International Online Teachers Society

American Expression E2792 Roaring trade

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“Roaring trade” is a British English expression used to describe business activity that is extremely busy, successful, and profitable. When a shop, restaurant, market stall, or other business is “doing a roaring trade,” it has many customers and is selling a large amount of goods or services. For example, an ice cream shop might do a roaring trade during a hot summer afternoon when customers continuously arrive to buy cold treats.

The word “roaring” normally describes a very loud, powerful sound, such as the roar of a lion, a large crowd, a strong fire, or rushing water. In “roaring trade,” however, the word is figurative. It creates an image of energetic, vigorous activity. “Trade” refers to buying and selling goods or services. Together, the words suggest a business operating at an unusually active and successful level.

The expression is particularly common when circumstances suddenly create strong demand for a product or service. For instance, umbrella sellers may do a roaring trade when unexpected heavy rain begins in a crowded city. Cafés near a stadium might do a roaring trade before an important football match. Similarly, stores selling electric fans could experience a roaring trade during an unusually severe heat wave when large numbers of people need cooling equipment.

Although “roaring trade” usually has a positive meaning for sellers, it does not necessarily tell us exactly how much profit a business earns. A shop could sell many products but still face high costs. The phrase mainly emphasizes the high level of customer activity and sales. Therefore, when someone says a business is doing a roaring trade, we understand that demand is strong, customers are plentiful, and business appears successful.

The phrase is commonly used with the verb “do.” English speakers usually say that someone or something “does a roaring trade” or “is doing a roaring trade.” For example, “The bakery does a roaring trade in fresh bread every morning.” Another example is, “Street vendors were doing a roaring trade during the festival.” The expression can also specify the popular item by using “in,” as in “They do a roaring trade in coffee.”

There are several expressions with similar meanings. A business may be described as “booming,” “thriving,” or “doing brisk business.” If a restaurant is “packed,” it has many customers, although this does not necessarily describe sales directly. “Business is booming” is especially close in meaning to “doing a roaring trade.” However, “roaring trade” has a colorful, lively quality and is particularly associated with British usage rather than formal business or financial language.

In conclusion, “roaring trade” describes a situation in which a business is experiencing very strong demand, heavy customer activity, and impressive sales. The expression uses the powerful image of something roaring to communicate energy and success. Shops, restaurants, market stalls, cafés, online sellers, and service providers can all do a roaring trade when circumstances bring them many customers. Weather, festivals, holidays, sporting events, new trends, shortages, or seasonal demand can suddenly increase business activity. While the phrase does not provide precise information about profits, it clearly suggests that sales are moving quickly and business is flourishing. Understanding “roaring trade” helps English learners recognize a vivid expression often found in British conversation, newspapers, and reports about successful businesses. It is especially useful when describing a business that becomes exceptionally busy because many people want the same product or service at a particular time.

Questions for Discussion

1. What kinds of businesses often do a roaring trade during holidays or special events?
2. Can you think of a business in your neighborhood that is doing a roaring trade? Why is it so popular?
3. How can weather conditions cause certain businesses to do a roaring trade?
4. What can a business owner do to turn a slow business into a roaring trade?
5. Have you ever visited a shop or restaurant that was doing a roaring trade? What was the experience like?