

Transform Vague Business Jargon into Crystal-Clear Benefits

Have you ever disdained business jargon, but found yourself using it soon afterwards? I've done that, and one of the guilty words is "leverage." You see it everywhere.

Actually, this word isn't as bad as most – at least it's an action word, a shortcut for saying you're using your current investment in or knowledge of something to gain more power. Even better, it's a word that most business people understand.

The problem with using business jargon is that it can be vague – sneakily vague because you don't realize it. Take the word "user-friendly," for example. What does user-friendly mean to Microsoft? To Apple Computers? To you? While one person may define "user-friendly" as screens with pretty colors, another person may define it as screens with a logical structure.

Besides being vague, business jargon obscures the benefits of your product or service. In a moment, I'll show you how to turn business jargon into an advantage. But first I want to tell you about the article that sparked the idea for this Monthly Makeover.

Overused Business Jargon to Avoid

David Meerman Scott wrote an article (["Cutting-Edge, Mission-Critical Analysis: Steps to Avoiding Overused Gobbledygook"](#) for [MarketingProfs.com](#)) that provides a list of gobbledygook phrases overused in press releases:

- best of breed
- breakthrough
- cutting edge
- easy to use
- enterprise class
- enterprise wide
- extensible
- flexible
- groundbreaking
- industry standard
- interoperable
- market leading
- mission critical
- next generation
- robust
- scalable
- turnkey
- user friendly
- well positioned
- world class

Some of these words are just nonsensical bragging and should be dispensed with altogether ("best of breed," "world class"). As for the rest of them, the trick is to catch yourself when you use them – then employ them to clarify what you can offer your clients.

Turn Blah into Benefits

When you write a gobbledygook word or phrase, ask yourself, "What do I *really* mean by this?" Jot down the thoughts that come to mind. For example, if you wrote this:

"EZWebShop provides the most up-to-date and *user-friendly* online shopping experience and e-commerce tools available."

... you might write ...

"User-friendly because the screens are simple with not too many fields, which means you can fill them out faster, which means you can get your Web site up faster, which means *you can start selling and making money faster.*"

Bingo! You just uncovered a benefit: "*you can start selling and making money faster*"

Now rewrite and incorporate that into your text:

"EZWebShop provides e-commerce tools that are simple to use, which means you'll get your Web site up faster and start selling sooner than you expected."

Do you see how that works? Take a moment to dig past the bland, vague business jargon, and you might be surprised to find what shines through.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Regards,



Mary

P.S. If you'd like to read the article by David Meerman Scott but would rather not sign up with Marketing Profs to read it (as is required), send me an email and I'll be happy to forward it to you.

Five Star Writing, Inc.

"Clear and concise writing for the software and manufacturing industries."

If you have a writing project coming up, I'd love to talk to you about it. Please contact me for a complimentary 30-minute consultation.

678-697-2555 ★★★★★ maryms@5starwriting.com