

A Succeed in America™ Mini-Dictionary

# **Ameri\$peak™**

the most common words and phrases  
you need to know  
to communicate effectively  
in American business

*Nara Venditti, Ph.D.*

**Succeed in America™ Books**

**AmeriSpeak™**

A mini-dictionary of the most common words and phrases you need to know to communicate effectively in American business

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**Here is What Business Leaders are Saying  
about this Book**

“We do business in over 120 countries. And, as a leader with global responsibilities, it is critical that I communicate effectively wherever I am on the globe. Having a dictionary in English of the most common words and phrases used in American Business would be a great tool that can be provided to my global colleagues to help them better understand what I am saying... and to enable them to more effectively communicate with me!”

**Thomas L. Schlick, Senior Vice President,  
Datacard Global Services, Datacard Group  
(The World’s Leader in Secure ID and  
Card Personalization Solutions), USA**

“Mastering business lingo is a *must*. This initiative is a very needed step towards better communication in our business. The use of a “communication” tool such as “*AmeriSpeak*” could make our business-life a lot easier. For all those professionals, who are challenged to make the globe much smaller and more effective, I recommend to start reading [*AmeriSpeak*] and practicing.”

**Pim Bonsel, Executive Vice President,  
Association for Service Management International,  
Executive Director, Research and Studies, Switzerland**

“...the most common words and phrases you need to know ... is very valuable for foreigners, I think. It should surely expedite the learning of jargons and, at the same time, help them understand better the mentality of corporate America.”

**George N. Cardenas, Ph.D., Executive Vice President,  
Walsh Properties, American national, born in Spain**

See more on the next page...

“I wish I had this [dictionary] several years ago, when I was trying to find my way in the business/professional world, where the use of idioms is so wide spread, there is hardly a sentence it is missing from. ...I'm sure this will be very handy to any one who is not too familiar with American English.”

**Eli Ben-Ezra, Senior Sales Engineer, NextNine Inc.,  
Israeli national, USA**

“It took me a year or two before I understood all of the nuances the American business jargon offers. This mini-dictionary will be very helpful for the person coming to US or a person dealing with a US businessmen in other parts of the world.”

**Mauri A. Korhonen, Vice President and General  
Manager, Ingenico Customer Services, US and Canada,  
Finnish national, USA**

"This is a very interesting concept and I believe this will prove popular in many countries... I do have people working for me in the UK whose first language is not English. They would benefit from understanding and using these phrases. ...you [Nara Venditti] have created something unique that can add significant value to many people around the world.”

**Simon Morris, Director, Global Marketing,  
ClickSoftware (NasdaqSC: CKSW), UK**

Read more on the back cover...

## **DEDICATION**

To dynamic,  
energetic, and expressive  
American English

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## Introduction

*Those who know do not speak*

Japanese proverb

*A word is silver but silence is gold*

Russian proverb

*A man is as good as his word*

American and English proverb

In the United States, verbal communication skills are crucial for establishing credibility and achieving success. Very often in the USA, the ability to express oneself and communicate with confidence will open more doors than a college degree and impressive credentials.

### **The Link between Vocabulary and Success in the USA**

There is a strong correlation between a powerful vocabulary and a successful career.

Imagine conducting business in the USA, and an associate says to you, “*My plate is full 24/7,*” or “*Don’t jump the gun on that product roll out.*” What if you had an American partner and during a meeting in your country heard the following series of expressions, “*we are stretched too thin*”, “*moot point*”, “*you guys are on a roll*” or “*back to Square One.*” Or if you were new to this country, you came to work and heard your boss say, “*Hey, Ramon (Natasha, Edward, Akbar, Bjorn, Hao, Vasumathi, Sunil, or whatever your name is), tomorrow at the huddle we need to cover all the bases before getting the ball rolling on this project*”, and “*I don’t want anything to fall through the cracks.*” Finally, imagine someone sent you an e-mail, that said “*please submit your report on FAQ ASAP or by COB*” and concluded with “*FYI, TGIF, Regards, Stanley*”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The reader can look up definitions of these words and expressions in this dictionary.

What you just read is American English and these are examples of words and expressions used frequently in American business. I collected a list of over one thousand of those most frequently used and then compiled those words and expressions into a mini-dictionary called AmeriSpeak.<sup>™</sup>

The expressions mentioned above and many others come naturally to native Americans. This is in part what makes American English what it is: a flexible, dynamic, expressive language, full of metaphors, idioms, and acronyms. American English — especially as used in business — employs these types of words and expressions more frequently than any other language. Because of this, these features may, and do, cause confusion for non-native speakers. This confusion can slow down communication and negatively affect business interactions such as customer service, negotiations, training, day-to-day operations, employee performance, and overall efficiency in the workplace.

### **Who AmeriSpeak<sup>™</sup> is for and Why It Was Created**

This mini-dictionary was created to help non-native American English speakers become more effective communicators in business situations and here is why.

Certain words and expressions occur in various business situations over and over again. And it is these types of words and phrases which one needs to learn first. Out of all the world languages (almost 4,000!) English is just about the richest in vocabulary. The Oxford English dictionary lists nearly 500,000 words and phrases while about the same number of technical terms remains un-cataloged. Do we need to use all of these words to be effective communicators? Luckily, we don't. The key is to know the *appropriate words* for the *right situations*.

Simply knowing more words will not help you to succeed. It is knowing the right words that will accelerate your success. You do not need to have an extensive vocabulary to be an effective communicator. To be an effective communicator you need to have the *correct vocabulary*.

AmeriSpeak<sup>™</sup> is for anyone who works or aspires to work in the USA and for those in other countries working with American colleagues. It is for native and non-native American English speakers who have been taught different versions of English acceptable in their respective countries.

## **The Most Common Words and Expressions**

This glossary is a powerful tool for non-native American English speakers in business. Although relatively short, it is a comprehensive list of the most commonly used words and expressions in modern American business.

First, a note of caution: not all of these words and phrases are appropriate for every occasion, nor do they necessarily represent standard American English.

However, these are words and expressions you will hear frequently in the workplace, and you need to understand them.

Real-life contexts will help you judge how and when to use the words and phrases listed in Ameri\$peak.

## **How Ameri\$peak™ was Created**

Throughout my many years of experience working in the USA as an educational programs developer for international executives, translator, interpreter and international relocation consultant, I have carefully analyzed real-life business communications. I have examined written and oral interactions in meetings, negotiations, keynote addresses, e-mails, trade magazines, newspapers, corporate press releases, memos, and modern American literature. By applying the principles of statistical lexicography, I extracted the most common words and phrases from those resources, and they are the words and expressions now contained in Ameri\$peak.

## **How Should You Use These Words and Expressions?**

As stated earlier, although used in modern American business, not all of the words and phrases in this glossary are appropriate for every occasion. Especially avoid using units labeled as *slang (sl)*, *informal (inf)* and *vulgar (vulg)*. However, you will hear this language often in the American workplace and understanding it is critical to clear communication. If you do not understand these expressions, you will feel “out of the loop” (left out, uninformed) and will miss out on many nuances of communication. Once you know these expressions and use them appropriately, you will “click” (connect, be accepted) faster with your American colleagues.

We encourage you, the reader, to give us your input. This is the first edition and if you learned a new word or expression, found a mistake or misprint or have any comments, please e-mail us at [nv@SucceedinAmerica.com](mailto:nv@SucceedinAmerica.com).

This book can be ordered on-line at

[www.SucceedinAmerica.com](http://www.SucceedinAmerica.com) .

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