

Van Buren III, Harry. "Layoff Lingo: Corporations Sugarcoat Mass Firings." Business and Society Review Winter96: 49-50.

The author, Harry Van Buren III, a doctoral student at the Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh stresses the importance of the language employed when firing employees. He states, "when language is abused, it can have powerful - albeit unintended - consequences" (50). This statement rings all too true. Throughout the article, he explains how corporations use the terms downsizing, rightsizing, restructuring, force management program, and involuntary offer to try to fool those employees let go. These employees (or former employees) can easily see when corporate profits rise along with executive salaries at the expense of their job. "A change in phrasing does not change the reality of what is happening" (49-50). Van Buren suggests that companies utilize openness and honesty about the situation. While employees may remain unhappy at least they will know that they worked for an honest employer. The corporation needs to show that it understands the community effects of mass layoffs. It needs to indicate that it is willing to help ameliorate the damage or communities will protest and competitors will gain an advantage at expense of the company laying off employees. This article illustrates Lutz's definition of a euphemism defined in *Nothing in Life is Certain Except Negative Patient Care Outcome and Revenue Enhancement* as the language of courtesy. A study conducted by Matthew McGlone and Jennifer Batchelor in *Looking Out For Number One: Euphemism and Face* where the authors found that participants used euphemisms less when knowing "a meeting between a sender and receiver of a message would meet" further enhances Lutz's definition. Both Coe and Lutz state that doublespeak tries to communicate while really deceiving. Employers may not intentionally try to deceive those employees fired but the employee may believe that the company may try to deceive them when it uses other lingo instead of honesty. *Downsizing is Bad for Business* contains similar ideas to those of Van Buren. However, Challenger goes further and analyzes the feelings of those fired. Moving on to the job search, Rice's article, *Job Description Jargon and the Average Joe*, discusses a different set of problems when searching for a new job.