

## **Top 10 for 2010:Top 10 Ways to Support a Smoke-free Workplace**

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According to the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport “employees can cost businesses up to \$3,396 per person each year compared to their non-smoking counterparts”. Here are some tips to help support a smoke-free workplace, minimize that heavy burden and promote a healthier workplace environment.

### **1. Comply with Smoking Restrictions.**

Ensure appropriate signage and awareness are in place to make certain your employees and visitors are abiding by provincial smoking restrictions. In BC these restrictions ban smoking in indoor public places and work places as well as near public doorways, open windows, and air intakes. Also be aware of any local municipal by-laws which may outline further restrictions. Make sure your employees and visitors are not only aware of these restrictions but respecting them.

### **2. Gain Managerial Support.**

Make sure your upper management and executive teams are on board with the development of a smoke-free policy and associated campaigns. Find out their budget for supporting such a program and the type of program they feel is in line with the company policies and visions.

### **3. Develop a Smoke-Free Workplace Policy.**

Engage your employees (both smokers and non-smokers) in the process of the policy development. Use local municipal and provincial restrictions as starting points to develop a policy which works for your workplace. Make sure you set out clear guidelines about the extent of your smoke-free workplace and then create email communications, intranet postings, posters, and flyers to help inform and educate the staff. Help your employees understand you are adhering to these policies and committed to a smoke-free workplace not only because of provincial restrictions but also because you care about their health and wellbeing.

### **4. Educate.**

Run a campaign designed to educate smokers and non-smokers about the impact of smoking and second hand smoke. Most people are very aware of the health implications of smoking – the traditionally supplied information unfortunately often falls like white noise on deaf ears. Try to think outside the box – find information that will really grab people and have an impact. Ask your employees to share personal stories of people they’ve lost to smoking related illness and include pictures. Help people feel the impact. Launch your own success. Don’t just send out a memo launching the new policy – have a fun event that involves employees and engages them. Both smokers and non-smokers need to be engaged to help create a successful smoke-free workplace. Consider having a staff event like a healthy lunch or BBQ where you launch the policy and a strategy or quitting challenge (see idea 7 for more on challenges).

## **5. Create a Company Spokes Model.**

Find a non-smoker internally who has successfully quit – showcase their success as part of an internal campaign. Follow up this campaign with a call for smokers who want to quit in a very public light – and walk with them through the process by having them provide 'reports' of their quitting experience that you can share on the company intranet or via email newsletters; this public process will not only help the smoker stay committed – it will also encourage other smokers to take the challenge too! If you have a CEO or high level manager who is a smoker engage them in the campaign as a role model to lead the charge!

## **6. Challenge Your Smokers to Butt out for Good.**

On an annual or regular basis run a planned program designed to engage multiple smokers in quitting. Challenges are a great way to engage camaraderie, support and community – a key element to the success of any behaviour modification program.

## **7. Provide the Tools to Quit.**

During challenges and year-round make resources available for those interested in quitting. Provide information, education sessions or workshops, and if possible financial resources for ongoing support through medications, counselling or other therapies.

## **8. Provide Tools to Non-smokers.**

Educate non-smokers on how to support smokers in their lives (at work or at home) to quit for good. Also provide non-smokers with tools on how to deal with people who are not complying with your workplace policies (both fellow employees and visitors).

## **9. Reward Everyone.**

Determine a reward for the whole organization for doing their part in creating this smoke free environment. Consider selecting a charitable cause that your employees believe in and making a donation to that charity as a reward. Or, have employees put the money they would have spent on cigarettes in a pool and consider matching the amount collected and donating it to charity or using it to purchase something of interest to your employees. Also develop an incentive program which rewards smokers taking the challenge – and of course for succeeding!

## **10. Celebrate.**

Celebrate and advertise your success as a smoke-free workplace – recognize your organization as a champion for healthy living in your community!

### **Recommended Resources:**

BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport:

<http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/environments/workplace/tobaccofree.html>

Quit Now: <http://www.quitnow.ca/>

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada: [www.smoke-free.ca](http://www.smoke-free.ca)

BC Lung Association:

[http://www.bc.lung.ca/smoking\\_and\\_tobacco/smoking\\_and\\_tobacco.html](http://www.bc.lung.ca/smoking_and_tobacco/smoking_and_tobacco.html)

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