

Think Outside the Business Jargon Box – Kathi Guiney, SPHR, GPHR, President YES!HRSolution

If you're still "thinking outside the box," you're really not. For years, "think outside the box" has topped business jargon people would like to forget. And this, like other jargon, isn't just annoying, it isn't clear language. Lessen annoyance and improve communication by forgetting this business jargon immediately:

- **"Deep dive"** – Unless you're scuba diving for sunken treasure, what does this phrase even mean? Ditch the diving suit and try, "Research this issue and get more details."
- **"Peel the onion"** – This "deep dive" forerunner conjures up bad breath and unquenchable tears; not exactly positive imagery.
- **"It is what it is"** – This phrase manages to sound dismissive, resigned, vague, and overly literal all at once, all while saying nothing of value. What is "it"? Could you make "it" better with a noun: "A chair is what a chair is"? Nope! Nothing can make this phrase meaningful. Instead, try, "We can't change that fact, but we can...."
- **"No worries"** – We say this when a project is delayed, sent with errors, or just didn't go as planned. This polite if not disingenuous response actually means, "I really am worried, but I hope things will get better on a 'go forward' basis" (see below).
- **"Go forward"** – Unless Doc Brown shows up with a DeLorean, there's no time-traveling to fix the past.
- **"At the end of the day"** – Another phrase that suffers under its own literality, this is often said when a decision is pending: "At the end of the day, we will look at all factors and make a decision." So is everyone supposed to hang out until 5:05 p.m. for the results show? Let people go home: try, "We will review all factors as part of the decision."

At the end of the day, let's deep dive into effective business phrases and go forward into new territory. And if you have any questions—no worries; it is what it is.