

Alice in CubicleLand

Communications Strategy Planning Exercise

Read the following scenario. Then upload the negotiations strategy planning form and fill it out, pretending you are Alice.

Alice in CubicleLand:

Alice works for ABC company, which provides accounting and payroll support for a variety of clients. Alice's work environment consists of a large room with six cubicles pushed together, where she and her five co-workers sit from 8-5. Most of her colleagues are able to work solely via email; Alice has the only set of customers who require almost daily telephone contact. This set of customers have the most detailed and difficult requirements of all of the company's customers.

Her co-workers talk aloud among themselves about the emails they have received, the amount of work they have, and also a great deal about their personal lives. Two of them also troll social media daily. This chatter goes on all day. Alice, who finds this chatter distracting, usually winds up at the end of each day with a headache from having to concentrate to regain her train of thought after hearing squeals from the two co-workers as they find details and pictures of their friends on Facebook or share juicy tidbits from celebrities' lives. These headaches are hard to deal with, especially as Alice has a 90-minute commute each way to work and back. Gas costs are rising, and Alice really needs a newer car to replace her old mini-van, which gets 15 miles to the gallon. She also knows her own productivity is not as good as it could be if she didn't have to hear the chatter and squeals.

Three weeks ago, Alice was on the phone to one of her clients when one of her co-workers began sobbing over a celebrity's death. The client, who could hear the uproar, told Alice that while he liked working with Alice, he was not sure that her company was the most "sincere and professional" company he could give his business to. Alice managed to reassure the customer; since then, she has reserved the conference room for her conversations with him and other clients. She now spends three hours of her working day, three days a week, in the conference room and other employees are complaining.

Since another employee is allowed to work from home, Alice asked her boss if she could also work from home one day a week, figuring she could catch up on most of the sensitive phone calls that one day and free up the conference room. This solution would help save the \$50 she is currently spending that one day on gas to put towards a down payment on a newer car. His answer was a flat no. When pressed, he stated that being in the office five days a week was professional; her answer to her comment that she would be more productive if she were allowed to work from home one day a week was that she was already the most productive employee he had.

Alice wants to revisit this request, this time armed with a good negotiation strategy and tactics. Her main goal would be to work from home one day a week or to work four ten-hour days. Her family situation does not allow her to move, and she really likes the work she does. Besides, in a down economy, where would she go?

As Alice, plan your strategy with help of the planning worksheet.