



Practice simplicity in your articles and marketing materials

Keep your audience in mind when writing articles, blog entries and other social content.

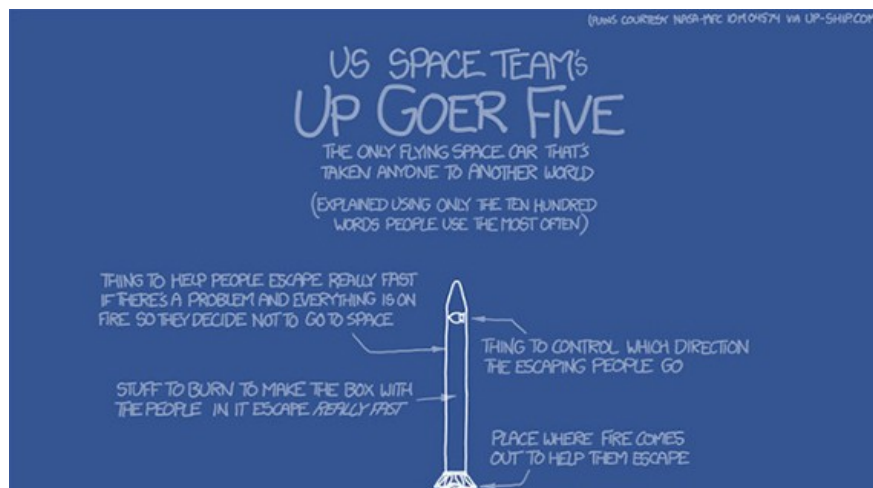
Every profession has own language and jargon – a collection of terms that are used predominantly only by those within the industry. Some industries have more (and more obscure) jargon than others, and attorneys are one group of professionals who have acquired a reputation for being some of the worst offenders.

It is easy to succumb to the idea that using big words will make you appear smarter and therefore impress your audience into respecting your expertise. People of every industry fall into this trap, including marketers who continue to throw around maddeningly overused terms like “ROI” and “core competency.” These are often false gurus (another marketing buzzword) who are merely using words that sound impressive to hide a lack of experience or deeper understanding. People who really know what they are doing can explain a concept in layman’s terms and are able to adjust their tone and language in accordance with the audience to whom they are speaking.

Robert Kurlwich posted an article on his science blog at npr.org this week that every professional can take to heart. Using an illustration created by web comic illustrator, Randall Munroe, Kurlwich points out that sometimes uber-simplified language is the clearest and easiest to understand. He also argues that journalists should practice such super-simplification as a writing exercise on a regular basis. Attorneys who wish to be able to communicate more effectively with potential clients can do the same.

Munroe has illustrated and described the Saturn V Rocket using only the “ten hundred” most frequently used words in the English language. (The words, “thousand,” “frequently” and “rocket” do not make the cut.) The illustration is insanely simple. Rocket becomes “up goer” and the cockpit a “people box.” But pretty much anyone, after reading through the whole diagram, will know exactly what each part of the rocket does, and perhaps in a way that they did not previously understand.

[Read through the whole thing for yourself here.](#)





In practice, you will, of course, need to strike a balance between speaking simply and sounding like someone who has indeed earned a post-graduate degree. But the principle here is important and relevant. Clients expect you to have attended school, to understand the nuances of the law and to know how to communicate with other attorneys. They are not interested in reading law review articles or combing through technical language about the law. They are likely not really interested in the law at all. What they are interested in is how your knowledge and your experience can help them. This is not something that can be said using industry jargon. It is best said by speaking directly to potential clients in a voice that resonates with them. Practicing these skills and focusing on how to best communicate with the different groups of people you will encounter in your practice are invaluable marketing tools.

Graphic Credit: Robert Kurlwich and Randall Munroe

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