



Words and Their Stories: Let's Do Business

Now, the VOA Special English program WORDS AND THEIR STORIES.

There are many special terms in the world of business.

The following story is about a **sweetheart deal** which I made last week. I made the deal with a friend, and we both made a profit.

I had started a small company several years ago. I worked hard to make it successful. It was a sign-making business. It was a small company, not a **blue chip company**. It was not known nationally for the quality of its signs. It did not make millions of dollars in profits. And it was private. It was not a public company with shares traded on the stock market.

Still, I worked hard building up my business. I did not work only a few hours each day -- no **banker's hours** for me. Instead I spent many hours each day, seven days a week, trying to grow the company. I never **cut corners** or tried to save on expenses. I made many **cold calls**. I called on possible buyers from a list of people I had never seen. Such calls were often **hard sells**. I had to be very firm.

Sometimes I sold my signs **at a loss**. I did not make money on my product. When this happened, there were **cut backs**. I had to use fewer supplies and reduce the number of workers. But after several years, the company **broke even**. Profits were equal to expenses. And soon after, I began to **gain ground**. My signs were selling very quickly. They were **selling like hotcakes**.

I was happy. The company was moving forward and making real progress. It was **in the black**, not **in the red**. The company was making money, not losing it.

My friend knew about my business. He is a leader in the sign-making industry – a real **big gun**, if you know what I mean. He offered to buy my company. My friend wanted to **take it public**. He wanted to sell shares in the company to the general public.

My friend believed it was best **to strike while the iron is hot**. He wanted to take action at the best time possible and not wait. He offered me a **ball park estimate** of the amount he would pay to buy my company. But I knew his uneducated guess was low. My company was worth much more. He asked his **bean-counter** to **crunch the numbers**. That is, he asked his accountant to take

a close look at the finances of my company and decide how much it was worth. Then my friend increased his offer.

My friend's official offer was finally given to me **in black and white**. It was written on paper and more than I ever dreamed. I was finally able to **get a break**. I made a huge profit on my company, and my friend also got a **bang for the buck**. He got a successful business for the money he spent.

(MUSIC)

This VOA Special English program, WORDS AND THEIR STORIES, was written by Jill Moss. I'm Faith Lapidus