

TAPGRAM

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HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We live in a free country. As an American citizen you have the right to speak out on the issues of the day. You have the freedom to write a letter, saying what you know and what you think, and to send that letter to the editor of a newspaper. And the editors, who also live in this free country, have the right to throw it in the wastebasket if they do not like it.

But most editors want to appear fair-minded, and most will print letters supporting both sides of a controversial issue. They will even print letters presenting points of view they themselves do not support — especially if the letter is a good one.

How do you write an effective letter to the editor? How do you present your case in a clear, calm and compelling fashion? Following is a list of suggested "Dos and Don'ts" designed to help you write a letter and get it published. First of all, what you should do.

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DOs



1. Think about what you want to say. Take a few moments before you start writing to decide exactly what the issue is and what point or points you want to make in expressing your opinion.

2. Organize your letter. Start with a simple identification of the issue and your position on it. For example:

As a [smoker] [taxpayer] [American citizen], I strongly oppose the recent proposal in Congress to double the federal excise tax on tobacco.

If you are responding to a particular article in the newspaper, identify the piece at the beginning of your letter.

Your March 22nd article on public smoking restrictions ("Councilman Smith proposes new restrictions"), fails to report that many members of the City Council oppose these unnecessary and unenforceable regulations.

This same rule applies if you are responding to an editorial or a signed column.

Jack Taylor's recent column ("Why I think all smokers should be shot," Jan. 15, 1988) is a perfect example of the kind of zealotry which pervades the anti-smoking side of the smoking issue.

In your next paragraph, state the reasons for your position. For example, if writing about the excise tax, you might start off your second paragraph with

The federal excise tax on tobacco was only recently doubled in 1985. There can be no justification for doubling it yet again, especially when you consider the impact tobacco excise taxes have on the poor.

3. Get your facts straight. If you are going to write:

"The percentage of income paid in tobacco excise taxes by a family earning \$10,000 a year is 15 times as high as that paid by a family earning \$100,000,"

make sure your information is correct. In this case, it is. But it helps to be able to add the source:

"according to a Congressional Budget Report released in December of 1986."

Hard data and published statistical information can help your argument. Information on all tobacco issues is available from The Tobacco Institute, 1875

1 Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 (1-800-424-9876), or from Philip Morris U.S.A. Corporate Affairs, 120 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

4. Write simply and clearly. Keep your sentences short and active.

Tobacco excise taxes gouge the poor.

City-wide smoking restrictions are impossible to enforce.

Do you want our police patrolling for cigarette smokers or rapists?

5. Make sure your handwriting is legible, if you are writing your letter by hand.

6. Be sure to sign your letter, and put your name, address and telephone number on it. Newspapers always confirm authorship with a note or phone call before they will publish a letter-to-the-editor. Making it easier for the paper to reach you increases the chances that your letter will be chosen for publication.

Following the above steps should help to get your letter into print. The following are examples of what to avoid.

DON'Ts



1. Don't range all over the place. If the issue is tobacco excise taxes, don't start fuming about workplace smoking restrictions. Stick to the subject.

2. Don't write convoluted sentences that just run on and on and on. Writing things like:

"The tobacco excise tax issue, arguably one of the most vital, and, may I add, one of the best examples of the heights to which inequity in this great land can lead, is, without a doubt, an issue to which we, as fair-minded Americans, should be addressing ourselves..."

will put the editor to sleep.

3. Don't send anonymous letters. They are never printed.

4. Don't be insulting. Avoid personal insults such as "Fatso," "Mush-brain," and the ever popular "Scheming, no-good, meddling, two-faced, double-dealing, blood-sucking creep." It may feel good, but it will not do a thing for your cause. At best, it will not be printed. At worst, it will be, and will damage the credibility of the side you are trying to present.

5. **Don't threaten the editor**, write a personal attack on a reporter or suggest that the newspaper will not be worth the paper it's printed on if it does not print your letter. Editors are tough-minded and stubborn. They do not respond to threats, blackmail, wheedling or pleas. They defend their reporters and their paper.

6. **Don't be overly sarcastic** or rely on heavy irony. Letters with lines like:

"Oh, yeah, right. A proposal to double the excise tax on tobacco. Great. That's just what we've all been waiting for. I mean, we've all just been holding our breath hoping and praying every day that some brilliant legislator would have the foresight and wisdom to think of such a wonderful idea. I mean, what a stunning solution to the nation's fiscal problems. Double the excise tax on tobacco. Yeah, we're all real excited about it down here, you just betcha..."

get put in a special file and sent to journalism schools as examples of how not to write.

The final "Do" on our list is: **Do write letters to the editor.** If there is an issue you are concerned about or have a strong opinion on, articulate your position. Write that letter. Say what you feel. After all, this is America. ■

RICHMOND PM USA EMPLOYEES HELP TELL STATE LEGISLATORS THAT TOBACCO IS STILL KING

"We rarely have a firsthand opportunity to defend the tobacco industry. So when we heard that the Virginia General Assembly was considering implementing statewide smoking restrictions, we were uncertain about how involved employees would be. But were we ever surprised!"

So said Richmond PM USA Manufacturing Center Training Manager Pat Crabtree, in discussing the grassroots support workers gave to help defeat a proposed ban on smoking in all public places in Virginia.

"Once our people learned about the 'Clean Air Act,' hundreds approached their supervisors and asked what they could do to help," Crabtree said.

Steven Spain, directing business representative for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Richmond Local Lodge 10, described one factor that led to the massive employee involvement. "This was not just management's fight. It was a time when management and hourly workers could work together."

It was in fact a true team effort. And with a team consisting of PM employees, Chambers of Commerce representatives, manufacturing associations and Tobacco Institute personnel, it's hard to miss.

More than 200 PM USA plant workers, many of whom had never before participated in the political process, volunteered their non-working hours to at-

tend a joint House/Senate hearing. Each wore a blue and white lapel pin that proclaimed "S.B. 130/H.B. 430 BAD FOR VIRGINIA!"

throughout the morning's proceedings.

SB130 / HB430

**BAD FOR
VIRGINIA !!**

The debate continued for almost three hours, as both supporters and opponents of the smoking restrictions stated their cases.

According to Stockton Street Manager of Employee Involvement Debbie Wolenberg, personal choice, loss of employment and revenues, difficulty in enforcement and Virginia's rich tobacco heritage were among the reasons cited in opposition to the restrictions.



Debbie Wolenberg



Steve Spain



Pat Crabtree

Spain expressed to the lawmakers his strong opposition. "Those bills put in jeopardy thousands of good-paying jobs. We're not talking about minimum wage, fast food jobs. These are good-paying, productive jobs with a future."

Spain also told the lawmakers that smoking restrictions would discourage the tobacco industry from expanding in the state. He reminded them that Brown & Williamson cited economic incentives when it moved from Petersburg, Virginia to Macon, Georgia.

"And now Petersburg has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state," Spain said.

Louis Eisenberger, a spokesman for the Virginia Hospitality Association and Virginia Restaurant Association, said that the bills would make the 2,800 association members he represents into "policemen and bad guys."

Following the hearing, the original proposal was watered down considerably—provisions to ban smoking in restaurants, libraries, museums and other places were removed. This alone would have been a significant victory for the 200 PM USA employees.

But in the end, there was a total victory for smokers' rights. The Senate Health Committee voted down the bill, while a vote of the full House sent it back to committee. The measure is dead for the remainder of the legislative session.

"There is an incredible amount of pride among our employees. It is a comfortable feeling to know that we have a tremendous pool of talent and resources waiting to be tapped," Crabtree said.

Stockton Street Manager Debbie Wolenberg summed it up this way: "A lot of times people give of their time and don't know if the company appreciates it. We not only appreciate the efforts of all employees who helped out, but we believe that their attendance at the hearing had a tremendous impact on the outcome."



"YES" "YES"

CANDIDATES SAY 'YES' TO TOBACCO PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM

With one or two exceptions, this year's field of presidential candidates is generally favorable to the tobacco price support program.

Some examples:

Governor Michael Dukakis (D-MA) recently told an audience in Wilson, North Carolina that he had "no problem" with the program in its present form.

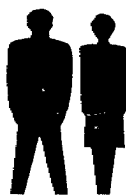
The position of Senator Albert Gore (D-TN) remains uncertain. He has stated that he opposes "subsidies" but has not made it clear whether he appreciates that the tobacco price support program is paid for by growers, not by the federal government.

Republican frontrunner Vice President George Bush is also believed to be in favor of the program.

The most clear-cut opponent is former television evangelist Pat Robertson who has called for a 10-year phase-out of the domestic tobacco industry.

PHILIP MORRIS SCORES HIGH MARKS IN JAPAN

In a recent poll conducted by **Financial World**, the four largest brokers in Tokyo were asked which American stocks they were currently recommending to their clients. Only three American companies received the endorsements of three out of the four brokers. Philip Morris was one them. The other two? Dow Chemical and "Big Blue," IBM.



TAPGRAM PROFILE

CARL P. JOHNSON, REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MANAGER

It's not surprising that Carl Johnson has a pleasant Southern accent. He is, after all, Government Affairs Manager for what he calls "some of the most southern of the Southern states:" Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi and Florida.

"All except Florida," he adds with gentle irony. "Florida is really not a part of the South. We have all the same problems down there that [PM USA Government Affairs Manager] John Boltz has in the Northeast."

Florida aside, most of the Southern states are more reasonable, Johnson says, when it comes to smoking restrictions. But that doesn't mean his job is easy. Johnson's territory covers a lot of ground—thousands of small towns—giving the anti-smoking forces lots of opportunity to make trouble on the local level.



Carl P. Johnson,
Regional Government
Affairs Manager, Southeast

Johnson does have his share of major battles shaping up—South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida all have so-called "Clean-Air" bills

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pending—but more often than not he finds himself trying to put out half a dozen small brush fires at once.

"Our short-term problem is to counter our opponents on the local level. They are motivated, extremely hostile and they are getting better organized all the time."

Johnson began working for PM USA in 1977, as Manager for Agricultural Relations and Analysis in the Leaf Department. With a background in agricultural journalism, it was natural for him to begin working on the Federal Tobacco Program.

"That put me in contact with a lot of people in both government and agriculture," he confirms. The experience he gained dealing with government officials made him a perfect choice for his current position, marshalling grass-roots support in favor of the right to choose to smoke, and defending PM USA's political interests in the South.

Johnson believes strongly that PM USA employees can play a significant role in fighting smoking restrictions on the local level.

"There was a case recently of a smoking restriction ordinance proposed for Sumter, South Carolina. A member of the Sales Force found out about it and got the information to us in time to do something." The bill has since been withdrawn.

Johnson's advice to employees: "Don't ever assume we know about it. If you hear about an anti-smoking bill being proposed where you live, give us a call or, if you're in the Sales Force, contact your Section Sales Manager.

"You can make a difference."

TAPQUOTE OF THE MONTH

"According to summaries of 1987 performance, Northwest [Airlines] received the second most passenger complaints, falling at or near the bottom for delays or cancellations, overbookings, lost and damaged luggage and other aspects of customer service."

—Brennan Moran of The Tobacco Institute
USA Today 3/28/88.



RESNIK RESPONDS TO NORTHWEST AIRLINES SMOKING BAN

Frank E. Resnik, President of Philip Morris U.S.A., responded quickly to Northwest Airlines' announcement that it was banning smoking on all of its North American flights starting April 23. In a memo to all PM USA employees, Resnik called Northwest's ban "a marketing ploy—using smokers to get some cheap publicity."

He added that "No law requires them to ban smoking on flights greater than two hours, yet they are doing it. We must stand up for fair and equal treatment of smokers as well as non-smokers. We cannot allow one company to abuse our customers in this way."

Resnik then outlined steps PM USA employees could take as a response to Northwest's ban, including calling Northwest to tell them you oppose the ban or sending a mailgram by phoning Western Union at 1-800-257-4900 and asking for operator 9381, then dictating a message. These mailgrams will automatically go to Northwest's management.

Resnik emphasized that Northwest's "outrageous and discriminatory ban requires an immediate response."

TI PAMPHLET EXAMINES "HIDDEN" FINDINGS

A copy of The Tobacco Institute's new pamphlet **Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Health: The Consensus**, is being sent to all TAPMEMBERS along with the April issue of TAPGRAM.

The 13-page pamphlet highlights many of the hidden "back-of-the-book" conclusions and statements about environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) published in reports issued by the U.S. Surgeon General's office, the U.S. National Research Council and Australia's National Health & Medical Research Council.

Despite highly-publicized "front-of-the-book" summaries suggesting ETS may be harmful to non-smokers, actual research for that claim is not persuasive, according to quotes culled from the three reports.

The consensus? More study is needed. There is no conclusive evidence that ETS poses a health hazard to healthy nonsmokers.

Additional copies of **Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Health: The Consensus**, may be obtained by writing to The Tobacco Institute, 1875 I Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20006, or Philip Morris U.S.A., Corporate Affairs, 120 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

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"GIVE ME THE LETTER PHILIP—AND A CIGARETTE, PLEASE"

Legendary film star Bette Davis is a smoker and proud of it, according to a story by Jim Emerson in *The Seattle Times*. Asked what she thinks of the anti-smoking movement, Miss Davis replied, "I resent it more than I can tell you!" Emerson interviewed the film star in her West Hollywood apartment.

"I think it's a big farce myself," Davis went on to say, "and I think it's our own business what we do. Who has the right to say 'You can't smoke?'"

Miss Davis is remembered for starring roles in such films as "The Letter", "Elizabeth the Queen" and "Now, Voyager", where Paul Henreid made film history by lighting two cigarettes at once—one for himself and one for Miss Davis.

HOME SHOPPING CLUB PRESIDENT RESPONDS TO PM USA INQUIRY ABOUT ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN

March **TAPGRAM** included a report about Bob Circosta, an announcer on the Home Shopping Club cable television show who initiated an on-the-air crusade against smoking.

After learning about Circosta's campaign from PM USA employees in both Louisville and Richmond, PM USA Vice President for Corporate Affairs Guy L. Smith IV wrote to Home Shopping Club Chairman of the Board Roy M. Speer, and asked whether Circosta's behavior was consistent with company policy.

Smith received a response from that company's President, Lowell W. Paxson. Here is an excerpt from Paxson's letter:

"While Mr. Circosta's views may not necessarily be the views of management, it is his prerogative to express his opinion. If the viewers wish to join him in his New Year's resolution that is their right."

We agree with Mr. Paxson when he defends freedom of speech and choice. By the same token, the more than 20,000 PM USA present and retired employees who re-

ceive **TAPGRAM** are free to make their choices. And they are free to talk about those choices with everyone they know.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Robert K. Taylor of PM USA Richmond is the lucky TAP member randomly selected as the winner of a trip to Washington, D.C. for the January, 1989 Inaugural festivities.

Taylor was one of hundreds of PM USA employees who sent in their suggestions and requests for information in response to Guy Smith's challenge in the January **TAPGRAM**. These postcards and letters provided us with a wealth of ideas about how to better communicate our message to smokers and nonsmokers. Everyone who sent us ideas or requests for information was entered into the drawing.

Congratulations to Robert K. Taylor, and our deepest thanks to all other Tap members who took the time to request information and share their ideas with us.

WELCOME TO NEW TAPMEMBERS: Harold Deal, GA; Mark Enos, OR; Phillip Woodson, IL; Larry Perkins, FL; Jonathon George, OR; Carla Tartaglia, MA; Tondelayo Beaulieu, NY; Jesus Santiago, NY; Philip Rodgers, TX; Mark Holland, CA; Richard Trojanowski, IL; Mary LaPoint, OH; Gary Pabst, WI.

A BIG TAP THANKS TO: Hugh Sutherland, VA; Jack Gibson, CO; Larry King, CA; Chris Frank, IA; Emilliano Lopez, CA; Ross Rainwater, NC; Robert Stirling, MD; John Viola, MD; John Love, TX; Joyce Robinson, SC; Sheila Rothrock, AL; Jimmy Ruotolo, CT; Ray Bullis, CT; Jerry Tusan, CA; Doug Diamond, MI; J.A. Staknis, NY; Daniel Hanchey, VA; Russ Martin, IL; James Snow, AK; Steve Vasquez, CA; Tony Jackson, CA; Kelly Jacobs, CA; Carmen Benitez, CA; Laura Hand, CA; Craig Connors, CA; Davida Culp, CA; James Connelly, CA; Jerry Tusan, CA; Don Cloney, CA; Tim Barbera, CA; Henry Posse, CA; Gil Contreras, CA; Lenny Nelson, CO; Johnny Byrge, CO; Dick Koch, WA; Tom Rau, WA; Jim Keighley, MA; Ron Eaton, FL; Rex Castle, AL; Jurij Hranowskyj, VA; Jill Richmond, MS; Steve Duncan, GA; Martin Goldfarb, NC; Don Traylor, KS; John Clary, KS; Dennis O'Neill, IL; Tim Higgins, IL.

The Tobacco Action Program (TAP) is a voluntary legislative support and communications organization for Philip Morris employees and their spouses. TAPGRAM, published by the USA Public Affairs Department, keeps employees informed on issues that affect the tobacco industry and encourages involvement in the political process.

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