Microspeak: Leverage

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At Microsoft, *leverage* is not a term of physics whereby a force can be magnified by the application of mechanical advantage. It is also not a term of finance whereby the power of a small amount of money can be magnified by the assumption of debt. In fact, at Microsoft, the word *leverage* isn't even a noun. It is a verb: *to leverage*, *leverages*, *leveraging*, *leveraged*, *has leveraged*. Oh, and it has nothing to do with magnification. Here are some citations:

> How do I leverage a SiteMap?

> Allow advertising partners to leverage this resource for providing targeted advertising links.

> Leverage existing design to power other designs

> Do we have documents on how Windows 95 can leverage Windows 2000 Active Directory?

At Microsoft, *to leverage* means *to take advantage of*, or in many cases, simply *to use*. Verbal use of the word *leverage* appears to be popular outside of Microsoft as well, such as this headline from eWeek: *How to Leverage IT to Speed RandD Innovation*.

But can you do this: At Microsoft you can leverage people.

> Alice, does Bob perform any component-Foo testing? Charles can be leveraged to actually execute tests if Donald can drive him with these asks. Let me know.

That snippet was a whirlwind of Microspeak, with the passive form of the verb *to leverage*, plus *to drive* and the plural noun *asks*.

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