

Sound Professional When Participating In Meetings

Agreeing and disagreeing

(Strong agreement)	I agree 100% / I agree
(Medium agreement)	I could go along with that
(Partial agreement)	I agree with you to a certain extent, however..
(Disagreement)	I see your point, but I'm afraid I can't really agree with you there. As far as I'm concerned...
(Strong disagreement)	I'm afraid I completely disagree. As far as I'm concerned...

Opening your opinion

(Strong opinion)	I firmly believe that.. / I'm convinced that..
(General opinion)	As far as I'm concerned, we should..
(General opinion)	I believe that.. / I feel that..
(General opinion)	If had to name the most important... I would say...
(Weaker opinion)	I'm leaning towards...
(No opinion)	I don't really have an opinion either way, there are advantages to both options.

Commenting on someone else's point

That's a very pertinent point..
 I see your point..
 I see where you're coming from..
 I just want to expand a little on that..

Expressing doubt

I'm a little bit wary about..
 I have some reservations about...

Contrasting

On the one hand.. on the other hand
 On the contrary...

Adding to your argument

Moreover, ...
 Furthermore, ...
 In addition, ...

Discussing options

I think we need to take a step back and weigh up all of our options before making a decision.
 I think the benefits outweigh the risks on this one.
 I'm leaning towards option A on this one

Discussing Strategy

From a ... perspective,
 We need to consider the long-term viability of...
 We need to look at the bigger picture

Making suggestions looking forward

We would be better off...ing

"I believe we would be better off accepting their offer."

Could we consider -ing

"Could we consider increasing our investment in the project."

It is well worth...-ing

"I believe it is well worth looking into this further, because we don't want to make a decision too quickly."

If + past...would

"If we accepted this client, it would open a lot of doors for us as a company."

We might as well.. (meaning that we have nothing to lose if we do something, used to make unenthusiastic suggestions)

"We might as well accept the offer because we have nothing to lose."

Moving forward.. I believe that we should...

"Moving forward, I believe that we should establish a strong customer base here before expanding further."

We could do with...

"We could do with setting up a meeting next week as well."

Making suggestions looking back

In hindsight, I think we should have done...

"In hindsight, I think we should have carried out more market research."

If we had prepared more then we would have...

"If we had prepared more then the project would not have failed."

Making suggestions in a difficult situation

We might have to make do with... (this means to 'manage' with something small)

"We might have to make do with the current budget if we cannot acquire more funds."

Can we get by with... (this means to 'survive' with)

"Can we get by with a \$5000 budget?"

"Can we get by with 10 staff working at the event?"

Let's see if we can get away with... (this means to do something without negative consequences)

"Let's see if we can get away with increasing the price by 10%."

Interrupting

If I could just come in here...

When you didn't understand

I'm sorry I didn't quite catch that..could you repeat it please?

Going back in the discussion

As I mentioned earlier...

Just going back to what we were talking about earlier...

Clarifying

Just to make sure I've understood correctly, are you saying that..?

Just to clarify, are you saying that..?

Just to clarify, are you suggesting that..?

Giving updates

Just to fill you in on the latest regarding...

Just to bring you up to date on / up to speed on..

We have completed phase 2 and we are now moving on to phase 3.

Going off topic

Sorry, I'm going a little off topic here, but it's important to add

Sorry, I'm digressing, just going back to what I was saying

When you don't know

I can't remember exactly, but off the top of my head

Let me go away and check that and I'll get back to you

I don't have the exact figures, but as a ballpark figure..

Offering to contribute

I could take a look at...

Useful Expressions from the Phrases above which Can Be Used in Other Business Contexts

A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to go along with	a pertinent point	to have some reservations about
in hindsight	to make do with	to get away with
could do with	might as well	to fill someone in on
viability	to get back to someone	to a certain extent

- To talk to someone again in order to give them information, especially when you were not able to give them information before: _____

"Let me go away and check that and I'll _____ you."

"I requested some information from them but they haven't _____ me yet."

- An opinion which is appropriate and helpful: _____

"That's a very _____."

"John made a very _____ earlier, and I'd like to discuss that a bit further if possible."

3. An expression used to make an unenthusiastic suggestion meaning that we would have nothing to lose by doing something: _____

*"We _____ accept the offer because we have nothing to lose."
 "I don't think that they would be interested in our proposal, but we
 _____ reach out to them anyway."*

4. To agree to a person or a proposal: _____

*"I could _____ that"
 "I could _____ your proposal if you provided some more
 definitive projected profits."*

5. Partly but not completely: _____

*"I agree with you _____. However, I believe that you are not quite
 right regarding some of the potential risks."*

6. To do something and escape any negative consequences or punishment:

*"Let's see if we can _____ increasing the price by 10%."
 "Do you think that we could _____ postponing the launch date
 until next week?"*

7. To give some updated information: _____

*"Just to _____ you _____ the latest regarding the arrangements for the
 event."
 "Could you _____ me _____ the latest regarding the merger?"*

8. Looking back and understanding a situation after it has happened. This is often used at the beginning of a sentence: _____

*"_____, we should have paid a little more attention to the
 potential risks."
 "_____, we shouldn't have rejected their offer."*

9. To manage with something that is less than you would like to have or of lower quality:

*"We might have to _____ the current budget if we can't acquire
 more funds."
 "We can't afford a new car so we will have to _____ the old one."*

10. To be unsure that something is right, or unsure that something is a good suggestion:

*"I _____ the plan. I think it is a little bit overambitious with our
 budget."*

"I _____ increasing the price. I think it could hurt a lot of our loyal customers during these difficult economic times."

11. Ability to be successful: _____

"We need to consider the long-term _____ of that system. Can we realistically sustain it?"

12. An expression to say that we could really benefit from something: _____

"We _____ setting up a meeting next week."

"We _____ an extra \$10 000 if we want to stay within the budget."

B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to go along with	a pertinent point	to have reservations
in hindsight	could do with	to get away with
viability	to get back to	might as well
		to a certain extent

Contributing to a Healthy Debate

Debates are a captivating battleground of ideas, perspectives, and opinions. They provide us with a unique opportunity to challenge our own beliefs and broaden our horizons. Of course, they take place all the time in business, and debating could be considered one of the most important skills necessary for success. However, few people take the time to master the skill, and many debates can descend into utter chaos and hostility regardless of the topic or the professional surroundings. Below are some top tips on how to contribute to a constructive debate!

Everyone around the debate table wants the debate to run smoothly. However, be careful not to allow this to prevent you from voicing your disagreement. Simply _____ every opinion that you hear certainly does not constitute a healthy debate. If you disagree with something, or if you only agree _____, it is important to speak up and allow your voice to be heard. If you simply nod along in agreement with every statement then you _____ stay at home!

If you do _____ about a certain suggestion, it is important to state your concerns respectfully and with an open mind, giving the other person an opportunity to address your concerns and offer further insight. In fact, active listening is one of the cornerstones to successful debating. Always allow speakers to finish voicing their opinion before you offer your own contribution, and try to avoid interrupting too much, as this can put others on the defensive. If someone makes a _____, even if it

is one that you don't agree with, make sure to tell them that they have brought an interesting opinion to the table.

If you have a strong opinion to contribute, then it is important to support your point of view with evidence or statistics. In a constructive debate, you can't _____ throwing opinions out there without anything to back them up. Participants will simply dismiss the _____ of your ideas as there is no evidence that they will work, and you will lose credibility for further contributions in the debate. Prepare for any challenges or questions related to your opinion by identifying potential flaws in your argument before the debate begins. If you have immediate responses ready, then people will be more likely to be won over by your argument. If someone asks you a challenging question for which you _____ some more time to give a cohesive response, simply explain that you will _____ them in the next few days.

In the aftermath of a debate, take a moment to reflect on your own performance. _____, could you have listened more attentively? Did you back up your points with sufficient evidence? Did you consider alternative perspectives? Taking time to evaluate yourself can be a painful experience, but it can certainly pay off when mastering such a difficult skill!

C) Comprehension Questions

1. Based on the context of the first paragraph, what can happen if people have limited debating skills?

2. What can happen if you interrupt too much during a debate?

3. Based on the context in paragraph 4, what do you think the phrase 'identifying potential flaws' means?

4. What is the benefit of being able to respond quickly to questions and challenges in a debate?

5. Based on the context of the final paragraph, what do you think is meant by the phrase 'in the aftermath'?

D) More Uses of Selected Key Words

To get away with

If we get away with something, it means that we don't suffer any negative consequences for the actions that we take.

As we looked at in the comprehension exercise as well as the meetings phrases, we can use it to discuss how far we can push something without receiving any negative consequences:

"Do you think we could get away with raising our prices by as much as 15%."

"If we delayed the launch any further, I don't think we would get away with it."

We can also use it to talk about avoiding negative consequences when you have made a mistake:

"We missed the deadline by a few days, but we got away with it."

We can also talk about avoiding negative consequences when you have broken a rule or done something wrong:

"He got away with stealing the money."

We can also use 'to get away with' before an 'ing form' in all of the contexts listed above:

"We got away with making a mistake with some of the figures mentioned in the presentation. I don't think anyone noticed."

"She always gets away with coming to work late."

Could do with

This phrase is great for business discussion. It suggests that you need something, or that you would benefit from something. It is very commonly used among native speakers. We can also follow this phrase with an 'ing' form:

"We could do with hiring a few extra staff for the busy summer period."

"We could do with extending the deadline by an extra week."

If we want to look back into the past to talk about something which we needed or we would have benefited from, we use 'could have done with':

"The restaurant was really busy last night. We could have done with a few extra staff."

To a certain extent

There are many other really useful variations of this expression:

to a significant extent / to a limited extent / to a greater extent / to a lesser extent /
to a considerable extent / to a minimal extent / to a satisfactory extent / to a
noticeable extent / to a sufficient extent

"The Covid pandemic affected businesses in all sectors, to a greater extent those in the hospitality and travel sectors."

"Local businesses have been hit by the new government policies to a significant extent."

A flaw

A flaw, meaning a fault or weakness, is a really useful business word, because it works well with many business nouns. Below is a list of business uses:

a flaw in the system / a flaw in the design / a flaw in the plan / a flaw in the argument / a flaw in the logic / a flaw in the process / a flaw in the strategy / a flaw in the methodology / a flaw in the theory / a flaw in the approach / a flaw in the interpretation / a flaw in the implementation

If something has many flaws or weaknesses, we can say that it is 'flawed'

"The plan failed miserably. In hindsight, it is clear to see that the plan was seriously flawed."

"I don't understand his flawed logic. His argument doesn't make any sense."

To win someone over

We can either 'win over someone' or 'win someone over'. However, when we use a pronoun (him / her / them), we must put the pronoun in the middle of the phrasal verb, it cannot go on the end:

"Thankfully, I managed to win them over." ~~*"Thankfully, I managed to win over them."*~~

To win someone over means to succeed in getting someone's support or enthusiasm after they initially did not support something. This is usually through persuading people that something is a good idea, as we saw in the examples in the exercises. However, it does not always involve directly persuading someone to support something. Here are some other scenarios below:

Consumers not liking the product and then liking it:

"Consumers didn't seem to keen on the product when we first launched it, but eventually we managed to win them over with some small alterations."

People not liking someone and then liking them:

“The team weren’t too sure about me when I first joined the company, but since then I have managed to win them over with my friendly but effective management style.”

An audience not liking a presentation or presenter and then changing their minds:
“If the audience are not very responsive to the presentation, it is important to win them over with a few jokes.”

E) Glossary of words for sounding intelligent when talking about statistics, facts, evidence and data

to go along with
a pertinent point
to have some reservations about
in hindsight
to make do with
to get away with
could do with
in the aftermath

might as well
to fill someone in on
to get back to someone
viability
to a certain extent
a flaw
flawed
to win someone over