DAVIS
CHAMBER
COMMERCE
CULTIVATING LOCAL PROSPERITY

We *are a membership organization whose mission* is to *promote, support, and advocate for the general economic vitality of our membership and the quality of life for our community.*

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May 11, 2018

The Davis Chamber of Commerce School Business Partnership Committee is pleased to announce today that Sophie Marie, a senior at Da Vinci Charter Academy, is the recipient of the 2018 Davis Chamber of Commerce Scholarship.

The chamber renewed their scholarship program in 2017 after the reformation of the School Business Partnership Committee in 2016. The committee is comprised of business and education representatives from the Davis community.

Funds for the scholarship are comprised of contributions made by the chamber membership to the chamber foundation fund.

You may read Sophie's writing response, as well as our second and third place responses below.

Sincerely,

Christina Blackman
Chief Executive Officer

Students were asked to answer the following question:

 "As a future business owner, how would you design an ideal work environment?"

Winning Essay - Sophie Marie

When I think about being a future business owner, my mind immediately jumps to the physical space. I envision a staff room with deep, comfortable couches in rich neutral colors and paintings by local artists on the wall. I picture my Italian Nespresso machine with varied, sophisticated choices and five-wicked fragrant candles on end tables. I hear Indie music being piped in from a fancy sound system and feel the thick threads of carpet sink beneath my feet. There is a sampling of current magazines - Architectural Digest, Better Homes and Garden and Runner's Digest - and the stainless steel refrigerator holds organic salads and fruit smoothies. As I look around the inviting space I've created, though, it feels empty, void of life and vibrancy. Then I realize that it's only a place. There isn't the sound of employees laughing over a shared TV sitcom episode or the animated discussion about an upcoming publicity launch. There are no professional and personal relationships being fostered and developed. There are no restorative practices being employed to positively and healthfully address internal conflict. There are no people. So even if I've created a beautiful, welcoming space that mirrors Friends Central Perk on its best day, unless I cherish people, my business will fail.

Growing up, my mom always told me that I had a voice in every family discussion, but I didn't necessarily have a vote. This frustrated me because even after expressing my needs and wishes, she often would make a decision that was not in alignment with my expressed desires. The more I reflect, however, the more I realize that she was, in a way, running our home like a business - she respected my input and greatly valued my contributions, but ultimately she, as the business owner, might have to make decisions that didn't always meet my individual needs , but were best for our home. I always knew though, without a sliver of doubt that she trusted me to take care of my responsibilities and that I had an open door to seek out her support and guidance when I needed it.

In this same vein, as a future business owner, I would model trust, transparency and respect, encouraging my employees to offer their opinions and views to improve our work and our workplace. I would listen reflectively and actively and seek out innovative solutions. I would insure that we had sound, fair policies and practices that nurtured both learning and teaching, providing employees with a sense of purpose and security. I would develop an environment that demonstrated caring, concern and high expectations, all the while honoring the individual differences and gifts of my employees.

I envision a workplace that plays passionately - that toys with ideas and experiments with what failure teaches us. I aspire to create an environment where we are all leaders, thinking critically and imaginatively together. I really believe in the importance of team building outside of work, as I've seen its impact in my own employment. When we get to know each other, to take time to celebrate unique strengths and potential possibilities, the work place seems to be less of a place for employees and more a home for family. Being silly and vulnerable with each other through retreats or games allows people to be vulnerable and brave. I desire to always have my employees feel prepared and engaged in their work through regular professional trainings and workshops and would hope to always be able to consider solutions to meet their scheduling needs. In my own experience, I appreciate my boss considering my requests for time off for family vacations and school events; it makes me even more loyal to his company because he views me as a whole person, not just an employee. As a family member with siblings, I know how messy and complicated and hard relationships can be. I am not na1ve in thinking that work will always be a cheerful place my employees will run to eagerly on Monday mornings. If, though, I am intentional about seeing and hearing and knowing people, really knowing them, I will be successful.

I was taught to always treat the janitor of a building the same way I would treat the CEO of a billion dollar enterprise, and that human philosophy is one I will continue to exemplify in my interactions, both personal and professional, for the rest of my life. Above the door to my cozy, inviting break room, I hope to someday see this sentiment stenciled in white: *It won't always be easy, but it will always be worth it.*

Second Place Essay

The main thing which every successful working environment needs is personal space. A situation where individuals feel trapped and unable to breathe causes a decrease in productivity. IfI were to design an ideal work environment I would make it most important that everybody feels as if they have enough space to get their job done effectively. As for creating an environment that feels inclusive to all people, I would prioritize focusing on inclusion of all cultures. Another important factor which relates to getting the most work done effectively, is the collaboration of the employees. I believe that if perhaps two individuals from different cultures are having trouble working together, a system would be in place which allows branching techniques between the two. Being able to successfully work on collaboration while also removing the issue regarding culture difference would be removing two issues with one idea.

Next there is the idea of employee needs, although many experience these needs in different ways, everyone has their own needs. A sub group would be set into place which would work on relations in the workplace, especially the needs which can be easily eradicated. A human relations sector of the business may be something which individuals work toward looking forward to. They could schedule certain meetings where they could discuss possible ways to accommodate for their individual needs. When dealing with newly hired individuals, I believe that the best approach is to put forth a program which will insure their abilities are up to par. I feel as though a simple week long introductory program would be good for the initial impression.

However, after weeks have gone by with the individuals feeling as if they understand their positions, I would request that mandatory check ups would be scheduled. This would accomplish multiple things, it would not only keep the new employees up to date on what they want to be accomplishing, but it would also keep them doing their best work. In terms of the hours which the employees would work, I believe that it would have to be up to whatever they felt they could handle. Overworking can possibly lead to poor quality of work or even individuals stopping their work. The amount of hours would be something which they could choose however there would have to be maximum and minimums set up.

I would make these after seeing the level of work each individual can accomplish. I believe that individuals working in an environment need to be kept relatively happy in order to keep wanting to work. The final thing which I believe is very important for working environment is the working space each worker receives. The workspace which would be alloted to each worker would have to be experimental. Some would receive more than others depending on circumstance. The productivity which people experience while crammed up can decrease if a change isn't made. These would be all of the things which I would set forth in the ideal work environment. Some things may not be exact however if most of them are followed, I believe there would be a productive environment.

Third Place Essay

As a future business owner, my ideal work environment is where teamwork is at its best, works are done fast and efficiently, and is inspirational and motivating. To have the best ideal work environment, there needs to be a healthy work culture, strong collaboration, employees' needs are considered, and advanced workspace environments.

In order to ensure that the culture at work is healthy, there need to be employee friendly guidelines. Employees must demonstrate professionalism and respect one and another. There must be integrity and honesty throughout the whole company, in order for the boss to trust its workers and vice versa. Strong collaboration also comes into play of a healthy work culture.

Strong collaboration requires each employee to be treated the same. They would be judged only by their results and not their background. All employees would have a chance to share their opinions and in doing so, those ideas could contribute to the successes of the company. They should also be praised, when appropriate, for their contributions because it will make them feel appreciated and motivated them to keep up their good work. To promote speed, quality, and efficiency, each job positions would have at least two experts and one trainee, or more if a job position requires more employees. This way, the experts can partner up together to work on a certain project and complete their tasks faster. As they say, "two heads are always better than one." The trainee will be there to observe, help, and learn from their mentor for whenever they get promoted to a higher position in the company. Not only that, when there is a holiday or whenever something good happens

in the company that needs a celebration, there could be trips, parties, or a fun get together where all the staffs can celebrate together and strengthen their bonds. With a strengthened bond between the employees comes a stronger collaboration effort.

Next, an ideal work environment also considers the employees' needs. Every employee needs a balance between work and their family or life. Also, if employees find that they give too much to a job than for themselves, they would quit and find a better work to balance their time with. It would not be ideal to make them work long hours or when they have a valid reason for not being able to work. Like for example, a worker has a funeral, family emergency, or a wedding anniversary that they need to attend to. It is not appropriate to not allow them a time off from work and require them to stay working for no reason or because it is crucial for the company. Just find a replacement, which should be done easily since in this ideal work environment, there are many employees working together on the same project. An ideal working hour should be the same as usual, eight hours per day. It is okay for some overtime working from time to time, but it should not always be frequently.

Finally, another factor that comes with an ideal work environment is the workspace environment. If we want the products of our work to be of high quality, we have to make sure that the tools we need are in high conditions. It is not very ideal like to be using old outdated technology to assist with our work. In fact, they might drag the productions down. Therefore, resources that are up-to-date will deliver the best outcome for the job.

Of course, an ideal work environment like this might not be necessarily true for all jobs. This design would be best for a service business. There might be another far more ideal design for a manufacturing or merchandising business.