

## The Problem

Social ostracism of smokers brought on largely by administrative and legal actions is growing rapidly in workplaces, institutions, localities and states in every part of the country. Self-appointed spokesmen for the "nonsmoking majority," backed by well-financed health organizations, are succeeding, where a ten-year health "crusade" has failed, in identifying smokers as social menaces. Virtually their only defense and the only organized opposition to this drive is The Tobacco Institute. But it is apparent that The Institute's efforts are insufficient to cope with the growing public acceptance of and agreement with the notion that smoking harms the nonsmoker. Publicity on behalf of nonsmokers at the community level is pervasive. The Institute, in state and local situations, is usually regarded as a "vested interest" lacking credibility. The Institute's arguments--that there is "no proof" of harm to nonsmokers and that smoking prohibitions are unenforceable--are largely ignored. Only in the position that individual rights may be jeopardized has any approach to credibility been observed.

## Recommended Efforts

1. That the staff develop, for Executive Committee consideration, a series of paid media messages. These would spell out the considerateness of most smokers in social situations, and relate to potential infringements of "rights" of both smokers and nonsmokers. They would be designed for use primarily or exclusively in newspapers, and could be used on a regional basis. They would demonstrate that the industry is aware of and communicating in good faith about the smoke annoyance problem, building credibility and also defusing some of the zeal of the activists.
2. That the Institute articulate, where necessary, the following "fall-back" position:

For the comfort of smokers and nonsmokers alike, it is practical, sensible and traditional to provide areas in some public facilities for those who wish to smoke and those who do not. In small, crowded, poorly ventilated places, smoking is inappropriate.

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The Institute staff is aware that this is not without risk, in the sense that it could lead to passage of "foot-in-the door" legislation subject to subsequent strengthening. For this reason, utmost caution would be observed.

3. That each company accelerate its input into The Institute "support system" on an emergency basis in order to effectuate more efficient counter-communications to balance attempts by local zealots to garner support from the public and news media.

Strategy Statement

1. Address the community newspaper readers in general--not in any segment such as smokers, nonsmokers, politicians.
2. State awareness of current public discussion of the subject.
3. Acknowledge that a few nonsmokers can be annoyed on occasion, and that most smokers are aware of this and act accordingly; conversely, that most nonsmokers aren't often troubled, and an occasional smoker may create a minor problem.
4. Confine the message to the general subject: No specific reference to pending legislation.
5. Make size and frequency correspond to the objective, which is to provide evidence of awareness, good faith and consideration by the industry, and is not to convey a sense of overkill by "out-of-town" interests.