

Summer challenge #6: Make your writing understandable

(Or, stop writing in “jargonese”.)

Look up jargon in Merriam-Webster and you find three definitions:

- 1) Confused, unintelligible language
- 2) Technical terminology of a special activity or group
- 3) Obscure, often pretentious language, marked by circumlocutions and long words.

Then look it up in the Oxford Dictionary and you find this:

Special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand

Using jargon, especially in professional or academic writing, seems inevitable. Anybody who has glanced at a medical journal or a legal brief knows that doctors, scientists and lawyers love to use jargon (thinking about the *ex parte injunction brought forth by the complainant*). But then again, those people are talking to their peers, where there is an expectation and more importantly, *an understanding* of jargon.

However, in business or marketing writing, where you are trying to communicate with a wide audience, jargon should have no place. You don't want people to have difficulty understanding you and you certainly don't want to come across as pretentious, do you?

Well, I am here to challenge you to go jargon-free in your business/communication writing, or at least to become more

aware of how much jargon you are using and to ask yourself if there is a better and plainer way of expressing yourself.

Don't think you use much jargon? Check this out and tell me whether you haven't been guilty of incentivizing your readers to drill down to find the low hanging fruit to achieve buy-in from the C-suite:

16 business jargon words we never, ever want to hear again

The Ridiculous Business Jargon Dictionary

The Most Annoying, Pretentious and Useless Business Jargon

So please, drop the pretense and write in English, at least for a summer challenge. Your readers will thank you and your detractors will stop thinking you are a pompous ass.