



Empowering professionals to write with skill and confidence

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Overused Phrases

Last month, we discussed one point of George Orwell's essay, "Politics and the English Language" (www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm).

This month, we'll be discussing another point, "**dying metaphors.**"

Some of our dear readers may be racking their brains trying to remember from their seventh grade English class what a metaphor is. A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. Two common examples are "night owl" and "early bird." Essentially, **metaphors provide us with tools we can use to offer our readers (and ourselves) fresh ways of thinking and seeing the world.** However, we may be deceiving our readers into thinking that we're lazy, if we overuse metaphors. And what we're **seeing in business is a trend toward using words and phrases that start to mean nothing because they're so overused.**

Why do business people, in particular, **use words and phrases that are so overused that they have little meaning?** Sometime it's to show that they understand the lingo of the organization they work in and that they're "in the loop."

What words or phrases do you hear in your workplace that you find especially irritating or useless? Some common ones we've heard lately are "leverage," "reach out," "drill down," and "low-hanging fruit." Send your best entries to pam@hurleywrite.com. We'll post them on our website, and the person who submitted the entry with the most votes **will win the opportunity to take our online module, "Using Language Effectively."**

All entries are due by April 30, 2010 and will be posted by May 15, 2010. The contest winner will be notified by June 30, 2010.

We Goofed! We had a misspelled word in the subject line of our February newsletter—oops! Consequently, we immediately enrolled ourselves in our online course "Effective Editing and Proofreading Strategies." Reader responses to our apology email were generous and funny; to read the responses, [click here](#).

Pompous Diction Contest


We received some great entries for our contest, but **we're looking for more!** To **enter, submit your best example or examples of pretentious diction to pam@hurleywrite.com.** We'll post them on our website, and the person who submitted the entry with the most votes will win the opportunity to take one of our stand-alone online modules: "Proposal Writing," "Writing Effective Emails," or "Effective Editing and Proofreading Strategies" (a \$99 value!). **All entries are due by April 30, 2010 and will be posted by May 15, 2010. The contest winner will be notified by June 30, 2010.**

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