

Nigel Woodhead: Global Transportation

Part One - *Read to the bottom of this page, then stop.*

It is your first day of work as an exchange student intern for Nigel Woodhead at the Unilever Corporation's regional offices in Jebel Ali, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. And you've just been given a big assignment.

Your new boss, Nigel Woodhead, is Unilever's Logistics Manager in Jebel Ali. That means that he is responsible for getting products in and out of the Middle East. He makes arrangements to have goods shipped to Jebel Ali from Unilever factories all over the world. Then, he gets those goods from the Unilever distribution center in Jebel Ali to countries all over the Middle East including United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen. He's held his job for six years and has offered you the chance to spend a school term learning about global transportation.

Unilever is a world-wide corporation that sells food as well as home and personal care products. The company was created in 1929 with the merger of Margarine Unie, a European business, and Lever Brothers Limited from the United Kingdom. Over the years, Unilever has grown from a European-based company that sold mostly soap and margarine to a global firm that sells frozen foods, ice cream, soup, tea, and personal products to people in nearly 200 countries. Unilever sells many brand names you recognize including Lipton, Ragu, Country Crock and Promise margarines, Breyers ice cream, Bird's Eye and Gorton frozen foods, and Chicken Tonight sauces. The company also sells a number of brands that are popular in the Middle East including Omo detergent, Lux soap, Dove soap, Sunsilk shampoo, Signal toothpaste, Ponds cream, Vaseline, Brut and Axe deodorant, Flora margarine, and Walls ice cream.

Just as you're learning your way around the office, Nigel gives you your first assignment. "I need to get a container load of tea to Jebel Ali as quickly as possible," he says. "I want you to figure out how to make it happen. Please give me your recommendation about what to do by this afternoon." So, what should you do?

STOP

Part Two - *Read to the bottom of this page, then stop.*

You realize the first thing you need is information. You need to learn – quickly – a lot more about tea, Jebel Ali, and Unilever.

You quickly jot down a list of questions to answer:

1. Where is tea produced? Specifically, you decide you need to know the CLOSEST place to Jebel Ali where you can get tea, because Nigel has said the shipment needs to arrive quickly.
2. How can the tea be carried? Would it be best to carry the tea by truck or by ship or by train? How long will it take? And what shipping companies does Unilever usually work with?
3. What kinds of cultural or shipping details will you need to be careful about? Are there any special restrictions on moving tea into Jebel Ali? What does it mean to “clear customs?”

Good questions. Now, how do you find the answers?

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Part Three - *Read to the bottom of this page then stop.*

After doing research in the office and on the Internet and asking Nigel some follow-up questions, you manage to answer your questions:

1. Where is tea produced? You learn that the closest place to Jebel Ali to get tea is India. Tea has been grown there for centuries, you learn, and can be easily shipped to Jebel Ali from the port of Nhava Sheva in Mumbai, India.
2. How can the tea be carried? You learn that it will be quickest to send the tea by ship from Nhava Sheva to Jebel Ali through the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman, and the Persian Gulf. You also learn that Unilever goods from Nhava Sheva are often carried by shipping company APL Limited. APL has regular ship service between the two ports. The voyage takes four to five days. Including loading and unloading time, it will take nine days to get the tea to Unilever's warehouse.
3. What cultural or shipping details do you need to be aware of? You learn that tea can easily be shipped into the United Arab Emirates – there is no tax or “duty” on tea – but that every step of the process must be carefully tracked. For instance, the tea shipment will require a Heath Certificate issued by the Municipality of Mumbai before it leaves Nhava Sheva. You will need to work with the tea company, the shipping company, the bank that is handling payment for the tea, and government officials in both Nhava Sheva and Jebel Ali. Clearing customs means that the tea must be approved to enter Jebel Ali by government officials and that all taxes on the tea must be paid.

You've learned a lot in just a few hours. But now you need to summarize what you've learned for Nigel. It's a good thing your new office has a word processing program you know how to use!

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Part Four - *Read to the bottom of this page then stop.*

You decide to write a short memo to Nigel summarizing what you have learned. You will arrange it like this:

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nigel Woodhead
FROM: Your name
DATE: Today's date
RE: Shipment of tea to Jebel Ali

Then you will organize the memo into three paragraphs so that Nigel can read it quickly.

Where should you get the tea?
How should it be moved to Jebel Ali and how long will it take?
What other details will you need to handle?

You start typing.