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**MEMORANDUM TO EVERY OFFICE**

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**TO:** Everyone  
**FROM:** [edmoss@maykit.me.uk](mailto:edmoss@maykit.me.uk)  
**SUBJECT:** Pretentious terminology to avoid at all costs  
**DATE:** Today  
**CC:** Everyone else who might otherwise miss it



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**Don't try and be smart with your language. It only makes you look airy-fairy.**

**Going forward** – loose, meaningless and overused, unless you're a driving instructor

**To 'action' something** – how about, just for a change, simply 'doing it' instead?

**Touch base** - about as meaningful as 'let's do lunch' or 'look at the talent on X-Factor'

**Circle back** - to catch up later, unless you're a driving instructor

**Blue-sky thinking** – similar to 'thinking outside the box' they both translate as simply 'doing your job'

**Brainstorm** – the same as 'thought showers', and yes, both utterly and totally meaningless

**Low hanging fruit** - means nothing, unless you are off on a 'pick your own' expedition

**Get the ball rolling** - simply means 'begin', unless you're ten-pin or crown bowling

**Drill down** - not, as one might think, anything to do with heavy machinery

**End of play** - curious strain of kiddy-talk in bureaucratese. Unfortunate conclusion if you've paid £130 (+booking fee) for a theatre ticket

**Deliverables** – the postman always rings twice, especially with your e-bay parcel

**Issues** – no, sorry, they're just 'problems'

**Leverage** – *'Give me a place to stand and I will move the world'*, said Archimedes. He didn't say he would *'leverage the deliverables matrix'*

**Stakeholders** - wooden-spike-wielding vampire hunters often featured in films on minority

**Competencies** – nope, it's 'abilities' or 'skills'

**Sunset** – why call a spade a spade when you can deliver an irrelevant euphemism?

**Core Competency** – the opposite of core mediocrity

**Buy-In** – what some unqualified manager asks if you'll do after the fact because he didn't value you enough to discuss it with you in the first place

**Empower** – the misspelling of a utility company

**Corporate Values** – sorry, but corporations generally don't have any values; the people who run them do and they're usually all just about making more money

**Scalable** – the venture capitalist's business nirvana craving. Or the kettle's aspiration for making a good cup of tea

**Solution** - usually refers to a collection of technologies too abstract, complex or meaningless to describe in a way that anyone would care about if they were explained in plain English

**Leverage** - the granddaddy of nouns converted to verbs and really just means the way RyanAir extracts money from passengers. With a surcharge crowbar

**Vertical** – a rather painful expression referring to a specific area of expertise

**Robust** - a cup of good Yorkshire tea is robust. A software program is not

**Giving 110%** - to tell someone to give more than 100% is to also tell them in no uncertain terms that you failed mathematics in school

**Take it to the next level** - in practice, it means nothing, mainly because nobody knows what the next level actually looks like and thus whether or not they've actually reached it. Or not. Unless you were playing one of those mindless smartphone 'apps' at the time.