ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Speak Business English Like an American Lesson 16 Idioms and Expressions Test

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1	C	2	A	3	B	4	B	5	A	6	C	7	A	8	C				

Explanations

1. **Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:**

I know we need to **do some belt-tightening**, but I'm not sure that laying off employees is the solution.
✓ **C) reduce our expenses**
Do some belt-tightening means to spend less money or **reduce expenses**, like pulling your belt tighter when you have less to eat. Not **get rid of some people**: the speaker says laying people off may not be the right way to cut costs, so belt-tightening is the general idea and laying off is only one possible method.

2. Changing the packaging design at this point is **out of the question**. We're already in production.
✓ **A) not a possibility**
If something is **out of the question**, it is completely impossible and will not be considered. Not **probably not possible**: the idiom is definite, not uncertain. The clue is **We're already in production**, so the design can't be changed.

3. If we're serious about saving money, we should consider **cutting back on** our use of expensive consultants.
✓ **B) reducing**
To **cut back on** something means to use or do less of it, that is, to **reduce** it. Example: **We need to cut back on travel costs.** Not **eliminating**, which means stopping completely; cutting back only means using less.

4. You can tell me about how great Jim is **until you're blue in the face**. The fact is, I don't like the way he does business.
✓ **B) all you want**
Until you're blue in the face means for as long as you want, but it will have no effect, so **all you want** fits best. The next sentence shows that the speaker will not change their opinion. Not **until your face turns blue**: that is the literal meaning, and idioms are not meant literally.

5. Kyle and Mark are meeting at Flanagan's Bar after work to **bat around some ideas about starting their own business**.
✓ **A) discuss ideas about starting their own business**
To **bat around** ideas means to discuss them informally and consider different possibilities. Example: **Let's bat around a few names for the new product.** Not **finalize plans**: batting ideas around happens at an early stage, before any decisions are made.

6. When you're the boss, demonstrating good leadership is **the name of the game**.
✓ **C) very important**
The name of the game is the most important thing or the main purpose in a situation, so here it means **very important**. Example: **In sales, customer service is the name of the game.**

7. The food manufacturer's costs have gone up, but they are unable to raise the price of their products. They're **caught between a rock and a hard place**.
✓ **A) stuck in an undesirable position**
Caught between a rock and a hard place means stuck in a difficult situation where every choice is bad. The company's costs are rising, but it cannot raise its prices. Not **deciding between two great options**: this idiom is about two bad options, not good ones.

8. Why don't you open a corporate account with DHL and ship all of your packages with them? **You could save a bundle**.
✓ **C) You could save a lot of money.**
A bundle is informal American English for a large amount of money, so **save a bundle** means **save a lot of money**. Not **save a few dollars**: a bundle is a big amount, not a small one.

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