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TOPICS

Ask an American: Working
quote vs. offer, something's gotta give

GLOSSARY

role – what one does in a job, department, or organization; one's responsibilities in a company or an organization

* Henrietta's role in the accounting department is to pay all of the company's bills each month.

global – related to the entire world; related to all countries; all over the world

* We usually know how well the economy is doing in a single country, but it's more difficult to understand how well the global economy is doing.

market – the demand for a product or service; the sales for a certain type of product or service

* The market for computers grew a lot in the mid-1990s.

FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration; a U.S. government agency that is responsible for protecting the health of Americans

* The FDA must approve all new medicines before they can be sold to the public.

clinical research – research done by testing something on real people

* The new drug did well in all of the laboratory tests, so now it's time to begin the clinical research and see how people react to it.

to negotiate – to find ways around something that is difficult

* If you want to apply for a job with the government, you'll need to negotiate the many rules and regulations to submit an application.

obstacle – something that makes it difficult for one to do something; something that is between you and something you want

* For many people, the biggest obstacle to losing weight is that they don't like to exercise.

patient – a person who is receiving medical care

* The doctor told her patient to take the medicine twice a day for a week.



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jargon – technical words that are used by one group of people and are difficult for other people outside of the group to understand

* Engineers use a lot of jargon, so it's sometimes difficult for them to explain their projects to people who are not engineers.

multiple – many; more than one

* This building has multiple emergency exits, so that people can leave quickly if there's a fire.

geography – the study of the surface of the planet, its physical characteristics, and how it is divided into different countries and populations

* In today's geography class, the students are taking a test on the capital cities in African.

quote – an estimate; a guess about how much something will cost

* The first quote we got for fixing the roof was too high, so we're going to look for better prices from other companies.

offer – the amount of money that someone is willing to pay for something

* Shawna got three offers from people who wanted to buy her car: \$6,700, \$6,350, and \$5,800.

gotta – informal version of "got to"; have to; has to; must do something

* I'd like to go to the movies with you, but I gotta study tonight.

to give – to relax; to stop putting pressure on something or someone; to stop doing something

* There were too many people standing on the bridge and when the wood gave, the people fell into the water.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

A Classic Song about Work: “Working 9 to 5”

Dolly Parton is a famous American singer and actress. One of her famous movies is a “comedy” (funny movie) called “Nine to Five,” which was made in 1980. The phrase “working nine to five” refers to a normal work schedule. Many people arrive to the office at 9:00 a.m. and leave at 5:00 p.m., or “from nine to five.”

In the movie, Dolly Parton sings a song called “9 to 5.” Here are the “lyrics” (the words in a song) to the “chorus” (the part of a song that repeats many times).

*Working nine to five, what a way to make a living.
Barely getting by, it's all taking and no giving.
They just use your mind, and they never give you credit.
It's enough to drive you crazy, if you let it.*

The first line means that working all day, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is a difficult way “to make a living,” or to make enough money to live a daily life. She is “barely” (hardly) “getting by.” “To get by” means to have enough money to pay for what one needs. In other words, she doesn’t get enough money from her job to pay for everything she needs. “It’s all taking and no giving,” meaning that her job is taking a lot of her time and energy, but it isn’t giving her very much money. There is a popular expression, “give and take,” which means that two people (or organizations) share the work and the rewards. When one side “takes” too much and the other side doesn’t “give” enough, then that’s not a good relationship.

She sings, “They just use your mind, and they never give you credit.” This means that the employer is using her ideas to help the business, but it never thanks her for her hard work. “To give (someone) credit” means to give them recognition, thanks, or reward for their work or accomplishment. The last line says, “It’s enough to drive you crazy, if you let it.” This means that her job is very frustrating and it could make her feel crazy, if she allows it to.

This is a well-known song that many Americans who work nine to five can relate to. They feel that the lyrics show their own feelings about working hard and not getting the reward they deserve.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 79.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast English Café number 79. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com and take a look at the Learning Guide for this episode, as well as some of our new premium courses.

In this episode, we're going to listen to and talk about an interview with Steve, who is going to talk about his job in our "Ask an American" series, and as always, we'll answer a few questions. Let's get started!

We're going to begin today by doing another one of our "Ask an American" episodes, where we interview someone else and ask them to talk about something related to their life or their job. We will then explain what they are saying. These are English speakers who are talking at a normal rate of speech, so it's a little difficult to understand them, but we will listen and then go back and listen again to different sections - different parts - and explain in slower, clearer vocabulary what they are saying.

We've had a good reaction to this series - the "Ask an American" series - that we do occasionally. And so, if you like it or don't like it, please email us and let us know.

Today we're going to listen to a short interview with Steve, and Steve is going to talk about his job - what he does for a living and what he likes about his job.

Now, Steve speaks a little fast, but to get you ready to listen I can tell you that he works for a company that makes medical devices. A device, "device," is sort of like a small mechanical or electronic thing that's used for a specific purpose. In this case, these are devices used for people who have a bad heart. He's going to talk about what he does at this company. He's going to use a lot of business technical vocabulary, so we'll explain all of that after we listened to him. This is about a minute long, so try to listen and understand what you can. Don't worry about understanding everything; we'll go back and explain it after we listen.

I recorded this interview a room where there was a little bit of noise, so you can hear some noise of people talking in the background. But again, I think that's



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good for us to get used to - understanding voices even when the audio isn't perfect. Let's take a listen to Steve then, talking about his job.

[recording]

I am executive director at Boston Scientific; I'm director of research. My role is to run global research in pre-market and post-market for products that are coming to market through the FDA in the United States. I work on clinical research and negotiate them through the FDA to - for new products, and bringing new products. And, I'm also director of post-market research, so that's research on products that are already approved in the United States, and also approved globally. Most of our studies are done in the United States and in multiple geographies in Europe, Australia and Canada.

[end of recording]

Okay, he did speak quickly and used a lot of different types of vocabulary, so we want to stop here and talk a little bit about what he said.

Steve begins by telling us that he is a director of research at a company. The name of the company is called Boston Scientific, which is a large company that produces medical devices here in the United States. Steve then tells us what his role, "role," is. The word role is just another word for what particular position you have in a company. He says:

[recording] "My role is to run global research in pre-market and post-market..."

Steve says his role is to run, or to take care of - to be in charge of - research that is global research. Global, "global," means for the entire world - for all the different countries where his company works. He says specifically he is in charge of pre-market and post-market studies.

Pre-market, "pre-" market, "market," is just another way of saying before the product that the company makes is sold to the general public - before they release it - before they put it on sale. So, pre-market research is when you are looking at your product or your service - what you are going to sell - and you are making sure that it's - everything is correct about it.

The word market here normally means a store, when we use the term market, but market can also refer to people who buy something. Someone who is buying drugs would be part of the drug market - the group of people who buy that



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particular good or that particular product. We also use the word market to talk about the stock market, where people trade money for stocks, which are essentially part ownership of a company. A stock, "stock," means that you own a little bit of the company, and if the company does well, your stock goes up and you can make more money. Or, you can lose all your money. It's just like Las Vegas; it's a kind of gambling.

Steve also says he is in charge of, or runs, post-market research. Post, "post," is a prefix - something you before a word - to mean after. Just as pre means before, post means after. So, Steve is in charge of researching the product - making sure it is working correctly - after they sell it to the people who want to buy it - hospitals, doctors, and so forth.

Steve then explains a little bit more about what he does with the pre-market research, and he mentions that he has to work with a group called the FDA. FDA stands for, or means, the Food and Drug Administration, and this is the part of our national government - the US federal government - that takes care of drugs and approving new drugs and new medical devices so that people can use them. They make sure that they are safe, and one of the things that Steve does is to take the product and bring it to the government so that they will approve it. He explains:

[recording] "...for products that are coming to market through the FDA in the United States. I work on clinical research and negotiate them through the FDA to - for new products, and bringing new products."

Steve says that for products coming to market in the United States. The expression to come, "come," to market means company is getting ready to sell them, they haven't sold them yet. Once again, we hear that word market to mean the people who are buying them. So, the products are coming to those people, but they're not yet ready to sell them.

The product is coming to market through the FDA, again, the Food and Drug Administration. Most Americans know what the FDA is; they know it is government agency - the government group - that approves new drugs in the United States for medical purposes. Steve says that he negotiates these new drugs through the FDA.

To negotiate, "negotiate," normally means to come to an agreement with someone else. It can also mean to be in charge of doing something that is somewhat difficult. We often use this expression when we are talking about



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problems that you may have to avoid - "I need to negotiate the politics of my office, because if I do the wrong thing I may get in trouble" - I may have problems. So, negotiate is the idea of moving through difficult things - moving through what we would call obstacles, "obstacles." An obstacle is something that prevents you or slows you down from reaching your goal - from getting to where you want to go. The process of getting a drug approved in the United States is very, very long, and there are many obstacles - many problems - that a company has to be able to negotiate, or negotiate around, we might say.

Steve says he works on clinical research. Clinical, "clinical," refers, in this case, to research that is done with real people - with what we would call patients, "patients." A patient is a person who is getting medical help - who is getting medical care. Clinical research, then, is when the companies - the drug companies or the medical device companies - start using the drug with a small group of patients so they can test it.

Finally, Steve tells us about the post-market research that he does:

[recording] "And, I'm also director of post-market research, so that's research on products that are already approved in the United States, and also approved globally. Most of our studies are done in the United States and in multiple geographies in Europe, Australia and Canada."

Steve says that as director of post-market research, he looks at products - things that his company makes - they have already been approved. When he says they've been approved, "approved," he means government has already said yes, the company can sell those drugs. He also talked about the product being approved globally, and again, we see that word global to mean for the whole world. In this case, globally is the adverb.

Finally he says that they do studies in what he calls multiple geographies in the United States, Europe, Australia and Canada. The expression multiple geographies, "geographies," is one that I had never heard of before. It's probably a good example of what we would call jargon, "jargon." Jargon are words that people use in certain businesses or in certain organizations that don't really mean very much to someone outside of the organization, and they're sometimes used to make things sound more important than they really are. But we all use jargon in our work, so that's not usual.

In this case, the word multiple, "multiple," means many, and geographies refers to different places. We talk about the geography of a place we mean where it is -



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what are the characteristics of the area. Here, I think multiple geographies just means many different places. But, in some organizations, instead of just saying many different places or many different countries, they use this term, multiple geographies. You are all listening to us from multiple geographies, and now we're going to answer some of your questions.

Our first question comes from Andi, "Andi," from Germany. Andi wants to know the difference between the words quote, "quote," and offer, "offer."

Quote is, when we are talking about a business, something that you give to someone who is interested in hiring you to do a job or a service. It's the estimated price that you tell that person. So for example, if you need to have a new sink in your kitchen, you would call a plumber - a person who fixes sinks - and you would ask him or her how much it would be, and that person would give you a quote saying here is how much I would charge should - here's how much it will cost.

An offer is generally something that we give someone else to accept or reject. For example, you can have an offer of marriage, so you're offering yourself to marry another person. You could have a job offer, when a company says we want to hire you. These are both cases where you could say no to marriage and to work. An offer is something that you can say yes or no to - you can accept or you can reject. To reject, "reject," means to say no. You may read the expression "the offer was rejected," meaning the person said no.

We also use the word offer sometimes in sales - when you're selling something. A company may say, "This is a limited offer," or a "limited time offer." That means that they are selling it at this price or under these conditions for only a short amount of time, so you have to say yes - you have to buy it - quickly.

An example would be for offer, you want to sell your used car, but you don't know how much you should ask for it - what price it should be. So, you put an ad in the newspaper, or on a website like Craigslist, that says, "2,000 dollars or best offer." Usually we abbreviate that with the letters "OBO." When you see "OBO" in a newspaper where there are advertisements for things that people are selling - individuals are selling - "OBO" means or best offer, which means if you don't want to pay 2,000 dollars, you only want to pay 1,000 dollars, you can make an offer to that person, and the person can accept or reject.

You can get a job offer. You can say, for example, "I got a good offer from the National Computer Company" - it was a lot of money - it was a good job offer. As



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a verb, you can say, "I was offered," and then say what they gave you - how much money or whatever it was.

For the word quote, an example would be, as I said before, you are getting something fixed or something done in your house, or perhaps your car stops working. We would say your car breaks down, "breaks," down, "down." When a car breaks down it stops working, so you take it to the mechanic and mechanical will give you a quote, say, "Well, it's going to cost you 10,000 dollars." You can then decide whether you want to do it or not.

Now, you have to be careful because, at least in the United States, a quote is just a guess - it's just an estimate. It may cost you even more. A good business will try to give you, however, an accurate quote - a quote that is very close to the actual price it will cost. If they don't, they won't have customers for very long!

Bo, "Bo," in Sweden wants to know about a movie that she saw. The title in English was "Something's Gotta Give." This was a movie a few years ago, I think in 2003 or so, with Jack Nicholson, who's a famous Hollywood actor, and Diane Keaton, who's a famous actress - or woman actor. What is the meaning of the expression "something's gotta give?"

Let's start with the word gotta; "gotta" is how it is spelled. This is a slang or informal way of pronouncing or saying the words got to, "got to," meaning must - something that must happen. You could say, "I gotta go to the bank" - I have got to go to the bank - I must go to the bank. But when we're speaking informally or quickly we may just say, "gotta," and that's how it is sometimes pronounced.

To give, normally in most circumstances as a verb, means when you take something that is yours and you pass it to someone else - you give it to someone else, but here, to give means something slightly different. To give means that you stop resisting something. You change in some way, even though you don't want to. Another verb we could use here is to yield, "yield." To give, then, means that you don't want to do something but because there's so much pressure - because there's so much force - you end up having to do something.

So, the expression "something's gotta give," which could also be something has got to or must give, means that someone must change what they're doing, even though they don't want to. We could say someone must yield - someone must let something happen that they didn't want to happen because there's so much pressure on them.



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For example, your wife wants to go on vacation this year to New York City, and you want to go the city of Chicago, and the two of you have both very strong opinions - you don't want to change. Well, something's gotta give or neither of you will have a vacation. So, if one of you doesn't change, then you won't have a vacation at all because you can't agree. So, something's gotta give, meaning one of you has to say, "Okay, you win. We'll do what you want to do." Usually that's the husband who says, "you win" to the wife; that's the way it works in my family!

If you have a question or comment, be sure to email us at eslpod@eslpod.com. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.

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