

Get With the Programme and Sunset that Jargon

Over 40% of office workers despise the use of office jargon phrases according to a recent survey conducted by recruitment firm Office Angels. 55% of office workers admit to using some form of office jargon and 20% feel compelled to use it simply to keep up with their colleagues. Love it or hate it, office jargon is here to stay so here's our quick guide to the best - and the worst - office jargon.

Workplace jargon is certainly nothing new although in days past it tended to be related to a specific trades or professions. Today there are many generic terms in common use which cover a multitude of work situations. The main criticism of office jargon is that it can lead to confusion, embarrassment, or even resentment amongst colleagues who simply don't understand what the terms mean. Many feel the use of jargon can complicate working relationships, preferring a simple, more direct approach to communications. Indeed some firms have gone as far as introducing a lighthearted ban on its use, with offenders paying a fine to charity for 'jargon abuse'. Whatever your view, it's as well to be equipped with the basics of office jargon terminology so here we give you a quick overview of some of the commonest terms...



- Finger in the air – a rough estimate, based on the idea of testing for wind direction.
- Ticking the right boxes – meeting objectives / fulfilling the right criteria.
- Put to bed – finish the task in hand.
- Thinking outside the box – taking a fresh perspective on an issue.
- Adding value – adding something other than cash to a business venture or relationship.
- Synergy – a mutual benefit for both parties.
- Keeping your powder dry – not divulging information until 100% ready to do so
- Face time – meeting with someone face to face rather than by phone or email.
- Drill down – get into more detail.
- Bricks-2-clicks – an established company going online.
- Bandwidth – having the capacity to do something.
- Getting in on the ground floor – getting in on the start of something new.
- Taking something offline – discussing something later rather than in a meeting.
- Taking ownership – taking responsibility for a project.
- Hit the ground running – being able to get started straightaway.
- To sunset something – to phase something out, eg, a product or service.

Interestingly enough...

Office jargon is more prevalent in the South East than in any other region of the UK. It tends to be more widespread in the creative business sectors such as advertising and PR although the IT industry is also notorious for its extensive use of jargon. It is estimated that around 40,000 combinations of jargon are in use throughout UK workplaces. Many originate from the US or via the internet. 'Thought grenade' is tipped to be the favourite office jargon term in 2007. What does it mean? It refers to an explosively good idea.

TIP: If in doubt, avoid jargon and just say what you mean.