

While there is universal awareness of asserted hazards for smokers, some people continue nevertheless to be and to become smokers.

On the other hand, significant effects of the environmental smoke issue (ETS) are multiplying rapidly. Increasing literature suggests that ETS is hazardous. There is growing awareness of annoyance about ETS. There has even been slight headway in suggesting economic costs of ETS.

These effects are synergistic. Steps taken to diminish ETS range from subtle (absence of ashtrays) to pragmatic (nonsmoker preferences by landlords and employers) to emphatic (legislated prohibitions). All such steps combine into a signal of increasing social disapproval of smoking and smokers.

Smokers and nonsmokers are thus provided with new incentives, rising from the health scare plateau, to become or to remain nonsmokers. These incentives range from altruistic (why harm the other fellow?) to a desire for social esteem (nonsmoking is "in") to economic (why be less favorably considered for a job?).

ETS is a greater threat to the tobacco industry -- and to the public itself in providing precedents for behavior control -- than the primary smoking and health issue.

If the asserted health or economic effects of ETS were real, and the annoyance effect not subject to modification, the pressures might be justified. But distinguished reviewers say the health studies are inconclusive. We know there has not been an

expanding source of annoyance, such as a greater proportion of smokers in society; in fact there is a smaller one. We are reasonably sure that economic costs are at worst very slight and probably not out of line with economic costs involved in almost any social custom.

Notwithstanding the synergism between the three major effects of the ETS issue, each would be troublesome in the absence of the other two. We should therefore plan to attack each one in ways to strengthen popular awareness of the realities and to diminish mistaken impressions.

Denials ("There is no convincing evidence. . .") and criticisms ("The study failed to take into account. . .") publicized by the tobacco industry are insufficient. Even such responses by third parties may lose credibility if they are publicized only by the tobacco industry. The industry must attack the health and economic effects of the issue by motivating independent researchers to develop and independently publicize reliable findings. It must attack the annoyance issue by advocating social politeness and not opposing reasonable private restrictions of smoking.

A successful attack will provide an additional benefit for the industry: The anti-smoking minority will lose its strongest basis for public support. The ETS issue has appealed much more widely to the public than other anti-smoking interests such as

labelling, advertising restrictions, taxation and self-extinguishing cigarettes. It has been a basis for communications and an esprit-de-corps among anti-smoking advocates which has strengthened their effectiveness in dealing with those other issues.

To evaluate properly the tactics of attack, one must be aware of the road-tested themes of the anti-smokers' ETS arguments. An inventory has been made based on observations from The Institute's field staff, its spokesmen, and a survey of ETS coverage over the past two years in major newspapers and magazines.

The primary theme is the physical assault of ETS and smokers as the assailants. In news and commentary, children are more often portrayed as victims. Parent's smoking accounts for more asthma, bronchitis, major and minor respiratory infections, lost school days, reduced pulmonary function, general respiratory symptoms and potential for serious lung diseases later in children's lives.

Airway disfunctions and abnormalities among adults are the next most prevalent topics in popular publications. An increased risk of lung cancer among exposed nonsmokers is third in media coverage.

Research reports which are interpreted to support these contentions are not often cited in news stories, commentaries and testimony; the "facts" speak for themselves, in other words.

Most coverage presumes the sources of these asserted problems. A fair amount, however, specifies them: Sidestream

smoke is more toxic or potent than mainstream (dilution is usually unmentioned); CO from cigarette smoke indoors exceeds federal occupational and outdoor standards.

More or less mindful of these "facts," anti-smoking spokesmen tend to recite them and follow with two "logical" principles: The "right" to clean air, and unlike other social discourtesies, smoking in the presence of other persons is a health threat to them. The latter discounts tobacco industry courtesy reminders. A further credibility problem is anti-smoker linkage of the industry's view of the nonsmokers health issue by explicit reference to its ("Flat Earth") position on the smoker health question.

It is notable that most of these "facts" and statements of principle are collated and disseminated by the American Lung Association. In a pattern not unlike that of The Tobacco Institute, the ALA tracks health literature and popular media reports, synthesizing information in exhortive pamphlets and background papers for circulation to media, legislators, GASP, ASH and other anti-smoking spokesmen. It is relatively easy to find editorials, testimony and letters to editors which quote ALA material without quotation marks. A rare exception is the assertion invented by ASH that more than 30 million Americans are allergic to ETS.

The roles of the American Heart Association (silence) and the American Cancer Society (quietly negative) in the ETS issue are contrasting. Worth noting is that of the three, ALA provides the least support for scientific research.

While the industry must attack all the bases of the ETS issue -- health, annoyance and economics -- preparation for the first of these deserves priority consideration for two reasons: It is the primary part of the ETS issue, and laying the proper groundwork for this phase of the attack will be the most time consuming.

### The scientific attack

Industry scientists, scientific consultants and independent reviewers (the Geneva, NIH and Vienna workshops) agree that the literature to date fails to support the hypothesis that ETS is a public health threat. Despite peer courtesies, some of these observers say privately that the research to date is biased or defective.

Interestingly, a number of its principal authors (Hirayama, White, Repace, Aronow, Miller) are also public spokesmen for the anti-smoking movement. In other words, these people and others not only achieve publication of research results (sometimes in leading journals); they also promote their findings to the public.

Another not uncommon characteristic of this "headline" research is that it tends to be a modest-cost hobby (Repase), a reliance on student or volunteer labor (Miller), or a reworking of data gathered for other purposes (Hirayama, White).

While scientists at Geneva, NIH and Vienna generally have called for further research and review of existing data, there is no judgement of volunteering to do it, or seeking funds to do it, among scientists competent to do it.

The essentially negative finding of the three workshops --except for a German-language news release in Vienna -- have not been publicized by the participants. The Tobacco Institute and other tobacco industry sources have tried to do so, at the price of a "vested interest" discount label. Thus far in the ETS controversy, as noted above, the industry roles has been limited to public criticism of publicized, damaging research. Without meaningful intervention, this state of affairs will continue, refreshed occasionally by publication of new but second-rate research results.

The tobacco industry has a clear opportunity:

The tobacco industry must inspire and support competent ETS research and it must encourage independent researchers to publish and to publicize their results.

Step 1: Identification of necessary research projects by in-house scientists in the U.S. and abroad. Areas of potential study include ETS effects on lung functions, compromised persons, air qualities, epidemiology and psychology. The Institute's Executive Committee should select this panel, provide it with legal counsel and set a reporting deadline.

Step 2: Establishment of a research funding pool. In doing this, the tobacco companies must evaluate both the depth of their pocketbooks as well as the relative priorities of their current research support.

The industry should consider the potential contribution of the Council for Tobacco Research "as is," whether it can divert or expand its resources into ETS research support, whether a separate and similar agency should be established for the purpose, or whether direct research funding grants will be sufficient.

Step 3: The scientific and communications staff of The Institute, with advice from legal counsel, must undertake direct approaches to ETS researchers and research reviewers to encourage them to publicize favorable results and views. The bases for these missions must be the public interest in prevention of behavior control, professional research integrity, and the credibility of the industry and its emissaries. Step 2 above will contribute to this as will the undertakings described below to attack the annoyance issue. Targets of these approaches must be made to understand the antismoking motivation of peers who have lent themselves to publicity efforts.

#### The annoyance attack

Even without considering the health aspect of the ETS issue, annoyance and physical irritation are bases for efforts to ostracize smokers. Standard American Lung Association propaganda explains how minute ingredients of tobacco smoke produce "distinctly unpleasant odors to skin and clothing on a lingering basis. Smokers are not troubled similarly, ALA says, because the inner lining of their noses has been "destroyed."

Regardless of the relevance of chemistry or physics, it would appear there is no way short of therapy to persuade an individual that smoke need not be an annoyance. Meanwhile, subjective reactions are reinforced by antismoking communications.

Anti-annoyance laws and regulations are commonplace, including behavior controls to combat noise and industrial odors. There is no way to forecast whether smoking restriction legislation would continue to be introduced solely on the basis of annoyance, or whether more general forms of social intolerance would recede in the absence of a health issue. The major question facing the tobacco industry is whether use of its products can continue to be any significant part of social activity. The next question is whether the industry positively can influence the trend.

It is desirable, before any new ventures are considered, to quantify the annoyance aspect. The Institute has some measurements. At two-year intervals beginning in 1976, a random national sample of 2,500 or more adults was asked about ten possible social annoyances: People jumping in line, honking drivers, coughing, body odor, loud radios, bright headlights, smoking, barking dogs, heavy perfume and unruly children. Those who responded "it doesn't bother me" declined by more than three percent on average. In other words, the surveys showed a growth of all kinds of social annoyance.

Regarding smoking, similar surveys between 1978 and 1984 showed a decline in the proportion of smokers who said they were seldom or never uncomfortable about smoking in the presence of others -- from 46 to 42 percent. The proportion of nonsmokers who try to do something about smoking indoors -- asking that it stop, showing other disapproval, or trying to move away from the smoker -- grew from 58 to 63 percent.

Between 1978 and 1982, the proportion of smokers who said they light up without thinking about it in the presence of other people dropped from 32 to 21 percent.

Putting aside the smoking detail, there is evidence that we are increasingly annoyed as a society by various forms of rudeness, discourtesy and thoughtlessness, and that smoking is just one of them. This suggests the industry's opportunities.

Step 1: The Institute's Information Services staff should make a prompt literature review on the subject of social annoyance.

Step 2: The Institute's Public Relations staff should devise and propose additional survey research to determine the trends and status of social annoyances.

Step 3: These elements of new knowledge should be applied by the Public Relations staff and the Communications Committee in devising a campaign for a more polite society. Just as it is sometimes necessary to destroy part of a forest temporarily in order to curb a forest fire, it may be necessary to offend a few careless dog owners, motorists, smokers or whoever in the process of earning the gratitude and respect of the many.

The campaign would envision releases, media insertions (including electronic), references in legislative testimony, article placements and speeches, wherever possible coming from sources beyond the industry itself, roughly in the pattern of The Institute's very successful fire prevention and education activities.

#### The economic attack

As is the case with the health and social aspects of the ETS issue, the economics are always regarded and discussed in negative terms. The question is whether ETS costs money and how much.

The discussion usually is part of a broader topic -- all the economic costs of smoking. Operators of indoor business, commercial and public facilities are led to believe, for example, that smoking by workers reduces productivity and increases health benefits costs. On the other hand, they are also told that ETS created by workers and patrons increases ventilation and cleaning costs. So some of the tobacco industry's current and necessary activities regarding economics fall beyond the scope of this ETS review. However, a proper attack on the economic aspect of the ETS issue will contribute also to a more favorable view of the whole economic issue.

The industry's current response has been similar to its reaction to the health aspect of ETS: Monitoring the "research" and speculations from anti-smoking sources, criticizing them or encouraging consultants to criticize them.

Unlike either the health or annoyance aspects of the ETS issue, its economics do not concern the general public. This aspect is of interest to four groups: People who operate facilities exposed to ETS; public officials who may consider smoking restrictions in such facilities; the anti-smokers who advocate such restrictions; and individuals and organizations interested in minimizing behavior control or discrimination against workers -- the unions. These groups must be provided with new information. One of them, the unions, should be considered as a source for part of it.

Step 1: Special release by The Tobacco Institute of those portions of the current Response Analysis survey which deal with economic questions, followed by continuing use among the four target audiences. (It should be noted, however, that the survey contains scant reference to ETS economics compared with the broader economics of employee smoking.)

Step 2: Informal study by The Institute's analysis staff of any actual ventilation, maintenance or other costs associated purely with ETS. If indeed there are any within this narrow definition beyond the published conjectures of Weis, they will sooner or later be amplified by anti-smokers.

Step 3: A pilot consultant study, assisted in its design by The Institutes scientific and analysis staff, of whether ETS is associated with excess health care costs and the extent to which these may be borne by individuals or employers.

Step 4: A cooperative pilot study with a labor union on the extent of -- and any ETS considerations in -- job discrimination.