

Technical and Business Writing

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

CHAPTER: 1

Technical and Business Writing

Text Book:

William S. Pfeiffer. **Technical Communication: A Practical Approach** 8th Edition

Reference Books:

Gerald J. Alred, Walter E. Oliu, Charles T. Brusaw, **The Business Writer's Handbook** 10th Edition

Mike Markel, **Technical Communication** 10th Edition

Course Evaluation Criteria

Assessment Item	Weight (%)
Assignments	10
Quizzes	5
Formal Report	5
Mid Exam	30
Final Exam	50

An Effective Technical Document



Use a Programmable Thermostat Properly

A programmable thermostat is ideal for people who are away from home during set periods of time throughout the week. Through proper use of pre-programmed settings, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs.

- Overview information summarizes the document's main point

How Do You Choose the Right One for You?

To decide which model is best for you, think about your schedule and how often you are away from home for regular periods of time—work, school, other activities—and then decide which of the three different models best fits your schedule:

7-day models are best if your daily schedule tends to change; for example, if children are at home earlier on some days. These models give you the most flexibility and let you set different programs for different days—usually with four possible temperature periods per day.

5+2-day models use the same schedule every weekday, and another for weekends.

5-1-1 models are best if you tend to keep one schedule Monday through Friday and another schedule on Saturdays and Sundays.

- Heading is phrased as the main question readers will ask

- Paragraphs and sentences are short

- Color is used to highlight key items

Programmable Thermostat Settings

You can use the table below as a starting point for setting energy-saving temperatures, and then adjust the settings to fit your family's schedule and stay comfortable.

Setting	Time	Setpoint Temperature (Heat)	Setpoint Temperature (Cool)
Wake	6:00 a.m.	< 70° F	> 78° F
Day	8:00 a.m.	Setback at least 8° F	Setup at least 7° F
Evening	6:00 p.m.	< 70° F	> 78° F
Sleep	10:00 p.m.	Setback at least 8° F	Setup at least 4° F

- Table provides easy-to-read comparative data

EXAMPLE 1.

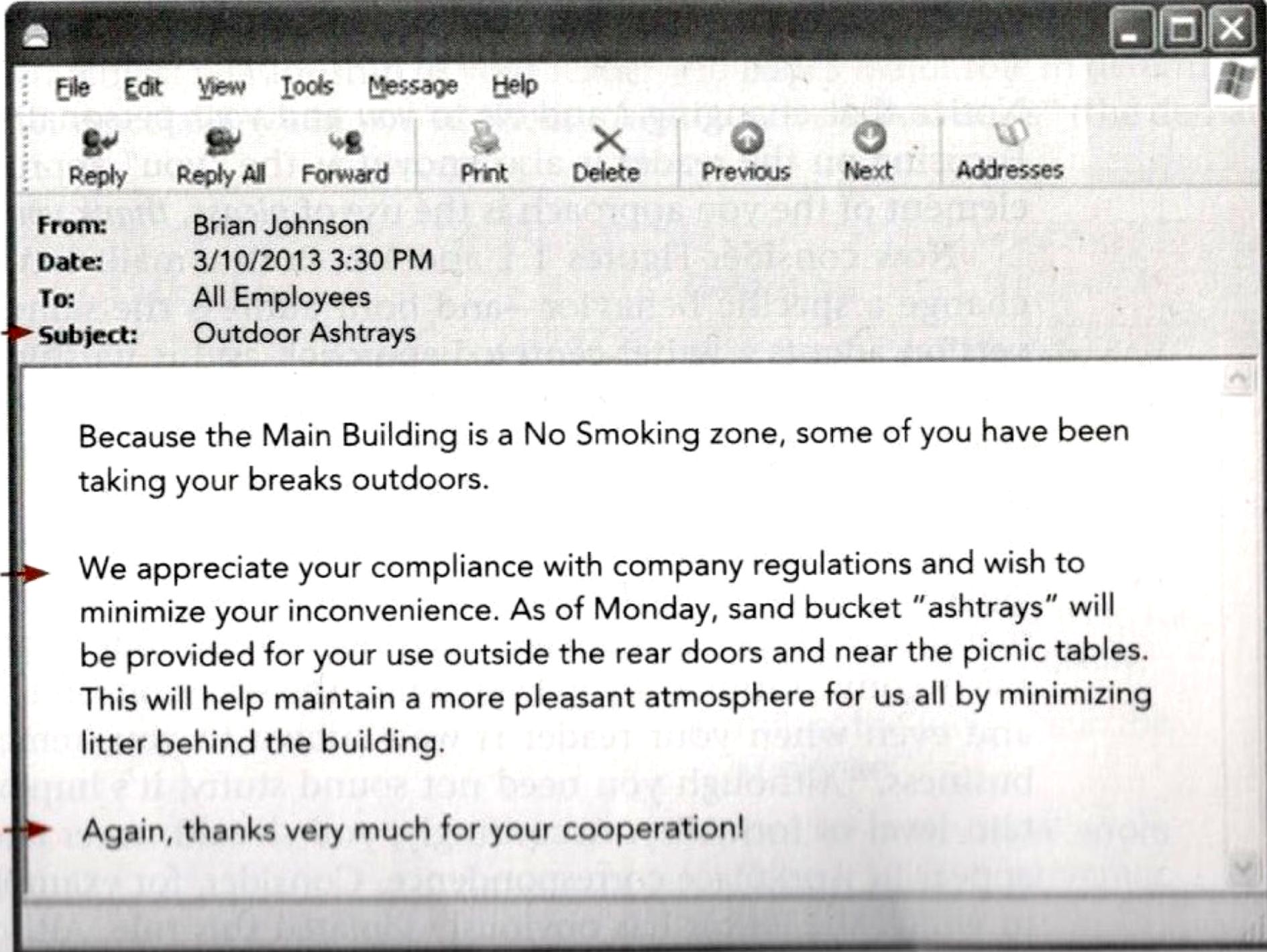
The screenshot shows an email window with a toolbar at the top containing File, Edit, View, Tools, Message, Help, Reply, Reply All, Forward, Print, Delete, Previous, Next, and Addresses buttons. The message details are as follows:

From: Brian Johnson
Date: 3/10/2013 3:30 PM
To: All Employees
Subject: Littering

Negative subject line -----> For some time now, smoking has been strictly prohibited inside the Main Building. Do NOT smoke anywhere indoors!

Capital letters and exclamation mark convey hostility -----> Some of you still insist on smoking and have been doing so outside. As a result, the areas near the rear exit and around the picnic tables are constantly littered with smoking-related debris (filter tips, half-smoked cigarettes, matchbooks, etc.), creating an eyesore and making more work for my staff, who have to keep cleaning up this mess.

Command should be a request -----> Starting Monday, sand buckets will be provided outside the rear doors and In the picnic area. Use them!



Positive subject line

Upbeat tone encourages compliance

Polite closing

EXAMPLE 2.

The screenshot shows an email message window with the following details:

From: Paul Curtis
Date: 4/14/2013 11:30 AM
To: Marilyn Kelly
Subject: Personal Leave Request

The body of the email contains the following text:

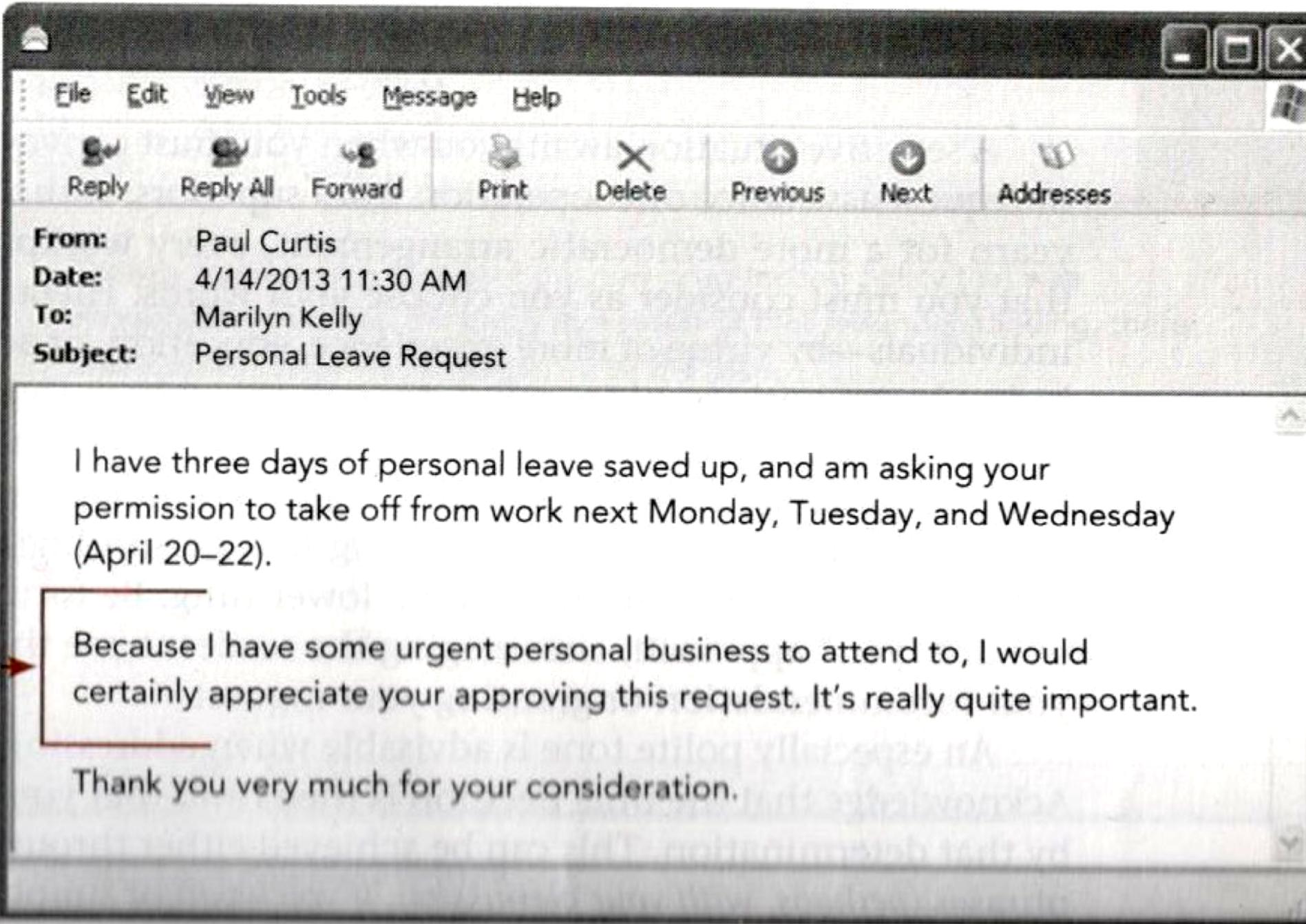
I have three days of personal leave saved up and am asking your permission to take off from work next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (April 20–22).

As you probably have heard, I've been having a lot of family problems lately. My son was recently arrested for drug possession, and my wife is talking about leaving. I really need a few days off to try to get my home situation straightened out.

Please approve this request.

A red arrow points from the text "Too much personal information" to the explanatory paragraph in the email body.

Too much personal information



October 13, 2013

Mr. Philip Updike
246 Alton St.
Atlanta, GA 30300

Dear Mr. Updike:

-----→ We are sorry that you found a piece of glass in your Superior microwave dinner. Please accept our assurances that this is a very unusual incident.

Here are three coupons redeemable at your local grocery store for complimentary Superior dinners of your choice.

-----→ We hope you will continue to enjoy our fine products.

Sincerely,

John Roth

John Roth
Customer Services Dept.

Enclosures (3)

Wording is
too explicit

positive tone
despite negative
situation

A suggested
revision of letter's
opening paragraph:

**Thank you for
purchasing our
product and for
taking time to
contact us about
it. We apologize
for the
unsatisfactory
condition of your
Superior
microwave dinner.**

EXAMPLE 4. Politeness

hostile tone
creates negative
climate

File Edit View Tools Message Help

Reply Reply All Forward Print Delete Previous Next Addresses

From: Thomas Kearney
Date: 5/19/2013 1:00 PM
To: Anne Scott
Subject: Drug Testing

Just wanted to let you know that you'd better forget about the random drug-testing policy you announced in your memo yesterday. It's a dumb idea that will never work. All the drivers are angry about it, and there are a lot of questions that your memo left completely unanswered! From what I hear, people in other departments have a lot of questions too. Better clear some of this stuff up or nobody's ever going to hold still for it.

File Edit View Tools Message Help

Reply Reply All Forward Print Delete Previous Next Addresses

From: Thomas Kearney
Date: 5/19/2013 1:00 PM
To: Anne Scott
Subject: Drug Testing

There's some confusion about the new drug-testing policy that was announced yesterday. Probably as a result of that misunderstanding, there also appears to be some resistance to the plan.

If you'll permit me to offer a suggestion, it might be a good idea to schedule a brief meeting with the employees to offer information, address their concerns, and clarify some of the more troubling features of the policy.

Thank you for considering this idea, and please let me know if I can assist in any way.

Paragraph-breaks segment the content

Polite closing and offer of assistance reinforce positive tone

Case Study

Just as your automobile company is about to unveil its new pickup truck, your safety engineering team discovers that the reserve gas tanks (installed beneath the truck but outside the frame) may, in rare circumstances, explode on impact from aside collision. You know that this information should be included in the owner's manual or at a maximum. In a letter to the truck dealers. But the company has spent a fortune building this truck and does not want to hear about this problem.

What will you do in this situation?