

Many expressions used in business are borrowed from war vernacular. Here are some examples:

- You can **'gain ground'** on your competition.

We've gained ground in the Japanese market. We now have a 20% market share, up from just 7% last year.

- You **'don't give up without a fight'**.

I don't think we should just withdraw the product because we have such a poor share of the market. Let's not give up without a fight. Let's try some other marketing strategies.

- You may need to **'reinforce'** your marketing position.

Our sales team is doing badly against the competition. We may need to reinforce the team with some new recruits.

- You can **'join forces'** with another company.

In China, we've decided to join forces with a local company and set up a joint venture.

- If you receive a lot of enquiries, you can say you are **'bombarded'** with them.

After our last radio campaign, we were bombarded with calls to our customer lines.

- If you don't want your boss to notice you, it's a good idea to **'keep your head down'**.

The boss is very angry. It would be a good idea to keep your head down for a few days.

- You can **'set your sights on'** an objective.

I've set my sights on being the next sales manager.

- Often different departments of a company have a **'battle'** over budgets.

There isn't much money and Accounts and Marketing are having a big battle over the advertising budget.

- Some people seem to do things that make them look bad – they are **'their own worst enemy'**.

He's always irritating the boss by being late for meetings. He's his own worst enemy.

- Most companies set **'targets'** for their employees.

Our target this year is to increase sales by 10%.

- You can **'capture'** a larger share of a market.

We need to capture more of the youth market.

- When businesses fail because of a poor economy, they can be said to be **'casualties'**.

They were a casualty of the last recession.

- If there are a lot of potential problems in doing something, it can be described as a **'minefield'**.

The workers are very unhappy and so are the customers. Taking over that company would be a real minefield.

Exercise: Choose one of the following idioms to complete each sentence.

capture / keep your head down / minefield / own worst enemy / reinforce / set my sights on

1. Industrial relations in this company are a real _____.
2. We need to _____ more of this market.
3. The boss is really angry. I'd advise you to _____.
4. He upsets everybody with his arrogant attitude. He's his _____.
5. I've _____ getting promoted this year.
6. We need to _____ the number of people on telephone sales. We can't cope with the demand.

Exercise: Choose one of the following idioms to complete each sentence.

battle / bombarded / casualties / gaining ground / targets / without a fight

7. We're _____ on our competition in some markets.
8. I'm being _____ with calls from marketing companies.
9. I don't intend to give up _____.
10. The _____ we've been set are impossible to reach.
11. We've got a real _____ on our hands if we want to become market leader.
12. I'm afraid he was one of the _____ of the last round of job cuts.