



VIDEO & PODCAST TRANSCRIPT #006

WHAT DOES MODUS OPERANDI MEAN?

Slide 1:

Hello, I'm David James.

Slide 2:

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What is the meaning of modus operandi?

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Modus operandi is a Latin phrase that means:

- a method of working
- a procedure
- a usual way of doing things

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The expression is often used in two distinct contexts:

1. criminal activity and police investigations
2. business, when describing a company's preferred way of doing business

Let's look at some examples . . .

Slide 6:

The first picture shows a group of police officers ready to conduct a raid.

The sentence example reads:

The police knew the criminal gang's modus operandi and carefully planned the raid.

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Notes: The police had been watching this criminal gang for some time and knew their method of operation which helped them to plan their raid to arrest them.

Slide 8:

The next picture shows a thief reaching through the open window of a car stealing a bag which is lying on the front seat.

The sentence example reads:

His modus operandi was to walk through car parks looking in cars for valuable items and then checking to see if the doors were unlocked.

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Notes: This petty thief's main method of working was to target car parks and look for any valuable items which had been left in the open in cars that weren't locked.

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Next we see the front of an Apple store.

The sentence example reads:

Apple's success is partly due to its modus operandi of making constant, small improvements to its products.

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Notes: Apple constantly seeks to improve its products, making gradual improvements over time – a very successful method of operation.

Slide 12:

The next picture shows a picture of author Don Tapscott beside a sign for Wall Street.

The sentence example reads:

According to author Don Tapscott, Wall Street's modus operandi almost brought down the entire global capitalist system.

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Notes: Author Don Tapscott believes that Wall Street's main method of operation was one of the reasons for the economic crisis in 2008.

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Apart from being used in the context of criminal activity or the business world, modus operandi is used in many other contexts . . .

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The next picture shows a photographer lying flat on the ground, in the middle of the street, photographing an object nearby.

The sentence example reads:

His modus operandi as a photographer was to wander the streets and capture whatever caught his eye.

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Notes: As a photographer, his usual way of working was to walk around the streets looking for things of interest to photograph.

Slide 17:

The final picture shows a chess game in progress with one contestant really concentrating.

The sentence example reads:

He tried hard to understand his opponent's modus operandi.

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Notes: This chess player is concentrating hard trying to understand his opponent's methods and way of working.

Slide 19:

So remember, when you see the phrase 'modus operandi', it refers to a method of working, a procedure, a usual way of doing things.

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