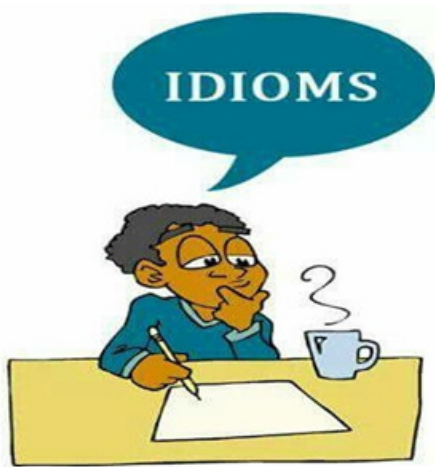


## Technology related English idioms to be prepared for in office

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As you get used to working in a company, chances are that you will often encounter idioms (phrases whose meanings are not obviously based on the individual words used) from your peers or bosses. Many of these are so overused that they have become clichés, but it is important that you understand these to get a clear idea of the context of the statement. While there are countless idioms that may be used in the workplace, let us just touch upon five of them in this piece. We will be explaining the meanings and the usage of more such idioms in another article in the near future.



### Hit the ground running:

You are more likely to hear this when you are new to the job or if you are part of meetings where the boss is explaining the execution plan for a product or project. “Hit the ground running” basically means **to be fully prepared** for a task such that as soon as you get the go-ahead to implement the task, you can get on to it without spending any more time thinking about it.

Let us say that your company has just won a new project, which you are due to start executing from say, April 01. The boss might brief you on the project in the middle of March on the expectations and deliverables from the project and tell you: “Let’s ensure everything we need to do beforehand is taken care of so that we can hit the ground running from April 01.”

It is common for organizations to expect employees, especially experienced professionals to hit the ground running when they join. So, it is an important idiom to not only be familiar with but also understand and imbibe its spirit.

### Low-hanging fruit:

During office meetings, you may encounter scenarios where the staff comes up with a lot of ideas and the boss shoots them down and says, “well, they are all good, but let’s focus on the low-hanging fruit first”. Hopefully, the above statement explains the meaning of this idiom, but in case it still leaves you wondering, it just means **“easy opportunities”**. As a return on investment is high on a manager’s agenda, it is only natural for them to ask to focus on the low-hanging fruit, so that

you can get a lot of the desired results, faster.

The ability to determine the low-hanging fruit is a highly valuable job skill as it shows the ability of a person to prioritize what is beneficial at a lower cost.

### **A well-oiled machine:**

When you think of machines that work smoothly, what qualities come to mind? Smoothness and efficiency, right? And that is precisely what is expected when somebody says in the office, "Let's ensure that we are all working like a well-oiled machine." An organization or a team that operates like a well-oiled machine showcases efficient processes and the smooth execution of those processes, so that work can continue to happen without any hiccups.

### **Bells and whistles:**

This is an idiom that one is more likely to hear if one is involved in a software or product development organization, though it can also be used elsewhere. "Bells and whistles" refers to features or functionalities that are not critical or even essential for the product to function or even for the user to use it. They are the **optional extras** that might make a product or service fanciful. It is always useful to question what is essential and what can be de-prioritized as 'bells and whistles'.

### **Hit the panic button:**

In any organization or team, things will go wrong at some time. Maybe, there is a bug in the software developed that is causing a lot of problems; or there are some quality issues in a product that is causing angry customers to call up. Moreover, as it happens commonly, just when something goes wrong, a lot of things go wrong at the same time. This is when you will hear wise and experienced professionals say, "It's ok- we'll address this problem. Let's not hit the panic button yet." To hit the panic button is **to panic**, to react to a situation out of panic without thinking through clearly.

To avoid hitting the panic button, one has to develop the ability to think calmly and logically. You will realize in due course that a person who doesn't hit the panic button commands a lot of respect; a calm temperament is indeed a great asset to have.

We hope you found these 5 idioms useful. Are there any more idioms that you want to understand better? Let us know with your comments on our social media channels and we will cover them through our series of articles on English tips.

Also, see our article on [common sports idioms in offices](#).

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**- By Chander Madan**

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