Title:
Jargon Awareness in Email Messages

Word Count:
377

Summary:
You may not realize it, but you use a specialized vocabulary every day. In the professional setting of the work place, this specialized vocabulary is referred to as "jargon."

Keywords:
email, commmunication, business, marketing, customer service

Article Body:
You may not realize it, but you use a specialized vocabulary every day. In the professional setting of the work place, this specialized vocabulary is referred to as "jargon."

Jargon is the language you use to discuss issues within your corporation (e.g., XYZ Widget Company), within your industry (e.g., insurance), or within your type of position (e.g., marketing). This language can be made up of technical terms, abbreviations, and acronyms.

The difficulty with jargon is that only those people within the group (whatever the group is) understand it. Technical terms and acronyms that may be fine for interoffice email correspondence wouldn't be appropriate when communicating with someone outside the group, such as customers.

Know the Audience
When determining what, if any, jargon to use, keep the audience in mind. What "group" is this reader a member of? Will he/she understand these acronyms or abbreviations? When in doubt, avoid the abbreviation, and spell it out.

Recognize that jargon doesn't just refer to job-related issues. If you work for a corporation, you use terms that are unique to your industry. If you are sending an email to someone outside your industry, you will need to review the message and remove any potentially confusing industry terms.

Example

Using different forms of jargon, here are a few examples of responses to the

same inquiry:

"Where do you work?"

1. (Who is asking): Someone in the same department

(Response): I work in CRT.
[This stands for Customer Resource Team.]

2. (Who is asking): Someone in the same company

(Response): I work for HLICO.
[This stands for Happy Life Insurance Company.]

3. (Who is asking): A working person who is outside the industry

(Response): I work for an insurance company.

4. (Who is asking): A young child

(Response): I help people save money today, so they can buy candy bars and ice cream later.

It's important to remember that the language you use in your everyday work environment is unique. Using this language with the wrong person can cause him/her to become embarrassed or confused. You don't want to appear condescending to a customer or coworker.

Be aware of when jargon is appropriate and when it's not. When you know the difference, more effective communication will follow.