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# Right to Ban or Restrict Smoking

Employers should have the right to ban or restrict smoking by their employees at the workplace due to smoking's effect on insurance costs, effect on coworkers, environmental issues, and worker productivity.

Health insurance is a heated topic in the United States, citizens have difficulty in paying for insurance to over health, medical, and dental costs for themselves and family; costing nearly $18,000 in additional costs. Employers who ban or restrict smoking in the workplace force smokers to live healthier lives, and also protect other employees from suffering from the effects of second hand smoke. In addition, when workers need medical attention that requires insurance to pay costs, the employer is liable for some of these costs.

Second-hand smoke has proven deadly for non-smokers as well, causing nearly 50,000 deaths in the United States each year, according to the discussion case. If employers did not have the right to ban, or at least restrict the potential harm from second-hand smoke, the employer may be liable for any damages suffered by non-smoking employees.

Smoking also has an effect on society and the environment, including: air pollution, fire hazard, distress on animal habitats, and reducing property values in heavy populated areas. The city and government are then required to spend money passing laws and legislation, funding clean-up initiatives, and teaching and training teachers and students the dangers of smoking. By reducing smoking at the work place, we are reducing (however incrementally) the need to implement the aforementioned initiatives and supporting a positive and healthy habits in the ecosystem.

In the end, employers are accountable to their investors, and are responsible for ensuring stakeholder investments are properly managed now and in the future. Smoking has a statistical effect on worker productivity, and thus a direct link to company competitiveness in the marketplace. The employer's goal are threefold: to profit, to benefit their employees, and to benefit society. Smoking inhibits the company achieving these goals.

In the end, law makers have decided that companies indeed do have the right to restrict or ban smoking in the workplace. According to the discussion case, "many towns and cities, and 23 states, passed antismoking ordinances or laws that banned smoking in enclosed workplaces". In addition, international law also agrees: "in 2005, the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control…. called on governments to protect people from workplace exposure to secondhand smoke".

# Regulating Smoking at Work

The government should regulate smoking at work to ensure that employers protect their employees and maintain a healthy and positive workplace. Supporting the employer by regulating smoking in the workplace completely benefits the employee and all citizens by reducing external effects of unhealthy lifestyles. In addition, employers are required to provide a safe workplace: safe from harm, safe from discrimination, safe from second-hand smoke which statistically causes death! The discussion case clearly points to several impactful reasons for regulating smoking in the workplace:

* causes nearly 50,000 nonsmoking deaths in the US each year
* nonsmoking employees can be sickened or killed by exposure to second hand smoke
* smoking costs the employer up to $1,800 per year in health care costs
* smoking caused employee productivity to decrease twice as fast as non-smokers

# Multinational Smoking Policies

Multinational corporations should adopt multinational policies that reflect the locale in which the firm must do business. The dynamic nature of international business and competition requires firm's not to impose their domestic morals or ethics on their offshore locations; in fact, by acquiescing to the locale government's laws, regulations, and norms, the company will be able to secure a more competitive position in the marketplace.

However, this is not to say a company must forfeit the right to promote their interpretation of 'healthy' and 'positive' in the workplace; but instituting policy that does not reflect the norms or customs of the culture in which they do business, may not be the most strategic pathway for success.

For instance, in the discussion case, the CEO at Weyco implemented various initiatives to combat unhealthy life styles in the workplace:

* offered cessation programs paid for medication and acupuncture
* Hired a fulltime specialist to advise all employees on diet and nutrition
* subsidized their health club memberships

the above steps are valid approaches to promoting healthy lifestyles in the workplace while not overstepping cultural or governmental boundaries in foreign business environments.