ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Speak Business English Like an American Lesson 29 Idioms and Expressions Test

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

Explanations

1. **Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:**

We purchased an entire office building in New York for a song a few years ago when the economy was bad.
✓ A) Now that building would be much more expensive.
For a song means very cheaply. They bought the building at a low price when the economy was bad, so today it would cost **much more**. Not the third option: if they got a bargain then, it would not be cheap now.

2. Carol, our new finance manager, is the type of person who can take the ball and run with it.
✓ C) Great, we're looking for somebody with initiative.
To **take the ball and run with it** means to take a task and move it forward on your own, without needing to be told what to do. That is a person with **initiative**. Not the first option: someone who needs a lot of direction is the opposite.

3. Jesse won $5 million last month in a lawsuit. He really struck it rich.
✓ A) No wonder he's decided to retire!
To **strike it rich** means to suddenly get a lot of money. With $5 million, Jesse doesn't need to work any more, so it makes sense that he has **decided to retire**.

4. We're looking to hire somebody who'll stay with our company for at least a few years. You wouldn't jump ship after just a year, would you?
✓ B) No, I always stay at jobs at least three years.
To **jump ship** means to leave your job or company suddenly, often for another one. The speaker wants someone who will stay, so the right answer promises to **stay at least three years**. Not the sailing answer: the idiom has nothing to do with real ships.

5. You might get rich investing in biotech companies, but you're just as likely to lose your shirt.
✓ B) That's true. I'd better be careful about putting too much money into them.
To **lose your shirt** means to lose almost all your money, usually in a bad investment. The sensible reply is to be careful about **putting too much money** into these companies. Not the first option: the speaker is warning about risk, not recommending heavy investment.

6. While in Russia, you should snap up some lacquer boxes. They're beautiful and inexpensive there.
✓ C) Okay, I will be sure to buy some lacquer boxes.
To **snap up** something means to buy it quickly, often because it is a good deal. The boxes are beautiful and cheap in Russia, so the right reply is a promise to **buy** some. Not the first option: **snap up** is about buying, not packing.

7. I bought plane tickets on Econo-Airlines, and a few days later they went belly up!
✓ C) That's too bad. You'd better buy some new plane tickets.
When a company **goes belly up**, it goes bankrupt and stops doing business. The airline no longer exists, so the tickets are useless and the person needs to **buy new plane tickets**.

8. Working on Wall Street for an investment bank sounds wonderful, but it's not all it's cracked up to be.
✓ B) You're right. The pay is good, but the work is demanding and the hours are long.
Not all it's cracked up to be means not as good as people say. The right reply mentions the bad sides of the job: **demanding** work and **long hours**. The other options say the job is wonderful, which is the opposite.

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