LESIKAR'S BASIC BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

SEVENTH EDITION

RAYMOND V. LESIKAR
JOHN D. PETTIT, JR.
MARIE E. FLATLEY

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LESIKAR'S BASIC BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Seventh Edition

▶ **Raymond V. Lesikar**
Emeritus, Louisiana State University

▶ **John D. Pettit, Jr.**
Austin Peay State University

▶ **Marie E. Flatley**
San Diego State University

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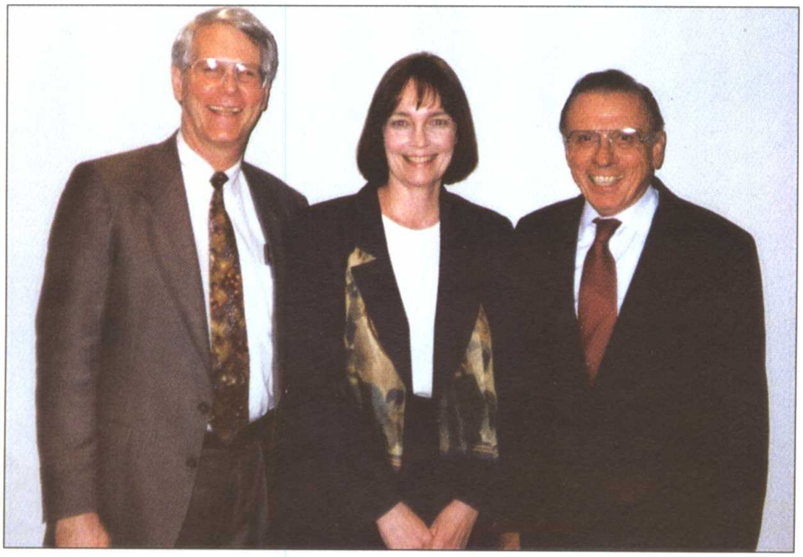
About the Authors



JOHN D. PETTIT, JR.

John D. Pettit, Jr., is the Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise in the College of Business at Austin Peay State University. He earned his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University and his B.B.A and M.B.A from the University of North Texas.

For 33 years Dr. Pettit has taught business communication and other courses at several universities: Wichita State University, University of North Texas, Texas Tech University, Louisiana State University, and Mississippi State University. He has contributed three books and numerous articles to the communication literature.

Dr. Pettit is a Fellow, former president, and former Executive Director of the Association for Business Communication. He is also a member of the Academy of Management and a member and former president of the Southwestern Federation of Administrative Disciplines.

MARIE E. FLATLEY

Marie E. Flatley is a Professor of Information and Decision Systems at San Diego State University, where she teaches various courses in business communication. She received her B.B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. In addition, she has done post-graduate study in AACSB sponsored programs at the University of Minnesota and Indiana University.

Marie is active in numerous professional organizations, including the Association for Business Communication, California Business Education Association, Delta Pi Epsilon, and the National Business Education Association. She has served as Associate Editor for the *Journal for Business Communication* and Editor for the *NABTE Review*. She was recently named Distinguished Member of the Association of Business Communication.

Her current research interests involve using technology to assist with the communication process. And she is currently writing a monograph for Delta Pi Epsilon on electronic communication.

RAYMOND V. LESIKAR

Dr. Raymond V. Lesikar has served on the faculties of the University of North Texas, Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, The University of Texas at Austin, and Texas Christian University. He served also as a visiting professor at the University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, China. His contributions to the literature include six books and numerous articles.

Dr. Lesikar has been active in consulting, serving over 80 companies and organizations. He is a Fellow, Distinguished Member and former president of the Association for Business Communication, serving ABC in many capacities, including a term as president. He also holds membership in the Southwest Federation of Administrative Disciplines and is a former president of the Southwest Social Science Association.

Preface

This seventh edition continues our efforts to produce the most authoritative, thorough, and technologically current book in the field. We are modestly confident that we have succeeded. We are also confident that more than ever before, we have achieved the two primary goals of the preceding editions: to present business communication in a way that is (1) more learnable for the student and (2) more teachable for the instructor.

AUTHORITATIVE

Our efforts to present the subject matter authoritatively involved a thorough review of the field. The information presented and procedures recommended are not just our ideas and preferences, though we support them. They represent the mainstream of business communication thought developed by researchers, teachers, and practitioners over the years. We are confident they fully meet AACSB and ACBSP accreditation standards for communication.

We are equally confident that our approach to business communication heavily involves the five educational competencies outlined by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U. S. Department of Labor. Certainly the emphasis on the effects of words on human relations helps the student in working with others. Coverage of research and reporting addresses the skill of acquiring and using information. Mastery of complex systems is an obvious goal of our review of procedures involved in analyzing, solving, and presenting report problems. Likewise, the skill of managing resources is a logical product of report preparation. Finally, the computer emphasis throughout the book supports the fifth skill area—technology.

THOROUGH

We worked diligently to cover the subject thoroughly. The content of the earlier editions was based on the results of two extensive surveys of business communication teachers. In this edition we supplemented the results of those surveys with suggestions from the highly competent professionals who reviewed the book. The result is a book whose content has been developed and approved by experts in the field. As well as we can determine, this edition covers every topic that today's business communication leaders say it should have.

TECHNOLOGICALLY CURRENT

Because the computer has affected business communication in so many ways, we worked this subject into the book wherever applicable. Where technology is integral to the way businesses communicate today, we integrated it into the text discussion. In those cases where technology helps students perform special tasks, we presented it in boxes. We believe these efforts will enable students to exploit the power of the computer in saving time and improving work quality.

TEACHABLE AND LEARNABLE

As in the earlier editions, we worked hard to make the book serve both student and teacher in every practical way. For the student, we worked to make the learning experience easy and interesting. For the teacher, we did all in our power to lighten the teaching load.

Successful Plan of the Past. To implement these goals, we continued the following plan that proved to be highly successful in preceding editions:

Readable writing. The writing is in plain, everyday English—the kind the book instructs the students to use.

Chapter objectives. Placed at the beginning of all chapters, clearly worded objectives emphasize learning goals, and are tied in to the chapters' summaries.

Introductory situations. A realistic description of a business scenario introduces the student to each topic, providing context for the discussion and examples.

Preliminary outlines of letters. To simplify and clarify the instructions for writing the basic letter types, outlines of letter plans precede the discussions.

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Margin notes. Summaries of content appear in the margins to help students emphasize main points and to review text highlights.

Critical thinking problems. In-depth, realistic business cases are included for all letter and report types—more than any competing text.

Critical thinking questions. End-of-chapter questions emphasize text concepts and provide material for classroom discussion.

Grading checklists. Lists of likely errors keyed to marking symbols are available for letters, reports, and points of correctness. They help the teacher in the grading process and provide the students with explanations for their errors.

Specialized report topics. Lists of research topics by major business disciplines are available for teachers who prefer to assign reports in the student's area of specialization.

Abundant illustrations. Carefully selected examples with handwritten comments show how to apply the text instructions.

Interest-gaining vignettes. Boxes containing exciting, humorous, technology-based, or classic material add interest and make points throughout the book.

Cartoons. Carefully selected cartoons emphasize key points and add interest.

Photographs. Carefully selected full-color photographs throughout the text emphasize key points and add interest to content. Teaching captions provide an enhancement of the textual material.

Chapter summaries by chapter objectives. Ending summaries in fast-reading outline form and by chapter objectives enable students to recall text highlights.

Computer applications. Computer applications have been worked in throughout the book wherever appropriate—into topics such as readability analysis, graphics, research methods, and formatting.

Computer use suggestions. For students who want to know more about how useful computers can be in business communication, pertinent suggestions appear in boxes.

Realistic form illustrations. The letter and report examples have been enhanced to reflect the current state of actual letters and reports (textured paper, letterhead, model computer formatting, fax and e-mail numbers).

New letter and report cases. As in past editions, the realistic and thorough case problems are new.

Teaching-Learning Helps. Teaching-learning helps were available with all earlier editions, but we believe the greatly expanded package for this edition is the most useful and effective ever assembled for a business communication textbook. The support material for this edition consists of these elements:

Workbook. This optional supplement is designed to reinforce the text instructions in the students' minds by providing multiple choice, completion, and application exercises.

Instructor's resource box. Arranged in file folders by chapter, the following support material is assembled for easy use with each lecture:

Sample syllabi and grading systems
Summary teaching notes
Teaching suggestions
Illustrated discussion guides for the transparencies
Answers to end-of-chapter critical thought questions
Answers to end-of-chapter critical thinking exercises
Answers to workbook questions
Case problems from the previous edition text.
Audio-visual list (annotated and with order information

Instructor's manual. All the material found in the Instructor's Resource Box is available in this bound manual.

Transparency package. Fifty-three four-color acetates and 130 transparency masters provide additional examples to critique and summaries of key points for use in lectures and discussion.

Electronic Acetates. For the first time, hundreds of four-color acetates are captured in a Power Point electronic package. The Power Point disks, organized by chapter, contain text information and material created specifically for the electronic format.

The IRWIN Business Communication Video Series. This series consists of self-contained, informative segments covering such topics as writing correctly and the power of listening. Presented in a clear and engaging style, every segment holds students' interest while presenting the techniques for sharpening their communication skills. Contact your IRWIN representative for more information.

Test bank. This comprehensive collection of objective questions covers all chapters.

Computerized Testing Software. This advanced test generator enables the teacher to build and restructure tests to meet specific preferences.

Tele-Test. Customized exam preparation is furnished by the publisher.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

A major goal in this edition was to cover the essential subject matter more concisely. Thus we made four significant organization changes. First, in response to suggestions of adopters and reviewers, we now cover the basic direct-order letters in a single chapter (Chapter 5). Second, we do the same for the basic indirect-order letters (Chapter 6). Our procedure in these two chapters is first to present in detail a plan for one letter situation. Then we cover the other similar situations briefly, with primary emphasis on differences. This approach to the subject reduces repetition and of course produces conciseness. Even though we reduced overall length of the subject matter involved, we took special care to retain all significant material.

Similarly, our third major change involves combining miscellaneous types of messages. In a single chapter (Chapter 8) we cover memos, collection letters, claim letters, and orders. In the coverage of these topics, we draw on material presented in preceding chapters, again emphasizing differences and reducing duplication. The result is a more concise coverage of these topics with no loss of significant material.

Our fourth major organization change is the movement of the material on producing business documents from the text proper to the appendix (Appendix E). Perhaps more significant than the physical movement of this part is the thorough updating to make this material conform to current standards of electronic word processing.

In spite of these changes, the following basic organization plan that has characterized this book through six successful editions remains unchanged:

PART I begins with an introductory summary of the role of communication in the organization, including a description of the process of human communication in the organization.

PART II is a review of the basic techniques of writing. Here the emphasis is on clear writing and the effect of words.

PART III covers the basic patterns of business letters, beginning with the most common direct and indirect ones.

PART IV applies the contents of the preceding two parts to other forms of business letters (persuasion, sales, collection, claims, job-search and memorandums).

PART V concentrates on report writing. Although the emphasis is on the shorter report forms, the long, analytical reports also receive complete coverage.

PART VI reviews the other forms of business communication. Included here are communications activities such as participating in meetings, interviewing, telephoning, dictating, and listening.

PART VII comprises a four-chapter group of special communication topics—technology-assisted communication, cross-cultural communication, correctness, and business research methods. Because teachers use them in different ways and in different sequences, these topics are placed in this final part so that they can be used in the sequence and way that best fit each teacher's needs.

ADDITIONS TO CONTENT

As in the past, this edition was thoroughly updated throughout. We expanded coverage wherever we and our reviewers thought it would improve content. Our most significant additions or expansions are the following:

Ethics. In support of both AACSB and ACBSP accreditation standards, the role of ethics in business communication is addressed wherever it applies throughout the book.

Updated technology chapter. Thoroughly revised, this chapter focuses attention on the technology used in each step of the writing process—discussing both software and hardware as they assist the writer.

Cross-cultural communication. Coverage of this timely subject was revised and expanded to support AACSB and ACBSP standards.

Collaborative writing. Because of its widespread use in business, the subject is covered in the report writing section.

Document production. Thoroughly updated coverage of letter and report format to include processing electronically (Appendix E).

Documentation. This appendix part was revised and expanded to cover electronic sources of information.

Job search, resumes, and application letters. As in every past edition, this material was expanded and revised to reflect today's standards and practices including examples and discussion of electronic résumés.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any comprehensive work such as this must owe credit to a multitude of people. Certainly, we should acknowledge the contributions of the pioneers in the business communication field, especially those whose teachings have become a part of our thinking. We should acknowledge also those colleagues in the field who served as reviewers for this edition. They are primarily responsible for the improvements that have been made. Although all identification was removed from the reviews given us, we were told that these people served as reviewers:

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Connie Jo Clark, *Lane Community College*

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Without exception, their work was good and helpful.

Because this seventh edition has evolved from all the previous editions, we also acknowledge those who contributed to those editions. They include:

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Finally, on our respective home fronts, we acknowledge the support of our loved ones. Marie acknowledges husband Len Deftos. John acknowledges wife Suzanne, son David B., daughter Melanie, and Melanie's husband Jamie Wilson. Ray acknowledges all his family members, both present and departed, who have provided love and inspiration over the years. Without the support of all these dear people this book would not exist.

Raymond V. Lesikar
John D. Pettit, Jr.
Marie E. Flatley

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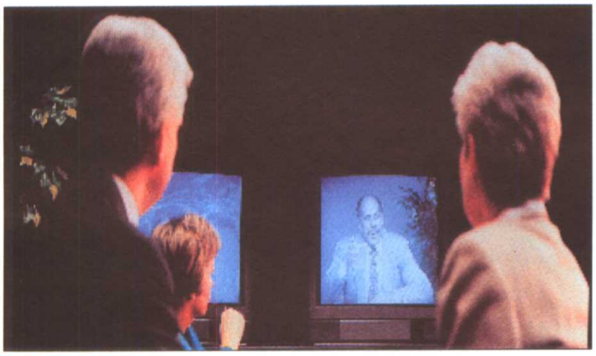

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A **Corrections for the Self-Administered Diagnostic Test of Punctuation and Grammar** *A-1*

B **Physical Presentation of Letters, Memos, and Reports** *B-1*

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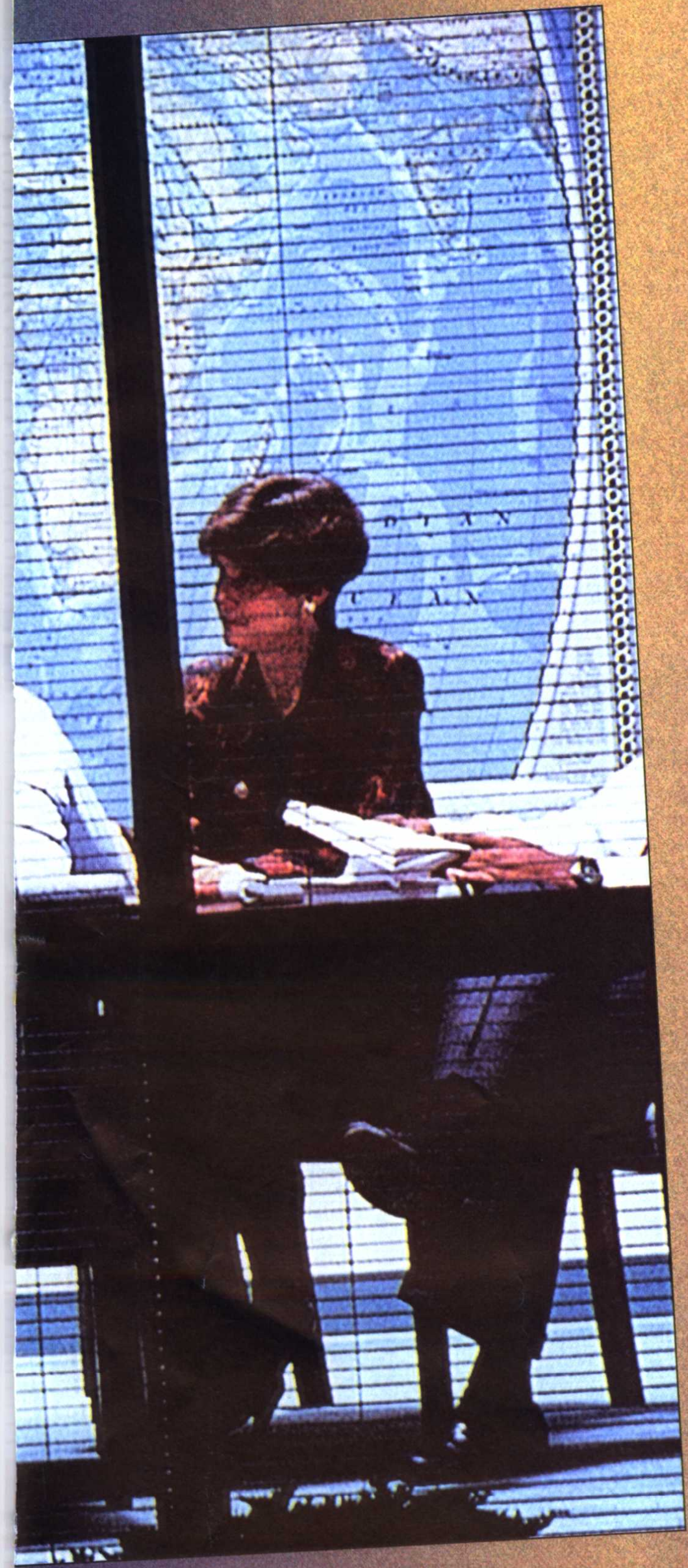

INTRODUCTION

① COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

CHAPTER 1

Communication in the Workplace

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, you will understand the role of communication in business. To achieve this goal, you should be able to

① Explain the importance of communication to you and to business.

② Describe the three main forms of communication in the business organization.

③ Describe the formal and informal communication networks in the business organization.

④ Explain the process of communication among people.

⑤ Explain three basic truths about communication.

⑥ Describe the plan of this book.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

Your work in business will involve communication—a lot of it—because communication is a major and essential part of the work of business.

- Communication is important to business.

The Importance of Communication Skills to You

Because communication is so important in business, businesses want and need people with good communication skills. All too often they do not get them, however, because most employees, even the college trained, do not communicate well. Among the recent studies that support this observation, perhaps the most notable[1] reports that one of the four major criticisms of today's college-trained people is their "poor communication and interpersonal skills." This study further reports that the shortcomings are in "both oral and, especially, written communication."

- Business needs good communicators, but most people do not communicate well.

The communication shortcomings of employees and the importance of communication in business explain why you should work to improve your communication skills. Whatever position you have in business, your performance will be judged largely by your ability to communicate. If you perform (and communicate) well, you are likely to be rewarded with advancement. And the higher you advance, the more you will need your communication ability. One study reports that top-level administrators spend about 85 percent of their work time communicating.[2] The evidence is clear: Improving your communication skills improves your chances for success in business.

- By improving your communication ability, you improve your chances for success.

Why Business Needs to Communicate

To understand how important communication is to business, note how much communication business requires. Take, for example, a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Throughout the company workers send and receive information. They process information with computers, write messages, fill out forms, give and receive orders, and talk over the telephone. More specifically, salespeople receive instructions and information from the home office and send back orders and weekly summaries of their activities. Executives use letters and telephone calls to initiate business with customers and other companies and respond to incoming letters and calls. Production supervisors receive work orders, issue instructions, and submit production summaries. Research specialists receive problems to investigate and later communicate their findings to management. Similar activities occur in every niche of the company. Everywhere workers receive and send information as they conduct their work.

- Communication is vital to every part of business.

Oral communication is a major part of this information flow. So, too, are various types of forms and records, as well as the storage and retrieval facilities provided by computers. Yet another major part consists of various forms of written communication—letters, memorandums, and reports.

- Communication takes many forms: oral, written, and computer.

All of this communicating goes on in business because communication is essential to the organized effort involved in business. Communication enables human beings to work together. In a business, it is the vehicle through which management performs its basic functions. Managers direct through communication, coordinate through communication, and staff, plan, and control through communication.

- All organized effort, including the work of business, requires communication.

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[1] Lyman W. Porter and Lawrence E. McKibbin, *Management Education and Development: Drift or Thrust into the 21st Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1988), p. 99.

[2] Martha H. Rader and Alan P. Wunsch, "A Survey of Communication Practices of Business School Graduates by Job Category and Undergraduate Major," *Journal of Business Communication* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1980), pp. 37–38.

Main Forms of Communication in Business

- There are three categories of communication in business:

The importance of communication in business becomes even more apparent when we consider the communication activities of an organization from an overall point of view. These activities fall into three broad categories: internal operational, external operational, and personal.

- (1) Internal operational—the communicating done in conducting work within a business,

Internal-Operational Communication. All the communication that occurs in conducting work within a business is classified as internal operational. This is the communication among the business's workers that is done to implement the business's operating plan. By *operating plan* we mean the procedure that the business has developed to do whatever it was formed to do—for example, to manufacture products, provide a service, or sell goods.

- such as giving orders, assembling reports, writing memorandums, and communicating by computers.

Internal-operational communication takes many forms. It includes the orders and instructions that supervisors give workers, as well as oral exchanges among workers about work matters. It includes reports and records that workers prepare concerning sales, production, inventories, finance, maintenance, and so on. It includes the memorandums and reports that workers write in carrying out their assignments.

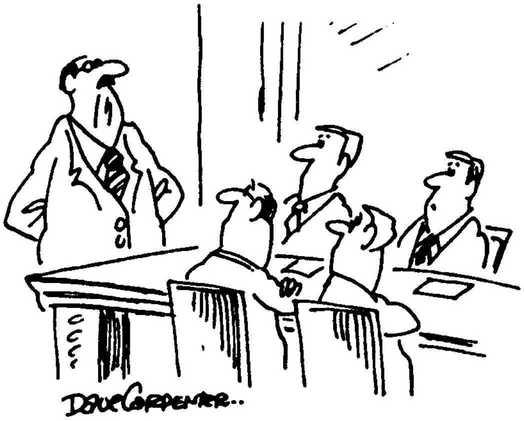
Much of this internal-operational communication is performed on computer networks. Workers send electronic mail through networks to others throughout the business, whether located down the hall, across the street, or around the world. As you will learn in Chapter 16, the computer also assists the business writer and speaker in many other aspects of communication.

- (2) External operational—work-related communication with people outside the business,

External-Operational Communication. The work-related communicating that a business does with people and groups outside the business is external-operational communication. This is the business's communication with its publics—suppliers, service companies, customers, and the general public.

- such as personal selling, telephoning, advertising, and letter writing.

External-operational communication includes all of the business's efforts at direct selling—salespeople's "spiels," descriptive brochures, telephone callbacks, follow-up service calls, and the like. It also includes the advertising the business does, for what is advertising but communication with potential customers? Radio and television messages, newspaper and magazine advertising, and point-of-purchase display material obviously play a role in the business's plan to achieve its work objective. Also in this category is all that a business does to improve its public relations, including its planned publicity, the civic-mindedness of its management, the courtesy of its employees, and the condition of its physical plant. And of very special importance to



"Gentlemen, It's only a suggestion but just remember who made it." *(From* The Wall Street Journal, *with permission of Cartoon Features Syndicate)*

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