

# WALL STREET & THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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“Live Better Electrically”

—GE mission statement

When George Orwell wrote his seminal essay, “Politics and the English Language,” little did he know that it would have little impact outside the University. Maybe some of the academic writing has become clear and concise since Orwell delivered his scathing critique, but certainly not political writing. Of course, that’s old news – political writing slowly digs its own grave by becoming dumber, while people are becoming an itty bit smarter. President Bush can droll all he wants about, “defending our freedom” in Iraq – not too many people believe him. There is only so much stupidity one can handle, especially when it’s transmitted via your TV, radio, web browser, and

newspaper simultaneously. No, the real debasement of the English language comes not from politics or the academia these days—it comes from Wall Street and American corporations. The amount of bureaucracy, low morale, and sheer incompetence that the corporate executives and their propaganda writers need to hide blows politics out of the water. Don’t believe me? Then I refer you to Dilbert’s Mission Statement Generator—automated software that allows you to create absolutely meaningless statements using opaque language. For example, you can create a mission statement for your company that goes something like this, “We have committed to continually leverage other progressive methods of empowerment, as well as to drive existing mission-critical, service-oriented, value-added meta-services.”

