



Volume 1, Issue 4

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*Understanding customer needs and trends.
Honing your message and strategies to meet market demands.
Building a reputation to create and sustain your leadership.
Demonstrating value.*

These are all paramount to your success.

Inspiration and ideas come from a wide variety of sources. The ability to integrate new thoughts and make the strategy + communications + leadership link helps companies and executives alike elevate their performance.

Because it's challenging at the top, [The Aerie Company](#) offers you useful and thought provoking ideas to help you soar to new heights. Enjoy these latest insights.



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 **The ABCs of Image**

Image has an undeniable impact on success. Every day both individuals and companies have the opportunity to create an immediate and lasting impression on clients, prospects and anyone they encounter. That means our bottom line is affected by personal image as well as the image of employees who serve as important ambassadors of every business.

That image consists of more than just appearance. Clearly, much of what you do and say contributes to the impression we make. Just ask Mark Tercek, a man passionate about the environment. In a recent

Wall Street Journal profile he shared how he has spent years setting an example for his family with trips to places like Tanzania, Patagonia and Costa Rica where naturalists have shown them how economic development has benefited and hurt the environment. A former managing director at Goldman Sachs, Tercek recently landed a dream job as head of the Nature Conservancy. Early on he was reminded about the importance of image and how impressions may dramatically differ in other cultures. During a meeting broadcast internationally to the organization's stakeholders, he mindlessly gulped down some water from a plastic bottle – not a great visual for the leader of a global conservation group. Today he's even more cognoscente about walking the talk and a consistent image.

Market leadership is built on how you express your image, differentiating and demonstrating individual or company expertise in a way that positively resonates with your target audience. A simple ABC approach can help you more consistently manage that image and overall reputation. This includes:



- **Appearance** – how you look from grooming, clothes and accessories for individuals to distinctive and uniform colors, fonts, logos, visual elements and other designs for businesses
- **Behavior** – actions, decisions, social interactions, etiquette, with whom you align and keep company, and where you appear consistent with your mission
- **Communication** – clear and concise, focused positioning that reinforces your key messages, uses appropriate channels targeted to your audience, resolves conflict

Businesses and individuals alike need strong market leadership reputations to get to and stay at the top. If you'd like to learn more about how to refine your image, contact us at The Aerie Company.

Eliminate the Jargon!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly nine out of 10 adults have difficulty following routine medical advice, largely because it's incomprehensible to average people. Journal reporter Laura Landro's [The Informed Patient](#) column recently revealed the consequences of such poor health literacy – substantially rising costs and worsening outcomes. The encouraging news is that, while public health officials are pushing for simpler language for medical communication written at a level between 4th and 6th grades, there are a number of companies with software to detect and suggest replacements for confusing words and phrases, as well as other teaching tools like video and interactive graphics to help ensure information can be more easily understood by patients.

Perhaps more of these approaches are needed for all those other industries and businesses suffering from the jargon syndrome. Poor writing is one thing. A string of meaningless words and expressions that have overstayed their welcome is quite another. And yes, there are times when scientifically or technically complicated issues may necessitate some complex explanations. However, clear and concise language makes you a better executive and it positions your company more effectively.

In an annual review of the most overused words and jargon in news releases, [MediaBistro](#) posted this year's results including nearly 100 words that appear with alarming frequency. In fact, far too many emerged in complicated company descriptions we reviewed as part of a competitive landscape review for a client in the healthcare industry. The updated list also prompted a colleague, quite a talented writer, to call and wonder which industries outside the WWE wrestling mania used phrases like bleeding-edge (surprisingly in a tie with "exit strategy"). Another amusing anecdote came from senior colleague at a large financial services firm who

shared that their company meetings are so mind-numbingly filled with business lingo that groups play Jargon Bingo while officials speak. What does that say about productivity or ensuring employees are good ambassadors for the business?



Effective leaders are good communicators. The key to being a good speaker is being able to speak to everybody at once, despite whether your business is technology, finance, government, manufacturing or professional services. The industry metaphors cloud your intended message and diminish your value. Too many leaders today use jargon and audiences ultimately perceive they are using it to dodge accountability for their own mistakes and failures.

So make a commit to minimize dependence on the culprit of so much of today's confusion. To help you improve communication like press releases, check out Grader.com, the free online suite of tools that helps you evaluate your messages and materials. So from now on, the only jargon I want to know more about is that St. Helena, CA Pinot Noir from Jargon Wines. I hear I'll be craving a second glass of the smooth, balanced, seductive and generously fruit-driven flavors.

New Links

Having the answers or knowing where to find them is what differentiates you and helps demonstrate value. Take a look at some of the new online resources we've identified which you may find helpful in learning more about strategy, communications and leadership.

[Putting the WOW in Customer Service](#) – Ken Blanchard, coauthor of Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach to Customer Service, showcases Zappos founder Tony Hsieh's new take on culture and how great customer service builds brands and loyalty in his recently released Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose.

[The Hot Mommas® Project](#) is an award-winning venture at the George Washington University School of Business which provides scalable, global access to role models and virtual mentors that can be used by peer support groups, educators, trainers, and parents. The group has been featured in Prentice Hall textbooks, Washington Post, NPR and as a Coleman Foundation award winner.

Grader.com, HubSpot's free online suite of tools that helps you evaluate your communications materials. See our website at www.aeriecompany.com for more links.

About The Aerie Company

At The Aerie Company, we help organizations and executives demonstrate their value and accelerate growth. Because it's challenging at the top, we show our clients how to go beyond where they are today and elevate their business and personal market leadership performance. We build a strategic stronghold with better understanding of your current market, an aligned and articulate vision, mission and strategy, a compelling position that resonates in



the marketplace and effective communication so your stakeholders recognize your real benefits and value.

For more information, visit www.aeriecompany.com, email us at suzanne@aeriecompany.com or call 847-556-8873.



Watch for regular updates from The Aerie Company on best practices, advice on communication and leadership development, and other insights we gain as devoted lifelong learners to help you demonstrate your value and improve your performance.