

Reflective Paper

The three major writing assignments that were assigned over the semester tested our ability to use different writing techniques to convey messages in a professional way. The three strategies were red, orange, and yellow level strategies, all of which are similar but different. Over the length of the course, the three strategies were broken down into three writing assignments; a memo using red level strategies, a formal email using orange level strategies, and a letter that introduces yellow level strategies. The way in which the course was laid out made the revision process simple yet effective.

After receiving the assignment, a rough draft must be turned in to make sure everyone is doing the work. After the rough draft is submitted, team members have the opportunity to review and make some suggestions regarding the assignment. There are guidelines that ensure the suggestions are on topic. After the student suggestions, a final polished copy needs to be turned in at the end of the week and grades are assigned based on the final copy. This process made it easy to learn the material and get almost instant feedback on the quality of work that is submitted. The course and way the material was presented made it feel like a personal relationship with the instructor, even though it was a distant learning course.

The first writing assignment was a memorandum with suggestions for a new email policy. This assignment's purpose was to teach and test the use of red level strategies. A well-written memo using red level strategies includes an established purpose and audience, uses simple and direct language to align language and purpose, and also uses informative and purposeful subject lines. One of the main paragraphs in the memo was somewhat unclear after reading it. There is a lot of information, but the purpose is lost with all of the other information. Deleting some context and simplifying the paragraph would definitely clarify the subject. There is also a problem with the subject line. Adding a word such as request would make the subject clearer.

Revising the second letter using orange level strategies helped me get a better understanding for the way in which the format should be used. Goodwill-building techniques, reader benefits, and writing with a positive emphasis were the guidelines that we were being tested on. This letter gave me a little difficulty when trying to maintain a professional, positive attitude, but while also trying to demonstrate my concerns with Ms. Wiggins. Comments such as, "have been ignored," are very negative and need to be changed. After all, Ms. Monroe is giving me the benefit of the doubt; a negative tone does not need to be used. Cleaning up and strengthening the language is needed to change the final outcome of this letter.

Yellow level strategies were used in the report about changes to Pansedik Corporation. The revision process for this report dealt with making my sentences and headings parallel. I did not realize this was such a problem in my writing, until I was able to see the corrections that were made directly on my document. Being more specific and finishing ideas is another aspect that needs to be worked on. The last paragraph in WA3 needs to be reworked and could use some more details to fully bring all the ideas together. Both red and orange level strategies were implemented successfully, but a few more tweaks with yellow level strategies would completely change the outcome of this letter to Pansedik Corporation.

Date: September 13, 2010

To: Management

From: IT Department

RE: Requested suggestions for new e-mail policy

While our company continues to grow, it is important that we adopt a new, formal email policy that outlines all of our company policies. Standardization of a new e-mail policy will make it easier for communication with clients, shareholders, and fellow employees. Subject lines, message format, response time, and professional attitude need to be addressed. Please take the time to review and familiarize yourself with the following suggestions.

1. Subject lines should only include a clear, concise subject. A short statement can be more informative than a wordy sentence. A subject line containing, "Customer Appreciation Lunch" would be a better alternative than one that read, "Next week's customer appreciation lunch at Chilis at 12:30p.m." or just simply "Lunch". If the reader skims emails by subject lines, the second example would probably be skipped and thought of as not relevant or spam. When replying to another person's e-mail, it may be beneficial to occasionally create a new subject line to skip the confusion of this- "Re:Re:Re:Re: Customer Appreciation Lunch".
2. Many times, the format of e-mails gets distorted when switching from computer to computer, so it is extremely important that the format be the same for all messages. Make sure your message is compatible with all operating systems such as Mac or PC. This goes for when responding or composing e-mails from your cell phones also. Attachments also need to be referred to in the body of the message to ensure they are received.
3. The timeliness of your response is also crucial when dealing with customers, stockholders, and fellow employees. It should not take more than 24 hours to respond to an e-mail. Customers are our main asset and it is our responsibility as a company to bring them back day after day; responding to their e-mails as soon as possible should be our main concern.
4. Proofread all emails to ensure that all messages are able to easily be read. When you write an e-mail, the way you type and speak can be different. The human ear can detect places where the meaning may be convoluted and confusing. Reading an e-mail out loud might make the difference between a happy and an unhappy reader. Spell check and grammar usage needs to be kept in mind also.
5. Whether writing to a customer or co-worker, e-mails must be kept professional. What is said in an e-mail represents the company, and with the recent success, we cannot afford to lose customers or market share. By no means should jokes, chain letters, personal information, or anything else that could be misinterpreted.
6. In the footer of the message, contact information needs to be present. Information like name, phone number, extension, and e-mail address needs all make it easier for the recipient to contact the correct representative.

All of these suggestions would make e-mail messaging more stream line to match the needs of our growing company. Full cooperation from all employees will help the company remain professional as we grow together.

Samuel Kaplan
10010 Syracuse Lane
Fort Myers, FL 33967

October 3, 2010

Jean Monroe
Emergency Medicine Supervisor
St. Martin's Hospital
1100 Indian Rocks Road
Largo, FL 33774

RE: Meeting Request Regarding Emergency Medical Team Performance

Dear Ms. Monroe:

For eight months, I have been a part of the Emergency Medical Team at St. Martins Hospital. Not long ago, I started to notice some changes that were being made in the Emergency Room. I believe my supervisor, Shanita Wiggins, has made some poor decisions which could be a hindrance in the professional performance of the hospital. Based on my attempts to discuss these matters with Ms. Wiggins, I would like to request a meeting with you.

I have tried many times to explain my concerns with Ms. Wiggins through email, but she seems too busy to address with my concerns. Various failed meeting attempts have led me to believe that Ms. Wiggins does not have the time or care to meet with me. The way Ms. Wiggins assigns tasks throughout the Emergency Room causes a major concern. She asks employees to carry out tasks that they were not trained in. I was able to speak briefly with Ms. Wiggins, and she simply stated that her choices were because of a cost reduction strategy. Although this may be an easy way to cut costs, I feel it could be unsafe to all who are associated with the Emergency Medical Team.

On one occasion, Ms. Wiggins ignored my vacation request and said I may earn another chance for a vacation if a task were completed. It is not fair to be held responsible for a task that I was not adequately trained for, and to have my vacation depend on that. I understand that Ms. Wiggins is my supervisor, but this is just one example of my dissatisfaction.

More training for all employees would help reduce some of the risks that are associated with these changes. In a business world it is crucial to reduce costs, but not at the cost of safety. St. Martins Hospital is known for its great service and medical staff and cannot jeopardize those notions. I believe these concerns should be addressed and would like to meet at your earliest convenience to resolve these issues and maintain a professional image. I will be looking forward to hearing from you with any questions or concerns. You can contact me at (239) 987- 6543.

Respectively Yours,

Samuel Kaplan

October 25, 2010

Samuel Kaplan
10010 Syracuse Lane
Fort Myers, FL 33967

Thomas Goldberg
Human Resource Director
Pansedik Corporation
987 Fake Street
Fort Myers, FL 33965

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Improving Pansedik Team Performance

Dear Mr. Goldberg:

I have been hired as an outside consulting firm and given the task to monitor and offer suggestions for the performance of Pansedik. After spending some time with your company, I have found a few concerns that I feel could be turned around to help improve your company. Some of them include review and update the way in which software developers are evaluated, revise the famous beer break, work harder as a supervisor to actively listen and act on employee concerns, and develop team activities that could be fun and beneficial.

Productivity Assessment

The way in which software developers are evaluated should be revised. Since software could take some time to complete, the quantity they produce should not be the determining factor in their evaluations. Maybe you could work with them to achieve reasonable goals to keep everyone both on track and in good standing with the company.

Revision of Employee Break

I talked to several employees who still liked the idea of the beer break, but keeping it enacted brings up some concerns. Not only will the companies insurance remain high, but drinking beer can be detrimental to one's health. It is important to keep employees happy, but not if it could be potentially harmful to them. Some simple suggestions that I have found could be:

- No longer referring to beer break, instead refer of it as mid-day break
- Shift the focus away from beer, introducing healthy alternative drinks and snacks
- Charge a small fee for beer during the mid-day break to sway drinkers away from a free beer

Understanding Team Members Interests

Some of the other employees feel that their concerns are not being taken seriously. As a top level supervisor, it is important to work hard to listen and solve any problems that employees have. Pansedik's performance will suffer if the employees are not happy and willing to work. Because they are

so important to the success of Pansedik, taking time out of your day or making it easier for employees to express their concerns could be all that is needed to gain that morale boost.

Build Employee Morale

Simple things such as casual Friday and the mid-day break are small things that workers enjoy during the work week. Adding some small fun activities could strengthen team bonds and be a fun break to work. Maybe every Friday, you could make breakfast for the work staff, or possibly allow them to leave early. Taking time every morning to sing a song, or doing team jumping jacks are small activities that allow employees to become more comfortable with their peers and eventually, bringing everyone closer. This would not only move the focus away from the loved beer breaks, but would also keep morale high if everyone worked together to reach a common goal.

I believe Pansedik could function even more efficiently while maintaining a healthy, happy work environment. In a business environment, you must be running at full capacity to stay competitive. With the help of my suggestions, Pansedik could be top software developing company on the market. I will be looking forward to hearing from you to further discuss these recommendations. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Samuel Kaplan