

THE IMPORTANCE OF FILTERING ACTIONABLE JARGON INTO BUCKETS



BY DAN GOLDGEIER

I was getting downloaded on some new deliverables that'd be coming into the shop soon, when suddenly I had an epiphany: It seems that folks in advertising and marketing have lost the ability to communicate simply.

Somewhere on the road to ideation and proprietary Brandilization processes, agency folks collectively decided that the only way to gain respect among the legions of management consultants and branding gurus was to imitate their BS.

We speak a very unique language in our meetings and daily interactions. It's a mash-up of business double-speak and artistic self-importance. And some of the terms are simply laughable. For example:

Killer book – A killer book is neither a “killer” nor a “book.” It's a great portfolio. Calling it a “killer book” doesn't make the work any better. A biography of Charles Manson is a killer book. A bomb-making manual is a killer book. Your portfolio isn't one.

Buckets – Sometimes, during a brainstorm, the downpour of ideas becomes such a vast pool of genius that someone needs to mop it all up and place it into a number of “buckets.” Hopefully without spilling any of that brilliance.

Widows and Orphans – More morbid terms. Real-life killers often leave behind many widows and orphans. You'd think a so-called “killer book” would have lots of widows and orphans. But if you're a designer, your work can't be killer if there are widows and orphans.

Brief – Never seen one that was.

Loyalty program – Sorry, there's no such thing. I save 30 cents off a gallon of milk at Kroger because I have a plastic card on my keychain that says I'm a member of a “loyalty program.” Nice discount, but it doesn't make me loyal. Any store that's cheaper, closer or better will get my loyalty, at least for the day.

Viral – I don't know who first looked at their marketing budget and said, “Now, if only we could be as successful as AIDS or herpes. Let's do something the great unwashed consumers could spread without more media dollars.” And alas, viral marketing caught on. No actual viral campaign has spread quite like the mere concept of doing a viral marketing campaign has. There are even people who refer to a viral campaign's “infection rate,” defined as the ease at which it can be forwarded and spread.

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VOICE

EVERYONE'S GOT A VOICE. LET YOURS BE HEARD. LOUD AND CLEAR.

“ In regard to the article (“Enough is Enough Advertising” July+Aug 2007) written by Bob Kodzis – I LOVED this article!!! Not my chosen profession, but I work for a company as a marketing manager, with no control of the advertising. I am so tired of everything that is copied or overdone, and that includes syndicated TV, movies, etc. I love the computer and the directions it's been able to take us, but what happened to true creativity? Speaking as a consumer, I am tired of the bandwagon mentality our society has taken! I hope this article makes people think about what they are putting out there, and we start seeing more original and creative creations!

Melissa Miller
Vivid Perspective, LLC



“I will be assigning (Rock for Hunger 2 poster contest sponsored by *Create Magazine*) tomorrow. This is a terrific opportunity for the class. I love ‘real world’ stuff.”

Mimi Botscheller
Instructor, Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale

JULY+AUG 2007 ISSUE Q+A



What is the best part about the new Create Network?

“For me, I like how we can post our news and blogs. It's a great free service for PR.”

Calvin Lee
Mayhem Studios, Createmagazine.com/mayhemstudios

VOICE

WHERE IN THE WORLD?



Above: Breeze Design Studio's Rukmal Fernando represents for *Create Magazine* at SIGGRAPH 2007 in San Diego, CA.

Right: Ben Henderson standing victorious in front of the Colosseum after battling countless gladiators in Rome, Italy, while backpacking through Europe.



Above: While vacationing in Florence, Italy, Joseph Reilly snapped a picture of his wife, Cory, reading *Create* in front of an Italian church.



Create Magazine is popping up around the corner and across the globe! If you've got a picture of yourself with a *Create Magazine* in hand while traveling, we want to see it! Snap a picture and e-mail the photo and caption to buzz@createmagazine.com.



QUESTION OF THE ISSUE

Why do you enter competitions like the Create Awards?

E-mail your answers to feedbackmw@createmagazine.com and sound off!

◀ *cont. from 17*

Change agent — Change doesn't need an agent. Or an advocate. Most people don't like change. But things just change, whether you like it or not. Go with it.

Direct marketing — This is a cute euphemism for "junk mail" or "spam." Somehow it's more directly targeted to me because my name is on a list of double-jointed, PBR-drinking cable subscribers. Your e-mails and junk mail may have my name directly inserted into them, but they're still mostly auto-generated, and I throw them directly into the trash. Why is it that a 4 percent response rate on a direct mail piece is terrific? Directly speaking, it's usually because the creative is crap.

Thought Leader — Back in high school, if you told people you were cool, you weren't. Same goes for calling yourself a "thought leader." If you have to go around telling people you are one, you aren't.

Deliverable — Actually, this is a bad one. A really bad one. Agencies aren't paid for their thinking, or to propose ideas that might improve a client's business, like beefing up customer service or retraining employees. No, ad agencies get paid for deliverables, like a pizza parlor. Would you like a direct mail piece with everything in it and extra logos to go? Because you can bill a client for that deliverable.

People are under the impression that it's more indicative of gravitas to use polysyllabic terminology to underscore the imperative nature of an initiative. But it's not. If you spend any portion of your day in meetings or presentations, then you're accustomed to hearing doublespeak. The problem is when it becomes a game of one-upmanship. Someone in the room uses jargon, then it's up to someone else in the room to either agree with what's been said, or increase the level of BS.

How do you let the air out of a roomful of windbags? There are two good ways.

When somebody says something so confusing, so intentionally pointless, give them a quizzical look and say, "Huh?"

And the other one, when someone uses overwrought language to explain the most simple of ideas, or says something painfully obvious, just reply with a happily sarcastic "Duh!"

Those two words will say a whole lot more than any marketing doublespeak ever could. Try it. Who knows, you may find a breakthrough, actionable way to cut through the clutter at your next ideation engagement. ■

Want to sound off about your market? Contact contribute@createmagazine.com.

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