

# 50 Things You Must Stop Saying At Work

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Do these phrases wind you up? If you are like most normal people then every time someone in your office or in a meeting uses one of these words it feels a bit like someone is sticking a needle in your arm. We can all cope with once or twice but continuous bombardment of jargon-ridden management drivel makes people want to explode.

I visited a company once where the senior management handed out “Buzzword Bingo” cards before the annual meeting — and then had one of their presentations interrupted when an employee jumped up yelling “BINGO!”

It was a lighthearted attempt to highlight the problem with business speak that invades our brains and pervades our conversations. A while back, I wrote a post on 30 phrases we should stop using at work and invited you to add your favourites — or least favourites! — to the list, and more than 7,500 people did!

It’s not that these words and phrases are all bad, or that you should never use them, but that they tend to get overused, and over use tends to make people sound pretentious, or worse, downright stupid.

People want to hear normal language, even in a business setting. Clarity is key. Of course, management jargon can be useful in some cases because it helps us to make a point clearly and succinctly, but more often than not, the words and phrases become so cliched that they lose all meaning.

See if any of these words and phrases pop into your business speak and then try to find a simpler way to say the same thing.

1. **Reach Out** – Just say call, speak, email etc. Unless you’re physically going to touch someone.
2. **Take off line** - Talk about this later.
3. **Shift the goal post** - This is just a sports metaphor for saying your goal was out of reach.
4. **Utilise** – use!
5. **Elephant in the room** - Unless it’s an actual elephant, this is pretty cliché.
6. **World-class** - Has little to no actual meaning.
7. **Let’s run this up the flagpole** - Get feedback.
8. **Socialise documents** - Are you taking them to a cocktail party?
9. **Seamless** - Unless you’re a clothing manufacturer, no.
10. **Get our ducks in the row** - Organise.
11. **Monetise** - Frankly, everything in business is “monetised,” so why do we need to talk about it?
12. **Workable Solution** - As opposed to the non-workable ones.
13. **Engage** - Be more specific here: show up, pay attention, comment, like, etc.



14. **Value-add** - Everything you do should have value. Period.
15. **Transformational Change** - What other kind of change is there?
16. **Circle back around** - follow up
17. **Leverage** - Usually has to do with making more money with less work.
18. **To be fair** - Usually means you're not going to be.
19. **Let's re-group** - Start over.
20. **OMG, LOL** - Never appropriate for business.
21. **It is what it is** - So why are we talking about it?
22. **All Hands on Deck** - Not unless you work on a ship.
23. **Apples-to-apples** - Direct comparison.
24. **Actionable** - Usually redundant. Do we want anything that *isn't* actionable?
25. **Bad Guy** - Usually from a boss who actually *is* the bad guy.
26. **Game changer** - Almost never actually is.
27. **Low hanging fruit** - It's much easier to say 'easy.'
28. **Accelerate** - Hurry up.
29. **Crystallise** - Make something clear.
30. **Bandwidth** - Attention, time, etc.
31. **Beat the Street** - If you've got a nickname for Wall Street, we don't really want to talk to you.
32. **Thought-leadership** - An example of, "if you are one, you don't have to talk about it."
33. **Bring to the Table** - Show up and contribute.
34. **All-in Effort** - As opposed to the half-arsed effort?
35. **Synergy** - Something CEO types LOVE to say.
36. **Bull by the Horns** - Only relevant to cowboys.
37. **Button-up** - Finish.
38. **Sustainable** - So often used as to be practically meaningless.
39. **Capabilities** - What we do.
40. **Customer-centric** - When you actually are, you don't have to talk about it much.
41. **Downsize** - Let's just call a duck a duck, shall we?
42. **Elevator Pitch** - Have you *ever* had the opportunity to pitch something in an elevator? I'm just curious.
43. **Face Time** - This is an Apple product, not a management strategy.
44. **Incentivize** - If you have to incentivize something, it's probably incredibly boring and awful.
45. **Ninja** - Unless you carry a sword, you're not one.
46. **Par for the Course** - Just makes me think of people in funny golf hats.
47. **Paradigm Shift** - Change
48. **Strategic Partner** - Hopefully all your partners are strategic. You're not just choosing partners willy-nilly, are you?
49. **Proactive** - Take action.
50. **Outside the Box** - Should be outside your vocabulary.