

## Avoid Buried Verbs for Conciseness

Concise writing means avoiding *hidden verbs* and *wordy noun constructions*.

Verbs represent action whereas nouns typically describe a state and are, hence, static. Some writers needlessly convert verbs to wordy noun expressions. This happens when verbs such as *acquire*, *establish*, and *develop* are turned into nouns such as *acquisition*, *establishment*, and *development*. Such nouns often end in *-tion*, *-ment*, and *-ance*. Most predictably found in bureaucratic organizations, these noun phrases increase sentence length and, therefore, slow down as well as confuse the reader.

Notice how you can make your writing clearer and more forceful by opting for active verbs and ditching wordy, static noun constructions:

### Wordy, Static Noun Constructions

conduct a discussion of  
create a reduction in  
engage in the preparation of  
give consideration to  
make an assumption of  
perform an analysis of  
reach a conclusion that  
take action on

### Active, Expressive Verbs

discuss  
reduce  
prepare  
consider  
assume  
analyze  
conclude  
act

Revise the following sentences by converting noun expressions to action verbs:

1. Our business cannot succeed unless we immediately effect a reduction in overhead expenses.
2. Did anyone actually conduct an analysis of every department's expense items?
3. After examining current expenses, management has reached the conclusion that our budget is already trim.
4. Nevertheless, our directors insist that we take action immediately to slash the budget.
5. As a result, the CEO is giving consideration to an extensive study of all employee Internet use.
6. Department heads must make a determination of what costs are essential and what they can trim.
7. We hope that departments will take part in collaboration with other departments to effect the combination of selected services.
8. We have made an estimation of possible savings of several hundreds of thousands of dollars.
9. Through the generation of cost-saving programs, the company should see a significant decline in expenses.
10. Once our departments are in agreement with regard to the combination of selected services, we can move forward with a trimmer budget.

## Suggested Revisions

1. Our business cannot succeed unless we immediately **reduce** overhead expenses.
2. Did anyone actually **analyze** every department's expense items?
3. After examining current expenses, management has **concluded** that our budget is already trim.
4. Nevertheless, our directors insist that we **act** immediately to slash the budget.
5. As a result, the CEO is **considering** an extensive study of all employee Internet **use**.
6. Department heads must **determine** what costs are essential and what they can trim.
7. We hope that departments will **collaborate** with other departments to **combine** selected services.
8. We have **estimated** possible savings of several hundreds of thousands of dollars.
9. **By generating** cost-saving programs, the company should see a significant decline in expenses.
10. Once our departments **agree to combine** selected services, we can move forward with a trimmer budget.