



## Breastfeeding WORKS

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**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Internal Communications — Associations / Government / Nonprofit Organizations

Recently enacted federal law requires companies to support the efforts of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace by providing time and facilities. A healthcare leader, Tarrant County Public Health created a new lactation policy and contracted Strategic Image, Inc. to develop an internal communication plan. The resulting campaign, “Breastfeeding WORKS: What’s Good for Babies is Good for Business,” used real employee stories to build a business and personal case for supporting coworkers’ lactation efforts. The policy gained nearly unanimous leadership and employee support, and the Texas Department of State Health Services designated 21 TCPH locations as Mother Friendly Worksites.

Internal communications includes programs targeted specifically to special publics directly allied with an organization, such as employees, members, affiliated dealers and franchisees.

### Full Text: **SUMMARY**

With a grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) contracted Strategic Image, Inc. to build internal support for a new lactation policy. TCPH and Strategic Image created *Breastfeeding WORKS*, an internal communication campaign that addressed common myths about breastfeeding, and built a business case for supporting coworker/employee lactation efforts. Rolled out in late 2012, the campaign helped TCPH gain overwhelming leadership buy-in, and has since been used as a best practices example by the Texas Department of State Health Services. The campaign also serves as a national template for companies looking to engage internal audiences in the support of lactation efforts in the workplace, thereby supporting a healthier workforce.

### **CHALLENGES**

Recently enacted federal law requires companies to support breastfeeding mothers by providing a reasonable amount of break time and a space to express milk as frequently as needed, for up to one year following the birth of the employee's child. In practice, this requirement can cause tension in the workplace if managers and coworkers do not support these efforts. Gaining internal buy-in is critical if companies are to provide mothers with the physical and emotional support to continue breastfeeding efforts for at least a full year as recommended by healthcare professionals.

While grant funding guidelines for this project predominantly measured success through *output* objectives, the project team spent significant time helping the client identify and outline *outcome* measurements that demonstrated changes in attitudes, behavior and buy-in, while meeting grant required objectives. In addition, inherent in the work was an understanding that the campaign might someday be used on a larger scale with audiences less pre-disposed to this issue.

## RESEARCH

Strategic Image worked with the client to conduct and interpret research to better understand the needs of the audience and get a baseline read on opinions and preconceptions. The following primary and secondary research helped shape the campaign and set the tone for messaging:

- Employee Interviews - More than a dozen employee/parents of TCPH were interviewed to determine how breastfeeding had benefited their children and families.
- Employee Survey – A survey was distributed to employees and supervisors to get baseline data and determine perceptions/needs/attitudes. This information was used to determine what materials were needed, develop direction and messaging, and define objectives.
- Leadership Council – An advisory committee was organized with a representative from each department within TCPH. This committee helped act as a focus group and test ideas.
- Best Practices – Local companies with lactation policies were contacted to uncover best practices. None had implemented employee communication campaigns or provided more than the required lactation room. Online research yielded no examples to follow.
- Business Case Research– Data was gathered to support the business case for lactation efforts. Pertinent stats were included as Did You Know facts in all collateral materials.

## PLANNING

With a budget of \$7,895, Strategic Image developed an internal communications plan, created a branded internal campaign logo and tag line, and designed collateral materials for multiple usage. A two-tiered rollout was recommended to educate and bring supervisors on board before communicating to employees. Department-wide education was recommended, with employees receiving communication through meetings, newsletters, emails, signage in employee break rooms, etc. For sustainability, the plan called for ongoing success stories and continued use of campaign materials, particularly with new employees and parents.

The campaign goal was defined as follows: TCPH supervisors and employees will have the tools and education to comply with and take advantage of a new lactation worksite policy and support employee and coworker efforts. Audiences were identified as TCPH supervisors, employees, expectant families and new employees.

Strategies	Tactics	Tools
Educate supervisors about new policy and provide tools to help them talk to employees	Develop tools to make it easier for supervisors talk to employees, address myths and support parents	Branded supervisor packet with all resources: Q&A's, policy statement, Fliers, postcards, handouts, poster. Power Point presentation. New employee/new parent packets.
Use real stories to help employees see how their support benefits coworker's families and themselves (WIFM)	Presentations in dept. meetings, posters in break rooms, articles in employee pubs, "Did You Know" facts in all materials that address WIFM (i.e. breastfeeding means fewer sick days/less covering for a coworker)	Campaign posters/fliers Power Point presentation. Employee success stories Fact sheets, FAQ's

Educate expectant parents and families about eligibility for benefits and help them educate/recognize coworkers	Care kits for supervisors and managers to deliver to new or interested employees. Create tools so mothers can signify they are on a pumping break, and thank co-workers for support	Branded folders with letter from supervisor, program summary, FAQ's, support materials, etc.  Door hangers, desk tents, thank you notes to send to co-workers, etc.
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## EXECUTION

Strategic Image delivered an easy to recognize logo and tag line: *Breastfeeding WORKS, What's Good For Babies is Good for Business*. Collateral materials were created, and TCPH implemented strategies, tactics and tools as outlined in the communication plan. Initial efforts focused on the supervisor audience, before rolling out the communication to employees. A follow-up of the initial survey was conducted at year-end to measure initial success and adapt tactics, as needed.

## EVALUATION OF SUCCESS

- TCPH will become recognized as a Mother Friendly Workplace by December 2012.
  - RESULT:** The Texas Department of State Health Services designated **21** facilities within TCPH as Silver Level Texas Mother Friendly Worksites.
- A majority of TCPH supervisors will receive training on the new policy and have the tools needed to implement the TCPH lactation policy by December 2012.
  - RESULT: 100 percent** of supervisors were trained. According to a post-campaign survey, **100 percent** now feel comfortable discussing the new policy. Approximately **95 percent** indicate they have the resources to communicate the importance of a mother-friendly worksite to employees (up from 51.4 percent), **95 percent** feel they have the information to help employees find time and space for expressing/feeding (up from 66.7 percent).
- The number of expectant families using lactation services provided by TCPH will increase from **three to 10** by December 2012.
  - RESULT:** Currently, **24** employees are using lactation rooms or have borrowed breast pump equipment (including two dads, five grandparents, three sisters and one brother). Approximately **12 breast pumps are** on loan at one time (compared to two prior to rollout).

**Additional Successes:** The Texas Department of Health Services recently used the *Breastfeeding WORKS* campaign as an example of best practices in a presentation to Texas companies considering similar efforts. And, while initial efforts focused on supervisors, the campaign is already beginning to show positive results with the TCPH employee base.

- Employees familiar with the policy increased from approximately 47 percent to **78 percent**.
- Approximately **90 percent** of employees now say they would support a co-worker's lactation efforts (up from 82 percent).

This communication effort continues at TCPH, and the Breastfeeding WORKS campaign serves as a model for organizations looking to educate and engage employees in an important health initiative.

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