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trueblood

THE BLOODY TRUTH

Time to Say “So Long” to “So”

The world of communication has become polluted by the use of “so” as the lead-in to answering every question.

Q: What is the trend of retailing?

A: *So...* it is shifting to ecommerce.

Call it the “so segue.” According to NPR news, the technique was spawned in Silicon Valley and then stealthily slipped up to the millennial mainstream.



You could prematurely conclude that the lingo of youth is just different from that of the rest of us. But not so fast. In a recent meeting with a group of longer-tooths, it became clear that the ante “so” has infiltrated our entire culture. We have morphed into a “*so*-ciety.” Proof: listen to any news interview and count the *so*’s for yourself.

This phenomenon may trace to our human need to take a moment to formulate an answer to a question rather than just blurting it out. Old-school sales trainers have long suggested the “pause before the reply” approach, which doubles not only as providing a time to compose but also might convey an impression of wise thinking. More recently the “reversal” tactic emerged - “let me make sure I understand your question” - that allows yet even more response-formulation time.

Sadly, these deliberately considered approaches have fallen by the wayside in our sound-bitten, forty-character, snappy-chatty world. The new need now is to respond quickly, with authority. So you dare not take longer than “so” to gather your thoughts.

Problem is, a mini-second is simply not sufficient for the average most of us. Thus we now hear the “inflating intro” worming its way into our boardroom language. Consider the increasingly long responses to the question: *What is the trend of retailing?*

A: *So...* it is shifting to ecommerce.

A: *So... ya.* So it is shifting to ecommerce.

A: *So... literally,* it is shifting to ecommerce.

A: *So... to be honest,* it is shifting to ecommerce.

A: *So... good question.* So, it is shifting to ecommerce.

A: *So... just between you and me,* it is shifting to ecommerce.

Who knows? Soon we may have actually replicated the aforementioned considered pause, albeit with several seconds of verbal static.

So ... want to stand out from the crowd? Try taking a moratorium on “so”. Let’s dare to be so brave as to pause before speaking. Maybe we just might launch a new trend.