

Who do you think you are?

 By [Dylan Balkind](#)

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What's your take on some of the fancy-pants titles doing the rounds on the circuit currently? Happiness Advocate. Social Media Trailblazer. Head Cheese. Digital Dynamo. Copy Cruncher. I can't decide. I've been called a pain in the arse but hey, that's not on my email signature or the cards in my wallet. Obviously, as a complete stick in the mud and advocate of all things old-school conservative, I find veering from the norm in any shape or form completely ludicrous. That aside - if I were to challenge myself to stretch a little - I'd still have to question the merit of some of these new offerings.

Wacom Wunderkind? PowerPoint Prodigy? The list is long. But listen pal, if you are calling yourself a PowerPoint Prodigy, you need to sit down and face the front. There's no need for that kind of ostentatious behavior in a creative industry like ours. These new clever descriptors to describe your business prowess have birthed a tricky trend. Tricky because not all trends are supposed to stick. Look at Mara Louw on Idols. In fact, look at Idols.

Your email signature that lists you as the organisation's Dynamic Paradigm Facilitator is very exciting - to you and maybe one other daffodil on the planet (your Gran). Then you take it to the next level and hit the town talking about it to anyone who will listen. Creepy. It smacks of trying too hard to be cool and we all know what happens when you do that. Well not me, obviously, but most people.

Not convinced?

These are some very real and active titles in the mix right now.

- "Erection Engineer." - Mm... I plead the fifth.
- "Mighty Eagle." - Penned for the creator of Angry Birds. *cough*
- "Swiss Army Knife." - This is a Web Developer. I'm lost.
- "Social Media Rockstar." - Because if you believe this to be rocket science, the title matters.
- "IT Pro Evangelist." - Because it takes a lot of skilled preaching to advise people to reboot.
- "Director of Intrusion Detection." - If you can guarantee NO rain spiders, sure - have the title.
- "Kingpin of Financial Trading & ..." - Flip I could do with a manni.

It's all about context

Some titles and name badges are best kept for agency drinks on a Friday. Internal company relations are such a powerful forum for team morale and a great place to boost that wunderkind who genuinely doesn't expect that he is a wunderkind. It doesn't mean you have to change his job title, redesign his brand within yours and reprint his business cards (if you're still

doing that).

It means that you have a fantastic opportunity to create an internal culture that is unique to those who eat, sleep and breathe the organisation - internally. It doesn't have to match how you project yourself to your clients based on the services you're selling. It also tells your team that you know them and that you've seen and heard the parts of their personalities that make them unique.

Pass begin. Forget the R200.

Here's the thing: if you start convincing your impressionable team that these swank new titles are cool, they will start putting them on their CVs. And to move on with something like *Erection Engineer* is like having a wine-fuelled brainwave at 2am and expecting the 'artful' scamp you drew to wow your audience come presentation time. So I've heard.

Think about that CV landing on top-shop hot-shot's desk with the title that got you so excited you actually wet yourself. He/she won't agree. Promise. It's like Romy & Michelle's '...we invented post-its....'. It's awkward and it's creepy - and so is your dodgy job title.

Director of first impressions

Ergo, don't take yourself too seriously. There must be a way to keep the spirit light while you keep people thinking but while being clear about the difference between what's smart versus what's simply stupid. Unlike one tepid who took all this very seriously and complained to the ASA about Johannesburg calling itself a World Class African City. It wasn't me. So don't get me wrong: I do believe in the value of titles. They are important for defining goals, accomplishments and a structure within the organisation - even if yours professes to embrace a flat one. If for nothing other than for process-driven deliverables, they certainly have their place. Still, it doesn't have to be brain science, but if you insist on frolicking with the flowery options of (en)titlement, changing your title as often as your mood swings is easy. Simply log onto bullshitjob.com/title and have a ball.

Dylan Balkind
Director of Chaos

PS: What do you think? Smart or simply stupid?

ABOUT DYLAN BALKIND

Even the person who can sell ice to Eskimos needs have a way of letting the world know. Words. They're wonderful warriors with the potential for worry. Use a writer who takes his passion seriously. Here's more about me and mine: <http://goo.gl/68R8se> | Twitter @DylanBalkind

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