

To be a manager, you need to speak like one! Doing that means upgrading your communication from general English to business English.

The eight verbs below are used frequently in professional contexts. You can combine them with hundreds of other words to create “collocations”. These are word combinations which people expect to hear together. Learning business collocations will help you sound more professional, feel more confident, and communicate more clearly.

Read through the list of business English words and collocations below. For each word, choose an appropriate collocation to describe a situation in your office or in any area of your life. Write down your own sentence. Then, read your sample sentence aloud. Saying the sentence out loud will make it easier for you to pronounce, remember, and use the new, advanced vocabulary in real life.

CHANGE GENERAL ENGLISH TO BUSINESS ENGLISH

GENERAL ENGLISH	pay attention to someone or something
BUSINESS ENGLISH	focus on or focus ____ on
COLLOCATIONS	attention, camera, causes, clients, consequences, courses, debates, differences, discussions, documents, effects, efforts, energy, factors, family, goals, grades, health, image, income, lectures, markets, media, meetings, mind, outcomes, papers, priorities, reports, research, results, similarities, studies, talk, topics, training, thoughts, workshop
EXAMPLE	You need to focus on your job search.

GENERAL ENGLISH	make or do more of something
BUSINESS ENGLISH	generate
COLLOCATIONS	business, capital, cash, data, demand, discussion, earnings, electricity, employment, energy, enthusiasm, funds, goodwill, heat, ideas, income, interest, jobs, motivation, noise, publicity, resentment, responses, results, returns, revenue, sales, savings, support, surplus, waste, wealth
EXAMPLE	How can we generate more capital?

GENERAL ENGLISH	find someone or something
BUSINESS ENGLISH	identify
COLLOCATIONS	areas, barriers, categories, candidates, careers, causes, characteristics, dangers, defects, departments, divisions, employees, errors, factors, flaws, gaps, goals, issues, jobs, limitations, locations, managers, means, motives, needs, objectives, opportunities, patterns, people, possibilities, problems, programs, reasons, solutions, strengths, suspects, targets, traits, ways, weaknesses, workers
EXAMPLE	The IT department is trying to identify the cause of the problem.

GENERAL ENGLISH	put something into action
BUSINESS ENGLISH	implement
COLLOCATIONS	agreements, changes, decisions, goals, guidelines, ideas, improvements, laws, legislation, measures, perspectives, plans, policies, priorities, processes, programs, proposals, provisions, recommendations, reforms, regulations, resolutions, rules, schemes, strategies, suggestions, systems
EXAMPLE	The new hiring policies will be implemented next month.

GENERAL ENGLISH	make the most of something, increase as much as possible
BUSINESS ENGLISH	maximize
COLLOCATIONS	advantages, benefits, chances, effects, effectiveness, efficiency, gain, impact, income, interest, investments, likelihood, opportunities, performance, possibilities, potential, production, productivity, profits, recovery, results, returns, revenue, sales, success, time, use, utility, value
EXAMPLE	How can we maximize consumer interest in our products?

GENERAL ENGLISH	make the least of something, lessen as much as possible
BUSINESS ENGLISH	minimize
COLLOCATIONS	arguments, bias, chances, competition, conflicts, confusion, contamination, costs, damages, danger, delay, discomfort, difficulties, distraction, distortion, effect, emission, errors, expenditure, expenses, exposure, friction, hazards, impact, likelihood, loss, pain, pollution, problems, quarrels, risk, stress, suffering, waste, window
EXAMPLE	If they don't minimize costs, they'll be out of business soon.

GENERAL ENGLISH	make someone want to do something
BUSINESS ENGLISH	motivate
COLLOCATIONS	adults, buyers, citizens, clients, colleagues, customers, department, employees, family members, leaders, managers, myself, speakers, staff, students, supervisors, team, union, viewers, workers
EXAMPLE	These incentives should motivate our sales people.

GENERAL ENGLISH	fix something
BUSINESS ENGLISH	resolve
COLLOCATIONS	conflicts, crises, differences, difficulties, dilemmas, disagreements, disputes, issues, matters, problems, situations, tension
EXAMPLE	You need to resolve your differences with the other team members.