Karen Hushek

Eng. 102

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

November 14th, 2017

**Inter-Company Memorandum**

To: Raymond J. Mason, President/Director of Operations

Re: Student Debt Employer Contribution

Mr. Mason:

As the Director of our Human Resources Department, I am tasked with both recruiting potential applicants and retaining our current workers. My staff and I are constantly looking for innovative ways to attract the best quality applicants for our future operations while providing an industry leading benefit package for our existing employees. Many of our competitors now offer Employer Tuition Assistance and Reimbursement programs. I would like to propose that we also consider a similar plan. An education benefit plan that will pay dividends for both this company and for all our potential and working employees as well.

A recent study conducted by ZaneBenefits (Corso, 2016) concluded that Employer Tuition Assistance and Reimbursement programs are one of the hottest benefit trends to hit our industry in the past 30 years. Here are a few of the ways this program could benefit our organization:

* **Aid in the recruitment of top talent**: 67% of recruiters said it helped build candidate interest (2016)
* **Boost employee retention and productivity**: 86% of your workers would make a 5-year commitment if employers helped pay their student loans (2016)
* **Manage employee turnover costs**: It is estimated that it costs between 6 and 9 months’ salary to replace a salaried employee (2016)

This program will not only allow us to hire the best candidates, but also to incentivize them to stay longer and productively with our company. This benefit could more than pay for itself by reducing employee turnover. I am proposing for consideration two types of employer contributions; tuition reimbursement and tuition assistance.

In 2016, the average college graduate amassed $37,172 in student loan debt (Kumok, 2017). These are our core employees. These are members of our team that we push each day to make our company better, to solve problems, to take ownership, to overachieve. Relieving their student debt burden would free them to focus on achieving our current goals as well as inspiring them to create and implement future innovations with a company that demonstrates it values their talent and loyalty. A tuition reimbursement program is a must for attracting a workforce that shares our visions.

Similarly, a tuition assistance program for our current employees would likewise benefit both our company and those employees that are motivated to complete a college degree. Members of our team that want to grow within our company should receive assistance with their educational goals. We should recognize their passion for learning and reward it with the opportunity to succeed. Our competitors already know the value of tuition assistance programs. Faith Bynum worked on our production floor as a packing specialist for almost five years (Bynum, 2017). She enjoyed our innovative working environment and wanted to move up in our company. She realized that a college degree was required for the position she desired, but she didn’t want to go into debt to achieve her professional goals. Faith, a valued and respected employee, left our company to pursue her dreams with another company. This competitor offers a tuition assistance program. Faith worked full-time for them while taking classes at a local college. Just three years later, she earned her degree, a promotion within their company, and the relief of knowing she completed her college education debt-free (2017). Our motivated employees deserve the same.

Of course, these programs are not without cost. If we were to model our tuition reimbursement and tuition assistance program after those offered in similar industries (Haq, 2011), we would allow $5,250 per year for educational expenses or reimbursement for any full-time employee that has been with our company for at least one year. Management approval would be required, and courses must relate to the employee’s current or future job responsibilities. These plans can be offered to our employees as a tax-free benefit (do not count as taxable income), and just as importantly for us, we can deduct this benefit as a business expense (2011). It is a benefit that pays for itself in tax savings and a reduction in costly employee turnover.

Another concern may be that employees would use this tuition reimbursement/assistance program to earn a degree and then quickly leave for a better opportunity (Corso, 2016). It’s true, our company would be making a financial investment based on the promise of a long-term commitment from the worker. Other industry leaders have overcome this uncertainty by including a restriction that the employee must remain with the sponsoring company for a certain period of time after the reimbursement period, or the assistance received must be repaid. The typical restricted period is 5 years (2016). However, I belief a worker who is now equipped with a degree, earned debt-free, will first look within our own company for an opportunity to take advantage of their new skills and qualifications.

An employer tuition reimbursement and educational assistance program will help us to attract new talent and retain our trained workers. Funded educational opportunities will promote professional advancement and a better trained workforce. By making a financial commitment of our employees, it will further encourage their hard work, loyalty, and motivation all the while increasing our business expense tax deductions. If we don’t continue to offer benefits that are attractive and competitive, we are going to lose valued employees that want to pursue future educational opportunities or be rewarded for their past academic achievements. I don’t want to lose another valued and productive employee like Faith to our competitors.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to discussing this matter with you in greater detail at your convenience.

Karen Hushek

Director of Human Resources

References

Avery, C., & Turner, S. (2012). Student Loans: Do College Students Borrow Too Much-Or Not

Enough? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *26*(1), 165-192.

Bay, L. (2009, March). Twists, Turns, and Returns: Returning Adult Students. *Urbana*, *26*(3),

105-113.

Bynum, Faith. Personal interview. 10 Nov. 2017.

Corbett, K. (2016). Candidate Bill of Rights. In *www.cree.com/media/wysiwyg*. Retrieved from Cree Careers.

Corso, R. (2016, February). Employee Retention - The Real Cost of Losing an Employee. *ZaneBenefits Survey*.

Goodwin, B. (2012, April). Does a College Degree Pay? *Educational Leadership*, 86-89.

Haq, H. (2011). Financial Aid: One of Six Tools to Graduate Debt-free. *Christian Science Monitor*

11-13. Retrieved from Google Scholar.

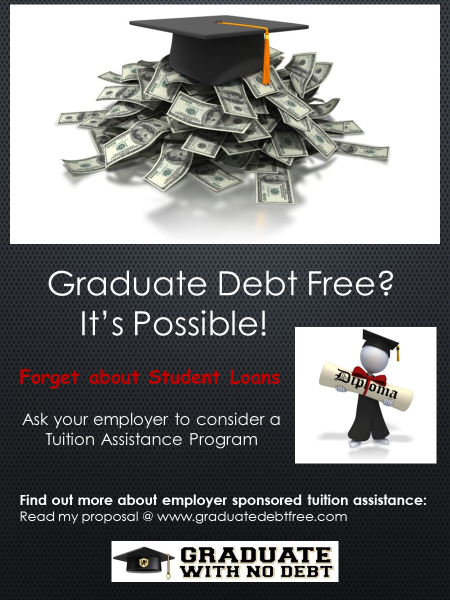
Kumok, Z. (2017, July 9). How to Go Back to School as an Adult without Going Broke. *The Week*.

Retrieved from Google Scholar

Images in Public Advocacy Ad

(2017). [Graduation Costs Money]. Presentation Clipart. Rights reserved: Single User License. Retrieved from Presentermedia.com (2494).

2017). [Graduate with Diploma]. Presentation Clipart. Rights reserved: Single User License. Retrieved from Presentermedia.com (10190).



**Project 2: Multimodal Analysis**

For this multimodal project, I chose to write in the genre of a detailed inter-company memo directed to the head of my company (with me acting as the human resources director). The focus of both my projects for this class have been the detrimental effects of assuming student debt. In assessing possible solutions to student loans, I discovered that the best possible solution would be for someone else to help pay for educational expenses. That lead me to create a proposal targeted to business leaders who might be swayed to implement a tuition reimbursement/assistance program for their own company. I included the personal experience of my interviewee that benefitted from such a program at a company that valued, encouraged, and rewarded educational pursuits. My proposal is meant to be informative and persuasive in order to convince my target audience to act.

I chose to organize my proposal essay beginning with an introduction and explanation of the problem, followed by some statistics on how a tuition reimbursement/assistance program might benefit the organization. I next presented an overview of how the plan would work, how it worked for my interviewee, and followed by a response to anticipated objections. I concluded with a repetition of my main points and an appeal to implement this program.

To appeal to my target audience’s emotional response to my proposal (pathos), I related the applicable story of my interviewee. The young woman in question avoided student debt by purposely choosing an employer that provided educational assistance benefits. I also mentioned that our competitors are offering this much requested benefit and our company is falling behind in our benefit offering to compel his sense of competition. Hopefully, my proposal will encourage him to take a stance and act on implementing this solution.

  I utilized the rhetorical appeal of logos by presenting evidence of the benefits to be realized by the organization in the establishment of a tuition reimbursement/assistance program. I presented statistics that show an increase in the ease of attracting potential candidates as well as decreased turnover of employees in companies that offer educational assistance. This was included to demonstrate reasonable evidence of potential benefits and to demonstrate that I had done my homework before making my appeal.

            To establish ethos, I found evidence to support my claim in the numerous references I consulted, paraphrased, and cited throughout my writing. By citing the beliefs and knowledge of others as well as my own opinion, I made a convincing argument that the lack of a tuition reimbursement/assistance program negatively affects our organization. In outlining the specifics of how this program could be executed, I included both pros and cons. Because I am writing from the position of a person that is charged with hiring and retaining employees, this affirms that I have a working knowledge of what recruits and staff members want in a benefit package and my appeal is worthy of consideration.

One of my job responsibilities **is** human relations. So, I do know that there is a delicate balance between business interests (more profits/less expenses), and those of employees (competitive compensation & benefits package). A well written proposal to promote greater expenses to a company must include a desirable outcome for the company as well. I believe I accomplished this by detailing this new benefit as tax-deductible and including claims as to the potential reduction in employee turnover. My hope is that I have at least paved the way for greater discussion of the possibilities of starting a tuition reimbursement/assistance program for my company.