

THE BUSINESS BULLSHIT BOOK

THE WORLD'S MOST **COMPREHENSIVE** DICTIONARY



2020 NEW MATERIAL

Aptitude + Attitude = Altitude: 1. If you know what you're doing and have the right approach, you will succeed. 2. Classically contrived motivational mantra designed to improve performance, but most likely achieving the opposite. (*see Team, there's no I in; Teamwork makes the dream work*)

Bandwidth hog: 1. Someone who is online persistently at home, thereby reducing the ability of neighbours to receive a decent connection. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, internet use was up 35% in many areas, causing consistent dropouts for many.

Bizmeth: 1. Business method. 2. Ridiculous portmanteau that achieves pretty much nothing, perhaps a saving of around one second, with no increase in meaning.

Cause washing: 1. Touting a noble cause without following through with authenticity. 2. Deceitfully liking every charity cause possible on social media whilst simultaneously donating no time or money to help anybody or anything; self-glorification under the guise of good citizenship. (*See Purpose washing; Slactivism*)

Dataful: 1. Literally, full of data. 2. Word coined by John Maeda, who asserts that: "Being dataful is about leveraging quantitative data together with qualitative data as two key methods by which one's "gut intuition" can be challenged for its most arrogant biases." Quite.

Employalty: 1. Elision of employee and loyalty. 2. Somewhat twee but nevertheless appropriate idea that if you treat your staff right, they will stick with you – something that many companies find notoriously hard to do.

ESG: 1. Environmental, social and corporate governance. 2. Rather pompous catch-all for a range of policy and committee activities that usually allow people to sit around talking about theory whilst ignoring what will happen in practice.

Freemium: 1. Portmanteau of free and premium. 2. Somewhat antithetical idea that something can be both highly desirable and completely free; possible, but more likely some sort of high value incentive to lure a rich sucker into buying something highly expensive, such as a gas-guzzling sports car which, when driven, makes everyone think that the driver is a wanker, which he undoubtedly is.

Furlough: 1. Leave of absence. 2. Originally conceived in the military and the church, and subsequently appropriated by business in general; now converted into a verb, whose technical meaning is to grant leave of absence, as though any worker would like to be granted the opportunity not to earn any money for a few months, or possibly indefinitely.

Gaslighting: 1. Manipulating someone psychologically so that they begin to doubt their own sanity. 2. The term originates from a 1938 play *The Gas Light*, in which a husband uses small environmental changes to convince his wife that she is insane (one technique is to dim the gas lights and deny the change); invidious approach to belittling people, in work or not. (*see Negging; Privilege gaslighting*)

Ghosting: 1. Being ignored by somebody, or finding them not present at all. 2. Taken from the world of online dating and subsequently applied to bosses or colleagues; an initially enthusiastic response is then followed by total silence or no further interaction. (*see Social distancing*)

Green hush: 1. Total lack of comment on ethical matters by a company. 2. Amusing pair of words to describe the complete absence of any communication or transparency from devious organizations whose predominant philosophy is to put their metaphorical heads in the sand and hope it all goes away.

Greenwash: 1. To pretend to be ethical when you are not. 2. Originally derived from the concept of whitewashing, a shocking 26% of companies have no proof whatsoever to back up their so-called ethical claims. (*see Nicewashing; Purpose washing*)

Healthful: 1. Healthy. 2. Completely pointless adaptation of healthy. (*see Wellness*)

Hub and spoke: 1. Working system with teams seated in satellite groups around a central leader. 2. Desperate attempt to make leaders more accessible and encourage collaboration – not always a roaring success. (*see Hub captain*)

Hub captain, Hubcap: 1. Person in charge of a working group. 2. Semblance of authority over a group, albeit constantly undermined by the true boss who sits at the centre of all the hubs. (*see Hub and spoke*)

Intersectionality: 1. According to one dictionary, the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. 2. Different views and representations of all the above, to be navigated extremely carefully. (*see Horizontality*)

Leisuretail: 1. Shopping centres reinvented to include a mix of retail, entertainment and dining ‘experiences’, with some now adding living and working spaces. 2. Another dreary attempt by the property sector to screw as much money as possible out of everybody; wherever they are, and whatever they’re doing, get ‘em.

Lifhack: 1. A strategy or technique for managing your time and daily activities more effectively. 2. Basic common sense under a different guise; consummate twaddle invented by people who probably haven’t got a clue what they are doing all day, let alone talking about.

Logorrhoea: 1. Diarrhoea whose subject matter is the logos of brands or companies, as though spat out of a company’s posterior. 2. A total mishmash of logos, signifying bugger all and confusing any potential customer seeing the advertising or brochure; most will be there to satisfy the egos of the marketing people involved. (*see Logo car crash, Logo soup*)

Log car crash: 1. Too many logos vying with each other. 2. Inability of those involved to step down and let one thing take suitable prominence; ego clash. (*see Logo soup, Logorrhoea*)

Nano influencer: 1. Person on instagram or similar who has less than 5,000 followers. 2. 1,000 is generally regarded as the threshold above which the increasingly desperate influencer market attracts the interest of brands; everything from knitting to braiding a dog’s hair, discussed *ad nauseam* by a very small audience that few care about.

Napkin maths: 1. Scribbling some rough calculations on a napkin or scrap of paper. 2. Perfectly reasonable way to sketch out the viability of something, or lack of it; far preferable to spreadsheets. (*see Spreadsheet dance*)

Negging: 1. An act of emotional manipulation whereby a person makes a deliberate backhanded compliment or otherwise flippant remark to another person to undermine their confidence and increase their need of the manipulator's approval. 2. Mental abuse and bullying, all too common in the workplace. (*see Gaslighting; Privilege gaslighting*)

Neurodivergent: 1. Neurodivergence refers to variation in the human brain with regard to sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions. 2. The term neurodiversity was coined in 1998 by Australian sociologist Judy Singer; in plain language, it encourages everyone who thinks they are mentally 'normal' to consider how the world is viewed by those with other approaches. (*see Neurotypical*)

Neurotypical: 1. Mentally 'normal'. 2. The mental brother or sister of neurodivergent; in other words, we should all allow for everyone's different approaches and celebrate the diversity. (*see Neurodivergent*)

News-gathering: 1. Gathering news. 2. Banal word from the world of public relations and newspaper journalism; it becomes derisory when journalists and PR agencies have so few staff that they simply 'gather' news from elsewhere and pass it off as their own work. (*see Newsjacking; Newsjumping*)

Newsjacking: 1. Hijacking a piece of news for the benefit of a brand that can then advance its cause. 2. Daft word invented by the PR industry to convince itself that news is somehow physical, and can be appropriated like a person or aeroplane. (*see News-gathering; Newsjumping*)

Newsjumping: 1. Jumping on a piece of news. 2. The illegitimate brother of newsjacking, although the distinction between jumping on an issue and hijacking it remains unclear; more nonsense from the world of PR. (*see News-gathering; Newsjacking*)

Nicewashing: 1. Making a company sound decent through appealing claims. 2. Nothing of the sort – a smokescreen of soft soap wibble to disguise nefarious working practices. (*see Greenwashing*)

No platforming: 1. Refusing to allow someone a platform on which to address a topic. 2. Mainly from the world of grumpy student boycotting, the National Union of Students has propagated this view since 1973; originally intended to screen out candidates for their own committee who espouse racist or fascist views, it now more broadly applies to anyone who is not allowed to express their views at an event, however abhorrent they may be.

Nuance, nuanced: 1. Subtle shade of meaning or expression. 2. Perfectly acceptable as a noun, now bastardized into a condescending adjective, as in: "*I think you'll find this issue is somewhat more nuanced than that, Brian.*"

Offence archaeologist: 1. Someone who looks through an individual's history, often on social media, in order to discredit them. 2. Whenever someone is appointed to a position and opponents wish to hound them out of office immediately, the offence archaeologists

rake through their past and find something incriminating to get them fired; their strike rate in modern times is pretty high, so be careful what you say on social media.

Phubbing: 1. An elision of phone and snubbing; to ignore a person or one's surroundings when in a social situation by busying oneself with a mobile device. 2. Pretty much universal these days, with barely anyone listening to anyone else at all. Sorry, what was that? (*see Social distancing*)

Pretotyping: 1. The stage before prototyping. 2. Somewhat nonsensical invented word, but with a grain of truth; a prototype is by definition a working, unfinished version, and presumably so is a pretotype; having said that, many companies are way too slow to prototype, so pretotyping might encourage them to get on with it rather than just talk conceptually for years.

Privilege gaslighting: 1. Mentally manipulating someone through privilege. 2. A highly controversial area this, with suggestions that this could even be done unintentionally; at its worst, those from privileged backgrounds intentionally create the conditions in which anyone from a lower social status will be belittled. (*see Gaslighting; Negging*)

Purpose washing: 1. Claiming that the purpose of a product, service or company is well intentioned, when in fact it isn't. 2. The classic smokescreen of all rotten corporations: offer up a seemingly helpful image or social stance whilst simultaneously raping the planet and its inhabitants behind the scenes. (*see Cause washing; Greenwash; Slactivism*)

Race to be least bad, the: 1. Hilarious cousin of racing to the top or the bottom. 2. Where companies are unwilling or incapable of doing something properly, they have the unenviable choice of being the least bad in their market – a high accolade indeed. (*see Benchmarking, Best practice*)

Re-disorganization: 1. Reorganization that will lead back to the disorganization it intended to solve. 2. Amusing moniker coined at a well-known newspaper group, in which the latest round of changes is assumed to be an improvement, when the cynics know it won't.

ROP: 1. Return on purpose. 2. Twee but well meaning acronym suggesting that if a company does the right thing it will be a success. (*see ROI*)

Sadfishing: 1. The act of making exaggerated claims about one's emotional problems in order to generate sympathy. 2. A common reaction for someone going through a hard time, no doubt, or indeed someone pretending to be going through a hard time; no fun for anyone really, including anyone having to listen to it.

Scaleup: 1. A company that is now ready to be bigger. 2. Hideous noun spawned from a reasonably okay verb; there's nothing intrinsically wrong with scaling up, but calling something a scaleup is not on; another gift from our American friends.

Second order thinking: 1. Working out what happens after first order thinking. 2. First order thinking works out the obvious outcomes of a business policy or change, while second order thinking works out the implications; you would have thought that both should be considered at the same time; consummate academic rubbish.

Self-isolation: 1. To be on one's own with little or no outside contact. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, this was government-imposed, not self-imposed; not to be confused with self-immolation, which is to set oneself on fire. (*see Social distancing*)

Sell the sizzle not the sausage: 1. Concentrate on explaining the benefit, not the item itself. 2. 1940s super salesman Elmer Wheeler invented this one and made a lot of money out of it; a smart way to point out that people don't need to know what a thing is, just what it does for them.

Sin counter: 1. Part of a shop where you go to buy 'sinful' products such as tobacco or alcohol. 2. Amusing take on the dingy area of a supermarket where they sell all the products that actually allow you to have some fun abusing yourself.

Social distancing: 1. Deliberately avoiding someone by ignoring them socially; being close to someone, but no closer than two metres. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, the meaning of this phrase strangely morphed from freezing someone out of one's social life to queuing politely for a can of soup in a supermarket, but at a suitable distance. (*see Ghosting; Phubbing; Self-isolation*)

Teamwork makes the dream work: 1. If we work properly together we will be more of a success. 2. Trite motivational mantra that gets people nowhere. (*see Aptitude + Attitude = Altitude; Team, there's no I in*)

Teeth and tits, all: 1. Salesperson, usually female, who smiles a lot and presents their best assets as a precursor to a successful sale. 2. Comment often made about vacuous salespeople who sell on looks rather than intellect; interestingly, not always a sexist remark – instead more commonly made by women about women.

Town hall: 1. Civic meeting place where all can congregate. 2. All-company meeting, never held in a town hall.

Unboss: 1. Leader who shuns the title of boss, instead suggesting that they are a team player. 2. Well-intentioned but somewhat daft initiative that ignores the fact that many people actually would like to know who their boss is.

Work-life blending: 1. Mixing work and leisure time together. 2. Tricky to analyze, this one: on the one hand, too much work at home is a disaster, but on the other hand fitting in some leisure at work could be good. (*see Work-Life balance*)