

## TEN BUSINESS WORDS TO BAN!

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I'd like to present a short list of the most pompous business words and phrases I think are overused and definitely should be banned from the business world:

### 10. As well as

The three word version of "and," which should always be replaced by it, unless you are MacGyver trying to delay a mad scientist from blowing up the world by speaking as much as possible.

### 9. And/or

An editor once told me, "And-slash-or means 'and' or 'or,' so pick one, unless you have no idea what you're trying to say, in which case, by all means use it."

### 8. People manager

As opposed to "Goldfish supervisor?" Seriously, this is a "try not to offend anyone term," that makes managers of people and non-people (whatever that is) feel less like managers or people and more like guppies.

### 7. Value, valued, valuing

Like "bad" in the '70s, "value" now seems to connote its opposite. When someone says, "You and your ideas are valued," you know both you and your ideas are a step closer to the door.

### 6. Value Add

Like value, "value add" doesn't mean "value" or "add." It is a substitute for the potentially embarrassing, "I don't understand." As in, "Yes, but what's the value add to take away from your presentation?"

### 5. Take Away

You take away food in a paper bag with a clown on it. Period.

### 4. Net-net

Like "irregardless," this phrase is meaningful when chopped in half, and meaningless in whole--except to indicate that the speaker doesn't know what "net" means.

### 3. At the End of the Day

It's omnipresent. Google shows 15+ million hits. One source says it was the most written cliché of 2006. Otherwise respectable people use it like Sarah Palin used "ya know," and chances are you'll hear it several times per meeting--if you don't just run away to get to the end of your day without screaming.

### 2. Out of pocket

This means you were on company business and using your own funds. But people increasingly use it when they are unreachable, on vacation, or even just in the restroom and away from their Blackberry (*you* don't email from there, right?). Instead, just say "away." Otherwise I will keep imagining a giant pocket somewhere that you couldn't get yourself back into.

## 1. Individual

The five-syllable "Individual" reduces us to police speak, "The individual exited the vehicle" instead of "He got out of the car." Like the word "troop" for "soldier," it's a way to distance the speaker from actual people, which is potentially useful if you want to say "30,000 troops were lost," which sounds far less bloody than "30,000 soldiers died." In business, "individual" gives me a similar chill. Especially in the phrase that unites two words from this list: "We value the individual." We all know what that means.

This list is by all means incomplete, as there are a lot of meaningless and ridiculous words and phrases being used and thrown around in the workplace.

What words make your skin crawl? What words and phrases make you want to lunge at the throat of the co-worker who utters them?

*Article by David Silverman*

*<http://blogs.hbr.org/silverman/2009/02/10-business-words-to-ban.html>*