

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Developing a Communication Plan

Developing a written communication plan and timeline is advisable for smooth implementation. You may want to consider developing separate communication plans for the policy and cessation services components of the initiative in case the components are not implemented simultaneously.

Communication Plan Components:

- Project name
- Sponsoring departments
- Contact person
- Issue to be addressed
- Project goals and objectives
- Target audiences
- Prelaunch communication strategies
- Ongoing communication strategies
- Timeline for implementation
- Evaluation Plan

Sample Questions for Developing Your Communications Plan:

- Which modes of communication are most suitable for your employee population?
- Based on the mode(s) of communication selected, what materials are needed to promote the initiative? Can existing materials be used, or should new materials be developed? Who is responsible for obtaining or developing the materials? For distributing the materials?
- When and by whom should key tasks be completed?
- Who will be responsible for tracking and responding to employee questions and comments? What mechanism will be established to encourage employee feedback and questions?
- Who will evaluate the communication strategies? What data should be collected and kept?

Key Communications Messages:

Communications and publicity about the policy should clearly explain its rationale and provisions. Specifically spell out where and when the policy does and does not apply. Reiterate the organization's commitment to helping tobacco users who want to quit and refer employees to additional sources of information on cessation services.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Developing a Frequently Asked Questions List

The following are examples of frequently asked questions. Your committee may want to consider developing standard answers to these questions and using them internally. All of the questions may not be appropriate for every organization and the list is not exhaustive.

FAQ's to Consider:

- What are the specific provisions of the new tobacco use policy?
- How does the new policy differ from the previous policies?
- Does the policy apply to the use of tobacco products besides cigarettes?
- Does the policy prohibit me from bringing cigarettes or other tobacco products to work?
- To whom does the policy apply?
- Is the policy in effect at all times or only during regular working hours?
- When does the policy take effect?
- Where does new policy apply? Are any locations exempted?
- How do I know where (organization name) property begins and ends?
- Am I allowed to smoke in my car while it's parked on (organization name) property?
- Does the policy prohibit smoking in organization-owned vehicles (e.g., government vehicles) only while those vehicles are on (organization name) property?
- Am I allowed to leave (organization name) property to smoke during my workday?
- Am I allowed to take breaks to leave (organization name) property to smoke?
- Will employees who smoke get longer breaks than nonsmoking employees?
- How will the policy be enforced?
- I'm a supervisor and my employee has violated this policy. What should I do?
- If I see someone smoking on (organization name) property, what should I do?
- I currently smoke. Does this mean that I have to quit?
- What resources are available to help employees who want to take advantage of this opportunity to quit smoking?
- Is (organization name) making assistance available to contractors and other nonfull-time employees who would like to quit smoking?
- Is (organization name) making assistance available for spouses and other family members who would like to quit smoking?
- Can I obtain telephone quitline cessation counseling, visit the (organization name) clinic to obtain cessation medications, or otherwise access cessation assistance during my workday?

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Potential Communication Strategies

Communication strategies will be influenced by the size of your organization, the number of campuses, and the amount of education needed (as determined by your employee survey.) Consider distributing promotional materials and information through various channels. Develop strategies that are specific to and appropriate for each component of the initiative, but look for opportunities to promote the initiative as a whole, and its pro-health message. Your communication should be timed so that there is plenty of lead prior to implementation. Communication should continue from when your policy is first announced through the beginning of the implementation period. There should also be a plan for ongoing, sustained communication for guests, contractors, visitors, new employees and others visiting the areas covered by your policy.

Communication Plan Components:

Potential methods for spreading the word about your new policy:

