



## Novozymes has become smoke-free

**Smoking is one of the most important factors for physical health, and that is why one of Denmark's largest workplaces has become smoke-free.**

*By Kristine Seest*

With the help of Willis Towers Watson's Corporate Health & Wellbeing advisors, Novozymes has become a completely smoke-free company with the desire to become a healthy workplace and the ambition to make a positive contribution to society. This means that the 2,700 employees who work for Novozymes in Denmark can no longer smoke or make use of snuff and other tobacco products during working hours. The rules also apply to everyone who visits Novozymes at their various locations in Denmark.

»As a company, we want to make a difference. We already focus on health with the food we serve in the canteen, and alcohol, for example, was abolished long ago. The smoke-free workplace is the natural next step,« says Rasmus Lynge, Head of Global Labour & Employee Relations at Novozymes.

Different parts of the organization – including shop stewards and working environment committees – have been involved in the introduction of the smoke-free working hours in Novozymes and in the preparation of a new policy on the matter.

### Uncertainty and freedom of choice

In the beginning, there was a lot of speculation in Novozymes about how the smoke-free environment would be received and handled by the employees, but they have generally welcomed the smoking cessation initiative, which was announced in the autumn of 2020 and has been in force since 1 January 2021.

»There was a lot of uncertainty about how employees would react and whether they would see it as an intrusion into their private lives. Because we have not just introduced a smoke-free workplace, but smoke-free working hours, the smoking cessation also applies when working from home. But the fears that were addressed in the beginning have been put to shame. I have heard far more success stories than the opposite, and I think it has to do with the offers that smokers have been given in connection with the introduction of the smoke-free working hours,« says Rasmus Lynge.

Smoking cessation courses, brochures to be shared with spouses at home and information for all employees are among the initiatives that Novozymes has put in place to help smokers quit smoking. And from the very beginning, it has been the ambition not to shame the smokers, but to care for them.

### Useful courses

The smoking cessation courses have been carried out in collaboration with an external supplier and have been a great success.

»80 percent of the participants in our smoking cessation courses have stopped smoking. And it seems that the group dynamics that arise on the courses have been a great help. I met someone who said that he would not be the one who came to the next course and had started smoking again. A great sense of community has emerged from the smoking courses and a strong focus on helping and supporting each other,« says Rasmus Lyngé.

He points out that smokers often lack the good reason to quit, and that he sees Novozymes' new policy as the reason and a nudge in the right direction.

»I am happy, every time a person in Novozymes quits smoking because research has clearly shown that quitting tobacco has a significant positive health effect. If we as a company can accelerate that process, we can make a positive difference,« says Rasmus Lyngé.

## Help with the process

Novozyymes has chosen to involve Willis Towers Watson's Corporate Health & Wellbeing advisors in the process of becoming a smoke-free company. Willis Towers Watson has advised Novozymes on the chosen initiatives, on the choice of suppliers and has created the communication campaign.

»Willis Towers Watson has been a really good coach and catalyst in this process. They have helped us analyze the situation and have kept the process moving forward – and they have also provided valuable input to what the general solution should look like,« says Rasmus Lyngé.

Willis Towers Watson has also facilitated the dialogue between Novozymes and its pension provider, Danica Pension, who has co-financed the offers that Novozymes has made available to the company's smokers.

Team Leader Søren Egens Petersen from Corporate Health & Wellbeing in Willis Towers Watson is impressed by the initiative and the results that Novozymes has delivered.

»As a smoke-free workplace, Novozymes is a leading example for other companies. It is not easy to change the habits and culture at work, but Novozymes has succeeded with strong collaboration, by sharing experiences and through a good dialogue,« says Søren Egens Petersen.

## Tips for other companies

Below you can see some of the advice that Rasmus Lyngé from Novozymes passes on to other companies that want to become smoke-free.

- **Do not let fear become a stumbling block** – employees can react far more positively than expected
- **Prepare with care** – and involve relevant stakeholders and partners from the very beginning
- **Ensure a good story and good offers** – it is important that the smoking cessation is well prepared and that all relevant stakeholders are taken into consideration when developing the story and the offers
- **Involve professionals** – look for the suppliers in the field and involve those who best suit the company's needs. The municipalities also have many good offers for smoking cessation – and they are free of charge
- **Cover all types of tobacco** – let the smoke-free environment include all types of tobacco (also snuff)
- **Take care of the smokers** – it is important that smokers do not feel singled out

Contact Corporate Health & Wellbeing at Willis Towers Watson if you want advice or coaching on how to become a smoke-free company.