Top 5 mistakes in business English

In the competitive world of business, you need every advantage you can get. And flawless English can put you way ahead of the competition. You think it's too hard to achieve? Not at all! Check out our list of business English mistakes your competitors make and get the edge immediately:

Personal vs. Personnel

Pay close attention to the spelling and stress on these! **"Personnel"** is a noun meaning a company's staff. E.g. *"Our company has the best personnel in the industry."* The stress is placed at the end of the word. **"Personal"** is an adjective meaning private or individual. *"I'm requesting a day of annual leave for personal reasons."* The stress is placed at the beginning. If you're not careful, you could call for a **"personal meeting"** rather than a *"personnel meeting."*

Executive

An **"executive"** is someone in company management. If you're introducing your company's top **executives** to visitors or customers, watch your pronunciation! If you place the stress over the **"u"**, then **"executive"** suddenly sounds more like **"execute"** - to kill or put to death.

Present? Presentate? Presentation?

You **present** information when you give a **presentation**. **Present** is a verb meaning to introduce something or bring something to someone's attention. A **presentation** is a format often used in business to introduce new information. Many people - even some native English speakers - think **"presentate"** is the verb form of **"presentation."** Don't make the same mistake!

"I look forward to hearing from you."

This phrase is commonly used to end business letters. But English learners frequently write, *"I look forward to hear from you."* This isn't correct and sounds funny to native English speakers. The verb **"hear"** always has to have the **"ing"** in this phrase.

Headquarters and Information

Many English learners leave the **"s"** off **"headquarters"** and add an **"s"** to **"information."** Both are wrong. **Headquarters** is a singular noun and means a company's main office: *"I'm going to headquarters this weekend to meet with the CEO."* Headquarters is tricky because it ends with an **"s."** It seems like a plural noun! But leaving the **"s"** turns headquarters into a verb, **"to headquarter."**

On the other hand, many learners add an **"s"** to information. Most people reason that if they need a lot of information, they need to make it plural, e.g., *"I need informations on overseas study programs."* But information is an uncountable noun (it doesn't have a plural form). All you have to say is, *"I need some information."*