

“that’s what she said”

a ford & harrison blog about the popular television series “the office”

It’s Not Easy Being Green

December 03, 2010 - by: [Kristin Starnes Gray](#)

Litigation Value: Front-row seat for the epic Michael v. Oscar battle of the wits = \$0; coffee from the office coffee bar = a shocking \$8 per cup; watching Dwight fail miserably at drinking coffee with his toes = priceless.

In this week’s episode, Oscar and Michael battle it out to see who is the smartest person in the office, while Dwight and Pam face off about Dwight’s new cost-saving measures in the building. Let the Scranton games begin.

During his trip to the dentist, Michael learns more than how to brush and floss properly. He leaves gripped with fear that China is taking over the world making forks irrelevant and forcing everyone to practice the cello. Michael goes straight to the office to warn everyone of this perceived threat. When Oscar (a.k.a. “Actually” because of his annoying habit of correcting others) challenges the reliability of Michael’s cited statistics, the office is shocked to learn that Michael is actually correct for once.

Oscar cannot handle defeat, so he invites Michael to coffee for a rematch. With help from Andy, Ryan, Jim, and a cheat sheet, Michael meets Oscar in the coffee bar for overpriced drinks and some verbal sparring. Everything is going surprisingly well for Michael until his cheat sheet falls to the floor along with his hopes of victory. But all is not lost. In a last-ditch effort to win, Michael gives a heart-felt speech about the

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importance of conversation and debate, leaving Oscar confused and the other employees cheering. Aside from one comment about Oscar knowing nothing about “boobs” and some less than complimentary statements about China, Michael was relatively well behaved this week.

Dwight’s Scrooge-like behavior, on the other hand, left much to be desired and gave rise to a number of landlord-tenant issues. The most disturbing part, however, was Pam’s discovery that Dwight’s “green” initiative included cutting the tampons in half, deploying the two-ply toilet paper, and even watering down the antibacterial hand soap.

With the flu season officially upon us, I could just hear the human resources professionals (and anyone concerned about germs) cringing during that scene.

When the World Health Organization declared that the H1N1 virus had reached pandemic status, employers were urged to develop a plan for dealing with the virus and its impact on the workplace. In planning for an H1N1 outbreak or any other pandemic, employers must consider possible Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues issues that may be implicated. The ADA, in part, regulates employer’s disability-related inquiries for applicants and employees regardless of whether they are disabled under the law.

Nevertheless, there are things employers can do to protect themselves in the event of an outbreak, including:

- (1) having a business continuity plan to account for a pandemic;
- (2) creating human resources policies to be used during a pandemic;
- (3) considering alternative work facilities in the event of a pandemic;
- (4) having a succession and crisis response plan; and
- (5) educating employees.

Hopefully, Dwight's temporary lapse in judgment will not lead to many employee sick days in Scranton this holiday season. It was a good thing that Dwight happened to see Pam crying to Jim about her fear of failing once again. Like Scrooge and the Grinch before him, Dwight's heart began to swell and he decided to allow Pam to win this battle. Now CeCe has one proud mom, the office building is a bit less ugly without the giant exterminator sign, and "the modern anus" is comfortable once again with its two-ply toilet paper.

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