

# 360 Degree Thinking



*Mike Smith is our Hearts correspondent. Clearly there is not enough football to keep him occupied as he now writes on philosophical matters too...*

The other day I read an article on another website – not one as good as The Edinburgh Reporter, obviously – about ‘office-speak phrases you love to hate’ And, unsurprisingly, I found myself nodding and smiling at many of them.

35 years after I first began working – jings, that makes me feel old as I still recall my first day as a working man, 1st June 1978 in a ramshackle furniture store – the world is a much different place. In the late 1970s, you were bawled out if you made a mistake, the ever-present threat of an on the spot sacking loomed large, sexism was commonplace and the words ‘grievance’ and ‘procedures’ were about as common as hairdressers refusing to do perms because they looked ludicrous.

More than three decades on and much has changed for the better in today’s working environment. However, the downside of better working conditions is the jargon, which has not so much crept into today’s working vocabulary, as swept all before it.

In the list which brought more than one smile to my weary face was the use of idea showering instead of brainstorming – lest this offended people who have epilepsy. That’s one used in the company I presently work for, the head office of which is in the north of England and whose regular guidelines on what to say and how to behave cause much amusement to those of us north of the border. Thinking outside the box and blue sky thinking are others. I recall doing some blue sky thinking while at school in the 1970s -only for my teacher to believe I was merely gazing out the window and throw a chalk duster

which struck me on the back of the head. She wouldn't get away with that today (principally because I'm now 51 and the fact she's probably scrawling away at a blackboard beyond the Pearly Gates. Can I say 'blackboard'? Is that politically correct?)

I particularly like 'my door is always open' which emanates from our office – particularly as we're in an open plan office and the only door is the one heading for the way out. Of course, senior managers may be trying to tell me something – and my appraisal is tomorrow...

An all too common phrase heard more and more these days is 'going forward'. I hear it said in my office at least twice a day. 'This is what we want you to do, going forward' says a voice on the phone sounding like someone from Coronation Street. I'm sorely tempted to respond with 'How about we try it this way going back in time'. But I have a feeling they probably wouldn't get the joke.

Anyway, I suspect I don't have enough bandwidth to carry on with this nonsense and the end of this rant is now in my radar. I've just received an e-mail from someone who wants to touch base about something off-line.

So I'm turning the computer off...