

**Writing sample 1:** *This sample is from a CenterPoint Energy employee educational campaign called Natural Gas Week. The goal of the campaign was to educate all employees about natural gas safety, savings, environmental impact and more.*

According to the American Gas Association, using natural gas appliances for heating, water heating, cooking and clothes drying can save an average homeowner \$840 per year compared to using electric appliances. Here are some ideas of what you could buy with that chunk of money:

- 34 copies of Purple Rain on vinyl
- 240 lbs of crawfish at the Mudbug Madness Festival
- 280 corn cobs at the Minnesota State Fair
- One-fourth of a 2017 Super Bowl ticket package
- 168 trips to Starbucks for a morning coffee

Energy-efficient natural gas has saved American consumers tens of millions of dollars over the past five years, and prices are expected to remain stable over the next 20 years compared to other fuels.

### **CIP, CIP, Hooray!: Conservation Improvement Program rebates**

CenterPoint Energy offers energy-saving rebates and programs in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Mississippi. In 2015, our 75 CIP programs, ranging from residential home energy audits to commercial rebates, saved our residential and business customers \$17.8 million in energy-cost savings. In fact, the Nonprofit Affordable Housing rebate program alone recently surpassed the \$1 million milestone in rebates to subsidize energy-efficient equipment and projects for qualified low-income homeowners.

### **What's in it for us?: Why we want customers to use less natural gas**

It may seem counterintuitive for CenterPoint Energy to help customers use less of the product that we sell them, but conservation is not only good for the environment and for our customers - it is also good for us. The cost of our rebates and other energy efficiency programs is recovered through a small portion of the delivery charge on a customer's bill. In addition, state policies in Minnesota, Arkansas and Oklahoma reward utilities for strong, cost-effective conservation program results. Utilities are awarded a portion of the value of the energy their programs save for their customers, creating a powerful incentive to help customers conserve. Based on our record-setting level of energy-saving achievements in 2015, we anticipate a financial incentive of approximately \$13.6 million.

Regulatory tools like decoupling are also in place to break the link between the amount of natural gas sold and the recovery of costs associated with delivering natural gas. Because of this, CNP can help its customers conserve energy, while also maintaining the revenue required to provide safe and reliable natural gas services. It's a win-win.

### **I'm just a paperless bill**

Like all companies these days, we promote paperless billing to our customers. There are plenty of customer benefits — less clutter, more security, higher customer satisfaction and its better for the

environment. Paperless billing also saves us money: in 2015, paperless billing provided CenterPoint Energy approximately \$4.4 million in operational savings by reducing paper, printing and postage.

### **Quiz time!**

Show us what you learned by taking today's quiz to be entered to win an \$840 gift card — the same dollar amount a customer saves in a natural gas home vs. an all-electric home.

### **Social Sweepstakes**

Visit the CenterPoint Energy Facebook page or Twitter page and share or retweet today's Natural Gas Week #Amgassador post in order to be entered to win a daily prize of a \$100 gift card and/or a grand prize of a \$1,200 airline voucher.

**Writing sample 2:** *This was an email that went out to one of CenterPoint Energy's professional networking groups.*

CNP is a platinum sponsor of Houston Young Professionals Endeavor (HYPE), the Greater Houston Partnership's young professionals organization. HYPE launched in 2009 and now boasts a membership of more than 2,600 young professionals from a diverse array of companies and industries.

Membership is free and online registration is easy. By becoming a member, you will gain access to great networking and career-development events created specifically for young professionals, as well as volunteering and mentoring opportunities.

HYPE's next event is a networking happy hour, 5:30-7 p.m. July 30, at the Houston Texans Grille at CityCentre. Admission is \$10, which gets you free appetizers, happy hour drink prices, and networking with other young professionals organizations in Houston's Energy Corridor.

If you have any questions about HYPE, contact Sara Cress, HYPE marketing committee co-chair.

**Writing sample 3:** *This is a brief speech from CenterPoint Energy CEO to employees who were recognized for participating in the company's Speaker's Bureau program.*

I would like to borrow a great line from Admiral William H. McRaven's 2014 University of Texas commencement speech: "If I can't make this speech memorable, I will at least make it short."

It turns out that McRaven's speech is pretty memorable. In a 20-minute speech to an audience of 8,000 college graduates with the world at their fingertips, this decorated Navy admiral who refers to himself as an "old sailor" boils down the most important lessons he learned early on in his military career. For instance, the importance of making your bed every morning. He says if nothing else goes right in your day, at least you have a nice place to sleep at night.

I encourage you to watch the video, which is available on YouTube, because the connection that the admiral – now the UT System’s chancellor – makes to his audience is masterful. His sense of humor, his immediacy and demeanor, his personal stories – McRaven feels like a friend. There isn’t much that can create connection quicker than a feeling of friendship.

Much like those UT graduates with so many concerns about what their futures hold, our customers are juggling a hundred balls at once. Our work may never enter their minds most days. But the minute that you step in front of them, you have a chance to stop them for a few minutes and ask them to focus on CenterPoint Energy, on what you and your colleagues do for their communities. You have a chance to help them.

By connecting with your audiences – CenterPoint Energy customers – you are strengthening the bonds that they have with this company. Your audience may never refer to CenterPoint Energy as a “friend,” but when they avoid danger because of your speech about staying safe around power lines, or when they start saving money because they’re using their smart meter data, they’re going to think of you as a friend. That’s the value you bring as a member of the Speakers’ Bureau, and I thank you for your service.

As you continue to develop your skills as speakers and advocates, find speakers that inspire you and study what they do. McRaven’s speech stood out to me for its honesty and humor. What moves you in a speech? Study those qualities.

Your power to connect is important. It humanizes the company and helps us strengthen our community relationships. In times of crisis, we call upon the reputation that you have helped build for us.

Thank you for helping spread the word about what we do and congratulations to today’s winners.

***Writing sample 4:*** Communications plan for new equipment rollout

## **Communications Plan**

### **Voice and Mobile Data Radio System Replacement**

**Situation:** CNP must replace the voice and Mobile Data radio systems now used by electric and gas field employees in Houston. The current analog systems have become obsolete, and the data radio system has reached its capacity limits. Capacity, coverage and performance all will be significantly improved with the new OpenSky™ system, which uses digital technology to allow multiple voice and data messages to run simultaneously on a single frequency.

## **Goals**

- To educate radio users about the new system, about training opportunities and rollout

dates

- To educate those employees' supervisors so that they can answer questions posed by employees
- To create awareness in all employees about the new system and communicate how it might affect their work

### **Target audiences**

- Employees who use the radio system regularly
- Their supervisors
- The supervisors' administrative assistants
- Training champions
- EOP employees
- All employees

### **Objectives**

- 95% of employees will receive information about the change
- 80-85% will be aware of/understand the benefits of the change
- 80% will find materials helpful

### **Key issues**

- How do we reach all of the employees who need this information when they spend most of their time in the field? Are they checking email and intranet? What physical locations are seen frequently by the most employees?
- There is already some knowledge and some misinformation in the field.
- Knowledgeable supervisors can positively impact the message once they are educated.

### **Key messages**

*Why it's happening:*

- The old system is obsolete
- The old system's voice and data systems do not communicate with each other
- Benefits of the new system
- Uses current IP technology
- Increased talk channels
- Scalable system
- Back-up system
- 95% success rate, improvement over old rate

*Who it will affect:*

- Employees who use the current system
- Their supervisors

#### *Communications tactics*

- Posters in common areas
- E-mail blasts
- FAQs for supervisors and safety meeting
- Pocket guides to hand out at safety meetings
- Sharepoint materials:
  - Training documents
  - Forum for questions/comments
  - Training schedule
- Q2 article in CNP news to go out before the first rollout begins
- E-news articles after implementation has begun
- Quick reference card for transitional phases
- Instructional video

#### Timeline:

Late-May -- CNP news story to announce project  
 June 6 -- Approval of memo, manager talking points and FAQs  
 June 13 -- Corp Comm inputs SharePoint portal content  
 Mid-June -- Memo sent to Cypress managers with talking points  
 Late July -- Presentation in Cypress to field employees at safety meeting  
 Mid-August -- Printed materials to printer  
 Aug. 29 -- Packet with memo distributed to employees with FAQs attached  
 Aug. 29 -- Poster distributed: Benefits and training dates  
 Sept. 12 -- Employee training schedule communicated via email  
 Sept. 26 -- Training begins