



## Sixty Seconds With the CEO

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You step into the elevator. Your moment has arrived! Your Chief Executive Officer stands there, alone. You have a sixty second opportunity! And, you desperately need organizational support to solve the brain full of problems you encounter daily. Don't let this golden moment pass!

I've listed talking points for each of several common employee health-related dilemmas you confront as an Occupational Health nurse, wellness coordinator, or manager of Human Resources, Benefits, Safety, or Worker Comp. Use them to enlighten, inform and persuade time-pressured Chiefs!



### Wellness

"Hello! Seeing you reminds me of the importance of senior leadership in our wellness program! I just read about how active the executives are in the wellness program at (Dow Corporation, Johnson & Johnson, Citibank, Union Pacific, Quad Graphics, etc.). Those leaders make sure every employee knows that wellness matters at the top! And, it has to here, because, after all:

- None of us are getting younger. We have an aging workforce. Our average age is \_\_\_\_!
- We do more work now with fewer people than five years ago! That makes everybody's productivity and health more important. And it makes everybody five years older!
- Age will rob our employees of health and productivity, but only if we allow it. It doesn't have to happen!
- By keeping employees healthy we can compete better, with more productivity, and lower benefit costs.
- Employee health drives all of our benefit costs. Health insurance, pharmacy, sickness and accident, long-term disability, turnover, early retirement, and lost productive time when at work.

Next time, let's take the stairs so you and I can talk longer, and keep our own circulation going!"

### Worker Comp

"How nice to see you! I was just thinking about all the Lean redesign efforts you've spearheaded, to eliminate waste. And I was thinking, what's a bigger waste than worker comp? I mean, when someone gets hurt, it wastes their own time and money, as well as ours. You have made it a priority to eliminate waste, which means good management of safety, illness and accident prevention, and worker comp has never mattered more. Did you know that:

- The single most cost-effective thing we can do in managing worker comp claims is to keep them "medical only." That means the case only incurs medical costs, and no lost time. It means we accommodate all restrictions and actively get people back to work, avoiding lost time. That greatly lowers next year's premiums. Lost work day cases increase premiums three to four times more than medical-only claims do.

- Doctors are getting better at giving us statements about injured worker restrictions and abilities, instead of just taking workers off work. If managers know that you want these restrictions accommodated, then our claims become “medical only” and our premiums go down.
- It really helps when you tell middle-level managers that accommodating restrictions and getting injured employees back to work matters at the top. When you’ve made that a strategic priority, then those managers double their efforts to help people work. I know some of our competitors make that a part of each manager’s performance review.

Well, this elevator has gone down, just like we hope our premiums will. Stay safe!”

### Health Plan Benefit Design

“Isn’t our tobacco-free workplace a wonderful improvement? We couldn’t have done it without your leadership! Besides giving us a cleaner workspace, better air, and better image, it also helps employees who have quit tobacco to stay tobacco-free. And it motivates lots of people to finally quit who have always wanted to. Did you know that:

- By going smoke free, about 15 percent of smokers in a work group will quit smoking.
- But, nicotine addiction, like other addictions, is a real disease. It needs real medical treatment, so people can successfully quit, and stay quit.
- If people just quit cold turkey without help, only 5 percent succeed after a year. But with medications and coaching, that success rate can increase by ten times.
- Our health plan benefits need to fully support these people. Otherwise they will try but fail, or succeed but relapse, leaving us the burden of tobacco-related costs. And our tobacco-free workplace policy would remain just another policy, and not a part of our culture of health and wellness.
- Health plan money spent on tobacco cessation has a better return on investment than any other preventive service. It leads to more and faster savings than mammograms, colonoscopies, cholesterol testing, and in fact any other kind of screening!
- It takes less than 50 cents per member per month to fully support our employees with tobacco cessation benefits.

Well, here’s your stop! Can I call our health plan representative for you, and get this done? That will keep the smoke-free momentum going!”

### Stress Management

“It amazes me how calm you look when I know all the big decisions you make. If I were you, my mind would race a mile a minute! I guess staying cool under pressure is part of your job description. Of course, everybody in this organization deals with stress. Did you know that:

- Our health risk appraisal shows stress is our most costly health risk. It drives a lot of medical spending, and not just on mental health services. Every condition worsens with stress, whether its back pain, migraines, high blood pressure, or heart disease.
- Some of our longest and most difficult-to-manage employee absences owe to stress problems.
- We do more work with fewer people than ever before! That means more stress for each individual. And, we can’t afford for any of our teams to lose a key member!
- Stress is a workplace risk, kind of like noise exposure. We deal with workplace risks at the source, not downstream. We wouldn’t deal with workplace noise exposure just by buying hearing aids for employees who go deaf. Likewise, we shouldn’t deal with stress by just providing mental health benefits to stressed employees.
- One way to deal with stress at the sources is to train managers in stress-free management. And we need to teach both managers and employees constructive communication.

Can I talk to our Employee Assistance Program today about getting that started? They could have it ready for the next Managers' Retreat you hold. You know, each day that goes by, the stress seems to get worse."

### Safety

"How lucky to see you!" I just have to tell somebody what an employee just told me about how much better he feels since starting treatment for sleep apnea. Like a lot of employees, this fellow has trouble with his weight and carries a lot of it around his neck. His wife had been bugging him to get tested for sleep apnea, because his crazy snoring during the night scares her half to death. Well, he had the test, started treatment, and told me today he wished he had done this five years ago! The trouble is, about 20 percent of our workforce seems to fit his mold. I'm worried we have lots of drowsy people around here who operate hazardous machines and driving trucks and tow motors who probably have sleep apnea but don't know it. That threatens their health, of course, with high blood pressure and heart disease. But it threatens their safety too, with more workplace accidents. Did you know that:

- Truck drivers with untreated sleep apnea have 2-7 times higher crash rates!
- Probably 20 percent of truck drivers have untreated sleep apnea.
- During the first two years of treatment for sleep apnea, truck drivers have \$6,000 lower costs than during the two years before treatment, in total health plan and disability costs.

What's good for truck drivers would be good for our employees too. Will you endorse a campaign to make employees aware that they need to know about this and see their doctors?"

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Naturally, Occ Doc in a Box recommends "always take the stairs." But if you catch the CEO headed for the elevator, get your talking points ready and dive in! What a difference a minute can make!