

When To Use Abbreviations & Acronyms?

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters of the several words in the name. For example RRSP is an acronym for Registered Retirement Savings Plan. When is it acceptable in sales to use abbreviations and acronyms?

SPO Quick Sales Tip

The use of abbreviations, acronyms and jargon are not as acceptable as most sales people think. The reason is that not all people assign the same meaning to the abbreviation itself. We all have different experiences and frames of reference so many of us assign different meanings to the same acronyms.

For example copier reps often use the term ADF when referring to document feeders. The first time I heard this however, I thought they were talking about a mutual fund. When another rep abbreviated his company name, I thought he was talking about what many people put with jelly on their sandwiches!

If it is a generally understood abbreviation, then it is acceptable. GST and RRSP are very common terms in Canada, however using those same terms with someone from the US is not a good idea as they would not know what you are talking about.

As a general rule, if the abbreviation is a company or industry specific term, then don't use it. If you didn't know its meaning before joining your industry, chances are your prospect won't either.

If you insist on using abbreviations, always define it the first time you use it. For example, "I work with the Sales Professionals of Ottawa or SPO for short."
Bottom line, when in doubt, don't use the abbreviation!

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