

Annoying phrases speakers are over-using

What annoying phrases from popular culture are speakers over-using in their presentations? The following is a random selection of comments from a Linked-in discussion.... are you guilty?

1. I am tired of hearing speakers say " Let me un pack this for you". This causes a mental shut down... .
2. So, well, you know, it's like it's sorta, kinda, basically a bit like this. Note this last sentence conveys no definite statement of fact or emotion whatsoever. If you listen actively, you'll hear that a lot of people simply fail to produce coherent, crisp sentences, even when they are "trained" public speakers. In my own language it would be the endemic use of "zeg maar" which has infested everyday speech. It's our equivalent of "like" or "sorta". Even seasoned public speakers (the prime minister comes to mind) use it.
3. A personal pet peeve of mine is: "SO, How many of you have ever....?" as an opener. It's okay to open with a question, but unless the energy in the room is already peaked, the audience usually does not want to raise their hands at the beginning of a presentation. Feel free to add the contrite:
4. Synergize, monetize, bring to the table, reinvent the wheel, carve out a niche, core competencies, low hanging fruit, deliverables, action items, and...GAZILLIONS more. There is actually a "buzzword" game to play during executive meeitngs that lists many of these. It's FUN!
5. Just yesterday, I heard a speaker say, "Well, at the end of the day..." three times within a 20 minute talk. It's quickly moving to the top of the overused cliches list.
6. Moving forward, going forward..what other direction would we go in? It is definitely overused not just in speeches but in everyday conversation.
7. I use 'bottom line' probably ten times within an hour, I am seeking help :)
8. Favourite MBA jargon, "add value".
9. For me, Yachting terms are the most annoying to me--"Headwinds and Tailwinds" They are elitest and mean nothing in the final analysis.
10. The fact of the matter is
11. I have been pointing out to communications seminars that the word "toxic" has been drained of all specific meaning in just a few months. It now indicates any level of disapproval or undesirability for any (or no) reason. It is instructive to see the "draining" process happen so fast.
12. It's a paradigm shift with a lot of impact for the stakeholders. I think.
13. Gritting my teeth as I say them: Going forward -Back in the day - On the same page -skill sets
14. like, you know, um (used almost every other word in the sentence!)
15. I'm not as bothered by the new buzzwords/phrases because they come and go. What drives my crazy is "irregardless". I am also guilty of using the following "they may or may not...." well that doesn't really narrow it down does it. It's like saying it "may or may not rain..." although 100% correct it has not moved us any closer to valuable information.

I also not a big fan of anything that comes after a phrase such as "my granddaddy used to say..." It's always some hokey, folk wisdom designed to cut through the clutter of today's sophisticated jargon and get back to the basics. However, I guess if you are Zig Ziglar and your persona is based on being folksy it works.

- OK, for the record I have used every one of these except irregardless. Maybe there is a speaker's anonymous program I can join
16. "At this point in time" --that's and oldie but a goody. Doesn't that mean now? It's an attempt to make the mundane more elegant.
 17. My other favorite is relatively new and I have seen it used by cable news anchors so of course it has to be correct... "efforting"
"We are efforting to get that video feed to you soon"....what? you mean working on or attempting or trying right.. is that even a word?
 18. You know my granddaddy used to say "fixin to"...
 19. I have heard "LOL" and "OMG" used a couple of times recently in presentations. It guard me off guard, as though the speaker's comments were set to 'stun.'
 20. I struggle when I hear things like "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten" or " Insanity is..."...you get the point. I know they are wonderful quotes and have meaning, but to me they have lost their meaning because they've become so overused and cliché. I hope I'm not using any that others have grown tired of hearing.
 21. I coach my clients to put the following lines into storage...
 - "Let's take it to the next level..."
 - "You may of heard of Harry Truman"...-(DUH!--the device of saying "you may have heard of" is very tired way of trying to engage people's minds)
 - "Let's drill down on that for a moment..."
 - "I just want to be clear..."
 - "My friends..." (sorry Mr. McCain)
 - "Here are some of the funny things kids have said to God..." (good grief--we all own computers)
 - " (tear in voice) I'm sorry, I always get emotional when I tell that story..."

22. I have 2 verbal peeves.

The first is "to be perfectly honest".
Is there an imperfect way to be honest?
If there is someone please let me in on it.

The other is "can I be honest with you?"
My visceral response -- No, please continue to lie to me.