

⊕ Positive/Neutral Scenarios ⊕

Business Correspondence Project

Dilbert: Less Driving; More Rewards

Positive/Neutral Correspondence

Over the years, the air in Boca Raton has been getting progressively worse. Your company, Initech Enterprises, a large tech firm (HQed in Boca), recently received an announcement from AQMD (a division of the EPA), about the issue. To reduce air pollution, the AQMD is requiring all big employers to offer incentives that encourage employees to participate in AQMD's Trip Reduction Plan (TRP). Initech faces big fines if they can't get a significant number of employees to share rides, take the bus, or ride a bike to work.

After studying what other large companies were doing, Initech developed a number of incentives to entice employees to leave their cars at home. One incentive offers employees who maintain a 75% rate of participation in ride-share/trip reduction programs for a

FYI, Acronyms & Abbreviations

HQed: Head Quartered in
AQMD: Air Quality Management Dept.
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
TRP: Trip Reduction Plan
ETC: Employee Transport Coordinator

period of six months one full work-day off with pay. The start date for this incentive is December 1. Other incentives include preferential parking near building entrances. These special parking spaces are for car pools only, and a parking pass is required. Another incentive involves bus passes. Employees who use public transportation will receive a subsidy of \$25 per month. Employees will also get a free round-trip transit pass for the first month. This pass applies only to workplace commuting, of course.

Employees receiving this message might want more information about the program. They may also want to sign up for the incentives mentioned here. If so, they should contact Chris P. Bacon (c.bacon@initech.com, Initech's AQMD liaison) before November 1. Another incentive is the provision of a subsidy for van pools. Initech will help obtain a van and will provide a \$150 per month subsidy to the van pool. What's even more terrific is that the van-pool driver will have unlimited personal use of the vehicle off company time. A final subsidy involves bicycles. Employees who bicycle to work will receive \$25 per month as a subsidy. Initech Enterprises will provide bicycle racks, locks, and chains.

Your Task: As the Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) for Initech Enterprises, write a correspondence to all employees that informs them about the AQMD Trip Reduction Plan (and persuades them to enroll).

Catbert: Prepping for Performance Appraisals

Positive/Neutral Correspondence

It's time to remind all supervisory personnel that they must complete employee performance appraisals by November 15. Your boss, Adam Baum (Director of Human Resources), asks you to draft a procedural message announcing the deadline. In talking with Adam, you learn he wants you to summarize some of the main steps employees should take in the appraisal process. Adam says the appraisals are really important this year because of recent company restructuring, shifting job titles, and changing employee responsibilities. Additionally, many offices are installing new technologies and following new procedures. It's been a hectic year. Adam mentions that some supervisors will want to attend a training workshop on November 1st where they can update their skills. Supervisors who want to reserve a space in the training workshop should contact Sheila Blige at s.blige@cyberdyne.com. When you ask him what procedures you should include in the memo, he tells you to consult the employee handbook and pick out the most important steps.

In the handbook you find suggestions that say each employee should have a performance plan with three or four main objectives. In the appraisal the supervisor should mention three strengths the employee has, as well as three areas weaknesses. One interesting comment in the handbook indicated that improvements should focus on skills, such as time management, rather than on things like being late frequently. Supervisors are supposed to use a scale of 1 to 5 to assess employees: 1 = consistently exceeds requirements; 5 = does not meet requirements at all. (You think to yourself that the scale is screwy; it's certainly not like grades in school, but you can't change the scale.) Finally, supervisors should meet with employees to discuss the appraisal. Completed appraisals should be sent to Adam's office.

Your Task: Draft a correspondence from Adam Baum (Director of Human Resources at Cyberdyne) to all department heads, managers, and supervisors. Announce the November 1st deadline for performance appraisals and provide info about the training workshop. List five or six steps to be taken by supervisors in completing performance appraisals. If you need more information about writing performance appraisals, Google to find more helpful advice than what you were given.

Dogbert: Parking Guidelines Reminder

Positive/Neutral Correspondence

As Lois Price, HR Coordinator, you must remind both day-shift and swing-shift employees of the company's parking guidelines. Day-shift employees must park in Lots A and B in their assigned spaces. If they have not registered their cars and received their white stickers, the cars will be ticketed.

Day-shift employees are forbidden to park at the curb. Swing-shift employees may park at the curb before 3:30 p.m. Moreover, after 3:30 p.m., swing-shift employees may park in any empty space — except those marked Tandem, Handicapped, Van Pool, Car Pool, or Management. Day-shift employees may loan their spaces to other employees if they know they will not be using them.

The biggest problem is that employees aren't registering their cars (as evidenced by a lack of white registration stickers in the parking lot). Registration is handled by Employee Relations, and they're going to start cracking down on employees who haven't registered—any car without a sticker will be ticketed, and in the case of repeated violations, cars will be towed.

To encourage registration, Employee Relations will be in the cafeteria October 14 and 15 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm to take applications and issue white parking stickers. They'll also be available in the cafeteria on the 15th from 3 pm to 5:30 pm.

Your Task: Write a correspondence to employees to remind them of parking guidelines and encourages them to get their cars registered. Be sure to write the information so it's organized and easy to understand. Despite Employee Relation's threats about cracking down, strive for a tone that fosters a sense of cooperation rather than resentment.

Alice: Camp Cooking for Adventure Trip

Positive/Neutral Correspondence

As a member of the senior staff of FAU Campus Recreation, you are leading a group of FAU students on an adventure trip through north Florida and south Georgia over a week-long fall break. You are responsible for ordering all the freeze-dried food the group will eat while hiking, camping, and enjoying other outdoor activities. They are a pretty picky group, with nine of the fifteen students claiming to have special dietary considerations!

To get more information about their specific requirements, you sent a request to all members that asked them to describe their needs. The responses included requests to "limit" fats, carbohydrates, and/or salt. Two members request "low cholesterol" meals, a few ask for gluten free options, and one asks for vegan meals. Their responses aren't as helpful as you'd like, but you don't have much time (you leave next month!) and you'll have to work with the information you have.

Based on the freeze-dried food you have tried in the past, you're concerned about the taste and quality of the food. Some prepackaged "just add water" camping food is awful, and nothing sucks worse than seven days in the woods with crappy food. It would be great to taste a sample meal or two before putting in a big order

Besides taste, you also have concerns about how to prepare meals for such a large group, the cost, and if the company your uncle recommended—Camp Kitchen Gear and Grub—will have a selection to meet the needs of your group.

Your Task: To get all the information you need (and your group needs), write to Trina Forest at Camp Kitchen Gear and Grub, 98669 Park St., Silver Springs, FL 34488.