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Key Word	Acronyms, Buzzwords	
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THE BIGGEST WORD I KNOW IS DELICATESSEN

File No. 3.030305 | 2017-06-01

Quick Summary: Use term-of-art words and abbreviations only when absolutely necessary.

Abstract:

Virtually all business segments have their own key buzzwords that may be foreign to others without intimate knowledge of the segment. Use those words sparingly and only with complete explanations to avoid confusing or turning off your audience.

Before I received my two engineering degrees and worked in the telecommunications sector for forty years, the biggest word I knew was “delicatessen.” With all those years behind me, I know many other big words such as superhetrodyne, phsometrically-weighted picowatts, and orthogonal frequency division multiple access. I also know lots of TLAs and FLAs – three and four-letter acronyms. “dBrnC0” and “KMc” used to roll off my tongue. However, I have also learned not to use them except in special circumstances. We all have egos; for most of us, it is hard to say, “I don’t understand.” Invariably, people nod their heads in agreement when they often do not know what you are saying. Further, while you have moved on with your presentation, their wheels are turning, trying to figure out what you meant by that “big word” or abbreviation. The exception can be when you are communicating with a group of your peers who expect you to use the “right” terms almost as a key to the membership in their club. To be fair, using the correct terms and TLAs (Three Letter Acronyms) speeds the communication process with those audiences.

This is not the case when you are dealing with financial investors. For the most part, they will not have the same in-depth knowledge as you do. Although successful in their own right, they simply cannot be experts in every market segment opportunity that is presented to them. The last thing you want to do is befuddle them with terms and expressions. You want them to focus on your overall message, which is how they will make money by investing in you and your company. If you are addressing a mixed audience, be sure to explain any “funny” terms you are using, spell out TLAs, and take a moment to paraphrase in layman’s terms. Don’t fall into the trap of trying to impress them with what you know about the business by using buzzwords. It is far more critical for the investors to have a clear understanding of the business aspects of your opportunity.

Invariably, if your investor presentation is well received and the investor would like to move forward, they will pass along your material to others. Those individuals who do not have the benefit of hearing you explain the specialized terms may be confused. To minimize this situation, include a glossary with

simple English language explanations of the terms as an appendix. It is easy to do and will help those who do not understand the terms, and it will also show those who do understand them that you do too.

As one final example to drive home the point, going to a restaurant for lunch and asking for a BLT seems innocent enough. However, if you go abroad and order a BLT, who knows what you will get – one thing is for sure: it probably won't be a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich!