

NEWS

The latest business 'buzz'

Do "buzzwords" get on your nerves? Me too. Buzzwords bother us because we hear them too often and they conjure up the same thought or image repeatedly. What started as a cute metaphor or a clever use of words ends up affecting us like a punch line or movie line heard over and over. (Remember how tired you became with: "Where's the beef?" and "Life is like a box of chocolates"?)

A recent poll developed by staffing company The Creative Group, asked 250 executives which buzzwords were most annoying or overused in the creative / marketing industry.

Some of those mentioned were: "outside-the-box" (no kidding!), "critical mass", "ROI", "paradigm shift" (that one's older than cell phones), "make it pop", "take it to the next level", "organic growth", "it is what it is" (uh, yeah, what's your point?) and "low-hanging fruit". The last one makes me really uncomfortable; speaking of which, how about the expression: "open the kimono" (meaning to disclose information) – yikes, that's a bad visual. Can we just agree not to use that one anymore?

A very impressive marketing executive that I was speaking with suddenly lapsed into "buzzcrud" (OK, that's a buzzword, but at least it's fairly new). He said: "If we do our 'due diligence' and 'drill down', we should be able to determine whether the 'value proposition'..."

During that one sentence he lost most of his credibility with me. There are certain trendy words and phrases that annoy me to the point of revulsion. I think users of a lot of buzzwords are sending a message: "I don't have a good vocabulary" or "I am desperate to appear cool" or "I'm too lazy to search for a more original word."

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HUMAN CAPITAL



There are other buzzwords/phrases that didn't make the above list, but in my opinion should have. There's "resonate" as in "it resonates with me". Or how about "at the end of the day"?

Unlucky 11

I once sat through a sales presentation in which the presenter used that phrase no less than 11 times. Don't think for a moment that I was the only one counting – the audience members made jokes about him afterwards. How sick are you of hearing "going forward" or worse yet, "on a go-forward basis"? Some people still say "it's a no brainer" which is so old that using it pegs you as middle-aged (not that there's anything wrong with that, some of

my best friends – OK all of my best friends – are middle aged. But I thought the whole purpose of buzzwords was to be new and trendy?) And with the exception of air traffic controllers could the rest of us lose the reference to things on a "radar screen"?

Not that I'm an English major, but I also have a strong aversion to turning nouns into verbs.

It all started with "partying" (yes, that really wasn't a word 25 years ago), then came "messaging".

Both of these new words have made the dictionary because of common usage but they still bug me. The latest is "actioning" which, if I'm correct, still is not officially a word but I'm sick of it already. I know that language evolves, but does it have to do so from the incorrect use of words? (Now I sound like a school matron.)

If you're going to use buzzwords, at least use some newer versions. How about "plutoed" (dumped or relegated to lower status), "dataveillance" (self explanatory, I think) or "informed intuition" (think Blink by Malcolm Gladwell). Now at least you're in this decade.

While we're on the subject of words, there is one example of misuse that I must raise. If you say this word in my presence I absolutely can not help but think even less of you than if you sang off key. The "word" is irregardless. Look it up.

Really, it's not a word. I hope we're all "on the same page" on that one.

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Business Times honoured as No.1 in North America

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Winners will be recognized at the SNA Spring Publishers' and Editors' Symposium (March 27-30) in Tampa, Florida.

Journal Register Company led all companies with 147 winning entries. They were followed by Metroland Media Group (owners of the Times and Mississauga News) with 58, Lee Enterprises with 57, Sun-Times Media Group with 34, and Gannett with 29.

SNA is the only non-profit, professional trade association specifically serving the suburban newspaper industry around North America.

"There's no doubt that Mississauga is a great place to do business, and it's also a great place to report on it as well," said Ron Lenyk, publisher of both the Business Times, and its sister paper The Mississauga News.

Lenyk said the back-to-back wins by the Business Times is unprecedented and is proof positive that Mississauga is not only the best business community in North America, but has one of the best papers reporting on it. "We've always taken great pride in delivering the best package of business news to our readers and our advertisers," added Lenyk. "I'm so proud of the editorial staff and all the hard work they put into last year's products. What other city in North America can brag about having the best business paper five out of the past eight years?"

Drennan was particularly pleased that the Times' winning entry (the December '05 edition) was chosen because it included a special supplement honouring Mayor Hazel McCallion's induction into the Order of Canada.

"Our writers, photographers, graphic designers, marketing people, and sales reps, really went the extra mile to make that a special paper," he said. "We take great pride in every edition that goes out into the community, but that was a special paper, and it looks like the judges agreed."

Drennan pointed to the paper's strong corps of freelance writers, columnists and photographers, as just some of the reasons why the Times has done so well in editorial competitions over the years.

Jan Dean joined the Business Times' team as assistant editor last year, and has made a huge impact on the business community.

Drennan says producing a good paper is all about building trust with the readership and advertisers. "I think they've come to trust our judgment on what is important to report on in the business community," he said. "We're blessed with a great business community, and we're never short of good story ideas when it comes to filling up our pages."

GE's 'Berry' nice donation

GE Capital Solutions, a leading provider of financial solutions to businesses operating in a broad range of economic sectors, last month announced that it has donated 50 BlackBerry wireless telephone and e-mail devices (previously used by GE Capital Solutions employees) to the TDSB for use by deaf and hard-of-hearing students at three Toronto schools. Text messaging technology has proven to accelerate the development of reading and writing skills of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. "GE is committed to supporting community initiatives wherever we have a presence," said Peter Ringler, vice-president, Ontario Region, GE Capital Solutions. The project was driven by GE's Mississauga team. Showing off the BlackBerry's are: Peter Gauthier, senior account manager, Shona Farelly, head of Deaf Department, Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute, Peter Ringler, GE, Kathryn Hope, vice-chair, The Toronto Council of Rotary Clubs, and George Heintzman, founder of the TOILS Project, The Rotary Club Eglington.



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