(1) Smoking is harmful to one’s health. It also creates detrimental and unconsidered side effects that simply do not enhance or belong in the workplace. This is precisely the reason I propose that we pass this petition to ban smoking in all areas of company property. In order to ensure our employees stay healthy and productive contributors to this company, I feel it is absolutely crucial and necessary to implement this ban. Let me show you some of the ways this bad habit negatively impacts you and your company…

(2) Smoking is a bad habit with lasting consequences. Because cigarettes contain over 7,000 chemicals – 69 of which are known to cause cancer – it’s no wonder why smoking has been identified as the most important source of preventable morbidity and premature death worldwide. In the United States, smoking is the cause of 1 in 5 deaths annually. Smokers also die significantly earlier than nonsmokers: 13.2 years for men and 14.5 years for women. Is smoking really the legacy you want to leave behind? Cause inevitably that is that path you are quickly headed towards. Luckily, as these facts have come to light, the proportion of adult smokers from 1964 to 2014 has declined from a whopping 42% to 18%. We can get that number even lower if we all begin to realize and understand the implications involved with smoking.

(3) Cigarette production and consumption lead to monumental waste. This waste is destroying our environment, and once again raises the question – do you want your bad habit to irreversibly ruin the future of our world? Cigarettes not only lead to litter, but also water pollution, deforestation, and present hazards for pets and other wildlife. On top of the extreme environmental impacts, the costs associated with the waste produced by cigarettes are astounding. Each year, a state like California spends $41 million of your tax dollars to clean up the waste left behind from cigarette smokers. Perhaps one of the biggest and most threating effects of smoking is secondhand smoke. An estimated 88 million Americans are exposed to secondhand smoke each year, and 54% of those people are children aged 3-11. Overall, secondhand smoke leads to about 42,000 deaths each year in the U.S… It’s bad for you, its bad for others, and its just a plain bad image for business to be involved with smoking in any way.

(4) Because smokers take more breaks and miss more days of work, its obvious that smoking has a profound impact on workplace productivity. Smokers are 50% more likely to be hospitalized than nonsmokers, and as you’ve seen, are much more prone to illness. The time that is missed costs the company and costs the economy as a whole. Each year in the United States, an estimated $289 to $332 billion is spent and/or lost due to smoking. $132 to $175 billion of this can be attributed to direct medical care costs; $151 billion in lost productivity due to premature deaths; and $5.6 billion due to secondhand smoke exposure. The good news is, the more we eliminate smoking, the more these costs go down. It has been shown that once former smokers quit for good, their absenteeism and lack of productivity begins to decline as well… so there is hope for reform.

(5) This graph is from a study that was conducted as a means to interpret productivity of smokers vs. non-smokers. Specifically this graph compares the difference between former smokers and current smokers, and rates their productivity value in terms of efficiency, quality, and amount of work. Employees assign values to themselves, and then also from the perspective of their coworkers and supervisors. When viewing themselves, current smokers view themselves as about as productive as former smokers. However, coworkers and supervisors have a different perspective and often view current smokers as much less productive than former smokers.

(6) As I’ve alluded to, smoking employees cost their employer more than a non-smoking employee – totaling nearly $6000 more per year. This has even led some companies to go as far as not hiring individuals who smoke. Because smokers take so many breaks and miss so many more days of work, they simply partake in less work activities than other employees, and this causes a lot of lost revenue each year for companies. The $132 to $175 billion in medical costs that I discussed earlier is of particular concern to employers because much of this is paid in part by company pharmaceutical plans. On average, tobacco users cost companies twice as much in these healthcare costs than nonsmokers. In addition, disability payments are also much higher for smokers because they are so susceptible to illness. Another thing to note is the fact that worker’s comp is so much higher for smokers not because they get hurt more often, but because their bodies are not capable of healing as fast as nonsmokers.

(7) The steps to achieving a smoke-free workplace don’t need to be as critical or harsh as not hiring smokers altogether. This type of discrimination is quickly being eliminated in many states, and I believe the best approach is not to neglect or shun these employees, but rather to help them through positive action and encouragement. Of course one of the first and most important steps in achieving this is by eliminating the opportunity to smoke while at work. A lot of people smoke because of the impulse and longing for the action – it is a repeatable habit to them. By making them physically unable to perform this habit for 8 hours of their day, it can go a long way in possibly changing their overall routine and outlook. Studies show that as smokers have more opportunity and more resources to quit, they are more successful in doing so.

(8) Smoking not only causes cancer but is also one in itself when it comes to the workplace. In order to create a better, healthier and more productive work environment, removing smoking from the daily agenda is without a doubt the key step in helping achieve and further these goals. Through both policies and positive encouragement, this company can help itself by helping its employees lessen or even quit smoking altogether. So let’s all consider the exponential benefits of implementing this no smoking policy and sign the petition – it’s the right thing to do for your company, your peers, and most of all for yourselves!