

## LESSON 1: GOURMET INTERNATIONAL GETS NEW COMPETITION

Mark, Ron, and Steve work at Gourmet International, a small food company specializing in ethnic frozen foods. Mark, a marketing manager at the company, tells his boss Ron and his co-worker Steve that Grand Foods, a large food company, is going to start competing with them in the frozen Chinese meals market. Mark got this information from an ex-girlfriend. Ron tells Mark to call her back and see if she can give more details.

Mark: I just found out that Grand Foods is planning to **come out with** a line of gourmet frozen Chinese meals.

Ron: It was **only a matter of time before** a big company decided to **enter the market**.

Mark: That's true. We've been making money hand over fist with our frozen Chinese meals for the past two years!

Steve: They're going to **eat our lunch**!

Mark: Our dinner, too.

Ron: Let's not **push the panic button** yet. Mark, how did you get this information?

Mark: **I have my sources**.

Ron: **Out with it!** Who told you?

Mark: An ex-girlfriend. She's the **head honcho** at Shop-Well.

Ron: Call her back and see what else she can tell us. We need to get this information **by hook or by crook**.

Mark: She's my ex.\* It's very awkward!

Ron: Sometimes you have to **leave your comfort zone**.

Mark: I'll call her tomorrow, but **this is not in my job description**.

Ron: Don't worry about your job description. If you **drag your feet** on this, you're not even going to have a job! Call her back right now.

\* ex - a former spouse or romantic partner (short for ex-husband, ex-wife, ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend)

### IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

**(to) come out with** – to release (as in a product or service)

Example: Levi's has **come out with** a new line of "eco jeans" made from organic cotton.

**(to be) only a matter of time before** – to be sure to happen

Example: The stoplight at the intersection is broken. It's **only a matter of time before** there's an accident.

Note: You will sometimes see this expression as "it's just a matter of time before." Also, you may hear the variation "it's only a matter of time until."

**(to) enter the market** – to start competing; to become a competitor

Example: Apple **entered the market** for cell phones in 2007 with the iPhone.

**(to) make money hand over fist** – to make a lot of money, often quickly or easily

Example: Mike is **making money hand over fist** by buying old apartment buildings, renovating them, and then renting them out.

**(to) eat one's lunch** – to take away one's business

Example: Our competitor's new cell phone offers more features than ours at a cheaper price. If we don't act quickly, they're going to **eat our lunch**.

**(to) push the panic button** – to panic suddenly; to overreact

Example: Our soccer team has lost four games in a row, but we're not ready to **push the panic button** yet.

**I have my sources** – I know people who have information (say this when you don't want to say who gave you some information)

Example: "Who told you that Jack is planning to leave the company?" – "**I have my sources.**"

**Out with it** – Tell me; Don't hold back the information

Example: The teacher said, "**Out with it!** Who drew this picture of me on the blackboard?"

**head honcho** – an important person; the boss or somebody in a senior position

Example: When Jeff Immelt became the **head honcho** of General Electric, he made some strategic changes at the company.

**by hook or by crook** – in any way possible, fair or unfair

Example: Roy was going to get the client to sign the contract **by hook or by crook**.

**(to) leave (or get out of) one's comfort zone** – to do something that makes one feel uncomfortable in order to achieve a certain goal

Example: Larry doesn't like speaking in front of large groups, so he'll have to **leave his comfort zone** to make a speech at his daughter's wedding.

**This is not in my job description** – an expression used to point out that what you're being asked to do is beyond your usual responsibilities (and you are not very happy about it)

Example: I can't believe I'm cleaning everybody's old food out of the office refrigerator. **This is not in my job description!**

**(to) drag one's feet** – to delay doing something

Example: You'd better stop **dragging your feet** and start working on your college applications. Otherwise, you're not going to get them in on time.

## PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

*Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:*

- 1) Drive the president to the airport at 6 a.m. tomorrow? **This is not in my job description!**
  - a) I'll do it gladly.
  - b) That's beyond my usual responsibility.
  - c) That's just part of my job.
  
- 2) Who's the **head honcho** of the marketing department?
  - a) head assistant
  - b) manager
  - c) person in charge
  
- 3) Please **don't drag your feet** in getting me the sales reports.
  - a) take your time
  - b) don't rush
  - c) don't delay
  
- 4) Adam's company is **making money hand over fist** by offering low-cost video games online.
  - a) losing a lot of money
  - b) making a lot of money
  - c) making a little money
  
- 5) The police know who the robber is. **It's only a matter of time before the police find him.**
  - a) The police need to find out who he is.
  - b) The police will definitely find him.
  - c) The police may be able to find him.
  
- 6) The president was determined to stay in power **by hook or by crook.**
  - a) by any means possible
  - b) by stealing the election
  - c) by following the rules
  
- 7) Starting your own business usually requires you to **leave your comfort zone.**
  - a) find a place where you feel safest
  - b) be uncomfortable for a long time
  - c) leave your feeling of safety and take a risk
  
- 8) Many small newspapers say that the website Craigslist.org is **eating their lunch** by offering free classified advertisements.
  - a) hurting their business
  - b) helping their business
  - c) giving people a good deal
  
- 9) Our best salesperson just announced he's leaving the company, but **let's not push the panic button yet.**
  - a) let's keep calm and come up with a plan
  - b) let's panic in a few days
  - c) let's not worry about it at all
  
- 10) Who was sitting in my office while I was on vacation? **Out with it!**
  - a) Get out!
  - b) Tell me!

c) Go back in!

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. C; 3. C; 4. B; 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. A; 9. A; 10. B



I don't want to open a can of worms.