

DILBERT

TV Newest Domain for Cultural Icon



He's been on the cover of all the major news magazines. His Web site gets more traffic than just about anybody's. Seventy-five percent of all U.S. daily newspapers feature him every day. Nearly three million copies of his books are in circulation. His name has entered the lexicon of several languages. His image appears on all manner of merchandise – and even an ice cream flavor. As a pitchman, he's credited with boosting sales in the competitive office supply industry. He's even been held responsible for changing society's attitude toward management.

So what's next for Dilbert?

A prime-time television series, of course.

United Media's nine-year-old comic strip is coming to TV in a cartoon series in January. Larry Charles, of "Seinfeld" and "Made About You" fame, has joined Scott Adams, Dilbert's creator, in production of 13 episodes for TriStar Television.

Like the strip, the show is expected to have broad appeal. When the strip first appeared, it targeted technogeeks. Then it expanded into office-wide themes. More recently, Dilbert strips have embraced education as well.

The evolution has been led by the 350 to 800 e-mail messages Adams receives every day. "That's where I get pretty much of my material now," he says.

This is all good news to United Media, where the goal is to keep growing Dilbert's syndication and licensing revenue. As the appeal widens, so does the product line.

The TV show will only broaden the strip's appeal, says Diane Shaib, United Media's senior

"I cried because I did not have an office with a door, until I met a man who had no cubicle."

– Dilbert in "The Joy of Work"

vice president for U.S. licensing. Finding Dilbert products now requires looking in bookstores, novelty shops, the Internet and places typically frequented by educated, well-read consumers. TV exposure should put Dilbert products in Target, Wal-Mart and other mass retail outlets.

"What's more important is whether Dilbert is here 10 years from now," says Rich Boehne, Scripps vice president of corporate communications and investor relations.

From all indicators, Dilbert is destined for a long life.



DILBERT At a Glance

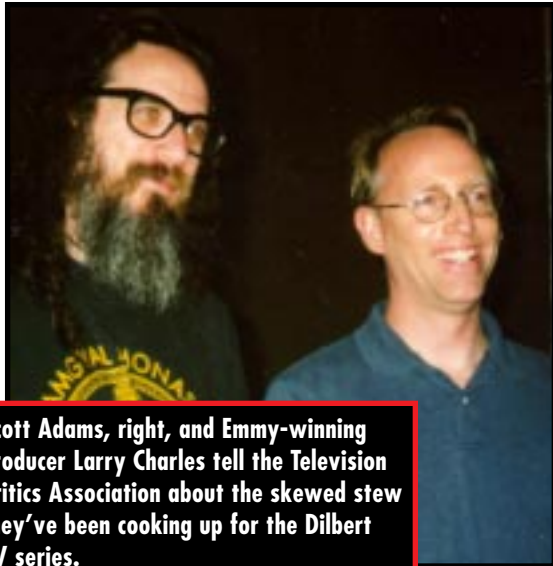
ORIGIN: Began life as a composite of Scott Adams' co-workers; name suggested by a co-worker.

DEVELOPMENT: First public appearance was part of Adams' business presentation. Later appeared in 50 sample strips after Adams read the 1988 Artist Markets book on how to get syndicated.

WORK EXPERIENCE: Sample strips submitted to major cartoon syndicates in 1988; Sarah Gillespie from United Media offered a contract a few weeks later. United Media launches Dilbert comic in 1989 with eight licenses registered for Dilbert-related products and syndication in 50 newspapers. Appears today in 1,900 newspapers in 57 countries, in Office Depot ads, and on all kinds of merchandise thanks to 100 licenses. Recently made stage debut; television series coming in 1999.

DISTINCTIONS: Named Best Newspaper Comic Strip of 1997 by National Cartoonists Society; helped Adams win the organization's Cartoonist of 1997 award. Named one of most influential people in America in 1997 by Time magazine. Named one of the 25 most intriguing people of 1997 by People magazine. Fastest-growing newspaper comic strip in the world. First nationally syndicated comic strip to appear online; generates millions of "hits" a day, which places it among the most visited sites on the World Wide Web.

RESIDENCE: www.unitedmedia.com



Scott Adams, right, and Emmy-winning producer Larry Charles tell the Television Critics Association about the skewed stew they've been cooking up for the Dilbert TV series.

SCOTT ADAMS At a Glance

BORN: June 8, 1957

GREW UP: Windham, N.Y., in the Catskill mountains

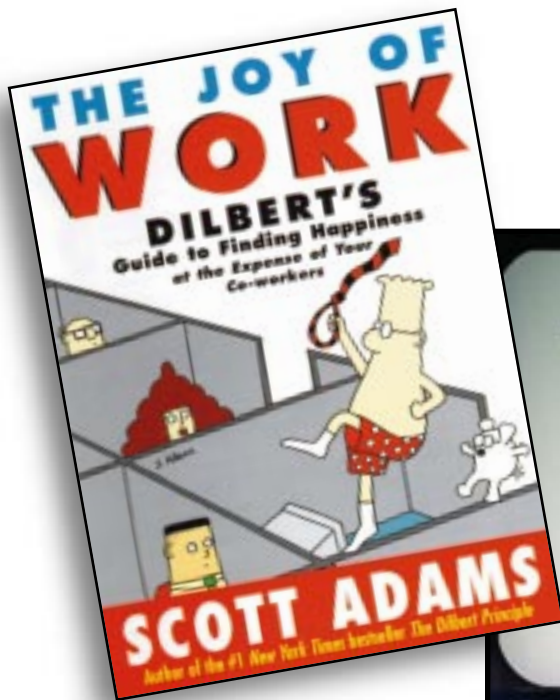
EDUCATION: Hartwick College, Oneonta, N.Y., bachelor's in economics, 1979; University of California at Berkeley, MBA, 1986; certified hypnotist, Clement School of Hypnosis, San Francisco, 1981.

WORK EXPERIENCE: Crocker National Bank, San Francisco, 1979 to 1986 as teller (robbed twice at gunpoint), computer programmer, financial analyst, product manager and commercial lender; Pacific Bell, San Ramon, Calif., 1986 to 1995 in technology and finance positions. Since 1995, devotes entire day and much of the evening to Dilbert, including speaking, writing, doing interviews, designing artwork for licensed products and answering e-mail.

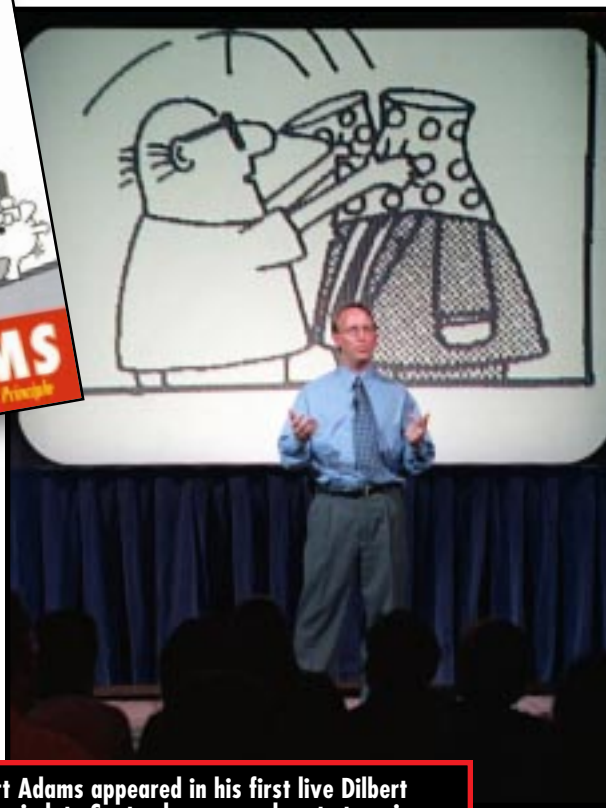
INSPIRATION: The 350 to 800 e-mail messages he receives every day.

DISTINCTIONS: "I graduated high school as valedictorian because the other 39 people in my class couldn't spell 'valedictorian.'" Went on to create Dilbert and become the world's foremost satirist of corporate life; revolutionized the book promotion process by conducting a series of "virtual book signings;" and, according to a 1997 Wall Street Journal article, diminished respect for management with his comic strip.

RESIDENCE: Northern California.



"The Joy of Work," Scott Adams' latest hardcover book, was released in early October. His first three hardcover books, "The Dilbert Principle," "Dogbert's Top Secret Management Handbook" and "The Dilbert Future," have sold nearly three million copies and have appeared on the New York Times bestseller list for a combined total of 60 weeks. There are 14 Dilbert books in print.



Scott Adams appeared in his first live Dilbert show in late September on a cabaret stage in New York. Using an overhead projector, he offered a mishmash of self-deprecating remembrances, thoughts on humor and one-liners. The show's next stop was Los Angeles.

JOY ON THE JOB

Enlightenment from Dilbert's new book, "The Joy of Work," a guide to finding happiness at the expense of your co-workers.

■ **Counterintelligence:** Fill your co-workers with ridiculous "facts," then wait and see if they repeat them in front of others.

■ **Microwave prank:** Put an official Microwave Tracking Form next to the microwave. The form should be both illogical and useless. See how many people put their names on it.

■ **Cake IQ test:** Frost and decorate a shirt box. Add candles. Do the song. Clap. Give the person of honor a dull knife and ask him to cut the cake. Take bets on how long it will take him to figure out he's sawing cardboard. Use a stopwatch to determine the winner.

■ **Recipe for handling a critic:** Four cloves of garlic, one small cross and one bag of fresh parsley. Eat the four cloves of garlic. Hold the small cross directly in front of the critic and say, "Look what I just made. Do you like it?" The critic will be unable to move until he has pointed out the flaws in your design. Breathe normally until you hear the thud of the critic's skull against the floor. Eat the bag of parsley to hide the murder weapon.

■ **Fun things to say to marketing people:** "Why don't we just tell the customers the truth." "I can see your fillings when you talk!"

■ **Fun things to say to technical people:** "You don't need another technical training class. You went to one last year." "We're only making a few changes. There's no reason to test it again."

■ **Fun things to say to accounting people:** "Give me the money now and I'll get the budget approvals later." "Is it okay if I spend my depreciation budget on travel?"

■ **Fun things to say to salespeople:** "Why don't you take one of the engineers to meet your customers." "We should redesign your compensation plan to give you more incentives."