




Building Employee Buy-In

Employers will be more successful with policy compliance if employees actively support a policy. A survey of NSC members showed the importance of employee buy-in; employers without policies reported that “lack of employee support” was the #1 barrier. When employers with successful policies share what works, much of their advice is not about the policy itself, but about educating, inspiring and involving employees. To gain employee support for a distraction-free driving culture, use the following tips from organizations that have had success.

Tips to Build Employee Support

- Before policy implementation, hold open meetings to discuss the need for a policy with employees. Many materials in this Kit will help you communicate. Request feedback from employees anonymously if that's helpful. Don't spring a policy on employees as a surprise. This could result in long-term negativity and lack of respect for the policy. When unions are involved, the union steward is a key stakeholder. Hold a pre-meeting with union reps to get them on board.
 - Recognize that for some employees, this policy will change deeply ingrained habits. Any change can bring initial stress. Give employees the opportunity to discuss potential barriers, conflicts with their beliefs and their doubts. These are “objections,” which in the sales profession are good to hear because there's now a chance to address and overcome them.
 - Ask employees to offer solutions to these objections. This makes employees part of the decision-making. The solutions become things they choose to do.
 - Employees must see and hear that top management supports the policy. Employees will sense the level of commitment. If you don't have leadership commitment, consider delaying employee rollout until you do have management buy-in. After all, management is part of the employee population.
- For a story about a strong show of management commitment, see the case study in the Safe Driving Kit about Owens-Corning's implementation of its cell phone policy. The CEO did not use his phone for 90 days prior to announcement and roll-out of the policy. So he was able to tell employees that if he could do it and maintain his productivity, anyone could do it and maintain productivity.

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- Employees may be concerned about job productivity — especially staff who frequently drive on the job and the supervisors responsible for their performance. Invite discussion about these concerns. Be clear about management's priority for safety, and ask employees to find solutions to productivity issues.
 - Ask employees to share ideas to maintain productivity. Employees will then have a plan to meet job goals without temptation to use the phone while driving.
 - Invite cross-department employee teams to solve barriers to implementation. Have teams share the solutions with all employees. While working together, they build and reinforce the social support for a policy.
 - Have a mix of senior management, front-line supervisors, union representatives, and other employees serve as spokespeople for the new policy process.
 - Tell compelling, vivid stories and testimonials about the risk of crashes. Use video and public education resources at <http://distracteddriving.nsc.org>. If someone in your company has a personal story, invite him/her to share it. Then ask employees to help prevent this from happening to other people.
 - Because many people still incorrectly believe that hands-free phones are safer, it's useful to share stories about hands-free phone crashes.
 - Involve employee stakeholders in deciding how to monitor compliance, and consequences of non-compliance.
 - After policy implementation, communicate positive results to employees. Consider surveying impact on productivity and share the results. The results are likely to be more positive than people expect. In a 2009 membership survey, 99% of NSC member respondents with cell phone policies did not find a decrease in productivity.

