

# Glossary: Business Jargon Fixes

## A

Action item	Pairing the word "item" with the word "action" doesn't make either term more informative.  → Instead: Use <b>"action"</b> .
Aha moment	A complicated way of saying that you just realized something. The best thing to do is to simplify it!  → Instead: Use <b>"revelation"</b> or <b>"insight"</b> .
ASAP	The jargon term "ASAP" creates a sense of urgency, but it would be more effective if you gave a specific time.  → Instead: Use <b>Provide a specific time, date, etc.</b>
At the end of the day	There are plenty of ways to simplify this phrase to make it easier to understand and comprehend.  → Instead: Use <b>"ultimately"</b> or <b>"eventually."</b>
At this point in time	The best writers know how to write simply, and the phrase "at this point in time" is not simple. To simplify your writing, tell it exactly how it is.  → Instead: Use <b>"at this point"</b> or <b>"now"</b> .
Awesome	Everything is awesome to someone. That said, "awesome" is an overused term that kills your content and is likely not realistic for what you're describing.  → Instead: Use a more colorful, realistic adjective like <b>"outstanding"</b> or <b>"excellent"</b> .

## B

Baked in	Instead of framing yourself as a pastry chef, just mention that something is included.  → Instead: Use <b>"accounted for"</b> or <b>"included"</b> .
Back of the envelope	"Back of the envelope" is a phrase used when you're trying to describe a quick calculation in which you'll use any scrap of paper that you can find — like an envelope. Instead of confusing readers that have never heard of this business jargon before, use another option.  → Instead: Use <b>"initial estimate"</b> or <b>"rough calculation"</b> .
Balls in the air	Using the phrase "balls in the air" doesn't make you sound like a clown at the carnival, it makes you look far too dramatic when you're just trying to say that you're busy.  → Instead: Use <b>"busy"</b> , <b>"active"</b> , or <b>"hectic"</b> .
Bells and whistles	This phrase is so overused that it tends to lose its meaning when used in content. If you add a bell or a whistle to something, it might come across that it is unnecessary. To keep your readers from thinking that "bells and whistles" are unnecessary, use different wording.  → Instead: Use <b>"bonus features,"</b> since it shows value or a sought-after, extra element.
Best of breed/Best in class	Your company is not a dog, nor are they in a classroom. This phrase is over-complicated and can easily be simplified.  → Instead: Use <b>"best"</b> .
Best regards	"Best regards" can make you sound pretentious, which is not how you want to come across to potential clients or partners. Not to mention, all regards should be your best, so this phrasing adds unnecessary wording.  → Instead: Use <b>"regards"</b> .
Bang for your buck	This phrase insinuates value without showing it. You can claim that your product offers a big "bang for your buck," but until you show it, your readers should assume no added value.  → Instead: Use <b>real numbers to show how clients will save money with your company.</b>
Bleeding edge/Cutting edge	As a business owner, you have to stay at the "bleeding/cutting edge" to remain successful. However, using this jargon comes across as over-promising. Stay humble and use one of our suggestions instead.  → Instead: <b>Show your audience why you're at the "cutting edge" by letting them in on what you're doing to stay ahead of your competitors or what unique product or service you offer.</b>
Boil the ocean	When you use this phrase, your readers will likely get hung up on trying to figure out what it means instead of continuing to read. This also means that it's an ineffective explanation.  → Instead: Use <b>"attempt," "strive,"</b> or <b>"go after."</b>
Boondoggle	You're not alone if you've never heard the term "boondoggle" before, which is why you should never use it in your content. "Boondoggle" is a term that is used to describe a pointless activity that outwardly appears to have value.  → Instead: Use <b>"waste of time"</b> or <b>"waste of money."</b>
Brain surgery/Rocket science	If you use one of these phrases in your content, it could come off as overly confident, or appear that you're talking down to your audience (if you say something "isn't brain surgery.") On the other hand, if you use one of these phrases to show that something is difficult, you might create an unnecessary comical overtone and muddy the waters about how difficult something actually is.  → Instead: Use <b>"complicated"</b> or <b>"not complicated."</b>
Brick and mortar	A fancy, over-used way of saying your physical building.  → Instead: Use <b>"physical location."</b>
Bring to the table	A long phrase that means "contribute" that you can easily simplify by saying "contribute."  → Instead: Use <b>"contribute."</b>
Buy-in	You can over-complicate your content when you use "buy-in." It may cause some readers to think that an exchange of funds is required.  → Instead: Use <b>"agreement."</b>

## C

Champion	When used as a verb, readers might misunderstand the term as a noun — making you sound uneducated.  → Instead: Use <b>"defend," "direct,"</b> or even <b>"spearhead."</b>
Check the box	Check to make sure that a box is put together, a box is packed, a box is big enough? Save your readers the trouble and replace the phrase with one of our suggestions.  → Instead: Use <b>"finish"</b> or <b>"complete."</b>
Compelling	The business jargon "compelling" is overused, causing it to lose its meaning in content. You should only use the term when something is, without a shadow of a doubt, compelling.  → Instead: Use only when absolutely needed.
Corporate structure/Corporate culture	When you claim to have a corporate structure, you better run a corporate business. One of the worst things you can do in your content is an overreach, and corporate structure likely overreaches what you have available.  → Instead: Use <b>adjectives to describe your environment or atmosphere.</b>
Content is king	"Content is king" is not only an overused phrase, but it's not really true. "King" is used to describe something in a hierarchy, but content isn't at the top of every marketing hierarchy, since so many elements are crucial to success.  → Instead: Use <b>"content is a crucial part of a marketing strategy."</b>
Core competencies	This jargon is a fancy way of saying that your business is good at something. When used in content, it sounds far better to say that you excel at something rather than saying it's one of your "core competencies."  → Instead: Use <b>"we excel at," "we're exceptionally good at,"</b> or <b>"we're trained in."</b>
Cross-training	A lot of content over-uses this phrase when it's not necessary. For example, if you allow someone on your content team to view your style guide, that doesn't mean that they're cross-trained in design.  → Instead: Only use <b>"cross-training"</b> when you have a thorough training program in place that intertwines different departments of your company.
Crushing it	Unless you want to sound like you're addressing a sports team that you coach, don't use the phrase "crushing it." It can make your content sound juvenile.  → Instead: Give a specific metric that proves that your company is <b>"crushing it,"</b> and avoid using the phrase.

## D

Deck	Not everyone knows that you're referring to a slideshow presentation when you use the jargon "deck," so you should avoid using it in your content.  → Instead: Use <b>"PowerPoint"</b> or <b>"presentation."</b>
Deep dive	Unless you're a scuba diver, there's no need to use this in your content. You can gain much more value by using one of our suggested terms instead.  → Instead: Use <b>"explore," "analyze," "discover,"</b> or <b>"study."</b>
Deliverable	The term deliverable barely made our list — but we decided to take note of it, anyway. "Deliverable" is an extremely vague term that could provide more benefits when explained completely.  → Instead: Instead of using the term "deliverable," tell what that deliverable is.
Disambiguate	You might use this in your content to make you sound more educated, but chances are, some readers won't know what it means, so you won't get your point across anyway.  → Instead: Use <b>"clarify"</b> .
Disconnect	The term "disconnect," when used as a noun, causes more questions than answers. If you're talking about a disconnect, how did it occur? Use the answer to that question instead of the word itself.  → Instead: Use <b>"misunderstanding," "disagreement,"</b> or <b>"misinterpretation."</b>
Do more with less	Typically used in the wrong context, the phrase "do more with less," should be swapped out for a more easily understood term.  → Instead: Use <b>"capitalize on"</b> or <b>"maximize results from."</b>
Drill down	Just like "deep dive," you should stay away from the theatrics of "drill down."  → Instead: Use <b>"take a closer look"</b> or <b>"look closely."</b>
Drink the Kool-Aid	This phrase is drastically overused, causing it to become less and less effective. It's also rarely understood, so you should never use it in your content.  → Instead: Describe exactly what you mean.
Drop dead date	This phrase is similar to the boy who cried wolf. Sometimes, a business might use this interchangeably with "ideally, this would be finished by..." or "ideally, we'd hold this meeting at..." meaning that you won't actually drop dead if something isn't achieved.  When you use this phrase too much (and it's already been overused), it lacks meaning and people might begin to question your credibility.  → Instead: If you do have a final due date, state that it is a <b>"hard due date,"</b> or <b>"deadline."</b>
Ducks in a row	Though it's cute to picture, it can cause readers to go off track. Simplify your writing with one of the suggestions below.  → Instead: Use <b>"ready," "prepared,"</b> or <b>"organized."</b>
Due diligence	The term "due diligence" means that you'll take extra care or reason, but this should be implied if you're a successful business.  → Instead: Use <b>"careful," "thorough,"</b> or <b>"painstaking."</b>

## E

Epic	"Epic" is typically used in a situation that is heroic or causes an effect that is unlike any other. If you use this term in your content, it's unlikely that users will take it seriously.  → Instead: Use <b>"memorable," "brilliant,"</b> or <b>"unforgettable."</b>
Evangelist	If you describe your brand-loyal customers as evangelists, you've taken it a step too far. Users will notice your extreme exaggeration and may not trust your brand if you use the term to describe your customers.  → Instead: Use <b>"loyal customers"</b> or <b>"brand fans."</b>
Evolve	You might struggle to find the discrepancy with the term "evolve," but if you're using it to describe a business relationship or a brand, there are words that better describe each.  → Instead: Use <b>"develop,"</b> or <b>"strengthen."</b>
Execute	"Execute" can come across as try-hard, since there are much easier ways to say it.  → Instead: Use <b>"do"</b> .

## F

Final result	When you say "result," it's insinuated that it's the end stage of something. There's no need to tack on "final."  → Instead: Use <b>"results"</b> .
First and foremost	Back to the idea of simplicity, "first and foremost" is a phrase that is better off simplified.  → Instead: Use <b>"first"</b> .
Fish or cut bait	This phrase easily confuses readers and keep them from understanding the point you're trying to make.  → Instead: Use <b>"make a decision."</b>
Forward planning	An odd phrase, since "planning" on its own typically insinuates that you're moving forward in a process.  → Instead: Drop the <b>"forward"</b> and just use <b>"planning."</b>
Frictionless	An overstatement that may cause some distrust with readers. Everyone knows that every business partnership experiences some friction, so make yourself more believable and just say that!  → Instead: Use <b>"minimal friction."</b>

## G

Game changer	Something you've created will change the industry forever. Is that true? If not use a different adjective.  → Instead: Use <b>"fundamental change"</b> or <b>"substantial shift."</b>
Give 110%	You've given it your all, and that's enough to prove that you're serious about something. When you give a dramatic statement like "give 110%," your dramatics can cause some skepticism.  → Instead: Use <b>"our full focus," "all of our efforts,"</b> or <b>"24/7."</b>
Going forward	There's nothing necessary about this phrase!  → Instead: Eliminate it.
Good to go	Overdramatic version of "ready."  → Instead: Use <b>"ready"</b> or <b>"prepared."</b>
Grow the business	This jargon is an over-used phrase that when taken literally likely doesn't mean what you think it does.  → Instead: Use <b>"build the business"</b> or <b>"increase business metrics."</b>
Guesstimate	Some readers may not be familiar with this slang term, so it's better to make your content sound more educated by using an alternative.  → Instead: Use <b>"rough estimate"</b> or <b>"estimate."</b>
Guru/Ninja/Rockstar/Thought leader	When you self-dub yourself one of the above terms, not only do you sound cocky, but you may also raise some skepticism since you're giving yourself that label. Furthermore, when you use this term to talk about someone else, you might be over-promoting them.  → Instead: Give examples to prove why you are the best option instead of labeling yourself.

## H

Head winds	This term might get a lot of readers thinking about a sailboat when you want them to be thinking about your business.  → Instead: Use <b>"challenges"</b> or <b>"constraints."</b>
Herding cats	Herding cats is difficult, but not every reader will know that. Not to mention, not every reader will understand why you've brought cats into the conversation.  → Instead: Use <b>"difficult," "challenging,"</b> or <b>"problematic."</b>
Holistic	There's a possibility that not everyone will understand what you mean by "holistic" in terms of business. Make your content easier to understand by using one of the alternatives.  → Instead: Use <b>"comprehensive"</b> or <b>"complete."</b>

## I

Incentivize	There is a much easier way to say "incentivize" that is more direct.  → Instead: Use <b>"motivate"</b> or <b>"encourage."</b>
In light of the fact that	This phrase is a mouthful that you could make much clearer by simplifying.  → Instead: Use <b>"because."</b>
In the loop	If you use this statement amid a serious informational article, it could make readers take you less seriously. And, you guessed it, there's a simpler way to say, "in the loop."  → Instead: Use <b>"inform(ed)"</b> or <b>"up-to-date."</b>
In today's world	This phrase adds unnecessary fluff by insinuating that there is another world to consider.  → Instead: Use <b>"today."</b>
Innovative	For readers to take the adjective "innovative" seriously, you have to describe what it is that makes your product or service innovative. This term has no meaning until proven.  → Instead: Describe specific elements that make something innovative.

## J

Jump the shark	"Jump the shark" refers to a business that is trying its hardest to stay relevant and pertinent in the eyes of customers after it has become obsolete. When you jump the shark, your attempt at publicity does more harm than good by highlighting how irrelevant something has become.  → Instead: Use <b>"losing credibility"</b> or a term like <b>"climax"</b> or <b>"plateau."</b>
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## K

Key takeaways	If you want readers to take you seriously, you should assume that they consider every takeaway "key."  → Instead: Use <b>"takeaways"</b>
Kick the tires	This phrase can throw readers off since many might not understand what it means. Even if you know what this phrase means, try using our recommended replacements.  → Instead: Use <b>"test"</b> or <b>"trial."</b>
Knee deep	An over-complicated way of saying that you're engrossed in something. If readers have never heard this phrase before, it can be confusing and ineffective at getting your point across.  → Instead: Use <b>"absorbed," "engrossed,"</b> or <b>"involved."</b>



## L

<b>Laser focus</b>	The very word “focus” means that you’re giving something your utmost attention. There’s no need to tack on “laser.”  → Instead: Use “ <b>focus</b> .”
<b>Leaders</b>	“Leaders” is an ambiguous term that you could make more effective by giving detail. Everyone can claim that they’re a leader, but what does that mean, exactly?  → Instead: Outline what it is that you’re good at.
<b>Learnings</b>	“Learnings” is a fictitious term that you should never use.  → Instead: Use “ <b>teachings</b> .”
<b>Let’s be honest</b>	When you create content, users assume what they’re reading is honest. There’s no need to state that ahead of time! Also, if you decide to say “let’s be honest” in front of a specific phrase, readers might assume that you weren’t being honest in the rest of the content.  → Instead: Don’t use it.
<b>Level playing field</b>	This is an over-used phrase that is much better understood in its simpler form.  → Instead: Use “ <b>equal opportunity</b> ,” or “ <b>fair competition</b> .”
<b>Leverage</b>	When you use “leverage” as a verb, it might not make sense to readers.  → Instead: Instead of saying you “leverage” something to achieve a certain result, state the result and tell how you did it.
<b>Lipstick on a pig</b>	“Lipstick on a pig” is a phrase that means you’re trying to make something awful into something wonderful. Although this has a negative connotation, you can find a better way to say it if you have to express this idea.  → Instead: Use “ <b>put your best face on</b> ” or “ <b>put your best foot forward</b> .”
<b>Lots of moving parts</b>	An overused and over-complicated term that you can easily simplify.  → Instead: Use “ <b>system</b> ,” “ <b>process</b> ,” or “ <b>instrumentality</b> .”
<b>Low-hanging fruit</b>	Although it might paint a literal picture, simplify this statement with something easier to understand.  → Instead: Use “ <b>opportunities</b> .”

## M

<b>Magic bullet</b>	So many businesses use this term to reference their strategies or products, and by now, it’s surely lost all meaning. Not to mention, nothing is really magic. Try replacing it with something more direct.  → Instead: Use “ <b>solution</b> ,” “ <b>remedy</b> ,” or “ <b>cure-all</b> ,” or better yet, tell readers what makes a solution or product “magic.”
<b>Make it pop</b>	Unless you’re a teenager talking about their latest school fashion, stay away from using this phrase in your professional writing.  → Instead: Use “ <b>crowd-pleas(ing)(er)</b> ,” “ <b>interesting</b> ,” or “ <b>engaging</b> .”
<b>Make hay while the sun shines</b>	If you use this phrase, it’s like driving under the block six times before stopping at your destination. Just get to the point and simplify this phrase!  → Instead: Use “ <b>make the most of</b> .”
<b>Maximize</b>	When you use the word “maximize” you might be overpromising. Unless you’re absolutely sure that you’ve done everything to drive the very best results (and the results that you drive are the best that anyone could drive), stay away from “maximize.”  → Instead: Use “ <b>improve</b> ,” or “ <b>immensely improve</b> .”
<b>Methodology</b>	“Methodology” is a term that is used for complex business systems. If you use this term as a smaller business, readers might not take you seriously, and you risk coming off as pompous.  → Instead: Use “ <b>methods</b> ,” “ <b>systems</b> ,” or “ <b>processes</b> .”
<b>Mission-critical</b>	If you use the term “mission-critical,” it makes it sound like the situation is life or death. Not only that, but you’re likely not on a literal mission for your customer. If you don’t want your readers to see you as over-dramatic, stay away from this wording.  → Instead: Use “ <b>critical</b> .”
<b>Most unique</b>	The term “unique” means that something is unlike anything else. Adding “most” in front of it doesn’t change its meaning.  → Instead: Use “ <b>unique</b> .”
<b>Move the needle</b>	This term is a long, round-about way of saying “drive results.” If you want your readers to know exactly what you’re talking about, stick with direct references.  → Instead: Use “ <b>drive results</b> ,” “ <b>impact</b> ,” or better yet, give real examples of those results.
<b>My bad</b>	This slang phrase can make you look untrustworthy or uneducated to readers, in addition to making you seem indifferent to the situation.  → Instead: Admit the mistake that you made, and don’t preface it with “my bad.”

## N

<b>Next steps</b>	When you say “next” on its own, it’s insinuated that “steps” will happen next — there’s no need to say that!  → Instead: Use “ <b>next</b> .”
<b>New normal</b>	“New normal” obviously insinuates change, which could potentially spur feelings of disorganization.  → Instead: Use “ <b>normal</b> .”

## O

<b>On the same page</b>	A phrase that’s been used forever and certainly lost its meaning — just like a lot of other phrases on this page! Simplify it!  → Instead: Use “ <b>agree</b> .”
<b>Open the kimono</b>	There’s no need to let people know that you’re sharing a secret — you could come off as pretentious (especially if it’s a secret that others already know.)  → Instead: Just share the facts — don’t frame them as secrets, and definitely don’t use the phrase “open the kimono.”
<b>Outside the box</b>	“Outside the box” is a phrase that can be misconstrued and might not ever be taken the way you anticipate. To avoid any confusion and to be certain that you come across properly, swap it out.  → Instead: Use “ <b>creative</b> ” or “ <b>imaginative</b> .”

## P

<b>Pain point</b>	A round-about way of saying problem. No need to bring out the theatrics! Readers will appreciate direct language.  → Instead: Use “ <b>problem</b> ,” “ <b>difficulty</b> ,” “ <b>complexity</b> ,” or “ <b>obstacle</b> .”
<b>Paradigm shift</b>	Many readers might not understand this term, so avoid using it in your content. Swap it out with a simpler form.  → Instead: Use “ <b>significant change</b> .”
<b>Peel the onion</b>	If you use the phrase “peel the onion” in your content, you risk not being taken seriously. There’s a better way to simplify!  → Instead: Use “ <b>get to the bottom of</b> ” or “ <b>explore</b> .”
<b>Pencil in</b>	“Pencil in” can make you sound pretentious and overbearing.  → Instead: Use “ <b>schedule</b> .”
<b>Perfect storm</b>	As many of our business jargon examples do, “perfect storm” paints a great picture, but it doesn’t tell readers anything.  → Instead: Use “ <b>crisis</b> ,” “ <b>nightmare</b> ,” or better yet, tell readers exactly what crisis is happening or could happen.
<b>Personal brand</b>	Your brand is your brand, so it’s assumed that it’s personal.  → Instead: Ditch the “ <b>personal</b> ” and just call it your brand.
<b>Pre-plan/Pre-schedule</b>	You can get the same point across and be more direct by simplifying both of these terms.  → Instead: Use “ <b>plan</b> ” or “ <b>schedule</b> .”
<b>Preso</b>	“Preso” is not a well-known term — and it shows up as a typo in Microsoft Word. Don’t use it in your writing, because readers likely won’t know what it means, either.  → Instead: Use “ <b>presentation</b> .”
<b>Price point</b>	There’s a way to simplify that!  → Instead: Use “ <b>price</b> .”
<b>Proactive</b>	“Proactive” is a great adjective, but to make it more effective in your writing, swap it out for a verb.  → Instead: Use “ <b>take action</b> ” or “ <b>take initiative</b> .”
<b>Pull the trigger</b>	An overdramatic phrase that means to begin, start, or kick off.  → Instead: Use the phrase “ <b>get started</b> ” or “ <b>kick off</b> .”
<b>Push the envelope</b>	A few different things, and if you want to make it as effective as possible in your writing, describe the situation exactly.  → Instead: Use “ <b>taking a risk</b> ” or “ <b>advancing boundaries</b> .”

## Q

<b>Quite frankly</b>	You should always be frank with your readers, and the minute you say, “quite frankly,” they’ll assume that you haven’t been frank to date.  → Instead: Don’t use it.
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## R

<b>Radio silent</b>	A fancy way of saying “silent.” As with most business jargon, the first part of the phrase, in this case, “radio,” doesn’t add anything to the meaning.  → Instead: Use “ <b>silent</b> ,” or “ <b>no communication</b> .”
<b>Raise the bar</b>	Extremely overused and is another business jargon example that has lost meaning.  → Instead: Use “ <b>raise the standard</b> ” or “ <b>elevate</b> .”
<b>Reach out/Touch base</b>	There is a much better way to get your readers to contact you, and it’s not by saying “reach out” or “touch base.”  → Instead: Tell readers exactly what you want them to do, whether that be call, email, text, etc. Be sure to give them contact info, too!
<b>Reinvent the wheel</b>	A term that refers to the intense action of creating something as life changing as a wheel. Many writers use this business jargon to describe something that doesn’t carry that much weight or importance, causing the term to lose its meaning.  → Instead: Don’t use it.
<b>Resonate</b>	To evoke or suggest images, memories, and emotions, or to be filled with a deep, full, reverberating sound. If your product or service doesn’t do just that, it’s better to stay away from this business jargon in your content.  → Instead: Use “ <b>relate to</b> ” or “ <b>connect with</b> .”
<b>Results-oriented</b>	If you work in an industry that is driving results for your customers, there’s no need to state that your business is “results-oriented.” If you’re already a successful business, the campaigns you create are based on results.  → Instead: Replace “results-oriented” with actual results that you can drive. For example, change “we are a results-driven company,” to “we have driven 2.4 million leads to our clients’ businesses to date.”
<b>Robust</b>	What does “robust” in business mean? To avoid confusion, swap it out.  → Instead: List out the useful effects your product or service will have on your customers.

## S

<b>Seamless</b>	Unless your product or service is guaranteed to not cause any problems for the customer, it’s best not to promise seamlessness.  → Instead: Use “ <b>easy</b> .”
<b>Secret sauce/Silver bullet</b>	Although using the lingo “secret sauce” or “silver bullet” makes your business sound like it offers something special, it loses its meaning when every company uses it.  → Instead: To truly show the unique value that your company creates for your clients, tell them what the secret sauce is. For example, “our secret sauce drives incredible results,” is more effective when you say, “our team of Google Analytics certified marketers drives incredible results.”  It’s more believable, and it proves that you actually do have a secret sauce.  Scared that spilling your “secret sauce” will give the competition an advantage? Their silver bullet is probably the same as yours.
<b>Sense of urgency</b>	An indirect way of saying that you have concerns about something, or you care to fix something that is causing a problem. To sound more personal, try implementing one of our suggestions instead of this phrase.  → Instead: Use “we’re concerned and working to fix the issue,” “we’re working diligently to fix the issue,” or better yet, give an exact example of what you’re doing to fix the issue.
<b>Solutions</b>	If you want your readers to take the word “solutions” seriously and understand exactly what you mean, it’s best not to use the word at all.  → Instead: Replace “solutions” with the actual solutions that you provide.
<b>State of the art</b>	Tells readers that you offer something revolutionary, but it doesn’t show them much of anything.  → Instead: Tell readers what makes your product “state of the art” by listing exact points or features.
<b>Strategic plan/Strategic partnership</b>	When you work for a successful business, every plan and partnership that you create is strategic. Assigning the adjective “strategic” to plan and partnership is unnecessary.  → Instead: Simplify and use “plan” or “partnership.”
<b>Synergy</b>	Not every reader will understand the term “synergy,” which could leave them with a lack of understanding about an important characteristic that your company has to offer.  → Instead: Use “ <b>collaboration</b> .”

## T

<b>Take/make strides</b>	Unless you mean “started from the bottom, and now we’re here,” avoid using “take strides.” This phrase insinuates that you started in a negative place and are slowly working to crawl out of a hole. Whichever way you slice it, it typically has a subconsciously negative connotation.  → Instead: Use “ <b>improve</b> .”
<b>Take to the next level</b>	Are you going to specifically improve something to make it exponentially better, or are you just going to change it and hope that it affects your customers?  → Instead: Use “ <b>improve</b> ” to avoid over-promising.
<b>Test the water</b>	A dramatic phrase that means “perform a test or trial.”  → Instead: Use “ <b>trial</b> ,” “ <b>test</b> ,” or “ <b>investigate</b> .”
<b>Thought leader (describing yourself)</b>	These days, if you’re successful in your industry, you’re likely known as a thought leader. But what is a thought leader, anyway? There are a few other terms that are more literal and less ambiguous.  → Instead: Use the word “ <b>expert</b> .”
<b>Top of mind</b>	Another overly complicated term that means “priority.” To simplify content, remove “top of mind” and use one of our recommendations instead.  → Instead: Try using “ <b>awareness</b> ” or “ <b>priority</b> .”

## U

<b>Unpack</b>	A complex, thought-provoking term that means to look closely at something or to examine it.  → Instead: Use “ <b>look closely</b> ” or “ <b>examine</b> .”
<b>Utilize</b>	Simply put, there’s a clearer way to say it!  → Instead: Say “ <b>use</b> .”

## V

<b>Value-added</b>	When you’re talking about value, it’s implied that it is already created or added. Tacking “added” to the end of the term doesn’t change the meaning.  → Instead: Just say “ <b>value</b> .”
<b>Valued partner</b>	Every partner that you have should be valued, so it’s unnecessary to say “valued.”  → Instead: Use “ <b>partner</b> .”

## W

<b>Where the rubber meets the road</b>	Another over-dramatic term that you can simplify to add clarity to your writing.  → Instead: Use “ <b>implementation area</b> ,” or “ <b>time of implementation</b> .”
<b>Win-win</b>	If you use the term “win-win” in your writing, you’re trying to convince the reader that they will win and so will you. Although this might sound great, it’s better to avoid it because of its salesman-like undertones.  → Instead: Explain the ways that your product or service will specifically help the reader. You don’t need to talk about how it will help you win, because in this case, the customer is the most important.
<b>With all due respect</b>	Typically, if you use this in your writing, you’re prefacing something that readers might not like — and they know that. They could end up turning away from your content or taking it as an insult, even if it’s not one — just because of the language you chose.  → Instead: Don’t use it. Just say what you need to say!
<b>World-class</b>	Unless your product or service is known, accepted, and loved worldwide, this phrase is not something you should use freely.  → Instead: Use “ <b>top-notch</b> .”
<b>Wordsmith</b>	A bit of a slang term that could confuse readers. You guessed it, there’s a way to simplify and clarify!  → Instead: Use “ <b>edit</b> .”

## Z

<b>Zero-sum game</b>	Not all readers will understand this term, and if you use it, you’re likely making an important point.  → Instead: Use “ <b>winner take all</b> .”
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