

Help Employees Butt Out - Increase Productivity, Lower Costs

Smoking is the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death, and leads to increased absenteeism, lower employee productivity scores, and higher benefits claims. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each employee who smokes costs business \$1,760 in lost productivity and \$1,623 in excess medical expenditures. As well, secondhand smoke's effects on nonsmokers are estimated by CDC to cost up to \$490 per smoker per year. Whether you are a large employer or an insurer, a smoking cessation program can provide a measurable business ROI by helping employees to stop smoking.

HSAGlobal offers **STOMP (STop smoking Over Mobile Phone)**, a text message-based smoking cessation service. STOMP sends smokers trying to quit a series of customized text messages on their mobile phones over a 26 week period to help them quit smoking. STOMP can be an enhancement to existing corporate wellness services or a value-added self-care benefit offered to policyholders by insurers.

The business costs of smoking

The CDC has done extensive study of the business costs of cigarette smoking. They estimate that US\$92 billion in productivity losses can be attributed annually to smoking and secondhand smoke.

Researchers for the journal Tobacco Control estimate that, on average, smokers are absent from work over 6 days per year due to sickness (including smoking-related acute and chronic conditions), in comparison to 3.86 days per year missed by nonsmokers.

In a recent study of health care utilization reported by the American Cancer Society, for 20,831 employees of a single, large employer, employees who smoked had more hospital admissions per 1,000 (124 vs. 76), had a longer average length of stay (6.47 vs. 5.03 days), and made six more visits to health care facilities per year than nonsmoking employees.

In the same study, it was reported that US employees who smoke have an average insured payment for health care of \$1,145, while nonsmoking employees average \$762. As well, health insurance premiums for employees who smoke are higher than for nonsmokers.

Smoking numbers worldwide remain significant. According to the World Health Organization MPOWER report, in the United Kingdom there are 16 million smokers; France - 15m smokers; Canada - 6m smokers; Japan - 31m smokers; and Vietnam - 14m smokers. At any given time, over 30% of these smokers are trying to quit.

Why offer a smoking cessation program

By implementing a smoking cessation program, corporations can improve workforce productivity, reduce absenteeism, and demonstrate leadership by investing in their people. Insurers can reduce claim volumes and severity, lower risk exposure, and offer more competitive health insurance premiums.

STOMP can be implemented into a corporation's existing health and wellness program via the Human Resources department, with links to HR / payroll / personnel management

systems. STOMP branding can be designed to match the organization's branding, and message content can be localized and culturally tailored so that participants have a seamless, relevant experience. Detailed reporting from the STOMP administrative portal includes quantitative quit results, providing data to support financial justification to stakeholder departments.

Based on the CDC findings, corporations implementing STOMP can expect annual savings of \$1,760 in productivity, plus their contribution to medical expenses, per quit smoker. STOMP has been clinically proven to double quit rates, so savings may be doubled.

Clinically-proven program doubles quit rates

STOMP was developed by the Clinical Trials Research Unit (CTRU) at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. It was tested in a randomized-controlled trial of over 1700 participants throughout New Zealand, which found the intervention to show a two-fold increase in self-reported quit rates at six weeks (28 percent compared to 13 percent). The results were consistent across subgroups defined by age, sex, income level, and geographic location.

Award winner

In 2008 STOMP was awarded the Telecommunication Users Association of New Zealand (TUANZ) Award for Innovation in Health. STOMP received the accolade as the best telecommunications product or application contributing to health outcomes. The TUANZ is a not-for-profit 500 member organization representing the business users of telecommunications.



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STOMP – Stop Smoking Over Mobile Phone

version 1.4

STOMP enables corporations to improve workforce productivity, reduce absenteeism, and demonstrate leadership by investing in their people. For insurers, offering STOMP can help reduce claim volumes and severity, lower risk exposure, and offer more competitive health insurance premiums. The service runs on the Health Messaging Engine which can be tailored to a variety of scenarios and integrated with other corporate wellness services or policy offerings.

Core program & intervention

STOMP gives employers or insurers the ability to provide participants with consistent smoking cessation support through various intervention techniques delivered to their mobile phones, including:

- **Personalized Cessation Support** – Text message content tailored to the target participants.
- **Quit Tips** – Consistent and helpful text messages reminding the participant of the overall goal to quit.
- **Smoking Facts** – General fact text messages that help reinforce smoking cessation.
- **Craving & Slip Up Support** – Text message content for participants craving a cigarette, or who have accidentally smoked a cigarette, that helps them beat cravings and get them back on track.
- **Polls** – As a way of adding distraction and interest, providers can conduct text message-based polls where participants can text their answers and then view results.
- **Relapse Program** – A 4-week intensive program which participants can enroll in if they start smoking again, but still want to try to quit.

Implementation and delivery

Program functionality is supported by three delivery components that are scoped prior to delivery:

- **Text Message Content** – Text messages may require customization for specific markets. This includes both smoking cessation expertise and text messaging language expertise relevant to that target market. This can either be completed by the smoking cessation service provider or a HSAGlobal partner.
- **Short Message Service (SMS) Gateway and Shortcode Service** – This service is usually provided by a HSAGlobal partner. It manages the flow of text messages to and from participants and the STOMP solution.
- **Solution Hosting** – HSAGlobal’s partner hosts the STOMP solution and all of its components, allowing providers to focus on their participants, not the technology.

Licensing

Product licensing is typically based on participant enrolment volumes and targets.

Technology

STOMP requires minimal client technology. Participants only need the most basic mobile phone with SMS text messaging capability. Participants simply sign up for the service by texting “Join” or a designated variation to the nominated shortcode. They then visit a designated website or call a toll-free number to complete registration.

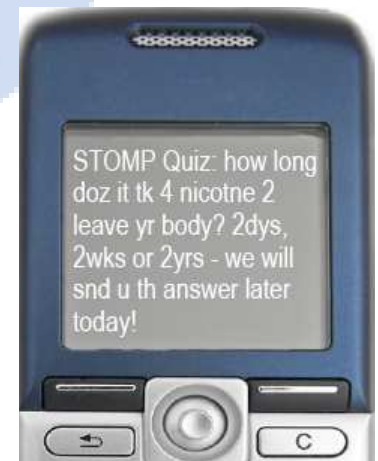
STOMP has been developed as an Internet-based application so that program administrators can manage the entire service from a web browser.

Customer experience

TELUS, the second largest telecommunication provider in Canada, recently launched STOMP to employees as part of their internal TELUS Corporate Wellness program. The TELUS launch of STOMP was eagerly anticipated as pre-registrations numbered well into the hundreds. The SMS text-based program has been met with overwhelming demand since launch.

As a service for health providers / health promotion agencies, STOMP is being used by two customers: the New Zealand government-funded agency The Quit Group, and Mohave County (Arizona, USA) Department of Public Health. The Quit Group uses STOMP for its nationwide service, branded Txt2Quit. Txt2Quit is integrated with the Quit Group website, the Quitline contact centre and their client database. Over 3,500 smokers are enrolled in the program.

Mohave County Department of Public Health is the first health provider in the USA to roll-out STOMP. Mohave County is using STOMP in a pilot project to reach 300 young smokers, and enrolls high school students caught smoking into the service as a form of youth diversion instead of suspending them from school.



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