

Buzz word bingo – play it and win!

By Lyndsay Swinton

Playing buzz word bingo is a great way to cut the cr*p out of meetings. But before we get to the game itself, let's look at the effects of poor business communication...

Have you ever considered harnessing the hot air generated in meetings as an alternative energy source?

If meetings are getting in the way of your real work, read on and discover how to recognise and deal with hot air generators.

Buzz Word Examples (or corporate BS)

- “We have proactively addressed the issue with our competitor strategy”.
- “Our newly formulated game plan will get us back in the ball park and drive results”
- “The bar has been raised and we shall leverage our knowledge base to fast track the solution implementation”

Total, utter, nonsense! But in the meeting room, how many of us would be nodding knowledgeably, agreeing with the speaker? Enough is enough! Take back control and save time by using plain English.

BUZZ WORD BINGO

How to play:

- Create a 5 x 5 grid and insert your favourite buzz words.
- Take this card to your next meeting and mark off squares as they come up
- You win when you've checked off 5 buzz word squares.
- Variations – check off 5 squares in a diagonal or horizontal or vertical line.

Here's an example **buzz word bingo template** to get you started. Click [here](#) for a larger version.

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|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Out of the Loop | Reap the rewards | At the end of the day | Think outside the box | Benchmark |
| Deliverable | Ball park figure | Bottom line | Back on track | Slippery slide |
| Customer centric | Touch base | Take that offline | Value added | Quality management |
| Take stock | Brainstorm | Go the extra mile | Client focused | Win-win situation |
| Leverage | Ground rules | First past the post | Strategic fit | Quick fix |

Start your campaign for plain English by suggesting you play buzz word bingo with your colleagues. Okay, you may never actually play the game, but the mere suggestion* of playing it can be an opener for discussing how you talk to each other.

Next time you meet, say "*Bingo!*" for each buzz word you spot. Over time, meetings will speed up as you build the reputation for being straight talking, and people spot their own BS before it happens.

So now you know, give it a go!

*Warning - if your colleagues have had a collective sense of humour bypass, play virtual buzz word bingo instead (that is, in your own head). It'll encourage you to challenge hot air generators and spot those who don't know what they're talking about. ;-)

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