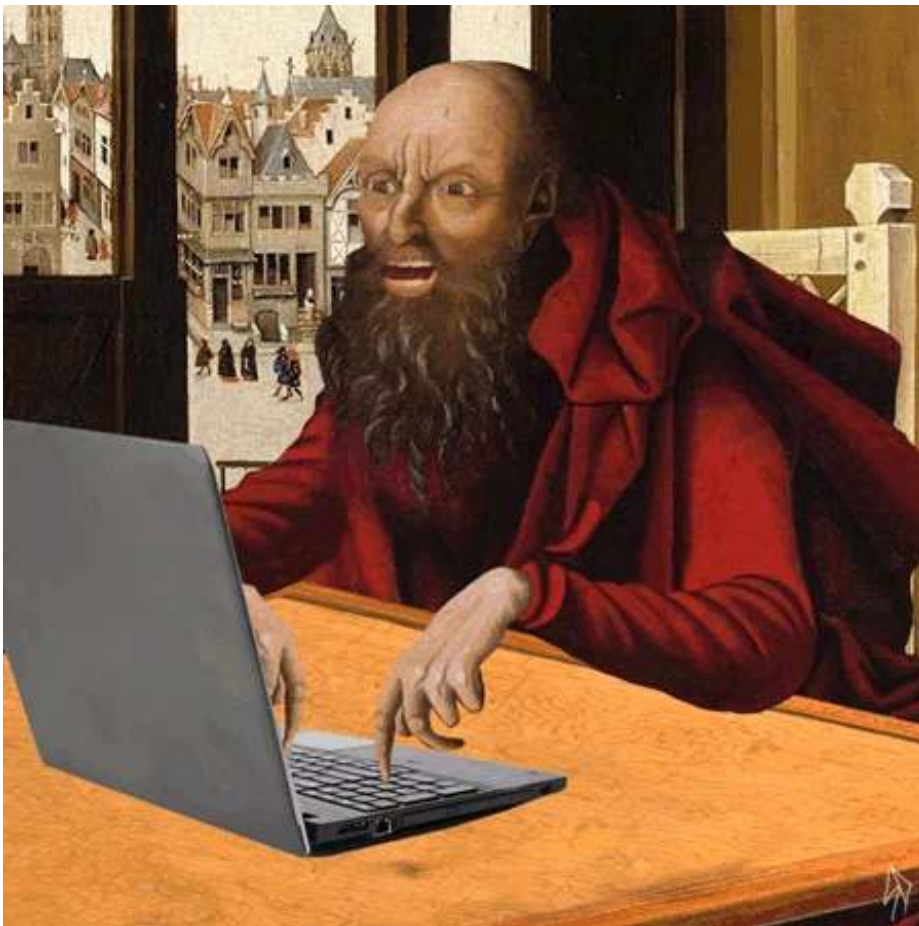


## Capital

Capital is a large sum of money which you use to start a business, or which you invest in order to make more money

## Captcha

A system used to make sure that you're a human being, not a machine, using the computer.



## Cash flow statement

The amount of cash and cash equivalents entering and leaving a company

## CEO

Chief Executive Officer. The highest-ranking executive of a business.

## Close a deal

To successfully agree a business deal. "He was about to close the deal but the client backed out."

## Competition

When businesses, or people, are trying to be more successful than each other, for example by making more sales in a market.



## **Conference call**

A call in which someone talks to several people at the same time, either by phone or online. These are also called video calls, Zooms, online meetings...

## **Consensus**

A generally accepted opinion among a group of people, or an agreement made by a group.

## **Core business**

“The business that makes the most money for a company and that is considered to be its most important and central one.

The car maker is to sell off its \$1 billion technology arm to concentrate resources on its core business.”

## **Corner the market**

To control the available supply of a type of product or the ability to sell it. ” The company has cornered 98% of the fried chicken market.”

## **Coworking**

Workers from different companies who share an office space. Also called “shared office” or “flexible workspace”. A popular new word for advanced Business English words.

## **Crowdfunding**

A method of getting money for something, for example a new film or album, by asking many people to give part of the money needed, often on the Internet

## **Customer**

Love your customer! This is a person or a company who buys goods or services from you... which ultimately is what gets you paid.

## **Cut corners**

It's when you do something quickly and in a less thorough way than you perhaps should. I.e. quick and cheap.

## **Deadline**

A date or time by which you have to do or complete something. "The latest date to send the report is April 19th". Keep your cool!

via GIPHY (<https://giphy.com/gifs/Wayra-deadline-wayra-telefonica-hqb6fTvZv0LCheZt1I>)

## Dear

Business salutation. Start an email in English with “Dear Maria,..”

## Debt

A sum of money that is owed or due. “They haven’t paid their debt yet.”

## Decision

A choice or judgment that you make after a period of discussion or thought.

“My decision is to leave the organisation.” “Her decision was to give me a raise.”

## Deliverables

Something that a company has promised to have ready for a customer. A deliverable usually has an expiration date and is tangible, measurable, and specific.

## Department

A division of a large organisation, i.e. the sales department.

## Digital marketing

Using the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, display advertising, and other channels to reach consumers.

## **Distribution**

The action of sharing something out among a number of recipients.  
“I’ll distribute the English online sales numbers to you after this meeting so we can allocate resources.”

## **Dress code**

The way that you’re expected to dress at work or at an event.

- Related: Intensive Business English course  
(<https://www.nativos.org/en/intensive-english-course-online/>)

## Drill down into

To examine or analyse something a bit more, in further depth.

## End-user

The person, customer etc who is the final and actual (or “real”) user of a product.

## Entrepreneur

A person who starts a new business or arranges business deals in order to make money, often in a way that involves financial risks.

## ETA

Estimated time of arrival. I.e. Her plane from New York arrives at 5 PM.

## Feedback

Advice, criticism etc about how successful or useful something is.  
Your manager should give you feedback on how you’re doing at work.



## **Fire (someone from a job)**

To force someone to leave their job, to sack them. You terminate their work contract.

## **Freelance**

Someone who works independently for different companies rather than being employed by one particular company.

## **Fringe benefits**

Fringe benefits are additions to employee compensation, such as pension, paid time off or a company car.

via GIPHY (<https://giphy.com/gifs/girl-life-car-3ov9jWu7BuHufyLs7m>)

## **Get down to business**

To start working on what needs to be done.

## **Get something off the ground**

To begin to operate or proceed in a successful way, to put something into operation.

## **Get the ball rolling**

To set an activity in motion; make a start.

## **Gig economy**

In a gig economy, large numbers of people work in part-time positions, as independent contractors/freelance or with short-term contracts (as opposed to permanent jobs). “Working in the gig economy means there’s always last-minute scheduling”

## **Go down the drain**

To be lost or wasted.

## **Go the extra mile**

When you do more than one is required to do.

## **Growth**

An increase in amount, number, or size. "We need to grow our company revenue by 15%."

## **Guidelines**

A general rule, principle, or piece of advice.

## **Headquarters**

The main building or offices used by a large company or organisation.

## **Helicopter view**

A general survey of something; an overview of a situation without any details.

## **Human Resources (HR)**

The company department in charge of all employees and employee-related operations.

## **Hybrid work**

A hybrid work environment means that employees can work in-office and remote from their home, or a co-working space.

## **In conclusion**

It means “to sum things up” or “finally”. It’s used in a piece of writing or a speech to show that you are about to finish what you are saying.

## **Influencer**

Someone with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending the items on social media (Tik Tok, Instagram, etc).

## **Item**

A single thing, especially one thing in a list, group, or set of things.  
“Let’s go to the next item on the agenda.”

## **Key point**

The most important part.

## **Know-how**

Practical knowledge or skill; expertise. “We don’t have the know-how in our company so we need to hire a consultant”.

## **Laser-Focused**

Intensely paying attention to a single object, concept, person, or activity to the exclusion of everything else.

via GIPHY (<https://giphy.com/gifs/thewatch-television-bbc-america-the-watch-SiuGIHX8RtM15EM1Wv>)

## **Launch**

To start something! Usually something big or important.

## **Leadership**

The position or function of a leader, a person who guides or directs a group. Leadership refers to the qualities that make someone a good leader, or the methods a leader uses to do his or her job.

## **League tables**

A league table is a ranking of companies based on a set of criteria, such as revenue, earnings, deals, or any other relevant metrics.

## **Learn the ropes**

If you are learning the ropes, you are learning how a particular job or task is done. If you're asked to "show him the ropes" it means you should help someone to learn something.

## **Let go**

When you talk about letting someone go, it means you are thinking about firing them, ending their contract. I.e. it's not their choice to leave the business.

## **Leverage**

If you have leverage, you hold the advantage in a situation or the stronger position in a contest, physical or otherwise. Leverage is to use something that you already have in order to achieve something new or better. "Talk to her. She has leverage with the board."

## **Long shot**

An attempt or guess that has only the slightest chance of succeeding or being accurate, "it's a long shot, but worth trying".

## **Loop**

The meaning of loop is to have (or not have) the special knowledge or power that belongs to a particular group of people. "I'm outside the loop on that" is a comfortable excuse.

## **Low-hanging fruit**

This means the obvious or easy things that can be most readily done or dealt with in achieving success or making.

## **Main point**

The most important part, similar to key point.

## **Make redundant**

To dismiss (an employee who is no longer needed) from a job. “He was dismissed last Friday.” So yeah, he was fired.

## **Market leader**



The market leader is a business that has either the greatest market share for a product or generates the most revenue in money terms. "They are the online market leaders".

## **Market research**

To do market research is to gather information about consumers' needs and preferences.

It could be a process to evaluate the feasibility of a new product or service, through research conducted directly with consumers.

## **Merchandise**

Any product that your organisation can sell or buy!

Any good for sale is merchandise. Some examples include food in a supermarket, clothes in a retail store, electronics on a website or raw materials in a manufacturing warehouse.

## **Metaverse**

Relatively new vocabulary!

A virtual-reality space online in which users can interact with a computer-generated environment and other users.

## **Micromanage**

When a boss micromanages, he or she controls and manages all the parts and details (however small!) of your work in an annoying way.

## **Minutes**

“Anthony wrote the minutes of the online meeting.”

It's the written record of everything that's happened during a meeting.

## **Miss Ms Mrs Mr**

Titles. These are related to how you address someone.

Notice how there are three versions for women and only one for men? Use “Ms.” when you are not sure of a woman's marital status.

## **Mission statement**

A mission statement is a concise explanation of the organisation's reason for existence. It describes the organisation's purpose and its overall intention.

## **Mute**

You need to mute yourself when you're in an online meeting. Make sure your microphone is turned off!

via GIPHY (<https://giphy.com/gifs/mute-youre-on-dfsHz5nvfOlevOnHRy>)

## **No strings attached**

If there are no strings attached to an offer or arrangement, there is nothing that is unpleasant that you have to accept. There are no special conditions you need to keep in mind.

## **Non-core assets**

Assets (things or people) that are not necessary for a company to carry on its business in the ordinary course, or simply no longer used in a company's business operations.

## **Not going to fly**

Something is not going to succeed, or work.

## **Objective**

A business objective is a result that a company aims to achieve. It also includes the strategies that people will use to get there.

## **On the same page**

If you're on the same page, a group of people are working well together and have the same goals.

## **Opportunity cost**

The value of the next best thing you give up whenever you make a decision. It's the potential loss from a missed business opportunity.

## **Out in the open**

“His real goal was finally out in the open.”

This means that something is exposed, or no longer hidden or secret.

## **Overhead**

An example of an overhead expense or cost could be electricity, rent and other ongoing things you pay for BUT that isn't directly attributed to creating a product or service.

## **Pain point**

Pain points are specific problems faced by current or prospective customers in the marketplace. Pain points include any problems the customer may experience along their journey.

## **Pivot**

Voted word of the year in 2020 by the Association of National Advertisers in the US.

A pivot means fundamentally changing the direction of a business when you realise the current products or services aren't meeting the needs of the market.

## **Point of sale**

The actual place where your product is sold to the customer.

## **Point out**

To highlight, to tell someone something. If you point out a mistake, you draw their attention to it.

## **Proactive**

To be proactive at work is to take the initiative on something. Perhaps you start looking into something, without waiting for your coworkers.

## **Proposal**

A proposal is a suggested plan or offer, terms or conditions proposed.  
“Send me the proposal by tomorrow.”

## **PS.**

Means someone added something at the end of an email or letter.

## **Put all one's eggs in one basket**

Diversify your options!

"I'm calling five customers because I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket."

## **Quick win**

A solution or initiative is defined as a quick win if it is easy, fast and relatively cheap to implement.

## **R&D department**

Research and Development Department (R&D department). Activities that companies undertake to innovate and introduce new products and services.

## **Reach out**

"Reach out to Anna to see if she can get you up to speed."

To reach out in English is to contact someone, to get in touch with someone.

## **Red tape**

"There was a lot of red tape and I couldn't get all the paperwork ready."  
Official rules and procedures that seem unnecessary and cause delay.

## **Remote work**

Unless you've been living under a rock since Covid started, you probably already know that remote work means that an employee performs their job tasks from home, not at the office.

## **Roadmap**

A strategic plan that defines a goal or desired outcome. It also includes the major steps or milestones needed for your company to reach the goal.

## **Rock the boat**



“She doesn’t want to rock the boat” means she doesn’t want to upset someone or disturb a situation.

## **Safe bet**

A sure/safe bet is something that is very likely to happen. “It’s a safe bet that Monica will get the promotion.”

## **Scalable**

Scalability means a company can perform well as its workload expands.

For example, if you get a lot more customers, your company won’t be held back by a lack of employees or know-how.

## **See eye to eye**

To be in full agreement.

“My manager and I don’t always see eye to eye, but she’s good at what she does.”

## **See something through**

It means you continue until something is finished. Sometimes it might be difficult, but you’ll still see it through to the end.

## **Shoot something down**

To put an end to something.

**Show of hands**

When there's a show of hands you're supposed to raise your hand to show if you support (or not) a suggestion.

## **Skill set**

Something that someone is good at, especially things that are useful in a particular job.

## **Slack**

Showing a lack of activity; not busy or happening in a positive way.

Slack is also a messaging app for businesses that connects employees to the information they need.

## **Smooth sailing**

The term comes from navigation but refers to something that is effortless, without problems!

## **Stakeholder**

A stakeholder could be an employee, investor, customer, etc. who is involved in or buys from a business and has an interest in its success.

## **Stand one's ground**

To refuse to change your mind about something, even though people are opposing you. "Eve stood her ground and showed she wasn't worried about the other proposal".

## **Startup**

A new business that started fairly recently.

## **Stay ahead of the curve**

The curve is an imaginary graph. It means to be one of the first companies to change to a new idea or way of doing something that later becomes generally popular.

## **Streamline**

To make your business work more simply and effectively. "We streamlined the process."

## **Summary**

"She made a summary of her main points going forward." A summary doesn't give all the details, it's a short statement about something.

## **Swag**

Swag at an event refers to free promotional items and products given to attendees.

## **SWOT**

It's an abbreviation for an analysis of your business': Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

## **Synergy**

When two people or companies combine their efforts and ideas to get additional advantages such as profits etc.

## **Talk someone into something**

This is when you persuade someone to do something. "I talked him into contacting the client again to see if we can solve this."

## **Targets**

“Our target is to double our sales” means your objective, goal or aim.

## **Taskforce**

“Linda put together a taskforce to solve the problem”, means she created a group of people that are to deal with something.

## **Tasks**

A task is a piece of work that someone needs to do.

## **Team player**

“Derek isn’t a team player, he never shares information.” That means Derek doesn’t work well as a member of the group.

## **The elephant in the room**

When there's an elephant in the room you have an important problem that everyone knows about... yet no one mentions it.

## Think outside the box

To look at your business and come up with new ideas of doing something, or doing something in a different way.

## Touch base

"Let's touch base tomorrow" means to talk with someone tomorrow. Usually for just a short while.

## Trademark

A special symbol, design, word etc used to represent a product, brand or company. A registered TM (trademark) can't be used by other companies.

## Twist someone's arm

When you persuade, or talk someone into doing something they don't really want to do. "If you twist my arm I'll come to the business meeting. And I'll even speak English!"

## Unanimous

Everyone is in complete agreement. Wohoo!





## Upskill

It pretty much means the same as training in English.

“Let’s upskill our assistants instead of hiring more senior employees.”

## USP

Unique selling point. What makes your company’s product different, and more attractive?

## Video conference

A system like Zoom, Teams, etc, that makes it possible to have meetings with people in different parts of the world by sending images and sound electronically.

## Vision statement



A very common English expression. It's a written document that describes where a business is going and what it will look like when it gets there.

## Word of mouth

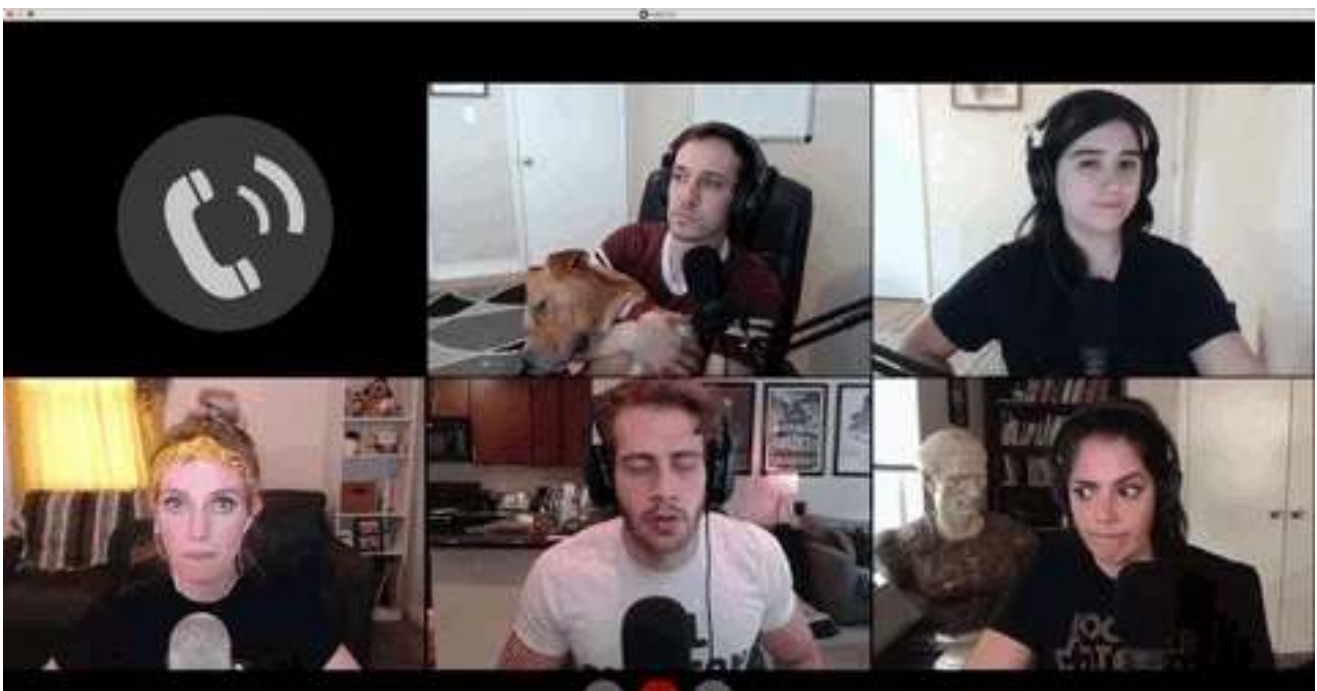
“Many recommendations for our business come from word of mouth.” That simply means your customers heard about you from their friends, neighbours, coworkers, etc.

## Workflow

How a particular project or task is organised by a company, including which part of a project someone is going to do, and *when* they are supposed to do it.

## Zoom call

“I’ll send you a Zoom invitation”. That means someone wants to have a video conference with you, using Zoom as the provider.



## We hope you learned some new Business English vocabulary!

Did you find a lot of new English vocabulary?

We hope you did!

These will help you in your professional capacity.

Some last minute suggestions:

- **Write post-it notes** to practice the words that you don't know, so you can use and understand the words during meetings and conversations.
- **Bookmark this page** so you can quickly check for a word during your online calls.
- **If you need help with your accent**, check out our English pronunciation tips (<https://www.nativos.org/en/how-to-improve-your-english-pronunciation-ideas/>).
- Find local ideas to practice your English (<https://www.nativos.org/en/practice-english-barcelona/>) or check out our teachers' recommendations for podcasts to learn a language (<https://www.nativos.org/en/best-english-podcast-learning-tip/>).

And if you find any business English vocabulary missing, do let us know.

We would be happy to add it here 😊