

Business Communication Boot Camp

Evergreen Natural Markets

Overview

The WRIT 340 Business Communication Boot Camp introduces you to the most common types of messages you will be asked to craft in a workplace environment, routine, negative/sensitive, and persuasive, and to the three major channels of business correspondence, e-mail messages, memos, and letters. The series of assignments takes you through the process of strategizing and applying the basic principles of business communication in each of these contexts. The tasks are based on the brief Harvard Business School case, “Evergreen Natural Markets 2012.”

Boot Camp Scenario

Imagine that you (firstname.lastname@evergreen.com) have been working as a manager in Evergreen Natural Markets’ Communications Department for almost one year. Based in Boulder, Colorado, Evergreen is “the leading independent food retailer in the Rocky Mountain West. Its stores [feature] gourmet, natural, and organic products” (Kanter and Myers 1). As the company has expanded, so too have your responsibilities, and you have gained a reputation as a hard-working, detail-oriented employee. In fact, CEO Kathleen Norton (knorton@evergreen.com) has been so impressed with your work that she has asked you to handle several important communications tasks in connection with the recent acquisition of Arugula Grocers. These tasks are described below.

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Task One (30 points)

Now that the acquisition of Arugula is complete, Norton is anxious to begin integrating the new stores and instilling in their managers the “Evergreen Way.” She wants to arrange a meeting between herself; Harry Miller, CFO (hmillier@evergreen.com); Sheila Merlyn, CTO (smerlyn@evergreen.com); and members of Arugula’s executive team to discuss next steps toward store integration. She has asked you to craft an e-mail message to go out over her signature inviting the Arugula team to the meeting and giving them some sense of the likely agenda. The invitees will include:

- Timothy J. Draper II, Chief Executive Officer (tjdraper@arugulagrocers.com);
- Julia Jimenez, Chief Operating Officer (jjimenez@arugulagrocers.com);
- Mary Chen, Chief Financial Officer (mchen@arugulagrocers.com); and
- Prevez (“Perry”) Patel, Chief Information Office (rpatel@arugulagrocers.com).

The meeting will be held at Evergreen headquarters in Boulder, and though Norton hasn't yet checked with Arugula leadership on their availability, she is holding the dates of June 12th and 13th open on her calendar. Her executive assistant, Jennifer Thompson (jthompson@evergreen.com), will make travel arrangements and handle other logistics.

Task Two (35 points)

Based on her earlier information-gathering sessions with Arugula's corporate executives, Norton has found that they are an unremarkable bunch, lacking the business acumen and managerial competence she normally seeks when bringing on board new leadership. She has already decided that Evergreen's corporate office will take over their job functions in the course of centralization. However, she intends to offer short-term retention agreements to at least some of Arugula's executives to "minimize operational disruptions during the integration period" (Kanter and Myers 8). Evergreen Human Resources will act as intermediary, negotiating these agreements with selected (as yet unnamed) executives.

Given the bleak economy, especially in Las Vegas, Norton realizes that Arugula's leadership team will not be pleased at the prospect of losing their jobs. Hoping to avoid negative fallout, she has called on you to strategically plan and draft a letter for her signature to break this bad news. It will be mailed individually to all Arugula executives listed above at the company's main office: Arugula Grocers, 10622 Harmon Avenue, Suite 1300, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109.

Task Three (35 points)

At last year's quarterly retreat in Breckenridge, Colorado, Norton was caught off-guard by the strong objections voiced by some store managers to Evergreen's practice of signing slotting-fee agreements with its suppliers. Nonetheless, she is determined to continue the practice—both at existing stores and within the newly acquired Arugula chain. She has asked you to draft a memo on her behalf to all store managers (including those in newly acquired locations) reinforcing the benefits of the slotting allowances and encouraging the managers to embrace this practice going forward.

This memo will be distributed to all store managers via e-mail and posted to Evergreen's Intranet site.

Please note: You should forward the draft to Norton with a transmittal e-mail explaining your strategic approach and requesting her approval. **Don't forget to include the transmittal, or you will lose points on this task!**

Due Dates and Scoring

Due dates for drafts and finalized copies of all three of the Boot Camp documents are listed in the Daily Schedule.

Together, the three communication tasks are worth 100 points, or 10 percent of your overall score for the course. Scoring will be based on the rhetorical effectiveness, structure and layout, style and tone, and correctness of your documents. A complete grading rubric will be available on Blackboard. If you

have questions about scoring or any other aspect of this assignment, please see me before or after class, consult with me during office hours, or e-mail me at markward@marshall.usc.edu.

Source:

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss, and Paul Myers. "Evergreen Natural Markets 2012." *Harvard Business School Brief Cases*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Publishing, 2012.