

## **BLM – Buzzword Lifecycle Management**

By William Sheppard

The world of technology is alive with buzzwords. The management of buzzwords represents a significant area of improvement for both the buzzword users (BU, for example vendors, analyst and consultants) and buzzword consumers (BC, mostly end-users). Buzzword Lifecycle Management (BLM) is a proven discipline being applied to this crying need within the world of technology.

### **What is a Buzzword?**

A buzzword is a word or phrase that enters the collective mind of the marketplace that signifies some set of ideas. To become a true buzzword, it must be universally applied and lose all meaning.

Buzzwords are often supplemented with acronyms. The Acronym Lifecycle Management (ALM) is a closely related science to BLM. The creation of the buzzword versus the acronym is often a chicken and an egg issue – which comes first, is often driven by how clever the acronym is with the buzzword designed to fit the clever acronym. If the buzzword comes first and it gains acceptance, an acronym is usually created with the intent of pointing out to those people not in the know that they are not in the know, to the benefit of those who do know what it means.

### **The Lifecycle of a Buzzword**

The lifecycle of a buzzword can be defined by the well-known IRCED2 cycle.

**I**    **Invention**        Buzzwords are not discovered, they are invented. They do not occur in nature, only in the minds of a select group of people, the Buzzword Creation Resource (BCR), typically located in the marketing department of the BU. The motivation of the BCR is pure -- driven by financial considerations. A good buzzword will one-up the competition, sell more books, and allow the recycling of old reports with new covers. BU's have put significant BCR in place to build and maintain a Buzzword Leadership Position (BLP).

The Buzzword Inventor (BI) positions the potential buzzword in the marketplace with the marketplace deciding if it justifies true buzzword status. The primary determinant of buzzword acceptance is the marketing budget of the BI. The marketing budget is also know as the Buzzword Leadership Capability (BLC).

Thus, we have seen BLM come from the minds of a few, highly trained BCR and placed into the marketplace of buzzwords.

- R Recognition** If the marketplace accepts the buzzword, it has gained recognition status. Recognition is signaled by two nearly simultaneous events. The market place remembers the buzzword and competing BUs and Buzzword Followers (BF) begin using the buzzword. Both events impact meaning. The marketplace does not know the original meaning of the buzzword so they either pretend to understand or each member of the marketplace makes up their own meaning. The competitors use the buzzword, but assigned a meaning which is more advantages to them in terms of financial reward.
- Thus, BLM has reached recognition status in the marketplace of buzzwords and has been copied and redefined to meet the needs of the masses.
- C Compliance** Marketplace recognition leads to a mass application of the buzzword to existing products, reports, ideas, etc. BFs rush to apply the buzzword as often as their marketing budget allows. Now, every BU seeking attention in the marketplace is using the buzzword.
- It is important to note that compliance does not mean any change to the underlying products and ideas to which the buzzword is applied. The same products, reports, ideas, etc. that existed before the recognition of the buzzword still exist without change. They have been relabeled with the buzzword.
- E Erosion** Buzzword erosion begins once the buzzword attains the status of compliance. Full compliance means that it no longer has any meaning. The word has been twisted in so many directions that no meaning exist. The buzzword begins to lose its ability to produce financial gain in the marketplace.
- D Derivations** As erosion is detected, the buzzword is extended or modified with the addition of one or more additional words. Typical words are “based”, “centric”, “compliant”, etc. Thus, we see some sources claiming that they are BLM based or BLM centric.
- The word that signals the ultimate in erosion is the prefix “true”. Alas, the erosion of BLM has been signaled by the claim by some parties that they have true BLM.
- D Death** With both the passage of time and more importantly, the entry of new buzzwords into the buzzword marketplace, the buzzword dies. Death to a buzzword does not mean it is forgotten. Death means that it is no longer a positive in the marketplace but a negative.

## **Recommendations**

BCs should place those vendors with a tradition of Buzzword Leadership on their short list. These vendors have proven the ability to continually redefine the needs of the marketplace in their favor, creating significant value for themselves.

Bus must decide on their buzzword strategy. Vendors choosing the BF strategy need to watch those with a BLP and quickly follow their lead. Those seeking a BLP should invest heavily in both BCR and BLC. If they are successful, they will be recognized for their Buzzword Superiority (BS).

### **About the author**

William Sheppard, often called Bill Sheppard or BS for short, is a well-known and respected BI who has often been called “The Father of Buzzword Superiority”. He has assisted many suppliers of technology create and leverage a BLP and continues to do so today. He is available as a speaker on the subject of BLM and be reached at [BS@cox.net](mailto:BS@cox.net).

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### **Buzzword Reference Guide (BRG)**

ALM	Acronym Lifecycle Management
BC	Buzzword Consumers (Mostly End-Users)
BCR	Buzzword Creation Resource
BF	Buzzword Followers
BI	Buzzword Inventor
BLM	Buzzword Lifecycle Management
BLP	Buzzword Leadership Position
BRG	Buzzword Reference Guide
BS	William Sheppard
BU	Buzzword Users
IRCED2	Lifecycle Of A Buzzword – Invention, Recognition, Compliance, Erosion, Derivations, Death