



# HUMAN RESOURCES



# Focus on Casinos' Human Resources: It's a Great Job, but Not Worth Dying For

A casino's smokefree air worksite policy demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of casino staff. It is no surprise that casino workers are among the biggest supporters for smokefree gaming. Problems from constant exposure to secondhand smoke create higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, higher health and life insurance costs, workers' compensation payments, disability and premature death (not to mention employee morale.)<sup>1</sup> With just 1 less day of absenteeism per casino employee per year, casinos stand to save a lot of money annually in lost productivity.

Going smokefree saves health care costs. This is something the human resources (HR) department of a casino understands. Fewer sick days mean money saved and savings in operating costs. Casinos, like all other businesses, need healthy employees to make the enterprise successful.

Talk to your casino's HR department and/or worksite wellness committee and share with them the benefits of going smokefree.

## TIPS FOR TALKING TO HR DIRECTORS

- Bring information about the potential cost savings from a smokefree environment. Help them consider the benefits:
  - ✓ Reduced annual health care costs
  - ✓ Reduced health and life insurance costs
  - ✓ Reduced risk for litigation from casino workers
  - ✓ Reduced employee sickness and early retirements due to ill health<sup>2</sup>
  - ✓ Increased productivity on the job—the average smoker takes six 10-minute smoking breaks per work day, or 5 hours of lost work per week
  - ✓ Reduced risk for fire damage and other accidents
  - ✓ Reduced maintenance and cleaning costs<sup>3</sup>
  - ✓ Reduced equipment replacement costs

- ✓ Energy cost savings from not using ineffective air scrubbers or ventilation systems to deal with the smoke<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ Greater appeal to nonsmoking customers who make up 80% of gaming patrons and 80% of the overall population (including potential customers who are staying away or leave early because of the smoke)

For help calculating cost savings, see page 26 of the workbook in the main folder for the fact sheet Business Costs in Smoke-Filled Environments.

- Show one or more of the employee videos available on Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights' (ANR's) YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/user/ANRandANRF](http://www.youtube.com/user/ANRandANRF) to raise awareness about the seriousness of this issue. These powerful stories are told by former and current casino workers across the country. A summary of these stories is located on page 4.
- In your meetings with the HR department personnel, ask whether they would like to know more about their employees' preference for smokefree air.

## HOW TO SURVEY EMPLOYEES ABOUT THEIR PREFERENCES

It is important to check in with employees and determine their thoughts about



secondhand smoke in their daily work environment. Consider conducting a survey during a health fair for casino employees, or possibly during a corporate wellness event such as a weight loss competition or a healthy cooking demonstration.

When proposing a worker survey to the casino's HR department, suggest they offer an incentive to complete the survey, such as a gas card or gift card to a local coffee shop or \$10 in free play at the casino.



When designing the survey, be sure to add questions that determine employees' knowledge and attitudes about secondhand smoke:

- “Does the smoke in the casino bother you?”
- “Do you believe secondhand smoke is dangerous to your health?”
- “Have you experienced negative health effects (such as eye irritation, upper respiratory illness, breathing difficulties, heart disease) from exposure to secondhand smoke?”

Most importantly, in these tough economic times, be mindful of how certain key questions are worded. Many employees are very concerned about income and job security, and that concern may factor in their responses unless questions are worded carefully.

For example, word the preference question in the following way:

- “If income and job security were not a concern, would you prefer to work in a nonsmoking casino?”

Or

- “All things being equal in terms of economic stability, casino profit, and job security, would you prefer to work in a nonsmoking casino?”

For a sample casino employee survey (designed by the San Juan County Partnership and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council), see the resources section of this toolkit. Feel free to contact ANR at (510) 841-3032 for assistance in designing, implementing, and analyzing a casino employee survey.

Lastly, be sure to present the data collected from casino employees to the casino management and the HR department in a way that makes the survey results easy to understand and supportive of smokefree casinos.

“I’m convinced that smokefree gaming is the future.  
And the future is always closer than we think.”

— KELSEY A. BEGAYE, FORMER PRESIDENT, NAVAJO NATION, WINDOW ROCK, ARIZONA



Smokefree casinos—just like the hundreds of thousands of smokefree restaurants, hotels, bars and other workplaces already flourishing coast to coast—protect workers, patrons and future profits. That’s a rare win-win-win situation. Ready to set your enterprise free from secondhand smoke? Get the facts and make up your own mind at [www.tobaccoscam.ucsf.edu](http://www.tobaccoscam.ucsf.edu).

*Are you  
smokefree  
yet?*



## VIDEO STORIES

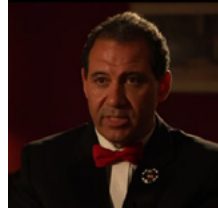
To better assist you in making an impact with your casino decision makers and the casinos' HR department, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation (ANRF) is proud to share the following video stories with you, as told by former and current casino workers across the country. We hope you are able to watch them and possibly share them with coalition members, gaming management, employees, and others to raise awareness about the serious dangers of smoke in casinos. You can find all these stories and more on our YouTube page ([www.youtube.com/user/ANRandANRF](http://www.youtube.com/user/ANRandANRF)). For more information, please visit [www.smokefreecasinos.org](http://www.smokefreecasinos.org).



### Jane's Story

Jane K. started dealing in 1995. She talks about what it is like to work in a casino, both the joys of the job and the one and only thing she says she didn't like: The secondhand smoke. She shares her story of what it was like to face the smoke day after day.

Her doctor called it *"the casino worker's disease ... caused from the secondhand smoke."*



### Shane's Story

Casino dealer Shane K. tells his story about what it is like to work in a smoke-filled environment and why no worker should be forced to work in an unhealthy environment.

*"People in Congress don't have to put up with the smoke. My CEO doesn't have to put up with the smoke; I don't know why I have to put up with the smoke."*



### Vinny's Story

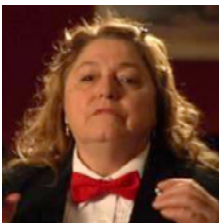
After decades working at a smoke-filled casino, Vincent "Vinny" Rennich found out that he had lung cancer. He had never smoked, but secondhand smoke cost Vinny part of his lung. Hear how he fought back and won. Speaking up about it cost him his job. The good news is that lung surgery was successful, and Vinny is now cancer-free. He says his destiny now is to inspire others in the fight for smokefree air. Vinny now works in a smokefree casino, but there are many casino workers who don't have that option in their area.



### Sheryl's Story

Sheryl never smoked, but she worked in casinos for decades. Ultimately, she developed throat cancer. She lost her battle with throat cancer in 2012. Sheryl W. was not only a great casino worker; she was a wife, a mother, and a dear friend to many. She inspired ANR to keep educating people about the dangers of secondhand smoke in casinos. She is dearly missed.

*"I've never smoked a day in my life.... All I wanted were the same considerations that management had, and that their secretaries had, and that every other office building in the city has."*



### Cynthia's Story

Cynthia F. has been dealing at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas for decades. She loves her job, but hates the smoke. Cynthia, a nonsmoker, used to be much more physically active but the daily exposure to secondhand smoke has made it difficult to breathe and she can no longer do the things she once loved.

*"All of the smoke comes into your face ... you cannot breathe. ... It's a shame that the corporations don't think any more of our lives than that. ... What's the value of our lives? When are they going to help us?"*



### Treva's Story

Treva shares her story of what it is like to work in casinos. Treva is now a casino dealer in a smokefree casino and she loves it! For more information or to get involved, please visit [www.no-smoke.org](http://www.no-smoke.org).

# REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Kristein, M.M. *How much can business expect to profit from smoking cessation?* Preventive Medicine 12:358-381, 1983; Marion Merrell Dow, Inc. *The economic impact of smoking: in the workplace; on cardiovascular health; on wound healing and recovery from surgery; on infants and children; on pulmonary health; on dental and oral health.* Medical Information Services, Inc. , 1991.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *The Costs and Benefits of Smoking Restrictions: An Assessment of the Smoke-Free Environmental Act of 1993* (H.R. 3434). Office of Air and Radiation. Washington, DC, April 1994.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Samet, J. , Bohanon, Jr. , H.R. , Coultas, D.B. , Houston, T.P. , Persily, A.K. , Schoen, L.J. , et al.(2010). ASHRAE position document on environmental tobacco smoke. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). Download at [www.ashrae.org/about-ashrae/position-documents](http://www.ashrae.org/about-ashrae/position-documents)

**Disclaimer:** This tool was developed with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Users of this document should be aware that every funding source has different requirements governing the appropriate use of those funds. Under U.S. law, no Federal funds are permitted to be used for lobbying or to influence, directly or indirectly, specific pieces of pending or proposed legislation at the federal, state, or local levels. Organizations should consult appropriate legal counsel to ensure compliance with all rules, regulations, and restriction of any funding sources.