

Bonus Terms/Definitions

Chapter 1: Your Own Foibles

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILL SET

CRASH AND BURN: What happens when relying on SMOKE AND MIRRORS gets too hard to enact.

CROSS-TRAINING: Falling through the cracks.

KNOWING THE ROPES: Skillfully hanging oneself.

NEWBIE: Because “victim” seems too harsh.

SAVE: 1) What you should have pressed before your internet connection failed. 2) The religious experience of solemnly vowing to never make that same mistake again.

CAREER BUILDING: YOUR OWN BRAND

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: The person you bribe with chocolate to maintain access to your Vice President.

DOMAIN EXPERT: King of an ill-defined hill.

GOING VIRAL: Sending your spouse a tweet about the tiny, little raise you just got.

LANDING A PROMOTION: The ultimate reward of those who focus is the nethermost aperture of their superiors.

NETWORKING: 1) The ability to find out if one can use people for something without that goal becoming obvious to them. 2) Eager to be stuck between a rock and places hardly worth exploring.

PSEUDO-EMPOWERED

CHASING BUTTERFLIES: Being chastised by your boss for chasing what you can't catch as opposed to the grief that you can.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: One's gut-wrenching reaction to a new manager, which makes sense because the stomach serves as a miniature brain with up to five times as many neurons as the backbone employees won't be called on to use anyway.

IMPROVISING: 1) The act of telling the boss what the boss wants to hear. 2) A set of words and actions that follow the strategic planning process. 3) What happens after pre-planning has failed.

JUMP-START: 1) A leap of faith. 2) The opportunity to make some mistakes immediately so one can get used to the feeling.

(being given plenty of) LATITUDE: Having the leeway to steer one's career ever southward.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE & (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

BLURSDAY: Working from home every day.

EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATE: A formula for describing the number of employees lost in battle without taking into account those missing in action.

INTEREST: A major factor in the debt load one carries but not in the work one pretends to do.

PRESENTEEISM: When employees' spirits leave their bodies because they're working for a company and/or boss without a soul.

RISK ADVERSE: 1) Arriving at a stage in your career where you like reading the liquor bottle's label far more than the memos being sent to you requesting action. 2) Employees with student debt, mortgages, health issues, a desire for comfort or a need to eat.

GOING NOWHERE FAST

BACKBURNER: Where your career sits, simmering on low while the boss dines out on your contributions.

TRADE-OFFS: What one gains by losing everything.

THE END OF THE TRAIL

EFFICIENCIES: Your job has just been eliminated.

MATURE: 1) A more politically correct way to say senior, older or experienced. 2) Obsolete.

RETIREMENT BUYOUT PACKAGE: The reality that it's cheaper for the company to pay you to leave than it is to defend an age-discrimination suit.

RETIREMENT PARTY: A medley of terrible jokes, and not nearly enough of them given the half-hearted best wishes that follow.

(company) VETERAN: 1) A traumatized survivor. 2) A specialist in a single yoga position, keeping your head down.

Chapter 2: Your Manager's Blind Spots

PRODUCTIVITY PRESSURES

DELIGHT: A power outage at work.

DIE ON THE HILL: Being asked to overcommit to a project.

MILESTONES: A common misspelling; see Millstones.

OUTPUTS: What employees produce after they cease to be human.

RESENTMENT: What one feels after working all weekend on a presentation summarily rescheduled on Monday morning to sometime *eventually*.

TALENT & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

DELEGATE: Giving the task to someone who will screw it up because you're more afraid of screwing it up yourself.

LET'S TAKE THIS OFFLINE: Where I can spike the project, no questions asked.

PERSONNEL: A warm-and-fuzzy term like Employees, Direct Reports, and Trash Compactors.

(job candidate) PIPELINE: A list of your family and friends' sons and nephews who would otherwise be unemployable.

SOCIAL DISTANCING: 1) The act of standing at alternative urinals, sitting on alternative seats, and ultimately living in alternative realities. 2) Introverts managing extroverts.

SLOPPY, VAPID COMMUNICATION

(not enough) BANDWIDTH: Avoiding the "garbage in, garbage out" syndrome by sealing the trash can lid.

FIGURE IT OUT (yourself): What bosses say when they're too lazy to provide clear instructions.

LET'S TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL: 1) A boss without a clue about how to make progress. 2) Being too cowardly to spike the project oneself. 3) A new set of meetings have been added to your schedule.

MARXIST: A fan of Groucho Marx's cheeky reply to Margaret Dumont: "Who are you going to believe? Me or your own eyes?"

MIXED MESSAGES: Ready. Aim. Fired.

NET-NET: The start of summarizing a presentation without any substantial findings.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS: 1) What consultants use when they can't speak. 2) A way to bore your audience without getting your key points across.

(to) SIGN-OFF ON: An approval step emblematic of corporate clarity.

TEMPLATE: 1) A sample document not structured the way one needs it, with irrelevant sample content that will cause 120% more work than if one had started from scratch. On the other hand, everyone's too lazy to get rid of the template so the company uses it and loses every deal. 2) A device for doing the same stupid thing time after time.

YOUR COLLEAGUES AREN'T VERY HAPPY (with you): How the boss lets you know that you won't be having any more "casual" lunches together.

CONTROL & ACCOUNTABILITY

DUE DILIGENCE: A way of verifying incompetency.

EMPLOYEE MONITORING: 1) A means of "looking over your shoulder" digitally before you feel a gun in your back. 2) An antonym for TRUST.

IN LIGHT OF THE FACT: The circumlocution of a middle manager about to blame a subordinate.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: Letting the air out rather than slashing somebody's tires during a feedback session.

TO BE FAIR: Hesitating for a moment before transferring blame.

MANAGEMENT INCOMPETENCY

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD: Staff withdrawing its fantastic ideas in favor of the one they know their boss will approve.

DECISION-MAKER: 1) A director or manager subsequently demoted. 2) Somebody who only requires a 9th second opinion before hesitating some more.

LASER-FOCUSED: Lasik surgery that failed to correct a supervisor's myopia.

TOO MANY CHIEFS, NOT ENOUGH INDIANS: Said by someone for whom this is their first rodeo.

WHO'S GOT THE "R": 1) A manager with responsibility issues. 2) The world's worst rapper.

Chapter 3: Colleagues Stirring the Pot

OFFICE POLITICS & MISBEHAVIOR

COLLEAGUE: Someone in the office with whom you haven't yet gone to bed.

CYBERBULLYING: Office gossip 24/7.

GRIP AND GRIN (company photographs): Alliterative apathy.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR: Actions by people who have all the virtues we detest and none of the vices we admire.

OFFICE HANDSOME OR PRETTY: Someone who starts to look attractive compared to the other colleagues romantically available in the office.

PRAIRIE DOGGING: Popping one's head over the top of the cubicle to keep tabs on the wolves nearby.

SUMMER INTERN: A person who commonly ends the summer feeling crushed and discarded like an empty can of cola.

TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY: For each and every success you've been tangentially associated with.

WATER-COOLER CONVERSATIONS: Super-spreader events.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME (WIIFM): 1) The invisible work agenda around which everything else orbits. 2) Distracted on the job because of spending all your time listening to the country's single most powerful radio station, WII-FM. 3) Guilty of narcissism, i.e., the underlying value proposition of all social media companies.

AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOR & INERTIA

INCENTIVES: A bribe to do the job one's paid to do.

NEXT STEPS: A project's long slog into oblivion.

RED FLAG: 1) An ill-defined concept denoting an unrecognizable situation that will get someone fired when it occurs. 2) A problem we ignore until it becomes clear we could be fired for doing so.

TEMPS: The people one hires on an hourly basis to do the work for which one overpays the regular staff.

WE'LL LOOP YOU IN WHEN WE NEED TO: 1) Which is approximately never. 2) You're utterly expendable.

Chapter 4: Executive Blunders

RED TAPE & INNOVATION SABOTAGE

BREAKING THROUGH THE CLUTTER: Taking the one, most essential fact from a research study and trying to explain it to senior management.

CONCEPT: The tinfoil hiding a half-baked idea.

CORE COMPETENCY: 1) The proposed solution to any customer or client challenge, regardless of relevancy or efficacy because “When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” 2) The ability to identify your company’s highest-margin product before your boss does.

FUTURE-PROOF: Avoiding the risk of a product becoming obsolete by making it immediately irrelevant.

(creating) PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS: The prospect of burning tonight’s dinner but this time with the oven light on.

COST-CUTTING MEASURES & ATTEMPTS AT QUALITY CONTROL

BUDGET REVIEW: 1) Surgery without anesthesia. 2) A euphemism for “What do we cut?”

(let’s) MAXIMIZE RESOURCES: The project is out of funds.

MERCHANDISE: 1) Material carefully arranged by clerks so it can be stolen by other employees. 2) The precursor to shrinkage.

PRODUCT RECALL: The only step in the Total Quality Management (TQM) process that doesn’t get detailed in advance.

WHOSE BUDGET IS THIS COMING FROM: A plan that’s not going to happen.

CORPORATE RHETORIC

BEST OF BREED: The company which does the wrong thing with the most effective PR.

DRESS CODE: What your company reinstates when casual Fridays turn the workplace into a nightclub.

LIKED/LOVED: A company whose misdeeds have not yet been leaked online.

MEMORABLE: From the Latin, *rigor mortis*.

PUBLIC OPINION: 1) The internet has spoken. 2) The sociological equivalent of drawing conclusions from cumulus clouds drifting across the sky, buffeted by winds that can be felt but not seen.

SWEET SPOT: The optimal mixture of theft and robbery.

VALUE-ADD: A more commercially viable way of saying, profit-add.

WORLD CLASS: Excluding the G20 countries, of course.

WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS: Encompassing your entire family and your brother’s girlfriend, too.

WOW: In business, a word that often appears in print in red letters, ALL CAPS, and/or with an exclamation point, so long as a dollar sign also appears in the vicinity.

(SEEMINGLY ENDLESS) RE-ORGS

DECENTRALIZED: Chaotic.

FLUID: Chaotic.

RE-ORGANIZATION: The presumption that chaos didn't previously reign.

RESTRUCTURING: Tending to the smoke rather than the flames.

ROAD MAP: An analogy favored by leaders orbiting the earth.

OUT-OF-TOUCH, UNACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENTS: 1) The company rewarding employees who are at once both too good to lose and too mediocre to be put in charge of anything. 2) The embodiment of the Peter Principle, i.e., people who have been promoted beyond their talent level and are thus strongly in favor of equivocating.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO): A person who wants both control and money, delighting in the title but delighting even more in the loot.

INEQUALITY: In America's new Gilded Age, recognizing what has been fundamentally tarnished. 2) INCLUDED badly misspelled.

INFLATION: An economics term referring to executives' egos and their compensation packages.

INSIDER TRADING: 1) A wink and a nod, with benefits. 2) How those who have it all get even more.

STRATEGIC BLUNDERS & SCANDALS

EARNINGS: What the company managed to keep after top management bungled its way through the quarter.

80/20 Rule: 1) A reference to how 80% of corporate mistakes are made by the top 20% of wage earners. 2) The triumph of capitalism and socialism alike, whereby 80% of the work is done by 20% of the workforce with 100% of the pie eaten by whomever can get their hands on it first. 3) The five-minute phone call you could have made that would have saved you 300 hours of anguish.

EMERGING MARKET: A fresh set of buyers the company hasn't disenchanted yet.

OFFLINE: Commercially extinct.

(striving for) PERFECTION: The business strategy most compatible with bankruptcy.

SHAREHOLDER VALUE: The best excuse for unethical behavior.

STRATEGIC FIT: Figuring out what the company doesn't do well and doing lots of it.

TAKING A BATH: Coming clean about the fact that a lot of money was just lost enacting a foolish idea.

WE NEED TO MANAGE THE OPTICS OF THIS: Devising solutions to offset leadership's short-sightedness.

WE WANT TO MOVE THIS UP AND TO THE RIGHT (on the chart): Executives preferring sales and marketing results that correspond to their ever-rising compensation levels.

Chapter 5: Other Buffoons

IT SNAFUS

AUTOMATED: A process that requires no input and sends you an email saying it's done, which you never read or even see because it's been automatically filtered as spam.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: 1) Problems you didn't know you needed to solve now highlighted by new capabilities that you will most likely never understand how to use. 2) The Shiny New Object du Jour, frequently cited as the answer to today's problems and the certain source of tomorrow's successes.

IT DEPARTMENT: People you desperately need but don't like, nor understand.

SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATED: A heavy pot-smoker couldn't have said it better.

SIMULATION: A geek using math to do something that would otherwise be done in the real world by people who no longer have their jobs.

R & D PRODUCT MISCUES

DATA-DRIVEN: Taking a detour around creativity.

FUNCTIONALITY: The assurance that the product does what it isn't even remotely capable of doing.

LOADED: A way of referring to a product's many intoxicating and highly profitable features.

PACKAGING: 1) The material used to present false claims about the product to shoppers. 2) A way of giving the product its own large, dedicated oxygen supply (larger than the product itself).

PLUG-AND-PRAY: The promise you give tech-tards to sell them stuff, knowing they'll still ask the seven-year-old next door to help.

MARKETING & AD AGENCY MYOPIA

BUYER RESISTANCE: The moment of truth when your marketing efforts no longer suffice to fool the consumers your company has always taken for granted.

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS: Scandals waiting to happen.

COMMODITY: Something without differentiation, hence value, that you advertise as "priceless."

CONSUMERS: Real people, but you would never know that from corporate presentations.

ENGAGEMENT: The attempt to engage consumers' interest in your marketing efforts while simultaneously trying to keep your employees from engaging in an uprising.

PRODUCT PACKAGE SHOT: The moment in a TV commercial when viewers are urged to think (of what's) inside the box.

SALES PLATEAU: When the public stops buying a product that shouldn't have been sold in the first place.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The rabbit hole hiding a wild boar.

TARGET MARKET: The biggest collect of suckers you've been able to identify so far.

VANILLA: The flavor corporate marketing departments favor, hoping no taste will be seen as in good taste by the only target market that truly matters, namely the executive suite.

MARKET RESEARCH PITFALLS

CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION (schemes): The initial stage in failing to satisfy people's defined needs group by group, as opposed to disappointing everyone at the same time.

DEMOGRAPHICS: The monetizable reams of information about people, products and services that, without a name, would be otherwise relegated to a garbage can.

FOCUS GROUP: Usually one dominant voice, with the other five participants singing in harmony.

METHODOLOGY: 1) The part of the report which is boring, incomprehensible, and food for those who have no sense of how to climb the corporate ladder. The official theology of a new religious sect, i.e., Corporate Methodists. 3) The post-hoc rationalization and operationalization of random events.

RECALL: The question of whether consumers can, when prompted, remember and describe the company's latest TV commercials before or after the company made the national news for yet another product recall.

SALES STRUGGLES

CALL TO ACTION (CTA): Crafting the unthinkable to persuade prospects to do the unnatural.

CHEAPER: The last gasp of an unimaginative seller.

CLOSING THE SALE: The ability to convince people who should know better.

FULL DISCLOSURE: 1) An opportunity to be perfectly dishonest. 2) The admission, *I'm about to lie to you but in such a way that it will sound like I'm telling the truth.* 3) The terms of a deal a salesperson on staff should have secured approval of in advance. 4) Details that should be revealed prior to beginning a discussion but are actually revealed after a potential customer is about to call you out. 5) Legalese for a carefully crafted document detailing only information that poses zero exposure.

GROWING THE BUSINESS: 1) The attempt to sell what is not wanted to those who don't want it in order to extract money, which you definitely want. 2) In prospecting, the goal of avoiding saturation, i.e., running out of fools.

HANDSHAKES: 1) In the age of Covid-19, an extreme sport. 2) When virtual, used to establish *virtual* respect.

ONE-OFF: 1) A freak-of-nature event, like a manager asking about one's life outside of work. 2) Whatever it's going to take to close the sale.

ROAD SHOW: What executives call a boondoggle and sales reps refer to as a bender.

SALES: The only place where people are actually measured by their own tangible successes, as compared to marketing and management, where people are measured by their own tangible braying.

TOP-OF-THE-FUNNEL: Making prospects aware of a product or service before bilious marketing gas is added to the experiment.

LEGAL MANEUVERS

ASSOCIATES: Outside counsel that favors wearing bowties.

CARVE-OUT: When the person writing the agreement fails to tell you that the good stuff is “no longer on the table,” and does so in a way that makes it hard to realize why the carve-out will prove to be fatal.

DISCLAIMER: *Caveat emptor* translated from the original Latin by company lawyers.

LITIGATION: The act of a lawyer from one company contacting a lawyer from another company, through a court, so that they may both remain gainfully employed.

RUN IT BY LEGAL: An initiative about to experience euthanasia.

ACCOUNTING FOR PROFITS

ANNUAL FEES: A company earning a small fortune by nickel-and-diming its customers.

(the) COMPANY'S STOCK PRICE: A publicly traded company's main product.

DISCOUNT: The act of paying full price but feeling happy after seeing the item sold at a higher price in a classier store.

GO BACK AND SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL: The polite way of saying, “I only look stupid.”

JUST-IN-TIME INVENTORY: A method to avoid paying vendors.

THE CUSTOMER SHOPPING EXPERIENCE (CX)

BRICKS AND MORTAR: Places where one used to buy things at twice the price as one buys on the Web, provided the item was actually in stock.

CANNED MUSIC: Sedates shoppers and helps to embalm office workers.

DESTINATION SHOPPING: A visit to a mall closing soon near you.

DRESSING ROOM: In a clothing store, a bathroom without plumbing.

MOBILE PHONE: A store's new display window.

HOW THE GAME OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IS ACTUALLY PLAYED

(the) CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT: 1) A prominently placed sign meant to confuse customers into thinking that anybody really cares about their problems. 2) What executives say they're focused on when they think no one will look closely.

CUSTOMIZED: Three options, of which two are currently out of stock.

ON-TIME DELIVERY: *Our* time, not the time when you actually hoped for delivery.

REPEAT CUSTOMERS: 1) People who, for now, live or work closer to one's store than those of competitors. 2) Any one prone to sleepwalking.

SALES RECEIPT: The life-raft the buyer clings to while dog paddling toward the Customer Service counter.

CONSULTANT VULTURES

(lots of) HAND HOLDING: A high-maintenance client who doesn't realize one's business model is based on being a polygamist.

(the) LEADERSHIP CONSULTING INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: Offering platitudes disguised as convoluted insights in a process akin to selling bottled water.

TRANSFORMATIVE: A change from bad to worse, as recommended by a consultant whose hobby is chasing tornadoes.