

# Biz Buzz

## Say What You Mean

If you're having trouble understanding what your colleagues are saying in meetings, take heart - you are not alone. A recent survey of office workers in Britain reported that 66% of employees used unnecessary jargon terms. 40% of those surveyed found it irritating and distracting, and 10% thought it made the most frequent users sound pretentious and untrustworthy.

This is nothing new or startling. But the list of buzz phrases that were reported as being at the same time most common and least understood was intriguing:

low-hanging fruit	sanity check	get in bed with
e-tailing	put to bed	big picture
talk off-line	whole nine yards	benchmark
blue-sky idea	helicopter view	ballpark
win-win situation	gap analysis	ticks in all the right boxes
think outside the box	touch base	strategic fit
holistic approach	rain check	bread and butter
level playing field	finger in the air	push-back

Some terms are odd and would stop almost anybody for a moment: *low-hanging fruit*, for a target that's easy to reach, *helicopter view*, for an overview, and *gap analysis*, for assessing untapped opportunities. But several such as *level playing field*, *benchmark*, and *blue-sky* have been a part of the English language for many years. What's confusing people is the context that they are used in. For example, we associate blue-sky with the great outdoors, not with creative brainstorming or thinking.

Jargon is all right in its place. But what's happening in today's business world is that we're getting bombarded with it from all directions and with greater frequency. It's clear from the survey, and from my personal experience, that people are confused by it and don't understand it. The result is that interpersonal and corporate communications are breaking down at an alarmingly high rate and it's having a negative impact on productivity and efficiency levels.

This is a good enough reason for sticking to plain simple English. Say what you mean in clear, concise terms. Keep it simple. Sometimes, less is best. If we do this, we can change the business world one word at a time and make it a much better place to work in.

Say what you mean in clear, concise terms. Sometimes, less is best.

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### ■ Six Figure Speaker Seminar with Cathleen Fillmore. Saturday, April 16th

Learn what it takes to move your speaking career to the next level and join the ranks of the six figure income speaker. Specifics can be found on Cathleen's website [www.speakersgold.com](http://www.speakersgold.com).

### ■ Unleash your Creative Potential. Thursday, April 21st

You are invited to Creativity and Innovation Day, a celebration of the unlimited creative potential in all of us, an opportunity to unleash creativity from within - within our families, our communities, our workplaces, our city, our country, our world and ourselves.

Celebrated in 106 communities across 43 countries worldwide, learn about this year's events taking place at the ROM, Toronto Zoo and many more by visiting [www.creativityday.ca](http://www.creativityday.ca).

