



The Smoking Climate

The implementing of the Toronto by-law on smoking in the workplace was far from the first time the Personnel Managers had been required to deal with the issue. The secondhand smoke problem, the one non-smokers are most concerned about (though odour bothers them as well), had been causing conflict for some years. Dividing offices along smoking lines had been ineffective, as had buying Ecologizers for smokers. Both approaches had been widely tried, as had offering Smokenders.

The by-law had largely solved the conflict, but had created two issues of its own. There was no problem with compliance, but loss of productivity was occurring. For one, smokers were taking upwards of an hour a day for smoking breaks, something the Personnel Managers tolerated as a hopefully passing phase. The other was resentment by non-smokers at the way smokers can take liberties with time that non-smokers cannot. That, plus complaints about increased smoking in lounges and cafeterias, caused continuing pressure from non-smokers to take further action.

The Personnel Managers could foresee the day when they might have to ban smoking entirely, though that wasn't their goal per se. The elimination of conflict was the goal. Some firms had gone to the extent of installing costly air purification equipment to improve the air quality in the remaining designated smoking

areas, to try to keep the peace. Smokers in Toronto face an increasingly hostile climate. Smoking in public, once an assumed right, is now an uncertain privilege. The singles at least could smoke at home without need for conscience. The marrieds, especially those who were the only smokers in their household, had self-imposed or family-imposed restrictions on smoking at home too.

The workplace by-laws had not been reacted to by smokers as negatively as one might have expected. For one thing, they yielded a forced economy. For another, the smokers readily admitted to quite freely taking smoking breaks. Few really wanted to reinstate smoking at their desk, and none seemed motivated to become activists for their cause.

Unexpectedly, the non-smokers who had never smoked were notably less tolerant of smoking than were the former smokers. This was especially true of the women who had never smoked: they were easily the most rigidly anti-smoking of all, with male former smokers being the most empathetic.

Excessive smoking breaks caused resentment among the non-smokers, as did smoke build-up in designated smoking areas. As expected, their main issue was secondhand smoke, an assumed health hazard, plus odour. The most militant, largely women, objected to merely being in proximity to smoking.

Air Purification Concepts

Small air cleaners were nothing new. The Phillips Ecologizer has been around for years, but was considered ineffective. For that reason, there was much scepticism about the efficacy of small free-standing units. However, the Smoke Magnet concept, promising 'electrostatic' operation, sounded like it might really work.

The interest in it among the smokers was for home use, and among non-smokers, to help clean the air in designated smoking areas. There was little or no belief among the smokers, or open-mindedness among the non-smok-

ers, that any such device could turn back the clock on workplace regulations at this too-late date. Non-smokers saw the by-laws as important social progress, and perceptually regressing on it was unacceptable. At best, such a device could forestall or make unnecessary the eventual total banning of smoking in the workplace. The Personnel Managers were in favour of this objective, and encouraged the development of devices that could truly help. They did not want to take unnecessarily harsh measures, but did want to be responsive to the needs of

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both sides. The investment that many of the firms represented had already made in special ventilation equipment was testimony to this.

The Smoke Stak concept was just an object of humour. The smokers rejected it as an unnatural way to smoke. The non-smokers doubted smokers would use it faithfully, and even if they did, sidestream and odour would still be released. It was assumed such a device could only be partially effective. Some exhaled smoke was expected to be released as well.

The wall panel Smoke Magnet concept would allow smoke to circulate in the air before being trapped, unlike a device in immediate proximity to the source of the smoke. For that reason, it was not favoured for either home or office use. However, as an unobtrusive passive

device in restaurants, and especially in typically smoky bars, it might alleviate the recirculation problem. Evolving ways of forestalling stricter by-laws about smoking in restaurants and bars would likely be desirable. Increased strictness was seen as inevitable in the longer term. As it is, non-smokers consider separate sections alone to be an inadequate solution.

A similar device for commercial aircraft was fairly acceptable to non-smokers, if used in a separate smoking section. Naturally, the smokers who flew were much in favour. Still, it was seriously doubted that airlines would now back-track, having come this far. The social progress regression aspect aside, one anticipated airline reason for reluctance was concern that it would also reintroduce fire hazard.

Product Modifications

Reduced sidestream was fairly appealing to the smokers. It promised to alleviate at least one objection, albeit a minor one, at theoretically no penalty to themselves. The non-smokers saw reduced sidestream as mere tokenism. It would not affect secondhand smoke, and would likely have little impact on odour. This concept would do more for the smoker's conscience than anything else, but it could easily have appeal for that reason alone, especially if from a credible brand like duMaurier.

The samples tried by the smokers shed flakes of ash in a highly objectionable way. Much development work remains to be done before the product is ready to market.

Chelsea, using vanilla to mask odour, was quite unattractive to both sides. The smokers perceived it as a taste-compromised product, likely to appeal only to young, trendy female smokers seeking novelty rather than social benefits. The non-smokers saw Chelsea as just a pretence, not a solution.

The Essence aerosol substitute provoked much laughter. It would eliminate the manual

and peripheral pleasures of smoking, replacing them with a bluntly pleasureless means of satisfying an addiction. The smokers would much rather not smoke in restricted areas than use a product like this. They saw Essence as a smoking cessation aid. To the non-smokers, Essence was hilarious. If smokers really were prepared to use such a thing, few non-smokers would care, but they doubted smokers would want to seem so foolish and transparently addicted.

Quix, a 51mm product, might be marketable as a price proposition. At regular prices, shorter cigarettes offer the smoker no benefits.

Advent, with reduced fire-hazard, addressed an issue of minimal or nonexistent concern. It sounded frustrating to smoke too, likely going out if not actively puffed on.

The Smoke Saver idea could have a fair degree of novelty interest. However, it was perceived as unlikely to be used regularly. For one thing, it would quickly become too messy and smelly for pocket or purse, being in effect a portable enclosed ashtray. For another, re-lighting cigarettes results in taste degradation.

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