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- Finn:** Hi Li. I didn't see you in the canteen today.
- Li:** I had to go and buy these...
- Finn:** An envelope and a nice picture of a sunny beach?
- Li:** It's the sky, Finn. My boss told me that we need blue-sky thinking and we need to push the envelope if we want to succeed in the current market.
- Finn:** Oh, right. And what are you going to do with this envelope, and this picture, Li?
- Li:** Well, the beach has a blue-sky... so maybe I need to push it into the envelope... and send it to... the clients? I'm not sure.
- Finn:** Li, I think what he wants has nothing to do with the sky or envelopes. These are two expressions people use in business nowadays. It's corporate language – or as we say, corporate speak.
- Li:** What do they mean?
- Finn:** Well, in English, 'blue-sky thinking' means having ideas which are very original, even if they're not practical or realistic. Your boss wants you to be creative.
- Li:** So 'blue-sky thinking' 代表天马行空式的思维, 即创新思维, 尽管想法不够实际或不脚踏实地, 但思路新颖, 具有原创精神。这就是你老板想看到的, 既创新思维。And what do I do with this envelope?!
- Finn:** Well, the expression 'to push the envelope' means to go even further than others and do things that might be new or risky or dangerous!
- Li:** 'To push the envelope' 意思是挑战极限。尝试他人没有做过的事情, 尽管有风险也不在话下。还是强调一种创新意识。不过我倒纳闷儿了, 为什么我老板不直接说 creative 呢?
- Finn:** Well, the world of business has its own special terms. Let's hear some examples of how to use the two expressions in today's Authentic Real English.

## **Examples**

*It's all about blue-sky thinking right now; mobile phones are no longer just for calls!*

*We're not just a normal airline. We're going to push the envelope and offer balloon flights.*

**Li:** Oh, so all my boss wants is for me to have ideas which are new and brave. What about your boss, Finn?

**Finn:** Well, my line manager told me this morning: "I expect you to think out of the box. If you don't step up to the plate by end of play you'll have to face the music".

**Li:** What on earth does he mean, Finn?

**Finn:** I really have no idea. I think we'd need another four programmes to explain those examples of corporate speak. Another time. I'm tired just thinking about it. Bye.

**Li:** Bye.