



# Dear Industry Shrink

Dear Miles,

I am writing to you anonymously to address a phenomenon that I have witnessed during the almost 20 years that I have been in the precision machined products industry. Since I consider you the "Dear Abby" of the PMPA, I felt there was no other person more qualified to address my observations.

In short, we have too many acronyms in our industry communications. I am distressed over this issue, and to demonstrate my point, I have compiled a table of acronyms.

SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TQM	Total Quality Management
SPC	Statistical Process Control
5-S	Sort, Straighten, Shine, Systemise, Sustain
	Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shitsuke
6-Sigma	ssssss or SSSSSS
CIP	Continuous Improvement Process
JIT	Just In Time
BIT	Barely In Time
CYA	Cover Your \$#%
FMEA	Failure Modes Effect Analysis
PFMEA	Process Failure Modes Effect Analysis
QMS	Quality Management System
8-D	8-Discipline
TVC	Target Value Costing
QM	Quality Manual
ABC	Activity-Based Costing
QRM	Quality Risk Management
VOC	Voice Of Customer
VSM	Value Stream Mapping
CMM	Capability Maturity Model Or Coordinate Measuring Machine
SME	Standard Measuring Equipment
SCM	Supply Chain Mapping
CMMI	Capability Maturity Model Integration
LEF	Lean Enterprise Forum
LN	Lean Network
DRIP	Data Rich Information Poor
DMAIC	Determine, Measure, Analyze, Implement, Control
S&OP	Sales And Operation Planning Process
TPM	Total Productive Maintenance
LM	Lean Manufacturing
SCAR	Supplier Corrective Action Report

It is my position that this plethora of acronyms, and in many cases, the meaningless communication that accompanies them, can have a negative impact on our industry's primary goal of supplying quality products. Take the customer's SCAR and corresponding supplier's 8-D or DMAIC response, for instance. Many of us spend a lot of time coming up with reasons for a non-compliance, so our customer will "buy off" rather than "write off" a good number of these issues. By the way, I love the part in the

8-D where it asks, "How did you congratulate your team?" I get a warm and fuzzy feeling all over every time I read that question. Who gives a rat's \$#@% about whether we had a celebration or not.

Do not get me wrong. I believe all of us should be held accountable and responsible for the quality we produce. However, it is absurd to have the customer micromanage us with a bunch of correspondence and bombard us with acronyms in an attempt to get zero defects when their processes are less capable than our own.

If you do not mind, I am going to lie down on the couch and begin my session with you, Dr. Free.

First, where do these people come from that come up with all of these acronyms? Every time I think I have the verbiage down, someone comes along and hits me with a new "buzz word." I get e-mails from customers using much of the above lingo. My initial response typically starts with "Before I address your subject matter, can you tell me what this word means?"

Sometimes my own people hit me with these words, and I simply shake my head like I know what they are talking about, something I have become quite good at.

I will read through training seminars that I want to send my people to, only to realize that I spend half the day with a dictionary in one hand and the Internet in the other, trying to understand what the seminar is even about.

I did a poll at my office with the top and middle managers, which is a total of ten people. I gave them a copy of the above table and found that only ten of the acronyms listed were identifiable and are used at my plant. By the way, I have great people and this is the best they could do.

At my company, we do exercise a little TQM. We hang our hat on some of the LM stuff which includes

5-S, SPC and 6-Sigma, and we do it all PDQ. We do this CIP to maintain our position as TD (Top Dog) and BMOC (Big Man on Campus) with our customers. Some of it we do to reward ourselves and some of it is done to CYA.

By the way, this thing about JIT (Just In Time) delivery is mythical. It should be labeled BIT (Barely In Time).

As I get up from the couch, it is worth noting that I went to Wikipedia to understand my own above research. This was my first mistake. Although Wikipedia serves as a valuable reference, I began to encounter even more acronyms. I quickly concluded that the people responsible for this Web site had a love connection with those people responsible for the above acronyms.

What has happened to the good old days when making quality product was all you had to think about? What happened with the idea of simply waking up each day and doing your best? Now we take time each day to give it a label, analyze, categorize and acronymize it, and then we patronize it.

Definition of "acronize:" to condense a collection of words by assigning several letters in its place. (I invented this word.)

I hate mediocrity and think the sooner we all get ourselves back to the basics of making quality product, the better off we will be. This is something that must be instilled in our customers and suppliers.

Thank you for your time, Dr. Free.

Sincerely,  
JD (Am I a "Jon Doe" or a "Juvenile Delinquent?")

P.S. I think this means postscript, but I am now so overwhelmed with acronyms that I forgot what I was going to say.