

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

What Your Language Choice Says

Special points of interest:

- *Selling*
- *Presentations*
- *Tools*
- *Research*
- *Social Media*
- *AND MORE!*

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Language is a funny thing—wisdom for a long time was jargon and big words made you sound smart. Today, not so much.

Recently, New York University teamed up with the University of Basel in Switzerland to study the use of business jargon and perception. The conclusion? Using jargon or big words makes you seem untrustworthy.

The study, “Truth From Language and Truth From Fit: The Impact of Linguistic Concreteness and Level of Construal on Subjective Truth,” showed that using simple language made statements easy to understand and process. The majority of people register easy-to-process as truthful. If they had to think about a word, it was clearly not true.

If you are starting to scoff, think about this. You contact technical support and the person says, “your problem is your registry is corrupted”. If you know what the registry is, you will have a conversation about the conclusion and where that came from. But if you don’t, it is hard to make a

judgment one way or the other to determine if that is the problem. Most people in this situation are skeptical. Now take that same statement and make it accessible—the problem is the information that tells the computer how to find that program has gotten corrupted.” If the program you are trying to run isn’t running right, this makes complete sense and suddenly you believe the technician. It is the same technician, just using plain English.

So what words were considered jargon? After all, many words we use in every day conversations were jargon at one point or another. Here is the list of terms you may want to avoid if you want people to believe you:

360 degree thinking
Ballpark
Blue sky thinking
Brainstorming
Credit crunch
Deep Dive
Deliverables
Ducks in a row
Going forward
Heads up
Let’s take this offline



"At the end of the day you want to have achieved passionate synergy as a team player that's consistent with corporate culture, and take it to the next level through an idea shower for a win-win game changer."

Out of the box
Pushing the envelope
Reach Out
Soup to Nuts
Thinking outside of the box
Thought shower
Touch base
Verbiage
Just remember in your emails, texts, tweets, phone calls and face to face meetings, keep the words simple and straight forward and sound like you. You will sound more credible, likeable and people buy from those they like and trust!

Selling to Previous Customers

Everyone knows the last couple years have been tough and you probably lost a client or two. As you build your strategy to get new customers, keep in mind that according to Geoffrey James at BNet, regaining a former client has a 20%-40%



74% said they left due to poor customer service

success rate. Compared to typical marketing options, this should be a strong part of your strategy for fourth quarter.

First, you have to find out why they left. Even if you think you know, you should confirm. The easiest ones will be those that left for a lower price. Find out how the service was, how the product performed, or if there is anything you can do to bring them back. The new vendor is probably not up to your standards and the customer will want to talk.

But, don't feel that everyone left because of price. In James' article, he cited statistics that "bad customer service" was the number one reason people switched (74%) and poor quality was second (32%). Price was only an issue for 1 in 4 and needs changing was even lower.

Take the time to find out as businesses are starting to look at quality more now that things have been tight so long. You may be able to recover some of those clients you thought were gone forever!

Interactive Presentations

Nothing gets through to an audience faster than making the presentation interactive. But too few people choose to go that route because it is "unpredictable"; meaning, the presenter loses control. Here are some tips to prevent losing control:

If you want people to talk to each other, set a time limit and have a sound to let people know when time is up. Before you start the exercise, explain what people should do, let them know about the time limit, and make the noise. Keep in mind it has to be loud enough to interrupt all the talk-

ing!

In group activities, be sure the goals are clear and put them in multiple places around the room. The more you reinforce where the focus should be, the more likely it will stay there!

Do more than one activity—if you have a long presentation and want to keep people engaged, start with activities that are small and build up. For example, if you start the presentation with people standing up and then sitting down, later you can have them do the wave!

The best way to control any activity is to state what people should get out of it up front, then explain the activity and reconfirm what they should learn. Do the activity next and at the conclusion, restate what you expected them to learn, what they did and what they learned.

Bringing interaction to your presentation can make you more memorable, more interesting and all around a better presenter. To make it effective, keep things entertaining and stay in control at all times!

Save Time With PhraseExpress

You know those phrases you use all the time—product descriptions, email signoffs, etc.? Now there is a way to automatically add those to emails or other Microsoft documents with just a short abbreviation and PhraseExpress (<http://www.phraseexpress.com/>).

This great tool allows you to store phrases you use all the time and insert them into emails whenever you like.

Want to use customized signatures for different groups of people? Just store them and assign an abbreviation you can remember. What about dimensions on a product or your tag line for a service? As easy as typing just a couple letters.

In addition to this main feature, PhraseExpress will also store several recent clipboard entries so if you have

cut several different things and want to paste them all, you don't have to do them one at a time. Instead, you can just access them through PhraseExpress.

The program has several other features, but being able to quickly enter text without having to type it over and over can be a big time saver for typists and non-typists alike.

A Review of the Unemployment Numbers

Unemployment is a topic on everyone's mind and the latest reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show reasons to be encouraged.

First, total nonfarm payroll employment increased by over 117 thousand jobs. In addition, total private employment rose by 154 thousand jobs over the month. Those jobs came from healthcare, retail, manufacturing and mining. Government employment continued to decline.

Over the course of 2011, healthcare has added 299 thousand jobs and in

July the big areas were hospitals and ambulatory care.

The retail sector grew by 26 thousand jobs with the biggest area being in personal care outlets. There were some modest gains in distribution as well.

Durable goods manufacturing saw the biggest increase in the manufacturing sector and fewer seasonal layoffs were seen in the motor vehicle and parts industries than is traditional for July.

Mining rose by 9,000 with almost all of those positions in support activities for mining operations.

Employment in professional and technical services continued to rise in July with over 18 thousand new jobs since March 2011.



When reviewed by position, C-suite executives are very much in demand. Unemployment for C-suite executives is 2.6%. Human Resource managers are at 2.8%, accountants and auditors are 3.5%, and financial analysts are at 3.8%.

Science of Social Media

This week **Dan Zarrella** of Hubspot Media released his "Science of Social Media" report. This is a great report because Zarrella takes the standard wisdom of the day and puts it to scientific tests. He analyzes a great deal of data to determine his findings and the results are surprising.

The three areas Zarrella focused on were Exposure, Attention, and Motivation or what he calls the Zarrella hierarchy. In order to get information out there today, first the person has to be exposed to the information, then they have to pay attention to it, and finally they have to be motivated to share.

With Exposure, it is vital to have followers because without them there is no exposure. The people with the most followers tended to share information with links in it and rarely engage in conversation. These people are getting the exposure they want for their content.

He also found that comments on blog posts have no correlation to more discussion on line. So while it may be good from a branding or customer service perspective to have conversa-

tions about your blog content, it isn't a requirement for you to get good exposure.

To get people to pay attention it became clear from Zarrella's report that content is still king. Good content that is compelling is what is needed to get people to pay attention.

Interestingly enough, he found that people appear to use social media most heavily at the end of the week. Activity goes up Thursday and Friday and email click through rates went up over the weekend. Zarrella postulated that was because we all receive fewer emails over the weekend so people had more time to pay attention to the ones they receive.

Motivation was the most interesting section to us because it is difficult to determine what motivates a person to do something. Some of the factors that influence people's willingness to share are things like how often others have shared it—the less often, the better as people like to be the one to "discover" something cool among their friends.

It also matters if the information contains the word "I" vs. "we". People

who use I do not get their information shared nearly as often as those that talk about a broader context.

Frequency of updates also played a part in how often information was shared. If a person posted too often, their posts got less attention overall than people who posted less frequently.

Also, information made up primarily of nouns and verbs got shared more often than those with lots of adjectives and adverbs. Straight talking plays better on the web!

Asking followers to share information had a better success rate of getting shared than information that didn't ask. That is counter-intuitive to much of what is published on the web today about social media but it appears to still be true—people will do what you ask.

The entire report is available in an eBook available for Kindle at http://www.amazon.com/Zarrellas-Hierarchy-Contagiousness-Engineering-ebook/dp/B005BP1Y36/ref=sr_1_3?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1314097421&sr=1-3. Hoep you find it interesting!

The Pedestal Group

4809 Lexington Ridge
Medina OH 44256

330-952-1121

kathy@thepedestalgrou.com

www.thepedestalgrou.com

Twitter: K_Breitenbucher



The Pedestal Group

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

Cost Savings

In a recent blog post, Angel Business Investors identified four areas to concentrate on when cutting costs. By using a more systematic process, you can ensure you aren't cutting things you may need but still make the cuts that help you get through these tough economic times.

Eliminate

Review each expense category and put it in the discretionary or necessary

box. It is important to force yourself to use just two choices to make this first step simpler.



For discretionary expenses, determine if you need this or can you go without for a period of time. For necessary expenses, determine if there are free alternatives or if you could cut down on the frequency. Also, check with vendors and see if there is anything they can do on costs.

Rent

It isn't just for office space anymore. Many companies rent their computer equipment, use subscription services to access software, and even rent their employees as temporary workers. See where you can rent what you need vs. needing to buy.

Share

If you already own something that has downtime, is there anyone who also needs it and would share? This can significantly reduce your ownership costs.

Optimize

When you do have to buy, be sure you are getting enough but not too much. In addition, be sure to price things as a bundle vs. individually. Often companies that sell certain features together will sell that bundle cheaper than individually because it is more work to separate things out. Be sure you know what you need and which way will be cost effective!