

Several years ago this space offered up interpretations of the pervasive doublespeak entering the once-quiet golf business culture. Words like synergy, platform, brand, branding the platform, platforming the brand, synergizing upward brand platform dynamics invaded once-usual conversations.

The bulky, vacuous nonsense coming from the game's powerbrokers seemed to signal golf's inevitable demise.

But we're all still here. However, at the end of the day, the bottom line is, gulp, MBAspeak thrives like never before.

It seems an updated glossary of the latest MBAspeak is in order to help navigate the maze of malarkey that's been spewing out of golf executives who talk about our little Royal and Ancient game like it's the latest hedge fund hottie.

Unfortunately, we've moved beyond laughing at this stuff. Corporate culture is omnipresent in our society. Sadly, you must embrace MBAspeak if you want to survive in the golf industry.

But there is good news. You only have to learn three new words!

Even better, their meanings are so vague that you don't need to know what they mean.

Instead, you must merely drop them in the appropriate context and watch your targeted audience's heads bobble.

Product: I know, I know: You're probably already using this one. If you're an architect, builder or even a shaper, you are building product. Superintendents? You need to close the product Monday for aerification. On the maintenance crew? You mowed the product this morning.

Try product on a golfer sometime, preferably the types glued to their BlackBerrys, and watch them light up.

Product! I know about that. I deal in products, not in golf courses! It's all about me!

Equity: Here's a cutting-edgeism that has become the buzzword du jour. It says, "I speak your language; I think like you, and I will say just about anything to convince you that I live for enhancing your bottom line."

Tiger Woods recently told CBS's Jim Nantz

It Sounds Too Good to Make Sense

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



PLAYING CLUB

POLITICS MEANS

BEING ABLE TO

TALK WITHOUT

SAYING MUCH

that he hopes his new PGA Tour event at Congressional Country Club builds equity in the marketplace.

Now, last I heard, equity was just a fancy word to say you owned something in a complicated sort of way. The dictionary says it's the "value of a piece of property over and above any mortgage or other liabilities relating to it."

Is Tiger buying Washington D.C. or even a simple golf course? No. And he hasn't taken out a mortgage to start this new Tour event. But, hey, he's hoping for equity in the marketplace.

It makes no sense, but it just sounds so good. So try this: We hope that with our topdressing program we'll be able to create equity in our marketplace.

Value: This equity stuff might be a bit too cutting edge, which is why you've always got another killer buzzword to fall back on.

Countless superintendents, architects and other golf industry types have reported run-ins with the dreaded value word. Even better, they've discovered newfound communications glory when dropping value in any sentence related to golf course improvements.

"We're hoping to deliver value for the membership with this Nemacur application. Getting rid of nematodes will distribute value to our product and enhance your equity."

Or, "This tree eradication project promises to increase air circulation and sunlight to the product, which only means voluminous value."

OK, maybe that last bit of alliteration was a bit much. But you get the idea.

You are no longer in the golf course maintenance industry. You are delivering value-driven product equity services. And don't you hesitate to say it.

Shackelford can be reached at geoffshac@aol.com.