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Dear Reader,

Fall is traditionally the season for fresh starts and new beginnings. At *EC Buzz*, fall is also a good time to pick up our spring cleaning where we left off – sorting out and discarding more buzzwords!



Elizabeth Cockle  
Copywriter and Buzzword Banisher

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### Excising the “-izers”: More Nouns that Shouldn’t Be Verbed

As discussed in the last issue, English is known for its extreme malleability, which is often one of its greatest strengths. That said, some of the ways it gets inelegantly contorted and twisted leave readers bent out of shape. One example is the verbing of nouns by tacking on the suffix “-ize”. Sometimes it works, but often the result is merely ugly jargon.

Here are some nouns frequently turned into “-ize” verbs that should be excised from the language completely:

1. **Incentive.** Don’t *incentivize* people when you can *provide incentives* for them. And beware the shorter but even more absurd “verb” *incent*. It would be much better to *motivate* or *encourage* them.
2. **Objective.** It might seem shorter to *objectivize* than to *formulate objectives*. It’s shorter still to simply *set goals*.
3. **Executive.** *Executize* is a new buzzword meaning “to make something appropriate for executives to read or review”. Most benignly this refers to preparing an executive summary, in which case why not just say so? More cynically it could be a euphemism for editing out anything that looks bad – but whether or not that’s a good idea is not within the scope of this newsletter!

### Buzz Off : *State of the Art*

One interesting etymology says “state of the art” is a high-tech bastardization of “state of the craft”, which was an important term back in the days of guilds. The head of a guild was the person to consult if you wanted to know the state of the craft. Its present form is cited as early as 1910 in an engineering manual on gas turbines. After a century of overuse, however, the phrase deserves a hazard warning, as it can make speakers sound like gaseous wind generators themselves.

Instead of tediously insisting your technology is “state of the art”, impress your audience by using one of the following:

- “the most advanced level of development”
- “the newest technique or equipment”
- “a novel technology”

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Is there a buzzword you would like to banish? Send your suggestion to [writer@ecwriting.com](mailto:writer@ecwriting.com), then look for your buzzword and name in an upcoming issue.

### Parting Words

“Maybe we can eventually make language a complete impediment to understanding.”

– Bill Watterson, cartoonist