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2010 Vocabulary Update

Since we have now ventured into another decade, we must once again commit to stop doing things we shouldn't do and start doing things we should. These "resolutions" are more tradition than a strategy but I believe they do have value. My resolutions vary but I usually try to reserve a few of them to rid myself of tired cliches, words or phrases that permeate my business vocabulary.

I do like words, especially nice long words that describe something that can be described by another word with far less letters. 'Fred is difficult' doesn't sound nearly as intellectual as 'Fred is fastidious.' If you choose the right word, you can give someone a pretty good jab without them even realizing it. It is bad form of course but oddly satisfying.

Now that we have embarked on 2010, I decided to give you three words that I am trying to commit to eliminating from my vocabulary, or at least reduce their frequency. Then I give you two words that are going to replace them. Please consider following my lead.

Words to eliminate

"Apps" - This is the slang term used to describe software applications. It has been around a while but with the popularity of the iPhone, I am hearing the word a lot lately. Would you stop using a slang term if I told you that 1/3 of the people hearing it have no idea what you mean? We spent 40 years getting used to the words "program" and "software." And then what do we do? We chuck them. If you worked in a restaurant at some point in your life, apps are nachos, chicken fingers and Buffalo wings. I see the potential for bad things if you confuse them. Goodbye apps.

"Metric" - Being a grade school student through parts of the 1960s and 1970s means this word has a dark place in my psyche. We who were being educated at that time had to deal with the introduction of the metric system debacle - and we're still ticked off about it. Just when I thought the word was gone forever, it gets a resurgence in the last decade as it is now used as the term that describe a variety of measurements in a business. We couldn't just say key 'measures.' No, we have to say key 'metrics.' Those of us born in the 50s and 60s are in the prime of our business careers and we say that "metrics" is outta here. Don't push us.

"%*@^!*#+" - Cussing, swearing, foul language, whatever the term(s), should be avoided at all costs in business. Of course there are those business relationships that have transcended and become friendships. Often loose language is the norm in those situations. I would caution you however to be mindful when a third person is introduced to your conversations. Unless you are certain that either: a) The person is not important to your business prospects; or b) They are OK with foul language, you may expletive yourself right out of a business opportunity.

Two words that need to return to a more prominent place in our vocabulary

"Charisma" - Charisma is a cool, positive word. Use it to describe your team (charismatic), or use it on your team to describe a cultural trait you'd like your business and those who work for it to possess. When you say that someone has charisma, you are saying something very special about that person. When you demonstrate charisma, people will be drawn to you, especially potential customers. Reward team members based in part on their level of charisma and you'll always excel with customer relations.

"Collaborate" - Another "C" word and it has four syllables which gets it high marks in my grading system. We should be seeking to collaborate more on decision-making. If done correctly, a group of three collaborating on a problem will come to a better solution than one person, or even two. If we collaborate with a related business in our marketing efforts we may find we can save money and reach a better and bigger audience. Collaborating means working together to come up with better ideas, answers and profits. Ask more people in 2010 to collaborate with you on ...whatever. Doesn't matter because I know you'll be better for it.

So goes my 2010 list of words to delete and add. I am happy with the list but I bet it is not as good as it could have been. I forgot to collaborate with anyone before deciding and writing this.

See you next month.



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