

# THE BUSINESS BULLSHIT BOOK

THE WORLD'S MOST **COMPREHENSIVE** DICTIONARY



**2019 NEW MATERIAL**

**All tip and no iceberg:** 1. Australian politician Paul Keating on a political opponent. 2. Excellent analogy for people who flatter to deceive.

**Anticipointment:** 1. The moment when consumer excitement about an over-marketed product or service gives way to disillusion. 2. True of pretty much every product launch, despite the best efforts of the PR industry.

**Architect (vb.):** 1. A person who designs buildings. 2. Frustratingly now turned into a verb, as in “*Julian is going to architect the strategy for you.*”

**Audio branding:** 1. Attaching a tune to a brand or product. 2. Reasonable idea that you can make a product synonymous with a melody, something that jingle writers have known for decades. (*see Sonic logo*)

**Back, got your, have your:** 1. Have your best interests at heart; defend your corner for you; stick up for you. 2. Pretend to do all these things, and then run for the hills at the first sign of trouble. (*see Back stabbing*)

**Backstop:** 1. Baseball term for a screen or fence behind the home plate that keeps the ball on the playing field. 2. Another example of an American sports term being hijacked in the UK, this time to describe the maintenance of an invisible border in Ireland; the reasons for using this phrase are unclear.

**Barnacle:** 1. Marine arthropod that is very hard to shift. 2. Unwanted third party contractor whose contract is infuriatingly binding in the long term, even though they are doing a crap job.

**BATs:** 1. Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent. 2. Chinese FANGs – online companies that dominate economies. (*see FANGs*)

**Briefy:** 1. Like a brief, but not one. 2. Rather twee adjective to describe a verbal or written request to do something, that turns out not to be a clear brief at all; often the recipient doesn’t realize this until the requester is long gone and the task is apparently underway.

**Bropropriation:** 1. An elision of brother and appropriation; men appropriating credit for work done by women, or ideas generated by them. 2. Coined by feminists to expose men who steal their ideas and masquerade them as their own. (*see Mansplain*)

**Buttress (vb.):** 1. Supporting stone or brick structure. 2. “*I support that view*”, as in “*I buttress Nigel’s stance on this,*” often used in overlong conference calls to break the monotony. (*see Scaffold*)

**Camping:** 1. Sleeping in a tent in the open air. 2. Deceptive modern verb for moving into offices that don’t (yet) have any decent facilities; euphemism for trying to make the best of an endless expanse of floor space, a few screens, and one toilet and a kettle between a hundred bewildered staff who were convinced they were moving up to better things.

**Cart abandonment:** 1. Putting items in online shopping carts and then not buying them. 2. The bane of marketers the world over; just when you think you have a sale, you don’t; usually followed by extensive retargeting.

**Cloffice:** 1. Closet office. 2. Tiny room offered after a hard-won promotion that turns out to double as the boss’s laundry cupboard.

**Coconut.** 1. A member of the palm tree family and the only living species of the genus *Cocos*. 2. Fast growing business, after a rather peculiar pronouncement by the ousted WPP executive

Martin Sorrell, who said of his new venture: “*The peanut has now morphed into a coconut and is growing and ripening*”; totally failure to grasp the basics of how plants actually work.

**Cruft:** 1. A jargon word for anything that is left over, redundant and getting in the way. 2. Particularly relevant for defective, superseded, useless, superfluous, or dysfunctional elements in computer software; badly designed, unnecessarily complicated, or unwanted – and there’s plenty of that in the world of technology.

**Cyberloafing:** 1. Wasting time on twitter and Instagram. 2. Near universal phenomenon that is engulfing the world, and starting at a worryingly young age. (*see Cybernating; Infobesity*)

**DACH:** 1: Germany (D), Austria (A) and Switzerland (CH). 2. Another in a long line of regional acronyms; by the time you have asked: “*What is DACH?*” it would have been quicker to say “*Germany, Austria and Switzerland.*” (*see APAC; EMEA; JPAC*)

**Day-one capability:** 1. Ability to do the job on the first day. 2. Full-scale meltdown from the word go, most commonly in large infrastructure and IT projects that are already broken the moment they are launched.

**Die in a ditch:** 1. Die in a ditch. 2. Ridiculous exaggeration that attempts to morph pathetic stubbornness into a virtue, as in “*I’ll die in a ditch over this issue,*” which the person saying it clearly will not.

**Douche:** 1. Literally, a French shower. 2. Idiot, fool, someone who constantly annoys others with their stupidity. (*see Douche bag; Douche balloon; Doucheboard; Douche canoe*)

**Douche bag:** 1. Literally, a French shower bag. 2. Extension of douche, and probably more so. (*see Douche; Douche balloon; Doucheboard; Douche canoe*)

**Douche balloon:** 1. Literally, a French shower balloon. 2. Someone who is so inflated with their own doucheness that they walk around with a false sense of importance. (*see Douche; Douche bag; Doucheboard; Douche canoe*)

**Douche canoe:** 1. Literally, a French shower boat. 2. An idiot who cruises around spreading their idiocy to everyone else. (*see Douche; Douche bag; Douche balloon; Doucheboard*)

**Ego warrior:** 1. Self-obsessed eco warrior. 2. Annoying person who has become a vegetarian or vegan, who won’t stop talking about it (*see Born again Christian*)

**FANGs:** 1. Facebook Amazon Netflix Google. 2. Root of all internet evil to some, sometimes extended to FAANGs to include Apple. (*see BATs*)

**First-tier:** 1. The first level or row. 2. Somewhat sanctimonious word pairing now turned into an adjective to suggest that something is top rate, when it usually isn’t. (*see Premium*)

**Flexension:** 1. Flexible extension; desire to flex tension, for reasons unknown. 2. Abject failure to make any kind of decision whatsoever; infinite run of time in which to procrastinate.

**Foreground (vb.):** 1. To bring forward or make more prominent. 2. Nasty appropriation of a perfectly reasonable noun into a verb, as in “*It was inevitable that the government would foreground this.*” (*See Foreshadow*)

**Foreshadow:** 1. Be a warning or indication of (a future event). 2. Now bastardised as a verb roughly meaning to provide an early glimpse of, or introduction to, as in “*Brad, could you foreshadow the presentation to the client while I plug in the laptop?*” (*see Foreground*)

**FUD:** 1. Fear, uncertainty and doubt. 2. Frequently intentionally manufactured, nefarious companies and governments use these tactics to keep everyone petrified so that they sell more or win votes.

**Full funnel:** 1. New business opportunities replete. 2. Somewhat pompous description of any activity that suggests that we couldn't possibly take any more business even if we wanted to because we are so successful, as "*We are bursting with full funnel fulfillment at the moment, Derek.*"

**Full-spectrum:** 1. Covering everything; panoply; entire scope. 2. Nothing of the sort; often used as a catch-all for describing IT 'solutions' that claim to be a panacea; first refuge of snake oil salesmen the world over.

**Henrys:** 1. High earners, not rich yet. 2. Millennials who aspire to greater things, but still make withdrawals from the bank of Mum and Dad.

**Human-focused:** 1. Concentrating on people. 2. Somewhat ludicrous adjective drummed up by the communications industry to emphasise that they know their customers really well, as though you might want someone other than a human to buy your product.

**Infobesity:** 1. Feeling of overload created by excess cyberloafing. 2. Feeling overwhelmed due to too much online gorging. (*see Cyberloafing*)

**JPAC:** 1 Japan and Pacific region. 2. Amusing attempt by the Japanese to assert their authority over a region more typically dominated by the city hubs of Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing and Shanghai, although the Japanese would doubtless not find it amusing at all. (*see APAC; DACH; EMEA*)

**Lumbersexual:** 1. Young urban man who cultivates an appearance suggestive of a rugged outdoor lifestyle. 2. Hairy bloke with a beard and a check shirt, found slumped over a desk ruing the fact that he has never left the city or even seen a mountain.

**Male, pale and Yale:** 1. Male pale and stale, but all well educated and American. 2. Typical of hundreds of conferences in which women, non-whites and anyone not privileged enough to go to smart university are conspicuously absent.

**Manterruption:** 1. A man interrupting. 2. Standard procedure for inappropriate men as soon as a woman starts talking, although technically a man can also manterrupt another man. (*see Mansplain*)

**Mobile first:** 1. Designing online services to suit mobile devices more so than desktop computers. 2. In extreme cases, pulling the plug on landlines completely, as has been done by several companies desperate to cut costs.

**Nomophobia:** 1. Fear of being without a Smartphone, or being out of signal range. 2. Literally, no mobile phobia; sad state for anyone who really can't exist without their device. (*see Phast*)

**Non-skin in the game people:** 1. People who do not have a vested interest in something – usually finance in an enterprise of some sort. 2. A brother or sister to one of the crown princes of bollocks – having skin in the game; the idea that someone should be played in order to be committed to a cause is, frankly, pure bullshit. (*see Skin in the game*)

**No platforming:** 1. Being denied a platform on which to speak. 2. Tricky area in which people argue about whether those with unpleasant views should be refused publicity, or granted freedom of speech since we live in a democracy; political hot potato best avoided.

**Participation evangelist:** 1. Someone who gets involved and is enthusiastic about something. 2. Usually a Z list celebrity desperate to pay the bills, paid for by an equally desperate brand vainly trawling for hapless customers. (*see Digital native*)

**Patriarchy:** 1. A system of society or work where men rule and women are subjugated. 2. Most company set-ups despite all best efforts to date.

**Phast:** 1. A phone fast. 2. Self-imposed period of abstinence away from your phone. Often triggers nomophobia. (*see Nomophobia*)

**Real time planning:** 1. Seeing what is happening online and adjusting accordingly. 2. Reacting; the whole point about planning is that you plan – in advance; so-called real time planning is making it up as you go along when it isn't going as predicted (*see Real time optimization*)

**Rebundling:** 1. Putting services back together in a group when previously they were disaggregated. 2. Nonsensical twaddle from trendy businesses talking to themselves, often resulting in farcical corporate straplines such as *Rebundling the unbundled*. (*see Hyperbundled*)

**Robocalypse:** 1. The end of conventional jobs due to artificial intelligence. 2. Paranoid nonsense peddled by anyone destined to have you believe that they are seconds away from annihilation. (*see Armageddon plan*)

**Role model (vb.):** 1. Respected person whose standards and actions prove a source of inspiration. 2. Awful transposition into a verb, as in: “*Dave I think you should role model this for Angela.*”

**Scaffold (vb.):** 1. Temporary support structure whilst building works are undertaken; 60s pop group known for the ditty ‘Lily The Pink.’ 2. Another annoying example of a noun becoming a verb, as in “*Crispin, can you scaffold this project for the client?*” (*see Buttress*)

**Siloed services:** 1. Services that operate completely separately. 2. Infuriating piss-poor services that purport to come from the same company but are incapable of coordinating information or logistics; total lack of communication. (*see Left hand not knowing what the right is for; Silos, working in*)

**Sonder:** 1. The realization that each random passer-by is living a life as vivid and complex as one's own - populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness. 2. A word coined by the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, which has generated huge debate online about whether it is acceptable to simply create your own word; intriguing in one respect, and utterly pointless in another.

**Sonic logo:** 1. Melody or sound bite that enables you to identify a brand without seeing it. 2. Jingle, in modern parlance. (*see Audio branding*)

**Sororicide:** 1. The killing of one's sister. 2. Women denigrating other women, usually in the office; cardinal sin amongst women – doing each other down when the real fight should be with men. (*see Patriarchy, Womenemy*)

**Soup to nuts:** 1. From beginning to end. 2. American English idiom derived from the description of a full course dinner that starts with soup and finishes with nuts. (*see Full Monty, the; Chapter and verse; Kitchen sink*)

**Stenographucker:** 1. Man who asks a woman to take notes in a meeting. 2. Extremely common phenomenon whereby the man casually leans across the room and says: “*Would you mind taking the notes Jenny?*” to assert his authority in front of clients or colleagues.

**Techlash:** 1. Backlash against technology companies. 2. Having binged on all things internet, millions are now up in arms about the data and inappropriate photos they ill-advisedly posted on the web when they were either drunk, or just younger. (see *FANGs*)

**TIA:** 1. Thanks in advance. 2. Another in the extremely long line of acronyms generated by those too lazy to speak properly. Why not simply say “*Thanks in advance?*”

**Trying to put a brake on a canoe:** 1. Embarking on something utterly futile. 2. Hilarious idea that a watercraft can be halted by a ground-based technology; another in a long line of metaphors from stressed out executives attempting the impossible. (see *Nailing a jelly to the wall, trying to: Banana, stabbing a seal with a; Grasping at fog*)

**Whataboutery/ism;** 1. The technique of responding to any tricky accusation or difficult question by making a counter accusation or by raising an entirely issue. 2. Last refuge of anyone boxed into an intellectual corner, as in “*Racism? Yes, but what about global warming?*”

**Womenemy:** 1. A woman who is an enemy. 2. Most commonly used by women, about women who undermine them. (see *Sororicide*)

**ZOUD:** 1. Zone of uncomfortable debate. 2. Term coined by Blakey & Day in their study of high-performing teams at the Cranfield School of Management; most people in business chat around the issues and don’t confront anything, but as soon as the ZOUD is broached, the elephant in the room may well finally be addressed. (see *Elephant in the room*)