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# Fly Rod “Expertise” by the Numbers

*...Or how to build a “modified formulated response” fly rod*

**A** “Dr. Bill” Hanneman

fly rod is considered a work of art by its maker and a critical review of that work can only be made by an “expert.” However, he must use words to express his ideas.

Fortunately, the many polysyllabic words invariably chosen to convey his subjective ideas have entirely different connotations to each listener. Because of this simple fact, even you can become an “expert.”

The following simple device can create for you an entirely new image and might raise you from total obscurity to a position of prominence. It is called the “Systematic Buzz Phrase Projector” (a concept devised by Phillip Broughton). Here is the first scientific approach to the language of the fly rod “expert.”

Simplicity in itself, the system is composed of only 30 words arranged in three columns and numbered from 0 to 9, as shown in Table 1.

To use, simply conjure up any 3-digit number between 000 and 999 and find the corresponding buzzword from each column. For example, 673 produces “unmatched versatile action.”

**Table 1**  
**Systematic Buzz Phrase Projector**

0 unique	0 patented	0 motion
1 significant	1 precision-engineered	1 balance
2 superb	2 technological	2 production process
3 modified	3 unprecedented	3 action
4 robust	4 multi-modulus	4 sensitivity
5 stylish	5 efficient	5 performance
6 unmatched	6 formulated	6 characteristics
7 proprietary	7 versatile	7 authority
8 smooth	8 delicate	8 response
9 fluid	9 accurate	9 presentation

If you were to casually mention a phrase such as this as your appraisal of a new fly rod, it would be sure to mark you as an astute observer and gain for you instant respect from your listeners. No one will have the slightest idea what you are talking about, but the important thing is that they’re not going to admit it.

On some rare occasion after you have dropped a 946 (fluid modulus characteristics) on the group, some “wise guy” may quip, “What the hell does THAT mean?” However, unless he is the foremost fly rod expert in the nation, you’ll have nothing to worry about. He will be immediately characterized by all present as either a dolt or an honest man — both of which are, of course, intolerable at such a gathering.

What is far more likely, however, is that your mastery and judicious use of the Systematic Buzz Phrase Projector will indeed catapult you into the status of One To Be Reckoned With at any gathering of fly anglers. You might even be asked by a national magazine to give your critical review of the new Z Series of rods being introduced by the ABC Rod Manufacturing Corp.

Should that be the case, the following three steps can guide you:

1. Choose 4 sets of 3-digit numbers
2. Determine the Corresponding Buzz Phrases
3. Write the review.

Example: New Z Series introduced by ABC  
238 - superb unprecedented response  
417 - robust precision-engineered authority  
769 - proprietary formulated presentation  
584 - stylish delicate sensitivity

### **Finished Review**

New Z Series introduced by ABC

In a superb unprecedented response to the exacting demands of the most sophisticated of the fly fishing fraternity, ABC has introduced a new Z series of rods reflecting a robust precision-engineered authority for both long and short distance casting. This new series, while still exhibiting ABC’s famous proprietary formulated presentation, introduces a stylish delicate sensitivity never before thought possible in fly rods of this price range (\$900-1050). Buy one today.


### **Epilogue**

While the preceding concept was originally developed some years ago, it is now apparent this technique has been fully embraced and further honed by a new generation of copy writers.

Perusal of the 2001 brochure of one of this nation’s foremost rod builders revealed the following Buzz Phrases.

unique integrated system  
ground-breaking design technology  
legendary “Trade Marked” action  
proprietary taper design  
balanced loading system

Previously, I wrote that if you used phrases like this, you would have nothing to worry about unless the foremost fly rod expert in the nation asks, “What the hell does THAT mean?”

However, time changes things. Today, we find one of the foremost fly rod manufacturers in the nation touting similar phrases. Now, it is our turn to ask, “What the hell do those phrases mean?” 

\*This article, along with the others in the Common Cents Series, was originally published in RodMaker Magazine.

Although of a more humorous nature, “Fly Rod Expertise by the Numbers” is not at all far removed from just how the rod companies decide on the terms used in the marketing and advertising campaigns to describe their rods.