

Are You FOBIO?

Ask a question like, “How would you do that?” and you might get, “You need to give write access to your CGI directory or whatever directory you put the PSP translator in.”

Some say IT jargon is necessary for accuracy—others say it’s a symptom of having spent too many hours in air-conditioned rooms full of blinking hardware. But it’s no better in marketing. The crew there issues press releases that read like, “SDRC and Asera Inc. today announced a multi-phase strategic alliance to integrate SDRC’s I-DEAS mechanical design automation and SDRC’s TeamCenter collaborative product management solutions, including specific functionality from Metaphase and Accelis, with Asera’s eBusiness Operating System.”

The fact is, as you travel around corporate towers you’re likely to experience geek-speak to biz-talk on the upper floors to colorful slang in the shipping room, replete with Anglo-Saxon epithets. And in most cases, slang (informal speech) and jargon (technical vocabulary) are blended with elements of cant (secret language used to conceal) to create dialects designed for club members only.

But how do you make up a lingo that’s your group’s own? One tech-

nique is verbing. You take an ordinary noun and begin to use it as a verb. (We’ll transition that material later.) Or you can make up a new buzzword. (Bobbleheading is defined on BuzzWhack.com as “The mass nod of agreement by participants in a meeting to comments made by the boss even though most have no idea what he just said.”) You can make up new acronyms like wombat—waste of money, bandwidth, and time—or FOBIO—Frequently Outwitted By Inanimate Objects. Or just find new ways to describe old situations. The phrase “negative patient outcome,” for example, is a euphemism from the hospital’s legal department for guess what?

With a little practice and some buy-in from your peers, you, too, can create directives like, “You’re not going to impress the alpha pups with Barneyware, so if you want BDNs, stop boiling the ocean and get out there and develop the killer app for the

Evernet.” (A dictionary for translating any of the terms, as well as winning PR releases, can be found at www.buzzwhack.com.)

Decide on like clothing (logoed if possible), a signature beer (or cola, like Jolt, if you’re in with the hardware), and maybe even a secret handshake (a digital password will do), and, voilà, your group is ready for its own loft in the tower. ■

