

Prost! will focus on the positive aspects of drinking -- party ideas, historical perspectives, cooking tips, etc. Will also promote responsible drinking -- a thrust which may win over adversaries. Michael Argetsinger (Chicago) publicizes Prost!: "I think that hostility will not be the case if we keep an editorial approach that says, 'You're not a bad person if you have a drink. Yet, if you drink, you have a responsibility.' There's nothing wrong with drinking, but something very wrong with excessive drinking."

Betty Kappelle, assoc publisher of Prost!: "It is a hostile environment. We feel people are being deluged with media impressions that using alcohol legally is as bad as using illegal drugs. Good information is the answer." But did people really get their perceptions from media ... or from experience & opinion leaders? Or all three?

Even researcher Anne Russell of MADD (Hurst, Tex) feels "If they're going to do what they say they're going to do, that would be beneficial. Anything that promotes responsible service is beneficial." Given its pervasive cocktail party schedule, public relations should be fertile territory for Prost!

2 CHICAGO COUNSELORS ADVISE IT MIGHT BE WISE TO SPECIALIZE

The role of the practitioner may soon be "jack of all trades, master of a few." As the profession grows, so does its need for specialists. Firms are recruiting people with backgrounds in law, education, medicine & business.

"It's more than a trend, it's an established fact." Dan Edelman told prr, "we're much more valuable if we can offer a high-tech client a high-tech counselor. Someone who knows pr, but understands their field as well."

Edelman maintains that the days of the 'country doctor' pr approach are numbered. "Certainly in a small office in a small town, the generalist still has a place. But in a big city..."

Janet Diederichs contends that a diversified background is preferable. "I still feel that the best & broadest kind of education suits people in this field." Edelman admits that currently people with journalism experience are prime candidates for pr. He cautions students, however, to think in advance about the future of the profession.

Another Trend: Shift Toward 'Non-Traditional' Services

Results of a survey

from Diederich's organization indicates that firms are realizing that "pr" doesn't just stand for "promotion." Many are expanding into client service areas.

"The role of the press agent has been de-emphasized," Diederichs told prr, "A lot of firms are still interested in publicity, but most are realizing that pr is effective in a management-consultant capacity. 'Sticking to your knitting' is not always appropriate."

Areas of growth:  
 strategic planning  
 publications  
 design  
 sports  
 political marketing  
 employee relations  
 direct mail  
 research & audits  
 investor/stockholder relations  
 convention management  
 corporate takeover defense  
 executive recruiting

WORKPLACE POLICIES, PART V -- SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE IS UNDER SEIGE; WORKER HEALTH CONCERNS CAUSE SHARP INCREASE IN ON-THE-JOB RESTRICTIONS; PUBLIC SECTOR LEADS WAY, BUT PRIVATE WORKSITES NOT FAR BEHIND

For most employers, the question is no longer "should we develop a smoking policy?" -- but "where and how shall smoking be restricted?" Statistics from survey of 623 employers by Bureau of National Affairs & American Society for Personnel Administration show:

- \* More than half (54%) have smoking policies, up from 36% in similar survey 1 year earlier;
- \* Only 22% of the firms have no policy and none under consideration, down sharply from 41% in previous year;
- \* Half of the policies (51%) prohibit smoking in open work areas and shared work spaces, up 41% from '86;
- \* Of those with policies, 30% have revised or plan revisions imposing even greater restrictions.

At latest count, 43 states have laws placing limitations on smoking, according to Angela Mickel of the Tobacco-Free America Project. Of these, 31 restrict smoking in public workplaces, 15 in private workplaces. Much of the legislative action has shifted to the city & county level -- more than 200 localities have passed smoking control laws. Even in feisty NYC, restrictions are taking hold. At the federal level, OSHA is considering a petition to issue temporary workplace standards.

WHY ORGANIZATIONS DO/DON'T ADOPT SMOKING POLICIES

<u>Reasons for Adopting a Policy</u>	<u>Reasons for NOT Adopting a Policy</u>
71% - Concern for employees' health/comfort	62% - Lack of employee demand
54% - Complaints from non-smoking employees	33% - Anticipated enforcement problems
39% - State or local laws	32% - Lack of top mgmt. support
17% - Order by top exec	28% - Anticipated objections from smokers
12% - Insurance cost concerns	24% - Concern about legal ramifications
10% - Absenteeism concerns	19% - Few employees smoke
8% - Productivity concerns	



Added to changing public attitudes about smoking, U.S. Surgeon General Koop has dealt smoking a one/two punch: first with announcement that passive or involuntary smokers are at risk, second with warning that nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine. Tho tobacco industry & smokers' rights groups dispute the evidence & debate fairness of restrictions, smoke-free workplace is clearly a trend.

✓ Cardinal Rules for Successful Policy

Most problems encountered are the result of not addressing these key areas, according to John Pinney of the Institute of Smoking Behavior & Policy at Harvard:

1. Provide plenty of advance notice. A policy perceived as precipitous or capricious will alienate both smokers and non-smokers. Positive communication of a policy is vital to its acceptance.
2. Don't treat workforce as monolithic body. Different settings (office vs. plant) and different worker types (blue collar workers smoke more) may require different approaches.
3. Involve employees in planning. Conduct prior research, appoint a task force, solicit input so process is participative, not just a management dictate. Consider union viewpoint if relevant; it will have members on both sides.
4. Make certain of management support. Without it, policy is doomed. Also consider impact of "role models;" if smoking is prohibited in plant but condoned in conference room, may look like mgmt is exempting itself.
5. Put "teeth" in the policy. Wimpy policies that try to do too little or mgmt that gives only lip-service won't work. To succeed, develop a formalized policy that spells out clearly what is permitted & disciplinary penalties for those who don't adhere.
6. Heavily promote smoking cessation programs. Reinforce worker efforts to kick the habit. Numerous materials, consultants are available for development of on-site programs, or subsidize attendance at public programs.
7. Develop follow-up procedures. Monitor to see how policy is working. Enforce to ensure compliance. Special training for supervisors is important.
8. Be compassionate. Recognize smokers are being asked to change behavior in a substantial way. A management seen as dictatorial or penalizing will create resentment.

"There's an effort to portray smoking restrictions as confrontational, but it's not a question of management trying to mandate or change employee behavior in an inappropriate way. When an employee brings into the workplace something now known to be toxic, the employer has an obligation & common law duty to protect those exposed. Letting employees smoke wherever they want is not consistent with providing a safe workplace." -- John Pinney

Special Issues for Small Organizations

Since something like 50% of the country's workforce is in organizations of 100 or fewer people, it's important to look at special problems they face in implementing a policy. As yet unpublished research of Glorian Sorensen from UMass Med School's Division of Preventive & Behavioral Medicine shows:

1. Recognize small business has more of a family atmosphere than corporate environment of larger organizations. Process may need to be more family-like. And owners & managers are more visible; their support/lack of support will be noticeable & have greater impact.
2. In a smaller organization, each employee's voice carries more weight. Makes employee participation in the planning especially important.
3. Smoking has more impact in a smaller workplace where there may be fewer places to concentrate smoking. Consider how it looks if smokers congregate in parking lot or lobby.
4. Personnel/employee relations manager may wear a lot of hats and have less time to focus on or implement a policy.

Costs & Legal Issues: A. Biggest threat comes from potential of lawsuits by non-smoking employees who claim disability or injury due to unsafe working environment. Businesses whose manufacturing process involves respiratory risks that smoking is known to aggravate are concerned about future liability & workman's compensation claims (e.g., one reason why USG, a maker of accoustical products, banned smoking on the job and at home).

B. Conversely, employers worry that strict smoking controls will incite discrimination charges (i.e., proportionately, more black men smoke than white men, raising possibility of racial discrimination). Experts also advise think twice before firing uncooperative employees. If condition of employment was changed after they were hired, they may file an abusive-discharge action.

IN ANOTHER INDUSTRY UNDER FIRE, LIQUOR, MAGAZINE FOR ALCOHOL ENTHUSIASTS TRIES TO DISPEL "MEDIA MYTHS"

What about "healthy" drinkers? Moderate & responsible, they treat alcohol with respect, as an occasional pleasure, an entertainment extra. But do they comprise an elusive market smothered by hype & hysteria?

The promoters of Prost! think so. The magazine will face a sensitive public when it debuts this fall. While Prost! publishers agree on the gravity of alcoholism & drunk driving, they claim media confuses issues, taints public opinion about alcohol & alcohol users. Prost! will attempt to "balance perspective," as Philip Morris magazine does about smokers' rights.

Dr. Morris Chafetz (pres of Health & Educ. Fdn & advsr to Prost!) told prr too often media try to interpret complex medical statistics & studies -- & end up reporting partial truths. He cites the press report linking alcohol to breast cancer as a total distortion later proved inaccurate by a more extensive study. "I would never advocate drinking, but I think this country has been siezed by a terrorism, a panic. Society, as a general rule, regards anything that gives you pleasure as bad for you. In our typical American fashion, we've become obsessive about it. Drunk driving has galvanized the issue. I agree with Winston Churchill when I say that drinking has done more good for society than harm."