

BEFORE

Subject isn't much help

To: Project leaders
Subject: Tantera Projects

Starting with background delays more important matters

① Attached is the year's budget for each of our projects. You will notice that money has been budgeted for Boston, interns, and technicians in several of the projects. These funds have already been committed and should not be considered available for normal project work. The money under "Other Available" is the money available for completing your project. It is your responsibility to control this money for successful completion of the project.

Updates and invoices belong in separate paragraphs

② ③ I will publish an updated budget each month showing the monthly expenses and the remaining money available for each project. I will still need to sign all invoices relating to Department 33, but you will need to initial all invoices relating to your project (except those for Boston, interns, and technicians).

This helpful information deserves a helpful layout

④ Project work should not be delayed due to a lack of funds. Please advise me immediately (prior to committing funds) if funds are not available under your project for work that needs to be done. I will then see if funds are available elsewhere under 33, or if necessary, investigate funds outside 33.

Rushed readers who don't scroll will miss the action

⑤ Because it is the start of a brand new year, would you please give me an update on the current status of your Tantera development project? A one paragraph synopsis will do, detailing where you are in the project, the planned activities, and the timing. I would like to have this by January 9.

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AFTER

To: Project leaders
Subject: Your Tantera Project Update—by Jan 9

Subject removes guesswork

⑤ Because a new year is starting, please update me on your Tantera development project. Tell me in a paragraph:

- Where you are
- Planned actions
- Timing

I'd like your paragraph by January 9.

The early request and open layout invite more replies and fuller ones

① **How much you can spend.** The attached budget will tell you how much you have to spend this year:

- Study the "Other Available" column for money you may use to complete your project
- Notice that some projects have committed money already (for Boston, interns, technicians)

Headings, best when more than a word or two, help readers move around easily

② **Monthly updates from me.** Each month I'll send you a budget showing:

- Your monthly expenses
- Money left for each project

Bulleted lists, good for all but love letters, make details stand out

④ **If you need more money.** Don't delay work for lack of money:

- Tell me right away—before you commit funds
- I'll look elsewhere under 33 or go outside 33

Parallelism and economy simplify and clarify

③ **How we'll handle invoices.** Let's do this:

- You initial any invoice relating to your project (except those for Boston, interns, and technicians)
- I sign any invoice relating to Department 33

Here ③ no longer interrupts related paragraphs about available money

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