

SMOKING CESSATION

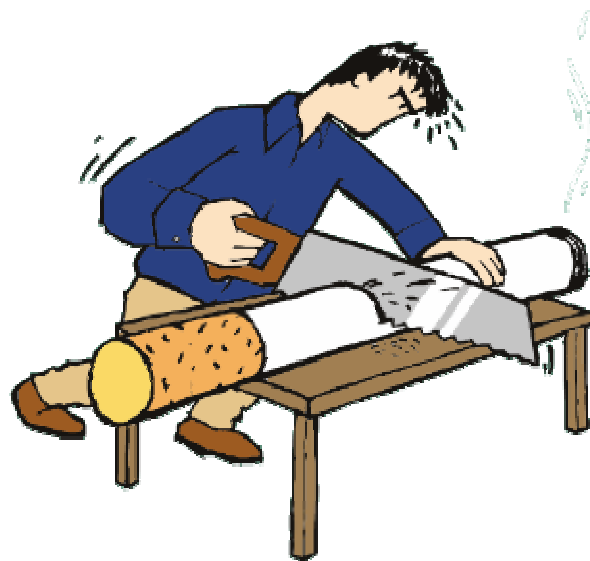
An Opportunity For Commercial Improvement

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Synopsis

Organisations in the UK have no moral or contractual obligation to help employees stop smoking. However, significant commercial gains in terms of improved profitability, greater staff contributions, improved employee attitudes and enhanced corporate image make it an interesting point to consider. Simply introducing a no-smoking policy is likely to create as many problems as it solves, unless a support programme is introduced to help employees who smoke to 'kick' the nicotine habit.

An effective no-smoking policy requires a phased introduction with the collaboration of all employees, a support system that helps smokers to stop their habit and a measurement solution to quantify the ROI.



Impact Of Smoking On The Business

When we consider the impact of smoking on a business we need to consider three key areas of profitability, health of all employees and other people who visit our premises and company image.

Profitability is a major concern for all organisations that employ smokers:

- 34 million working days are lost to British industry each year due to smoking related sick leave. After all, there are over 50 diseases associated with smoking, so the habit provides a lot of opportunities for sick leave. The cost to the employer is not just on sick pay but also lost productivity and output.
- Professor Konrad Jamrozik of Imperial College London has estimated that exposure to second hand smoke in the workplace causes around 617 premature deaths in the UK each year.
- The average smoker takes 40 minutes per day for smoking breaks – that's a whole month for smoking breaks each year (losing over £2,000 / year on a salary of £25,000 per annum)
- A Canadian study (Health Canada, Smoking and the bottom line, Canada, 1997) showed that the average annual reduction in productivity per employee who smokes is £1,085, increased absenteeism costs £115, additional insurance £37, and smoking areas cost £42 (figures that have significantly inflated over the last 10 years).

The cost of supporting a smoking environment is significant and many companies fail to realise how this impacts the bottom line:

- Smoking breaks cause interruptions to work flow and can account for one lost day per week.
- Smokers introduce additional costs for cleaning and redecorating.
- Cost of space for smoking rooms if used.
- Special ventilation is required if smoking rooms are used.
- Increased premiums for health and fire insurance with up to 14% of medical costs related to smoking.
- Increased litigation risks.

Legislation is now in place to prohibit smoking in workplaces in England during 2007. However, Wales, Scotland and Ireland have already banned smoking in all indoor public workplaces.

Impact Of Smoking On Employees

A staggering 13 million adults still smoke in the UK and whilst the overall trends show the number of smokers are declining, there is a large incidence of smoking amongst younger people. Unfortunately 1 in 2 of these smokers will die of smoking related illnesses.

Staff morale amongst non-smokers is an issue as they consider they receive fewer breaks and have to cover for the time lost by smokers. Smokers take an average of 40 minutes off each day to feed their habit and that accumulates to nearly a working month off each year for smoking breaks. This often causes resentment towards smoker colleagues. 86% of all employees and interestingly 73% of smokers believe that smoking should be restricted at work (Lader D. and Meltzer H. Smoking related behavior and attitudes. Office for National Statistics 2001).

Smoking affects employees on several levels as summarised below, any one of which can impact their performance at work.

HEALTH

DETERIORATES

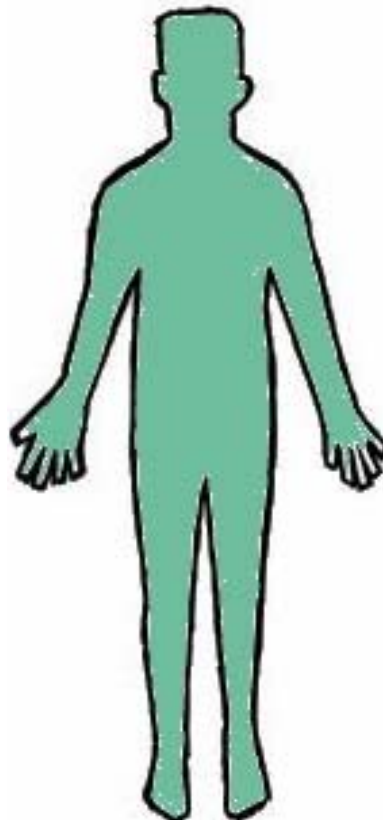
Heart attack risk increases threefold
Heart disease risk increases by 70%
Cause 90% of lung cancers
Proliferation of other cancers
Type 2-diabetes risk increases up to 3 times
Will cause 1 in 3 deaths by 2020
Causes 120,000 deaths in the UK / year

REDUCES SEXUAL PERFORMANCE

Reduced stamina
Impotence in men increased by 50%
Fertility reduced to 72% in women
Respiratory problems passed to unborn children

DAMAGES CHILDREN

Children are three times more likely to smoke if their parents smoke



IMPAIRS DECISION MAKING

Reliance on the temporary calming effects of smoking to avoid issues and reduce stress

REDUCES CAREER PROSPECTS

Smoking breaks take 1 month each year
Smoke breaks lose up to 1 day of work per week
Health and fire insurance costs 14% higher
Take more sick leave

DETERIORATES APPEARANCE

Premature wrinkles around eyes and mouth
Skin becomes dry and older looking
Fingers become tobacco stained
Teeth become stained and risk of gum disease
Smell on clothes, in the car and in the house

SUPPRESSES APPETITE

Taste buds suppressed leading to unbalanced diets

Corporate Benefits Of No Smoking

Any organisation that introduces a support programme for smokers as well as initiating a no smoking policy is likely to experience significant gains in productivity and workplace attendance. These gains far outweigh the costs of any smoking cessation programme and include:

- Reduced employee sick days due to heart disease, lung cancer, aggravation of asthma, decreased coughing, and reduction of respiratory complaints.
- An additional month of work per year from smokers (or an average of about £2,000 per year per employee).
- The supportive attitude to employee welfare stimulates reciprocal positive attitudes from employees and this helps smoker morale.
- 71% of smokers want to quit (Lader D. and Meltzer H. Smoking related behavior and attitudes. Office for National Statistics 2001) and this goal is easier for them if their employer creates a smoke free environment and particularly if the employer introduces a smoke cessation programme.
- Without the introduction of a support programme, less than 10% of employees are expected to quit (2Europe Limited, PCT Lifestyle Survey 2006)
- Recognition amongst non-smokers that they will also benefit from elimination of passive smoking and seeing increased productivity from the new non-smoking colleagues improves the moral of non-smokers.
- Creates the corporate image of a caring organisation and this opens doors with environmentally concerned customers.
- Improved company image (both internally and externally) and possible incremental business from organisations that are environmentally aware.
- Reduced risk of future legislation.

Employee Benefits Of Stopping Smoking

The most common reasons given for the lifestyle change to stop smoking are: -

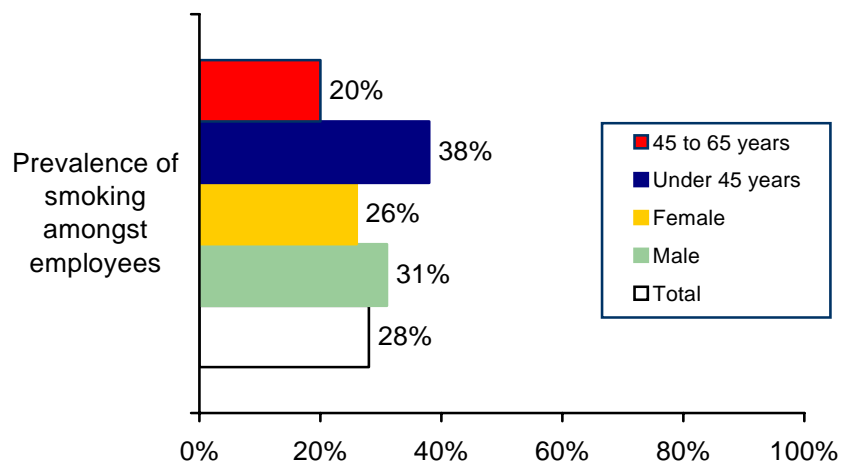
- Received a severe medical warning.
- Improved health and wellbeing.
- Improved prospects of a long life.
- Improved physical appearance.
- Improved job prospects.
- Wanting to regain control and not be dependent on cigarettes.
- Improved chances of a new relationship or marriage.
- Improved chances of becoming pregnant.
- Improved sex drive and performance.
- Improved job / career prospects.
- Compliance with no smoking regulations.
- Setting a good example to children.
- Being more socially responsible.

Introducing Smoking Cessation To A Smoking Policy

Smoking policies (according to ASH) are not about whether or not people smoke, but about when and where they smoke and whether their smoke affects others. Smoking in the workplace needs to be tackled like any other management challenge. The introduction of a stop smoking programme to a company smoking policy requires clear guidelines for all parties involved and we suggest a 5-stage process to establish this: -

Employee Feedback – Pre Stage

Carry out an internal survey amongst employees to clearly establish the impact of smoking on the company (one example is shown), attitudes and opinions of both smokers and non-smokers, together with opinions (if applicable) of unions, customers and suppliers. This survey provides a benchmark to assess the scale of the opportunities to be gained from the introduction of any stop smoking programme and also provides a yardstick against which to measure the future gains. A second analysis should establish the hard employee facts such as sick days for both smokers and non-smokers.



Establish Dialogue With Employees

The survey is the starting point and the findings from this and the proposed course of action are often discussed with employees in order to ensure recommendations meet the needs of both the company and the employees. It is normal to set up a working party with representatives of both smoker and non-smoker employees. When introducing a stop smoking programme to the smoking policy framework it has to be remembered that we need to comply with Section 49 of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, which specifies that 12 weeks notice is required of changes to working conditions.

It is also worth noting that restrictions on smoking do not relate to a factor inherent to a person, such as age, gender, colour or social class, but to a voluntary activity. In this respect it is wrong to claim that they are discriminatory.

Finalise The Stop Smoking Programme

The introduction of any stop smoking programme requires changes to the smoking policy and this is likely to go through a few iterations before it is acceptable to all parties. This time is well spent if later problems are to be avoided. The policy will be designed to comply with Section 2(2)(e) of the Health and Safety at Work ETC Act 1974 and will detail:

- General principals of the policy.
- Common area where smoking is not permitted.
- Work areas where smoking is not permitted.
- Any use of designated smoking rooms.
- Smoking in company vehicles.
- Unions / Health & Safety representatives.
- Staff information.
- Restrictions applied to visitors and temporary staff.
- Adequate signage.
- Recruitment policies.
- Treatment programme to help smokers end smoking.
- Enforcement of smoking policy.
- Policy amendments.

Initiate The Stop Smoking Programme And Communicate

Changes in government legislation mean that employees will no longer be permitted to smoke within working places after 2007. By introducing a programme to help employees to stop smoking, organisations comply with the legislation and demonstrate social responsibility towards employees.

Companies should use their normal methods of communication to ensure the stop smoking programme is clearly visible to all employees and visitors. Specific days and times require being allocated to the programmes.

Employee Feedback – Post Stage

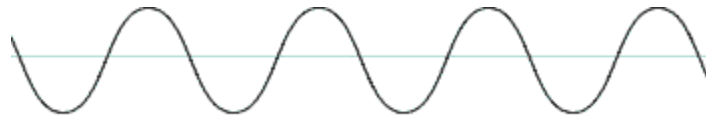
It is beneficial to repeat the employee smoker survey 6 months after the commencement of company stop smoking treatments. This will enable organisations to measure the return on their investment, establish reduction in sick days and measure improvements in employee productivity and attitudes. It is also beneficial PR to use the findings to communicate the environmentally friendly policy and caring attitude towards employees and visitors.

Support and Treatment

The introduction of a stop smoking programme to any smoking policy should be accompanied by advice and support to enable smokers to understand the benefits of quitting. Simply ordering employees to stop smoking is short sighted, as their habit is driven by their addiction to nicotine, one of the most addictive substances known and more addictive than drugs such as cocaine.

There are many different methods and products on the market to help smokers to end their habit. The most popular are nicotine replacement therapies or using smokers helpline and counseling. However, the quickest and most beneficial solution appears to be the treatments that cancel out the electromagnetic charge of nicotine in the body and analyse the psychological dependency on cigarettes.

Harmful oscillations
from cigarette



Mirror image
oscillations returned
to patient



These treatments have success rates in excess of 85%, require one treatment for most employees, generally eliminate nicotine addiction within 24 hours and have virtually no withdrawal problems. This provides for a rapid ROI.

Energy Medicine

Energy Medicine (UK) Limited was established in 2000. The company provides corporate and consumer programmes based on the use of sensitive micro-electronic equipment, to help clients to stop smoking.

The corporate stop smoking solution provided by the company includes: -

- Analysis of the impact of smoking on employees and the company
- Establishes and manages employee stop smoking programmes
- Introduces measures to demonstrate return on investment.

Further information concerning smoking treatments for employees can be found by contacting www.ENDSmoking.co.uk/corporate, by email to info@energymedic.co.uk or by telephone on 01442 831551.