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**A Guide to the Latest Batch of Corporate Buzzwords**

The Wall Street Journal Online

By Carol Hymowitz

Don't even talk about "rightsizing," "digitization" and the "war for talent." The new business buzzwords are "delaying," "Web 2.0" and "knowledge acquisition."

A new crop of buzzwords usually sprouts every three to five years, or about the same length of time many top executives have to prove themselves. Some can be useful in swiftly communicating, and spreading, new business concepts. Others are less useful, even devious. "Too often people use buzzwords to muddy or cover up what they're actually saying," says Warren Bennis, management professor at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

It would be wise, then, if executives who want to be believed and understood, carefully select their language.

Delaying, for example, may evoke an image of a cake, but there is nothing sweet about it. In plain English, it means managers are being fired. It's the latest manifestation of rightsizing and downsizing.

Knowledge acquisition is the opposite of delaying, but different from the now passé "war for talent." It has been awhile since executives have had to do battle to find job candidates. These days, companies need to know how to sift through an onslaught of applications to hire the person with the kinds of knowledge that will best help the company stay competitive. Hence the notion of knowledge acquisition and its corollary, "skills development," which refers to efforts to use the employees already available, but to teach them new skills.

Another current buzzword, "unsiloing," mangles the noun silo to make an important but simple point: Managers must cooperate across departments and functions, share resources and cross-sell products to boost the bottom line.

This buzzword is likely to appeal most to new chief executive officers, says David D'Alessandro, former CEO of John Hancock Financial Services, now a unit of Manulife Financial. "Suddenly they're in charge and they want everyone to play together nicely in

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the sandbox," he says. That's never the case when executives are on their way up and fighting colleagues to get promotions. The need for wide cooperation is "an old problem with a new imperative in today's competitive global economy," Mr. D'Alessandro adds, "especially for older companies with entrenched organizations."

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