

# Double speak

The real meaning of common utterings

**A**s this is the summer issue, many of you will be reaching for phrase books to make sure you enjoy a well deserved break. On your return, it may take a while to tune into the often confusing world of IT sales, which has a language all of its own. We're talking about the subtle meanings of innocent sounding phrases. Just to get you back into the swing of things, here are some used in common situations – and what they really mean. Happy holidays.

## When used by customers

■ Will you be sending out customer satisfaction forms this year?

*I can't wait to destroy your career*

■ It would be good to meet with your manager

*Am I that unimportant to you?*

■ It would be good to meet with your manager again

*As you are completely incapable of solving my problems, let's meet with someone in real authority*

■ I've got to hold off signing the order for another couple of weeks

*You will give me a better price at the end of the month/quarter*

■ Your salesperson has been very flexible in understanding our business needs  
*Your salesperson immediately caves in when we ask for a discount*

■ We appreciate the value of a diverse set of opinions

*You don't understand a thing*

■ Unfortunately, little issues like this often cloud the perceptions of senior managers

*I'm going to hold you to ransom over that next order*

■ That symposium in Monte Carlo last year was very interesting

*I'm open to bribery and corruption*

## When used by salespeople in front of customers

■ The support organisation has let me down again

*I promised the Earth and set expectations far too high*

■ Really? I've never heard of that being an issue

*We've been found out again*

■ I'd like to bring in my manager

*I've got absolutely no authority to get anything done around here*



■ I'd like to bring in my manager again

*I'm going to offload your problem onto someone else*

■ Can we focus on the value added elements of our proposal?

*My margins are far too low on this deal*

■ We would like to focus on the underlying problem

*This will take a long time to fix*

## When used by sales managers discussing account management

■ Customer satisfaction is vital

*It's now the first week of the month/quarter*

■ I'd like your best judgement on this

*Make a guess*

■ There is severe pressure from senior management

*My bonus/job depends on this*

■ It's critical that the customer sees you as empowered

*Don't bother me with this stuff*

■ I'm disappointed in your handling of this

*Don't expect any promotion/bonus/salary review, you good for nothing...*

■ I'm extremely disappointed in your handling of this

*If I were you I'd make sure my CV is up to date*

■ I appreciate your honesty and openness

*You are a complete and utter failure*

■ We have an issue with pre-sales resources

*You have given away free consultancy again*

■ We have another issue with pre-sales resource

*None of our engineers will work with you*

■ This looks like a rigorous assessment of the situation

*What have I missed?*

## When used by salespeople during the forecast review

■ I'm working closely with our partners on demand creation

*I'm ambulance chasing*

■ We are under intense competitive price pressure

*I've failed miserably to sell any benefits*

■ There is an issue with our order processing policy and procedures

*Why can't I book this signed napkin?*

■ I've detected signs of a slight slippage

*There's no chance we will get it this month*

■ We need to create a compelling event

*The only way to get it soon is to give a massive discount*

■ The market appears to be drying up

*I haven't done any cold calling this month*

■ Their policy is not to talk to potential suppliers during the evaluation phase

*I don't have any good senior level relationships*

■ There is some slight upside potential

*I've got orders in the bag, but will hang onto them until next month*

■ There is some slight downside potential

*This forecast is wildly optimistic*

## When used by sales managers during the forecast review

■ We may have to consider some form of financial re-engineering

*We're going to have to cook the books*

■ It may be prudent to consider a stock re-profiling exercise

*We're going to stuff the channel*

■ Your pipeline appears a little pessimistic

*You are holding business over until next month*

■ Your pipeline appears a little optimistic

*There is no way that will come in this month*

■ I'll just insert a management variance

*There is no way that I can put their forecast up to my boss; they are lying again*

■ What is your medium term pipeline?

*What can we steal into this month?*

■ We owe it to you to do a deep dive on your pipeline at the next review

*I don't believe a word that you are saying, but I'll give you one more chance*

■ Is that your final commit?

*Please place all of your appendages on the table while I take out this big hammer and nails* **SF**

Steve Hoyle is Chairman of ProAct Business Development, specialising in turning theory into practice with sales behavioural change programmes. See [www.proactbd.com](http://www.proactbd.com)