

CHAPTER 10

NO SMOKING POLICIES AT THE WORKSITE

A Look at What Companies Are Doing Today

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The number of businesses with smoking policies has burgeoned. A national, predictive survey released in 1987 by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, found that 27.2 percent of all U.S. companies with 50 or more employees have a formal smoking policy. Of these, 40.4 percent report the policy is in place to protect nonsmokers; 39.5 percent report the policy is designed to comply with regulations; 12.7 percent report a need to protect equipment; and 7.4 percent advise that the policy is designed to protect employees at high risk for health problems.¹ A more recent study, that looked only at large and medium-sized companies, the 42nd annual Northwestern University Lindquist-Endicott Report, found that 70 percent have restricted, or are prepared to limit, smoking in the workplace. The study was released in early 1988.^{1a}

The development and implementation of a no smoking policy within a business is a multi-faceted process. Experiences of the growing number of companies that have developed written statements spelling out how smoking will be limited or prohibited illustrates vividly

that the process involves many individuals and groups, and that deliberations often are emotionally charged.

This chapter contains a series of case studies outlining how several companies have successfully approached this process. But before discussing company-specific examples, there is merit in examining some of the key issues that must be looked at by any company considering developing a no smoking policy. Among the questions to be answered are:

- o What kind of specific smoking restrictions are best for the company?
- o What benefits can be realistically anticipated from the policy?
- o How should employees be involved?
- o How should unions be involved?
- o What kind of education should be offered and to whom?
- o What kind of incentives should be offered?
- o How should the policy be enforced?

Further details about each of these steps are contained within the "Case Studies" section of this chapter.

Options for Smoking Restrictions

Restrictions on smoking in the worksite are not new.

For year--even decades--businesses have had policies that banned smoking in specific areas such as elevators, hallways, auditoriums,

sections of cafeterias, laboratories, rooms with delicate equipments, etc. In many instances, these restrictions were imposed because of laws or ordinances requiring them or to protect property. Before the 1980s, they were seldom implemented for health reasons. The assumption was, of course, the entire company is considered a Smoking Permitted area unless otherwise specified.

Another type of policy began appearing with regularity in the mid and late 1980s. It banned smoking throughout the company except in designated areas. While many of these policies did not necessarily put greater limits on smoking--often allowing offices and work areas, special lounges, large parts of the cafeterias, etc, to be designated as Smoking Permitted areas, they did set the precedent that the company is Smoke Free except in specified areas.

While the difference between these two types of policies may seem subtle at first glance, there is a strikingly different corporate philosophy underlying the two approaches. And in the late 1980s, it was this latter approach--establishing a smoke free company, possibly with a few, carefully selected areas that permit smoking--that appeared to be setting the pattern for worksite smoking policies.

According to a spokesperson for Texas Instruments, Inc. (TI), determining what approach to take in limiting smoking was the most

difficult aspect of developing and implementing its policy.

As TI and many other companies have found out, designating even a few smoking areas within a company can still pose serious health hazards for employees because smoke from lounges, cafeterias, hallways, and enclosed offices, gets into the ventilation system and is circulated throughout the building, including into no smoking sections. (See "Case Studies: Pacific Northwest Bell.") As an interim step in a phased-in nonsmoking work environment, Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, Newport Beach, California, installed electronic filters in the temporary smoking area of its cafeteria.

TI chose to avoid this problem by eliminating smoking from the worksite except for designated smoking areas which were, to the extent possible, separately ventilated. Similarly, the headquarters complex of General Telephone of California prohibited smoking in all areas except a small portion of the cafeteria that has its own ventilation system.

For others like American Family Insurance Group, Madison, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania Blue Shield, and UNUM Life Insurance Company, Portland, Maine, the choice to provide separate ventilation was either too expensive or physically impossible, so they chose to ban smoking completely at the worksite. On October 1, 1987, Ralston Purina's headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, became the first Fortune 500 company to completely ban smoking in

its facilities. ;

Clearly, the trend is moving toward more and more companies banning smoking or severely limiting it. Most require that all visitors abide by the company's regulations. Some will not allow smoking on company property, including grounds and parking lots. Groups like Michigan Bell, which has a large number of motor vehicles, are expanding their bans to all company-owned vehicles. However, others are voiding a ban in company cars and trucks because they believe enforcement will be virtually impossible.

A few companies have gone even further, and may be bellwethers for a future trend. These companies require that all new employees sign a statement that they are nonsmokers, even on their own time. Company policies prohibiting the hiring of smokers got nationwide publicity when Acoustical Products Company, a subsidiary of Chicago-based US Gypsum Corporation, announced that because of exposures to fibers that could have adverse health effects, all present workers were required to quit smoking or face termination, and in the future, only nonsmokers would be hired. The Non-Smokers Inn in Dallas, Texas, provides only nonsmoking rooms and hires only individuals who do not smoke. At Cardinal Industries, Columbus, Ohio, new employees must state on the application form whether or not they smoke, and only nonsmokers will be hired; but the company does not make any effort to check or test to find smokers. Louisiana Pacific Corporation, a Portland, Oregon-based national

timber company with 15,000 employees, does not hire smokers in any of its plants or in corporate offices "because of the medical costs, absenteeism, environment of smoke in the workplace, the fire problems in the mills, and lung cancer."²

The vast majority of companies still do not require that new employees be nonsmokers. But many companies with strict bans are seeing fewer smokers apply. "Why would a smoker want to work for us," one company spokesman said, "when we deprive him of his habit for eight hours every workday?"

Benefits of No Smoking Policies

Developing and implementing a worksite no smoking policy is not easy and may cause a great deal of discomfort for smokers and management alike. So why do companies do it? What benefits do they receive?

In a recent national survey of all types of worksites with 50 or more employees, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, asked those with smoking programs what benefits they perceived.

- o 41 percent said smoking control policies and programs improved employees' health;
- o 16 percent said they increased employees' productivity;
- o 9 percent said they improved morale, and
- o 8 percent said smoking control activities reduced costs.¹

Some companies have conducted evaluations of the results from their smoking control efforts. Several of these studies, along with some anecdotal findings, are reported in this chapter's Appendix, "The Economic Justification for No Smoking Policies."

To many companies, a reduction in the number or percent of employees who smoke is benefit enough from a policy. Smokers dropped from 21 percent of the workforce to 16 percent in two years at UNUM Life Insurance Company. In addition, 87 percent of the smokers reported they were smoking less after the policy was implemented.³ At Pacific Northwest Bell, smokers dropped from 28 percent at the time the ban was implemented to just 20 percent of employees two years later.

Employee Involvement

Some companies, especially those wanting quick results that can be controlled, develop smoking policies at the top executive or management level and announce them to the employees. But a more frequently seen pattern today involves employees in the process of formulating and implementing a policy from the outset--but with varying degrees of direction from management.

In some companies, the involvement takes the form of responding to a charge, such as: examine the issues and problems related to smoking at our worksite and present your recommendations for a

policy and implementation plan to deal with them to management in three months. In others, management may decide that smoking is a serious health hazard to its employees and that smoking is to be eliminated in 12 months. This organization's charge to employees might be to: review how other companies have successfully moved to a smoke free workplace and present your recommendations for steps our company should undertake during the next 12 months to make that transition both smooth and as painless for smokers as possible.

But if employees are to be involved, it is important that their contributions have meaning and be listened to objectively by management.

When tracing the history of smoking policies in organizations, it is not unusual to find that the initial push to limit or eliminate smoking came not from management, but from the employees, themselves.

At UNUM Life Insurance Company, employees' complaints, coupled with a Maine law requiring employers to reduce smoking, resulted in the company-wide ban. Pacific Northwest Bell emphasizes that no company officer or executive advocated its move to implement a smoking policy. Rather, the impetus came from employees. A grass roots group conducted a survey of workers and eventually recommended that PNW Bell ban smoking. The Employee Advisory

Council at Cardinal Industries' Sanford, Florida, plant initiated the idea of a tough no smoking stand. (See "Case Studies--Cardinal Industries and Pacific Northwest Bell")

At Holiday Corporation, Memphis, Tennessee, a task force of employees developed a Clean Air Policy covering its headquarters offices. The task force was originally set up as a Wellness Committee a full year before work began on the smoking policy. The employee group researched various aspects of the smoking problem by gathering research, talking to other companies that had already done it, and working with the local cancer society and lung association. A survey was conducted of all employees to identify their habits and attitudes related to smoking. The Task Force, itself, created the phased-in process that resulted in Holiday Corporation headquarters and several of its subsidiary groups going smoke free January 1, 1987.

But the act of involving employees is not always as easy as it might seem, according to Charles Nielson of Texas Instruments. It is important to involve employees in the process of developing a policy as early as possible, and a survey of their habits and attitudes provides invaluable data to management, says Nielson. But because TI has so many locations, timing of an employee survey was sometimes very difficult; in some locations, the policy had already been set by corporate headquarters before the attitude survey could be conducted. As a result, some employees felt they

were being manipulated. "Data is vital to planning, but timing is also important so that the company maintains its credibility," cautions Nielson.

Union Involvement

In any unionized organization, consideration must be given at the outset to how and when unions will be involved. Popular thinking just a few years ago was that unions would block most company-sponsored wellness efforts, particularly those that interfered with personal freedoms, such as smoking. But through the work of several pioneering unions such as the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, the United Steelworkers Union, and the United Auto Workers, as well as the efforts of national groups including the Workplace Health Fund, more and more labor groups as willing to cooperate with management in reducing smoking if they are approached properly--and early in the process.⁴

Unions also recognize that their membership reflects closely the national averages, therefore the vast majority of their members do not smoke. As a result, many unions are receiving increased pressure from their membership to help control smoking in the workplace. After having been involved in all aspects of policy development, the Communications Workers of America sent a memo to its 8,000 members at Pacific Northwest Bell acknowledging that the company was implementing a smoking ban, but stating that CWA would not oppose it because of the possibility that nonsmoking members

would sue the union--and probably win. (See "Case Studies: Pacific Northwest Bell.")

In late 1985, the Workplace Health Fund, in cooperation with the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, (US DHHS), held a conference of union people to discuss the merits and value of health promotion. One of the outcomes of the meeting was a set of criteria for union involvement in worksite wellness efforts.

Among the recommendations were two that placed heavy emphasis on the need to have a good working relationship between the union and management before attempting to implement any kind of wellness program. "Worksites in which labor and management are not cooperating to bring health and safety hazards under control should not be sites for health promotion activities." In addition, "where the worksite is not under control or the employer is uncooperative, and where the union has established the need for health promotion, the programs should be conducted outside the worksite."⁶

But for any unionized company considering a smoking policy, the first step must be to look carefully at its union contracts, particularly for any wording that might guarantee members the right to smoke. If such agreements exist, the likelihood of the union supporting a no smoking policy is slim.

Sue Pisha, area director of the northwest region of the

Communication Workers of America, believes that with motivational information and education, there is the potential for unions to eventually become a proactive force for nonsmoking policies. "Policies seem to eliminate in-fighting," she says. "Without a policy, the issue is messy and polarizing."⁵

Education

A companion element of virtually every successful workplace no smoking policy is an educational program designed to inform employees about the new rules and to provide opportunities for smokers to kick the habit. While behavior modification programs are the most commonly presented, some companies have offered innovative approaches such as acupuncture, hypnosis, aversion therapy, self-help materials, hot lines, and multi-day intensive programs for hard-core smokers. In addition to on-site opportunities, businesses have gotten good results by encouraging participation in community-sponsored stop smoking classes merely by providing lists of sessions available through reputable groups such as cancer and lung associations, hospitals, Ys, and for-profit organizations.

Because quitting can be very difficult and often is greatly enhanced by peer and family support, many companies make cessation opportunities available to spouses and other immediate family members, as well. (See "Incentives.")

UNUM Life Insurance Company offers classes for a usually over-

looked group, nonsmokers. The classes are designed to help those who do not smoke understand the problems faced by smokers trying to quit and to urge them to encourage fellow workers to quit or to refrain from smoking. At Rainier Bank, Seattle, Washington, stress management classes were offered to help smokers adjust to the policy as well as to assist those who were trying to quit.

While there are not national data available on worksite quit rates, strong worksite programs claim anywhere from 20 to 50 percent quit rates after one year. However, most published studies report six-month abstinence rates of 30 percent or less.⁶ As a result of an intensive smoking cessation campaign, Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick, New Jersey, reports a two-year success rate of 23 percent of all smokers in the company, not just 23 percent of those who went through a program or completed it.⁷

Incentives

Many companies go a step beyond offering cessation classes by providing incentives for smokers to quit. The most widely used incentives for smokers are monetary, often tied to completing a cessation program and/or stopping smoking. Many companies offer cessation classes free to employees and their families, often during company time, or reimburse them for the cost of taking a community-based class. Others, like the Utah State Department of Health, reward smokers who actually quit. The "Healthy Utah" programs pays smokers who quit \$25 at the end of three smoke-free

months, another \$25 after six months, and \$50 at the end of a year of not smoking.⁸

Nonmonetary incentives, too, can be appealing. Employees who participated in a 24-hour "Cold Turkey" stop smoking day at MSI Insurance, Arden Hills, Minnesota, became eligible for a drawing for a frozen turkey. Those who quit for six months were eligible for a drawing for a free YMCA membership, and anyone who stayed off cigarettes for a full year was eligible for a weekend vacation.¹⁰

Some companies have gotten creative in finding ways to reward employees who are nonsmokers or who quit before a policy goes into effect. Employees who take a health risk appraisal at Westlake Community Hospital, Melrose Park, Illinois, receive a \$50 "bounty" for participating plus several "good health bonuses" including \$25 for not smoking. Weekly paychecks at Speedcall Corporation, Hayward, California, include an extra \$7.00 for those who do not smoke at work. Backsliders who light up one week and lose their reward are encouraged to get back quickly to not smoking; so the next week without smoking earns the \$7.00 bonus again.⁸

Businesses also offer nonsmokers discounts on life and health insurance, a very visible and tangible incentive to stop smoking and improve health.

Smoking Policy Enforcement

Without a doubt, one of the most difficult questions asked by companies considering a smoking policy is "How can a no smoking policy be enforced?" The response from most businesses that have moved to a ban is that the company must first demonstrate to employees that it is serious about eliminating smoking in all or parts of the building. Second, it must handle violations in the same way that infractions of all other personnel policies are dealt with.

Cardinal Industries had a highly visible and dramatic way of demonstrating its commitment. Its president, Austin Gurlinger, a cigar smoker, stated to all employees that he would refrain from smoking at the workplace.

Most companies say that no people have quit their jobs because of the new rules. However, most also point out that employees have "tested" the policy, with some pushing it all the way to probation. According to Dick Becker, employee services representative for American Family Insurance Group, "Some employees tested the waters, sneaking cigarettes in the restrooms. Supervisors let it be known that smoking would be treated like any other violation of policy, for example, inappropriate dress."³ Holiday Corporation follows its usual procedure for any company rule--first a verbal warning, then a written warning, followed by a "final" warning, and if

necessary, termination.

But all agree, termination is not the objective. Everything possible should be done to encourage employees to comply, and most feel that peer pressure is the best policing mechanism. However, when an employee continues to break the rules, he or she must be disciplined appropriately, or the entire policy will crumble. (See "Case Studies.")

CASE STUDIES

Following are case studies illustrating how four widely different companies approached the development and implementation of a policy to reduce or eliminate smoking within their organizations.

CARDINAL INDUSTRIES, INC.

A total ban on smoking on any company property exists; all new employees must attest to being nonsmokers.

Beginning January 1, 1987, the 8,650 employees of Cardinal Industries were assured of a totally smoke free work environment.

One year prior to the ban, Cardinal, the nation's largest manufacturer of modular homes, had taken an even more dramatic step by instituting a multi-faceted policy that included hiring only nonsmokers as new employees.

Benefits Anticipated

Although insurance carriers are saying it will take 12 to 18 months to see any decrease in insurance rates, Cardinal's management expects to significantly lower operating costs, increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, and eventually pay lower insurance premiums as a result of the new policy. Even more importantly, it expects to improve the health of its key asset--its human resources.

But employees at Cardinal's Sanford, Florida, location--one of four regional sites throughout the country--are convinced they would have gone smoke free even without the corporate edict. Why? Because employees wanted it, and because management recognized the negative impact of smoking on employees' health and productivity. The passage of Florida's Clean Indoor Air Act in October, 1985, focused attention on the plant's efforts and established it as one of the most progressive worksite no-smoking policies in the state, stimulating a letter of commendation from the governor.

Employee Involvement

Because of the nature of materials used at Cardinal, the second

largest residential builder in the country, the company had a long-standing policy prohibiting smoking in its five manufacturing plants. But at the Sanford location, the real push for a tough policy that extended beyond the manufacturing facility came through its Employee Advisory Council in late 1985. Made up of employees elected by the workers within each department, the Council meets regularly with top management.

Based on employees' suggestions, a three-phase policy was developed and implemented Jan. 1, 1986, that gradually eliminated smoking in meeting rooms, the cafeteria, and other common areas during the year. As part of the policy, which was designed to make Cardinal smoke-free by the end of the year, only non-smoking personnel were hired. Current employees' smoking privileges (in designated areas) were grandfathered for the remainder of the year.

But before the policy was implemented, it required approval by top management, including the company's 33 year-old founder and president who was a cigar smoker--a situation that has stopped many other companies with good intentions. "We had been looking for ways to reduce our health care costs and at the same time improve efficiency and productivity," said a company spokesperson, "and the evidence about the health consequences of smoking were too powerful to ignore. When you add the fact that Cardinal pays for 100% of employees' health insurance, the decision seemed inevitable."

Enforcement

In many ways, the fact that the chief executive at Sanford was a smoker aided in convincing employees that the plant was serious. The announcement that only nonsmokers would be hired and that there would be no exceptions to the rule--even the president--helped overcome one of company's biggest obstacles to successful implementation...convincing employees that the company is serious about the ban.

A second advantage Cardinal has going for it in terms of enforcement is a highly desirable work environment. It pays top benefits and offers excellent working conditions. An employee must balance sacrificing his/her smoking habit for eight hours each day with sacrificing a job at Cardinal. So far, Cardinal has won every time. Not only has no one quit, but the ban has not even been tested. "They know we are serious, and if they test us, they must be willing to live with the consequences." Management also believes that the long-standing positive environment among employees and management has contributed to the easy transition.

Education

During the 12 months between the announcement and the implementation, various company-paid educational programs and cessation classes were offered. In addition to regular stop smoking seminars provided after business hours, employees and their families also were offered a hypnosis program, and for those who felt they were addicted to smoking, an intensive two-day, off-site

treatment program was provided. FDA approved pharmaceuticals also were offered as quitting aides. During the period preceding the ban, smoking areas within the locations were gradually restricted until, on January 1, 1987, the entire company became smoke free.

Blue Collar Workers

Although no survey has been taken to determine how many employees have quit smoking, a survey taken before the ban was implemented revealed that more white collar employees than blue collar workers were smokers. At the Florida location, for example, some 40 to 45 percent of employees could be classified as "blue collar." But partly because the manufacturing plants were always nonsmoking, there has been no particular problem in implementation among the laborers.

Off-Job Smoking

In a Position Paper discussing its policy, Cardinal Industries states, "The program only concerns itself with smoking in the workplace and not what employees do on their own personal time. Cardinal Industries never has, and never will try to regulate the activities of its employees on their own personal time." Thus, while Cardinal's application form asks prospective employees whether or not they smoke, and while its policy prohibits the hiring of smokers, no attempt is made to test employees or to check on their off-work habits.

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

Smoking is prohibited in all owned and leased facilities except in specific locations in each facility that are designated as smoking areas and, to the extent possible, are separately ventilated.

In late 1985 and early 1986, several of the 37 major sites of Texas Instruments began implementing their own smoking policies as a result of employee complaints and local Clean Air legislation. Rather than be faced with 37 different policies to implement, TI made a decision to implement a single corporate-wide policy.

Employee Habits and Attitudes

Before embarking on policy development, TI surveyed its employees to learn how many smoked and how they viewed worksite smoking restrictions. About half of the more than 50,000 workers surveyed took the time to respond, revealing that 77 percent of TI employees were nonsmokers or exsmokers, and that just 23 percent were current smokers. Of those who smoked, over 40 percent said they wanted to quit.

Corporate Objectives and Policy

Before designing the Clean Air Policy, top corporate management agreed on three objectives that would form its underlying

philosophy. There were to:

- o provide a healthful and safe working environment;
- o ensure high quality in all TI products; and
- o initiate the company's clean air approach rather than be forced to react to legislation (including the possibility of legislation from many different states and municipalities).

From these objectives grew TI's Clean Air Policy.

"It is the goal of Texas Instruments to provide for its employees a healthful and safe working environment. In accord with this goal, Texas Instruments will prohibit smoking in all TI owned and leased facilities, except for specific locations in each facility which are designated as smoking areas."

Education and Training

To underscore the importance of the new policy, the eight-month, phased-in implementation process took a top-down track, with the President and CEO Jerry Junkins working directly with a key operating manager and the personnel director from each location throughout the organization. During the session, Mr. Junkins emphasized the organization's complete commitment to the new personnel policy and each individual manager's responsibility for its successful implementation. These teams then headed up similar training programs in their own locations. Training sessions were

conducted for selected managers using a centrally prepared manual to ensure consistency among the 37 locations. Specially developed brief video tapes offered all employees an introduction to the policy (3 minutes), briefed managers and supervisors on issues related to smoking (10 minutes), and assisted managers and supervisors in learning techniques for resolving smoking-related problems at the worksite (16 minutes).

Making every effort to assist smoking employees to prepare for the new policy, TI provided company-paid smoking cessation programs on company time during the initial phase-in of the clean air program. Classes were scheduled to accommodate workers on all three shifts, and "maintenance sessions" were offered to provide additional support.

More than 4,700 employees signed up for cessation classes, representing 40 percent of the company's smokers--almost exactly the percent that said they wanted to quit in the employee survey. Of the group, 3,235 completed all the required classes (including maintenance classes), with 1887, or 58 percent, reporting they had quit by the end of the program.

As a further aid, a Tip Sheet, "How to Make Life Easier Until the Next Cigarette Break" provided "some practical suggestions to help you when you need to change your regular smoking routine." A "Wrap Sheet: Daily Cigarette Count," designed to be wrapped around a pack

of cigarettes, offered an easy place to keep track of how much was smoked, when and why, in the hope that the information would assist the smoker in altering his/her habits.

However, all communication was not downward! Employees were given opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns during educational programs. Special attention was paid to employees concerns and complaints in in-house communication vehicles, as well.

Facilities Modification

Because TI chose to designate a limited number of areas in each building as smoking areas rather than to completely ban tobacco, it faced the problems of recirculating contaminated air. Thus, where necessary and possible, facilities were modified to provide separate ventilation. In addition, all cigarette machines were removed from TI facilities and a decision was made that no new ones would be installed.

Enforcement

TI made it clear from the beginning that a new personnel policy had been established that would be monitored and enforced in the same way as all other policies, such as attendance. Thus, anyone found smoking in non-designated areas would be given an oral warning. If there were no further problems, no further action would be taken. However, with subsequent smoking incidents, the

employee would be given written guidance, followed by probation for additional infractions, with termination as a final step. But TI stressed to all supervisors that they should make every effort to educate smokers about the importance of the policy, rather than to be heavy-handed. After nine months, "two or three cases" have gone to probation, but no one has been terminated because of smoking. Considering that 50,000 to 60,000 employees are covered by the policy, this is an excellent record, says Charles Nielson, Vice President and Manager of U.S. Employee Relations.

Advice: Keep Policy's Purpose in Perspective

Nielson cautions other companies considering establishing a no smoking policy that one of the most difficult problems they face will be keeping the desire to eliminate the health hazards of smoking at the worksite in proper perspective.

TI made a corporate decision to eliminate smoking at the worksite except in designated areas. The decision was a business decision, not a moral or a value judgement. TI, which has 50 percent of its business in semiconductors, is facing intense competition, according to Nielson. Therefore, it must have productive employees. And that means it must have good relationships with all its employees. But smoking is an emotional issue for many people, both smokers and nonsmokers. "I'm not sure those of us in the personnel field have yet learned how to deal with this kind of highly charged issue and still maintain our productivity," states

Nielson. "It takes a lot of hard work to achieve the desired atmosphere of teamwork, rather than an adversarial relationship."

RAINIER BANK/RAINIER BANCORPORATION

Following a one year phase in period, smoking is banned in all 200 domestic facilities and in car pool vehicles.

In September, 1985, the 5,800 employees of Rainier Bancorporation's U.S. facilities received a communication from their President, John D. Mangels stating that "We are committed to insuring a healthful and comfortable environment for all employees." As part of that commitment, he announced, the corporation would become smoke-free on October 1, 1986. As part of a transition plan, beginning October 15, 1985, smoking would be restricted to designated areas, and the company would sponsor and pay for smoking cessation classes to assist employees who choose to quit.

Rainier Bancorporation is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with 200 offices in Washington, plus Alaska, Oregon, California, Hawaii, Arizona, New York, and the Far East.

Health Threats, Employee Complaints, Legal Concerns Prompt Policy

According to Peter Broffman, personnel officer for Rainier Bank,

the major subsidiary of Rainier Bancorporation, the policy resulted from three converging issues, the major one being a concern for employee health and wellness. Additional factors were an increasing number of employee complaints about smoke in the workplace, and the changing legal and regulatory climate. In July, 1985, the state of Washington had adopted a Clean Indoor Air Act that prohibited smoking in public places, including public areas of banks, and there was reason to believe that unless employees acted on their own initiative, there might also be legislation regarding private workspace. That, coupled with an increasing number of court cases upholding the right of employees to have a smoke free workplace, added impetus to the development of a policy.

Communications Vital to Implementation

Once the decision was made to go forward with a phased-in ban, communications with employees became a key link to successful implementation. Emphasis was placed on the fact that Rainier was prohibiting smoking at the workplace, not smokers.

Phase-In Period

During the transition period, managers were given discretion to determine the most appropriate way to make the transition. The company policy stated that "The needs and 'comfort level' of both smokers and non-smokers should be considered during this period." Guidelines for Phase I stated, in part:

- o All common areas, including lobbies, elevators, conference rooms, hallways, libraries, rest rooms and computer rooms will be smoke free.
- o In open-office work environments, managers should use discretion in deciding whether those areas should be smoke free. Individual employees may, of course, designate their assigned immediate work space as a no-smoking area.
- o Employees with enclosed offices may designate their area as a smoking or no-smoking area. However, the rights of non-smokers who must come into an enclosed office to conduct business should be respected.
- o Lunchroom and lounge areas will be divided into areas for smokers and non-smokers. Managers are given discretion to divide the rooms as appropriate for their locale.

According to Broffman, there were relatively few difficulties in the initial phase of implementation. The few problems that did exist were due largely to differences in the ways various managers chose to implement and police their smoking restrictions. Occasionally disputes arose over what areas should be smoking and nonsmoking, especially in the smaller branch offices where there were few options for allocating space. For the most part, Broffman says, the problems were minor and easily resolved when the total prohibition was enforced.

However, in retrospect Broffman believes that a shorter transition

period might have been more desirable. "A three to six month phase-in period probably would have been adequate," he says. "Many smokers go through a adjustment period. A few indicated that putting off the inevitable ban for too long really isn't doing them a favor because it prolongs the period of anxiety and allows them to procrastinate in making the adjustment. Also, a shorter transition emphasizes the resolve of the company to become smoke free." In addition, any employees who want to defeat the policy will use the entire phase-in period to rally support. A shorter transition period would shorten the debate and lessen the possibility that the detractors will succeed.

Enforcing the Ban

Phase II, the total smoking ban, was introduced in a low-key, matter-of-fact manner: a simple "reminder" that smoking would be prohibited in all work areas. With the exception of minor, final protests by a few "die-hards", employees accepted the new policy. Rainier has received no formal complaints, has had no problem with recruiting, and no one has resigned. The only complaint Broffman is aware of is that a few employees who still smoke do so immediately outside company building during breaks, and some employees are concerned about the impression this gives to customers entering the bank.

Because of its stance that Rainier is eliminating smoke, not smokers, the organization makes no attempt to discriminate against

hiring smokers.

Biggest Obstacle to Policy: Fear

Broffman acknowledges that when the policy was first proposed, there was concern on the part of a few senior managers of "What might happen." Although the majority and the leadership of senior management supported the policy, a few were initially concerned that there could be mass defections, that disagreements about smoking would cause major disruptions in work units, and that it could turn into an "employee rights" issue. However, these things did not happen at Rainier.

"We had more complaints from nonsmokers before the policy was implemented than we got from smokers after it was enforced." Broffman says. His advice to other companies considering a smoking ban? "Do it! You can make it work!"

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BELL

Because of health concerns related to smoke, PNB does not allow smoking in any company facility.

On October 15, 1985, Pacific Northwest Bell became the first large company (15,000 employees in 750 buildings) to go completely smoke free. Its policy is simple:

"To protect the health of PNB employees, there will be no smoking in any company facility."

Options for Smoking Restrictions

Prior to the establishment of the policy, PNB had allowed each work group to decide, itself, whether or not it would be a smoking area. Problems arose, however, when adjacent work groups had differing approaches. Smoke would drift around barriers, waft across no-smoking desks, and generally infiltrate all areas of the building. Smokers assigned to no smoking areas would merely walk into work groups that permitted smoke, making the atmosphere even worse for nonsmokers in the area. Difficulties occurred even within individual units that voted to eliminate smoking. If 60 percent voted to be a clean air area and 40 percent voted for smoking, the question arose as to whether the wishes of four-out-of-ten employees could really be ignored.

While this kind of democratic approach had initially sounded like an easy way to avoid forcing a company-wide policy, it was seen as unfair and inequitable by most workers. No one was really satisfied and all the underlying problems still existed. Eventually both managers and employees began exerting pressure on PNB to develop a company-wide policy.

Employee Involvement

In January, 1983, a Smoking Issues Steering Committee was established consisting of smokers, nonsmokers, and a group often forgotten, former smokers. Employees representing their unions and from the legal, health services, safety, and many operating departments were part of the task force. One of its first undertakings, an employee survey, brought an astonishing 74 percent response rate, attesting to the importance of the issue among workers. In addition to comments from those who were randomly surveyed, 151 people who were not part of the survey group made the effort to get copies from their friends so they, too, could have their view heard. They included 135 nonsmokers and 16 smokers.

Results of the 1983 questionnaire showed that 28 percent of PNB employees smoked, but that the majority of employees were bothered at least occasionally by smoke at the workplace, and almost 80 percent said the company should be concerned about smoking at the worksite.

Two-and-one-half years after its inception--following a great deal of research and discussion by the task force, as well as involvement in the issue by numerous Quality of Work Life teams and various ad hoc groups--the employee committee recommended to the officers that smoking be eliminated at PNB.

Union Involvement

At PNB, unions were instrumental in all phases of policy

development. Not only were they included in the employee committee making recommendations about a future policy, but leaders of both unions were part of the June 1985 presentation to the company president of the committee's recommendation. "They were not there as advocates for a no smoking worksite," cautions Len Beil, director of human resources planning and employee involvement. "They were present, rather, to state that they had been involved in the process and what their positions would be on a strong policy. While they did not endorse the complete elimination of smoking in all buildings, they stated that their unions would not formally fight its implementation, either."

Beil adds that the the union members on the committee were "extremely helpful" in all aspects of policy development, and that while they never fought against the policy, they negotiated successfully for several compromises that proved to be fair and beneficial for all employees. Initially, the company wanted to reimburse employees for smoking cessation classes after successful completion. The union position was that PNB's goal was to assist and encourage employees to live with the policy and comply with it - not necessary to get them to stop smoking. Therefore, they pressed, the company should reimburse totally for cessation classes, whether or not the employee completed the series. On the issue of smoking in company vehicles, union representatives stressed the difficulty of enforcement and potential problems if cigarette butts were found in a company car or truck ash tray. On

both issues, PNB went with the unions' requests. All employees got full reimbursement for taking a cessation class and smoking in company vehicles is a matter of "common courtesy." The unions also urged that any policy be consistent throughout all company locations and for all employees.

Education

The day the policy was announced, which was 90 days before the policy was to go in effect, PNB provided two telephone hot lines to answer questions about the policy and provide information on free cessation programs for employees and their dependents. (BNA Where There's Smoke: Problems and Policies Concerning Smoking in the Workplace. Washington, DC) A wide range of quit opportunities were made available, many on company time, with PNB paying all fees following completion. But PNB also garnered kudos from many employees by allowing them to take classes outside the company and still get reimbursement. The ability to choose their own quit method seemed to add to their commitment to succeed and helped encourage a friendlier attitude toward the policy.

Benefits

Within the first two years, 1,738 people had gone through cessation programs--1,353 of them employees, 360 spouses, and 25 dependents--receiving full reimbursement from the company for a cost of about \$250,000. Is this investment worth it to PNB? "Yes," says Beil.

"It is money well spent. This equals the cost of just two or three cancers cases. And we would much rather pay for 1,738 to try to quit smoking than pay the results of their continued habit."

Enforcement

PNB reports that there have been "no real problems" with enforcement. On the first day, there were reports that one or two people were smoking behind closed doors in several locations. But "word got around" and by the second day they were abiding by the rules. Although several people threatened to contact lawyers and a few employees tried to organize a Smokers Rights day, nothing significant came from any of the attempts to block implementation.

The bottom line: After two years, no one has quit because of the no smoking policy, there have been no grievances, and smokers at PNB have dropped from 28 percent to 20 percent in the two years since implementation. All in all, the company views its no smoking policy as an unqualified success.

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