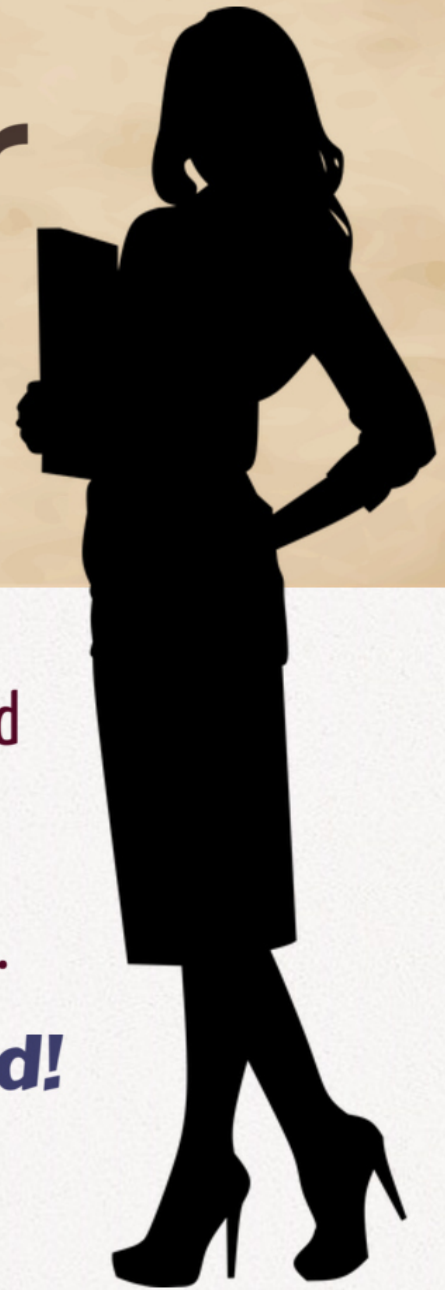


Meetings At Work Special Events Conversations  
**Make sure people take you seriously!**

# Terms to Boost Your Business Savvy



The secret to effective networking and future opportunities is to know the language of your audience and peers. The secret to knowing it is to study it.

***Luck favors the prepared!***

Developed by  
**My Personal Professor**

Meetings ○ Conversations ○ Presentations ○ Small Talk

**Terms to Boost Your Business Savvy**

*Prepared by*

**My Personal Professor**

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Case for Boosting Your Business Savvy by Expanding Your Business Vocabulary

#### Who Saw That Coming?

Once upon a time, like a lot of people, I went to work for an organization that held a lot of meetings. After one of these, several stayed around to chat. In that short time, something happened – in a split second – that changed one of my colleague’s career trajectory.

We talked about an intrapreneurship project. The company’s division manager asked for a first year projection of resources committed to the project to make it work.

Someone said, “Who’s putting together the pro forma for the project?”

A new employee asked, “What’s a pro forma? I’d like to work on that.”

Those who started the talk glanced at each other without a smile and ignored the comment. A couple of days later, I was talking to the guy who started the conversation, and he said, “How in the hell does she think she’s going to be able to work on a pro forma when she doesn’t even know what it is?” Then he simply said, “Idiot!” The man was her supervisor, and from that point forward, he treated her like a second-class citizen.



**You can’t prevent every bad situation, but you can do many things today that decrease the chance of disaster and fill your pipeline with opportunities.**


A business associate once told me about his first trip to France. He commented on the beauty of Paris, but shook his head when I asked him how much of the language he learned while he was there.

He said something really important:

***“You know – it’s hard to get people to take you seriously when you don’t know their language; especially when you’re on their turf.”***


## The Case for Understanding Business Terminology?

I use a version of the pro forma story above in my business communications and college orientation classes for two reasons: 1) it conveys the importance of understanding the language of business for all, and 2) the majority of business students - even those close to graduation - have underdeveloped business vocabularies as they approach their time in the business world.

 What's worse is that many students simply do not care about developing their business-related vocabulary because they have not yet experienced any negative repercussions from their lack of knowledge, and they have not experienced any positive feedback or results from having developed it. This means they don't see it yet as the hindrance it will become. And, they don't see it yet as an opportunity, but they will wish they had.

It goes without saying - the better you know the language of business, the easier it is to establish yourself and gain credibility among peers. Knowing the language helps you get things done. It gives you confidence. It builds other's confidence in you. It unleashes your personality and sense of humor. Knowing the language creates the perception that you are intelligent.

**In business, language is a form of currency.  
When you use it the right way, you get something in  
return. When you don't, you won't.**

 And here is the kicker – if you don't have a college degree, you can be perceived as smarter than your college graduate counterparts by having a well-developed business vocabulary.

Every four years in the United States, we elect or re-elect a President. It's an interesting how intelligence factors the voting decision for many people. How can so many believe that one person is intelligent while others view them as a knucklehead?

People want to hear another's command of their language because it gives them a sense of confidence. They feel that "all things considered", the best bet is to go with the smartest person possible.

The best example of this is the average American's desire for their president to look and sound "presidential". We also want the CEO of our company to look and feel the part so it gives us a sense of certainty, maybe even a sense of status ("that's my CEO"). As kids, we rolled our eyes and cringed when our parents embarrassed us because they "said something stupid", or they didn't know what they were talking about.

What we have learned through experience and study over the generations is that people feel more comfortable around those who have a command of the situation in which they find

themselves. Those people can almost always articulate for themselves and others an understanding and confidence as part of their demeanor that makes them attractive, and, in some cases, perceived as indispensable.

At times, Presidents demonstrated a knack for words and the language, and they knew how to use them without overusing it. Most consider a U.S. President to be someone who is savvy, meaning that they are experienced, knowledgeable, well-informed; and shrewd (often used in combination). When we heard Kennedy's inaugural address, Reagan's speech at the Berlin Wall, we were reassured and inspired. When the boss of "high integrity" chose the right words to reassure us that our division was not going to be closed, we breathed a little easier.

People who consume the words of those they consider intelligent go into their next day with more security and swag in their step because they have surrounded themselves with a higher degree of certainty about how their day will turn out.

Here are six important considerations that illustrate why it is valuable to make a commitment to learn and use the language of business:

## #1 We Love Intelligence

While people define intelligence differently, everyone defines intelligence. Some may argue that everyone defines intelligence the same - "I know when I see it". That adds an emotional element to use of language. Many love Jeopardy because they enjoy seeing smart people perform. I've heard people say, "We should only elect this person as President because he or she is so smart." Intelligence – independent of how it is used – is highly valued by many.

There is a lot to be said for strong instincts, intuition, work ethic, etc. But there is something special about being "smart." You have to be smart to get into the best schools. You have to be smart to be a doctor or a lawyer. A kissing cousin to intelligence is being "clever". We admire people who are clever. It's a nuance of intelligence that attracts people. We might not want to be taken in by a grifter in real life, but watching John Cusack, Anjelica Houston, and Annette Bening be grifters in a movie is fun and fascinating. We admire their craft and value their ability to be so good at it. Being around smart people reinforces our aspirations and confirms our own desires



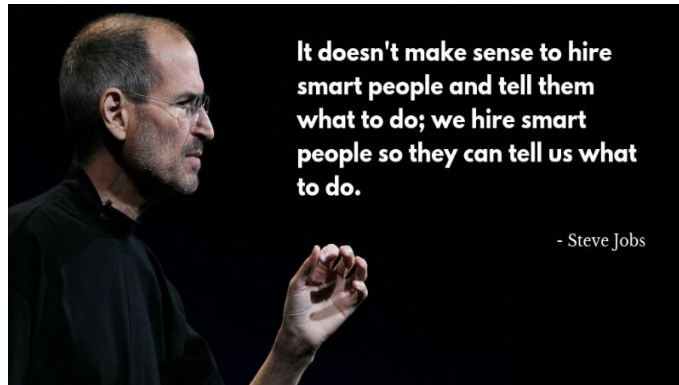
Smart is sexy. Smart is money. Being smarter is better. The case for intelligence as a key factor in your success is strong.

## #2 Intelligence is a Key Trait of Successful People


Commanding the language of business, including understanding key terms and concepts in all kinds of businesses, contributes mightily to conversational, decision-making, relationship-building, and persuasion skills. It's hard to argue that successful business people are dumb.

One of the significant attributes of intelligent business people is they are not only smart in their chosen field, but also in many other fields they interface with on a regular basis.

Understanding contract law, and then knowing the difference between an athlete's contract with an NFL team and the "employment-at-will" concept might be very impressive to a junior employee who also wants to understand those differences.



As important as the perception it creates, language and intelligence is essential to critical thinking when it comes to decision-making, allocation of resources, isolating necessary goals, objectives, and the strategies to achieve them.

 Understanding the language of business gives you an advantage on the way up or wherever you plan to go. It also is essential in helping you sustain and protect your success.

Obviously, there are many factors that go into business success; but in a world of first, quick and lasting impressions, it is critical to get things right the first time to build our personal brands, as well as our business product brands.

## #3 Intelligence Helps You Protect Yourself by Keeping People Honest

A mentor once told his young friend that one of the greatest uses of his intelligence and experience was for the purpose of "playing dumb". The young mentee asked why he didn't want everyone to think he was smart. He responded by saying that the more successful he got, the more people tried to take advantage of him. "I learned that I could use what I know to test people to see if they wanted a genuine relationship with me, or whether they wanted something from me."

"How do you do that?", the youngster replied.

The mentor said, "An agent approached me about buying insurance. I met with him. He began to ask me how I wanted to protect my family when I died – an important question. The problem was he only focused on that issue. He never asked about my business dealings or structure to determine how that should be factored into my decisions. You see, I have personal and



business insurance needs, not just one or the other. At the beginning of the appointment, the young man asked me what I knew about insurance? All I said was, I'm not the expert, you are. Ask me the questions you need to learn about me so you can advise me."



The mentee said, "So, what did you do?"


"I found a new insurance agent", the gentleman replied.

"The first insurance agent demonstrated that his knowledge of insurance and the selling process would not meet my needs because he never asked me about a comprehensive strategy for passing my business along to my family when I died. He didn't know the right questions to ask. As a result, he lost potentially

thousands of dollars in commissions because he didn't demonstrate knowledge based on my needs.?

The mentee asked, "What should I learn from that?"

The older gentleman guided him through a brief conversation explaining that the first sign of intelligence is to accept that you don't know everything, you can always learn more. And, he taught him that telling someone everything you know is like showing the competition your cards when playing poker.

 If you give away your knowledge, position, or hand, you put the competition in the driver's seat.

#### **#4 Intelligence Creates a Platform from Which You Can Build Success**


Good, ethical business people seek the shortest, ethical route to success that also creates long-term sustainability. That means sometimes you make decisions to slow down or not try to accomplish everything at once.

One important reason for this is that effective business people develop alliances based on trust and by surrounding themselves with the best people possible; and that takes time.

That's one of the reasons it is so important to have developed a solid strategy to reach your goals and achieve your objectives.




Those committed to business alliances like this help each other develop in many ways.

 In the process, these alliance partners create new and expanding opportunities for each other.

## #5 Intelligence Makes You a Valued & Attractive Resource to Others

You earn and enjoy loyalty with those you help because of your knowledge. One of the greatest joys in life is helping people when you don't expect anything in return. Sharing your knowledge and wisdom with others is a fulfilling reward of achieving success.

 One caveat – *not all smart people are ethical*. Be careful who you trust and give information. Be careful with advice and information you receive. Smart business people use their deepest intellectual capacity to discern truth from lies, and opportunities from traps.


## #6 A critical sign of intelligence is knowing the right questions to ask in a given situation.

In my book, *Help Anyone Create a Clear Vision for Their Future*, I talk in detail about the importance of asking good questions to help people clarify the factors that go into decision-making for their future. Anyone can dispense knowledge. Getting people to challenge their own perspective about things is where true reflection, consideration, understanding and wisdom start. You can lead, direct, and suggest; but if you want to unleash someone's intelligence and ability to transform the future, teach them how to discover their intelligence and channel it for the purpose God and nature intended.



## Where do you go now?

Here is where you go now. It's simple.

 Make a lifetime commitment to understanding the language of business – the terms and phrases of the different aspects and industries within business. Become a student of business terminology. It will not take long for many to consider you a valuable resource. Regardless of the primary industry or industries in which you work, maintaining a broad and strong command of business vocabulary will serve you well.

Consider this:

Intelligent people are frequently considered by HR managers, CEO's, and other business leaders to be "strategic hires" – someone in whom a company may want to place and offer a special set of resources and considerations because of their potential and ability.

If you're like me, you believe in the idea that everyone deserves a bright future, but not everyone has to get there the same way. One thing, however, that most successful business people have is a commanding knowledge of the terms, phrases, and vocabulary of business. They know the language.

## Terms to Boost Your Business Savvy

### 30 Situations Where Knowing the Language of Business Boosts Your Reputation & Opportunities

Business lunches – one on one or group opportunities	Casual conversations and run-ins involving a range of topics	Training sessions - accuracy and delivery of information
Office meetings – internal and external	Career fairs where you never know the person you will meet	Game nights when it pays to be the brightest in the room
Client meetings – demonstrating value and conserving business	Meeting new neighbors who are sizing you up / checking you out	Office parties – the mine field random topics
Preparing speeches that will be relevant and valuable to others	Changing jobs and being able to demonstrate competence/value	Business & personal writing – clarity and competence
Preparing presentations that informative and persuasive	Changing industries – showing your skill as needed & valuable	Insuring that you are always dealing with qualified and competent people
Job interviews – whether being interviewed or interviewing	When you're asked for advice, leaving a lasting impression	Justifying financial plans based on sound reasoning and understanding of terms
Receptions where business colleagues will ask random questions	Association or society meetings where you interact with those who can impact your future	Creating a personal career plan based on sound reasoning and understanding of terms
Mentoring young people who look to you for building confidence and advice	Taking employment assessments that demonstrate aptitude, capacity, and competence	Connecting with clients and reassuring their decision to do business with you
Connecting with prospects who want a sense of confidence in who they are dealing with	Not being taken advantage of by colleagues who will use your lack of knowledge against you	Not being taken advantage of by service professionals – auto, home, insurance, etc.
Gaining respect in negotiations so you create leverage	Testing other's knowledge so you know your competition	Leading people to help (substance abuse, finances, etc.)

Opportunity is right in front of you, grasp it. Grow your knowledge of the language of business, and watch your opportunities in business grow!

On the following pages is a world of knowledge in the form of business and related vocabulary. Use this often and check the resources at [www.rickmckee.com](http://www.rickmckee.com) for other opportunities to expand your knowledge, influence, and success.