**Case Study: Chapman’s Ice Cream**

**Professional Communication Channels: Chapman’s Ice Cream—Phoenix Rising**

**INSTRUCTIONS: Find someone in the class to work with on this case study. Please do not request that you want to work alone. The professor hopes you can locate your own partner and you are encouraged to do so; however, any request for help in locating a partner must come a week before the deadline. Unless documentation is provided that will be accepted by the SELS Department (a medical, legal, or accessibility note) you *cannot* request more time.**

**Read the following case and work together to answer the questions that follow. ONE STUDENT WILL SUBMIT THE WORK ON BB but both need to contribute their ideas.**

**CASE BACKGROUND**

ICE CREAM, in one form or another, has been a favourite treat for centuries. Between 54 and 68 CE, the Roman emperor Nero served “cream frozen in snow” (The History of Ice Cream, n.d.). During the 17th and 18th centuries, the French and Italians developed “sweet, flavoured ice cream” (The History of Ice Cream, n.d.). Today, ice cream is a North American dessert staple in restaurants and homes.

Chapman’s ice cream is a Canadian business that began in 1973 when David and Penny Chapman moved to Markdale, Ontario, and bought the local creamery. They began with four employees and two trucks and lived and raised their family above the plant. Today, the company employs over 300 people and owns 60 trucks (Our Story, 2014). The Chapmans began with the goal of producing great-tasting, good-quality ice cream at a reasonable price and became “Canada’s largest independent ice cream company” (Our Story, 2014).

Most companies have their good and bad times, but rarely are they handed the challenge that the Chapmans faced on September 4, 2009. During construction work in the plant, a “welder’s spark fell between insulated panels. By the time the tradesmen welding a crossbeam noticed there was smoke coming from the building, it was too late” (Our Story, 2014). The building, which was made from wood, produced a fire that could not be controlled by fire departments from five neighbouring towns. The town’s water tower ran dry, and the building was completely destroyed (Our Story, 2014).

Luckily, the company had recently completed building a new warehouse, which they quickly converted to production. With lots of frozen inventory, and with the help of other small, Ontario ice cream manufacturers who let Chapman’s use their production lines, the company produced its first ice cream seven weeks after the fire (Our Story, 2014). A year and a half after the fire, the company had built a new manufacturing facility in Markdale and was in full operation (Our Story, 2014). They called the new plant Phoenix (Our Story, 2014).

The companydecided to rebuild in the small town of Markdale (population 1,325) (Statistics Canada, 2012). In addition, the company ensured that none of its employees missed a pay cheque because of the fire (Cowan, 2011).

**CRITICAL THINKING CASE STUDY QUESTIONS**

Meeting the day after the fire, the management team decided to rebuild. With your partner, consider what type of messages this company would need to send and to whom in order to communicate the team’s decision and to keep goodwill towards their company.

Fill in the form provided to show your answers.

1. **Brainstorm the various people or groups of people that would be affected by this situation, and decide what kinds of messages should be sent and by what channel. To answer this question, use the form posted which includes a chart (15 marks). Fill in the form / chart with your partner.**
2. **Do not use the Chapman Family as an option: the son and parents would obviously be informed right away. Consider other options for your answer.**

**Additional Information to help you complete the chart:**

**People:** Use critical thinking skills to come up with a list. If you are having trouble with this, go and look up news stories about the Chapman fire online to learn about those who were impacted. There are videos of the event online as well.

**Kinds of Messages:**

1. Directional Message:In this message you explain “ so *here’s what we are going to do now”*
2. New Possibilities Message: In this message you explain “ so *here’s what our options are right now; some of these options may work, but we don’t know which yet”*
3. Reality Message: In this message you write  *“Here is how things really are right now”;*
4. Necessity Message: In this message you state “*Here is what we need to do now”;*
5. New Idea Message: In this message you explain “*Here is what we haven’t considered before* but we are thinking about this now”;
6. Reframing Message: In this message you are “taking something negative *and turning it into something more positive”;*
7. Regret and Apology Message: In this message you “*express regret and / or apologize for a situation or event that transpired because it was a source of stress or inconvenience to others”*

**NOTE: Some messages contain a combination of these. But be aware: a quality message would generally only offer TWO in combination. More than that could be over-loading a message. Often in professional writing it is best to keep things simple and focus on one or two areas of content in a message.**

**Channel:**

* **Face to Face: in-person conversation and/or group meeting**
* **Email**
* **Instant / Text message**
* **Tweet**
* **Instagram**
* **Blog**
* **Letter**
* **Memo**
* **Report / Powerpoint Slides**
* **Fax**
* **Phone, voicemail, conference calls**
* **Video chat and web conference**
* **Broadcast Media Announcement (TV, Radio announcement)**

**Part Two**

1. Find another company (Canadian or international) that has faced some type of difficulty or crisis (like the Chapman’s fire). Describe the situation and how the company handled it. Be sure to state the source you used to locate your information.

Answer in sentences. **(10 marks – at least 5 sentences are required – to a maximum of 10)**

**RUBRIC**

Question 1

* 5 marks for naming each of those affected by the situation. The choices must be logical and realistic.
* 5 marks for explaining the type of message. This also must be logical and realistic
* 5 marks for the method of communication which also must be appropriate for each situation (appropriate in terms of the message and its audience)

**TOTAL = 15 Marks**

**Part Two**

The answer will be marked for the quality of the ideas; for coherence (order and flow) and for the quality of the language (spelling and grammar)

1 mark off for a minor error (preposition, punctuation, capitals) and 2 marks off for major errors (comma splices, fragments, verb errors, spelling).

A – (80% and above) level answers will have no grammatical errors as well as presenting ideas that are both logical and coherent. Since this is a writing class, the SELS Department requires that marks are deducted for language errors.

**TOTAL = 10 Marks**