Survey reveals management pet hates

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A survey of over 2,000 British managers has revealed which habits irritate them most while at work. One of the most annoying things for today's managers is the current crop of jargon, or "management speak". Others high on the list include people who sit opposite you sending you emails, when they could simply tell you their message; people arriving late for work and for meetings; and people who take regular cigarette breaks. Report author Charles Elvin explained why it is important for us to know what annoys people. He said: "When office-based teams work in close proximity for long periods of time, we see that seemingly trivial issues can grow disproportionately. If left unchecked, they can begin to cause upset and resentment."

Management jargon proved to be an emotive issue for those participating in the research. Many managers described it as a "pointless irritation" which few people understand. They wondered why people used it when there are "normal" ways to express the same thing. Cited examples included 'thinking outside the box', 'going forward' and 'let's touch base'. The "real-world equivalents" of these are 'looking at things differently', 'in the future' and 'contact me'. The Plain English Campaign stated overused jargon damages the economy. The group said: "Management speak…gets in the way of business….It isolates newcomers who feel they have to learn the lingo….It acts as a barrier to procuring new business."

Sources: *Huffington Post / Telegraph / ITV*

Writing

Too much jargon entering the world of business is confusing and leads to poor communication. It should be banned. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

survey / managers / jargon / annoying / late for work / cigarette breaks / trivial issues / pointless / going forward / let's touch base / in the future / newcomers / barrier

True / False

a)   New research shows that successful managers do not own a pet. T / F

b)   People get annoyed at receiving e-mail from a worker sitting nearby. T / F

c)   A researcher suggested we need to know what annoys different people. T / F

d)   The researcher said there was no such thing as a trivial issue. T / F

e)   Many managers said they thought jargon was annoying. T / F

f)   Many people wondered why we use jargon instead of simple English. T / F

g)   "Let's touch base" means to want to feel the bottom of something. T / F

h)   A campaigner said jargon helps businesses in getting new contracts. T / F

Synonym Match

1.	revealed	a.	quoted
2	irritate	b.	unimportant
3.	simply	c.	nearness
4.	proximity	d.	annoy
5.	trivial	e.	keeps apart
6.	emotive	f.	counterparts
7.	cited	g.	shown
8.	equivalents	h.	obstacle
9.	isolates	i.	sensitive
10.	barrier	j.	easily

Discussion – Student A

a)   What's the difference between English jargon and "plain" English?

b)   How and why does jargon start?

c)   Is jargon good or bad for business?

d)   What jargon in your language do you like or dislike?

e)   What are your most hated words in English (and in your language)?

f)   What do you think of people arriving late to work?

g)   Do other workers / students in your office / class annoy you?

h)   What trivial issues have you seen grow disproportionately?

Phrase Match

1. which habits
2   Others high
3. in close
4. seemingly trivial issues can
5. begin to cause upset
6. a pointless
7. thinking outside
8. real-world
9. overused jargon
10. It acts

a. equivalents
b. grow disproportionately
c. irritation
d. irritate them
e. on the list
f. the box
g. and resentment
h. as a barrier
i. proximity
j. damages the economy

Discussion – Student B

a) What irritates you most in your daily life?
b) What do you think of the jargon, "think outside the box"?
c) Is it better to use plain English and not jargon?
d) How do you think jargon can damage an economy?
e) Do you think you are a good team member?
f) What do you do that might annoy other people?
g) What was the last win-win situation you experienced?
h) What questions would you like to ask a management expert?

Spelling

1. which habits <u>ratterii</u> them most
2. people who sit <u>ipesoopt</u> you
3. <u>cgairttee</u> breaks
4. work in close <u>tixpiyrom</u>
5. seemingly <u>aitilvr</u> issues
6. cause upset and <u>mtetenensr</u>
7. proved to be an <u>emeovit</u> issue
8. <u>dteic</u> examples
9. real-world <u>snlietuaqve</u>
10. <u>edesruvo</u> jargon
11. it <u>sltsoeai</u> newcomers
12. a barrier to <u>gpnirrcuo</u> new business

Role Play

Role A – Top manager
You love management jargon. The more, the better. Tell the others three reasons why. You think plain English doesn't motivate workers. Jargon paints an easy-to-understand concept of important ideas. It also makes people feel modern and fills them with dynamism. English always changes.

Role B – Old manager
You hate management jargon. Tell the others three reasons why. You have used normal, plain English for decades and no one has misunderstood you. Jargon is confusing and leads to mistakes and wastes time. It's only used by people wanting to look cool, but they aren't cool.

Role C – Assistant manager
You are totally confused by e-mails and presentations from your boss. It is full of jargon you don't understand. You want a jargon-free workplace. Tell the others three reasons why. You don't understand why people can't use plain English. You have wasted time asking what the jargon means.

Role D – Management expert
You think jargon is an important and necessary part of business. Tell the others three reasons why. Business is so dynamic and changing that it needs new language. When people think about the meaning of jargon, they understand the concept better and so perform better.

Speaking - Annoyances

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most annoying at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- people smoking
- slow drivers
- TV commercials
- untidiness
- people not saying 'thank you'
- computer screen freezing
- forgetting English words
- people being late

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. c	5. b
6. i	7. a	8. f	9. e	10. h

Answers – True False

a F	b T	c T	d F	e T	f T	g F	h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.