

Substance Abuse in Organizations

Changes – Management Issues – Policies

1971 - 1993

Management by Walking Around
High Standards
Leadership by Example
Listening
Managers Participate in Training

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**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

Preface

Officially, 1993 represents the 23rd year that I have been involved with the subject of substance abuse in American organizations. Throughout the years, what began as a very personal motivation became a professional career goal. Then it became an academic research goal, and now again, a personal and professional commitment. It started simply. While inside a large organization in 1969 and 1970, I was shocked to watch disciplinary action taken against young employees who were assigned boring, repetitive tasks. I struggled with why these young, intelligent employees would waste their minds by getting "stoned" every night. I struggled equally with the inconsistencies in management practices. Throughout graduate school, I determined to work helping organizations manage employees in a way that would reduce the possibilities and effects of substance abuse.

Since the 1986 study, one of the biggest changes to this research has been in the international area. In 1990, I was invited to participate in the 5th Annual European Employee Assistance Conference in Ireland. There was interest in how the U.S. has addressed substance abuse in the workplace versus how European communities were starting to attack the problem. Again in 1991, I was invited to deliver the opening address for the 6th European Employee Assistance Conference. And now, during 1993, the same questionnaire used for this study is being used in a study of Irish companies - and we are working on cooperative research efforts with The Alliance for a Drug Free Canada.

In the first studies, a major university provided significant funding for the project. Since 1986, the research personally because of a commitment to the continued development of this important data.

*The report is dedicated to workers everywhere,
individuals who deserve to work in a drug-free workplace and
who deserve to work drug-free and enjoy the satisfaction of
productive employment and well-managed organizations.*

JWS 5/1/93

Introduction

Substance abuse in organizations has become one of many organizational problems that are affecting productivity, costing organizations money - and costing individuals productive careers and lives. It is important to examine real organizational experiences, policies, and practices. Very few organizations have been able to escape the problem.

The results described in this study are based on 23 years of research. Surveys done at regular intervals in 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, and 1992 have gathered data about organization's experience with substance abuse. Information about organization policies, procedures, and training efforts are examined. The report also contains a variety of typical situations involving substance abuse and testing. In these incidents, respondents provide insights into their management practices. This information is helpful to any organization trying to define or improve its practices for dealing with employee substance abuse.

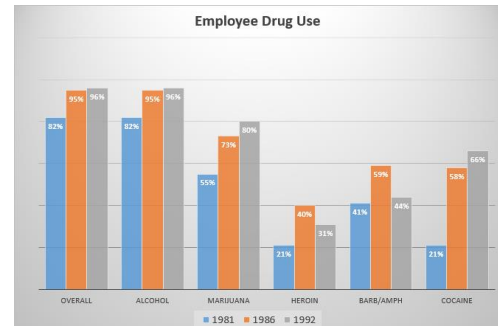
This report is organized into sections covering major findings, on-the-job drug use, history and background, policy and practice, management issues, trends, drug testing, and size issues. In addition, each major topic is divided into sections presenting the results of the survey, the interpretation of the results, and when appropriate, recommendations for action.

Major Findings

1993 is a year that begins with continued emphasis on positive management techniques. Lessons from quality, ten years of striving for excellence and one minute management, megatrends for 2000 and beyond, and others have shown us that organizations can be successful, good places to work. But with the positive news comes the negative news -- about substance abuse in the workplace. The fifth survey in a twenty-three-year examination of information has the following major findings.

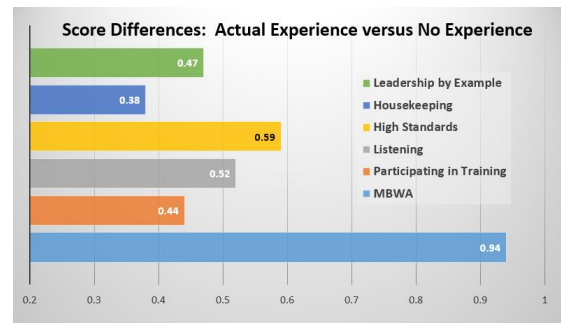
On-the-Job Substance Abuse Is Up -- and Down!

- 96% of organizations have had direct experience with employee substance abuse on the job. Experiences with alcohol, cocaine, and marijuana are up -- cocaine is again up dramatically -- while experiences with heroin and barbiturates/amphetamines are down.



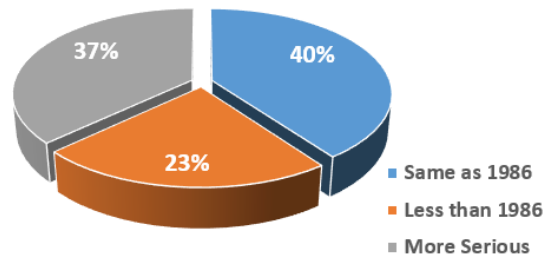
Positive Management Practices Make a Difference - in Actual Experience and in Organization's Assessment of the Problem in the Last Five Years

- Organizations who have had less actual experience with some forms of substance abuse and those who believe that their experience is "less than 1986 - 1987" have scores significantly higher on positive management practices taken from Tom Peters' "Thriving on Chaos."



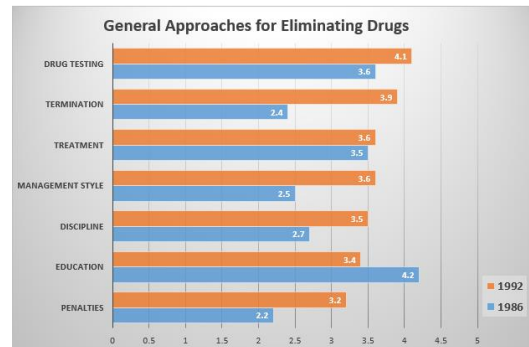
A Majority Feel the Substance Abuse Problem Is the Same or More Serious than Five Years Ago

- 77% of organizations feel that the alcohol and drug abuse problem within their own organizations is the same or more serious than it was five years ago. For the first time in ten years, there was a substantial increase of organizations - 23%, up from only 2% - responding that the problem was less serious than five years ago.



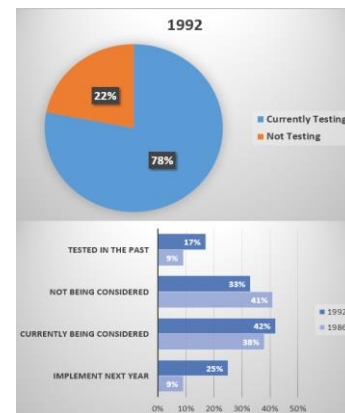
Testing Is the Favored Technique for Eliminating Drugs in the Work Force

- There is significant movement toward tougher penalties, stricter policies, and testing. Education dropped as the preferred alternative for eliminating drugs from the workplace.



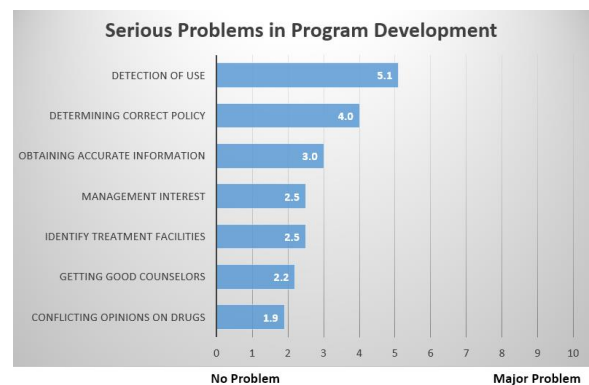
Drug Testing Is Being Used in a Majority of Organizations

- 78% (up from 42% five years ago) of the organizations are currently testing for drugs. Of the remaining, 42% are considering drug testing at the present time and an additional 25% have made plans to initiate drug testing within the next year.



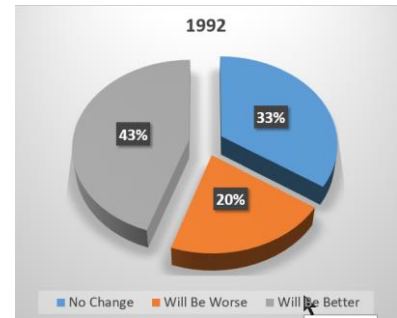
Detection of Drug Use Is the Most Serious Problem for Most Organizations

- Detection of drug use has always been the most cited problem by the organizations in the data base. Determining the correct policy has replaced obtaining accurate information as the number two problem. Obtaining accurate information holds on to a much weaker third place rating.



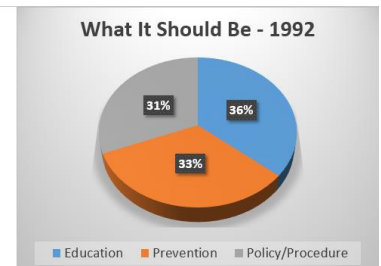
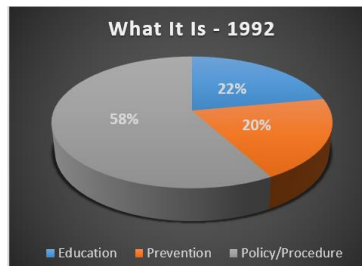
Respondents Feel the Drug Problem Will Get Better in the Next Five Years

- 43% of the respondents feel the drug and alcohol problem will get better in the next five years - compared to 52% five years ago. But while some of the optimism of five years ago has disappeared, only 20% of the respondents, down from 30% in 1986, feel the problem will get worse.



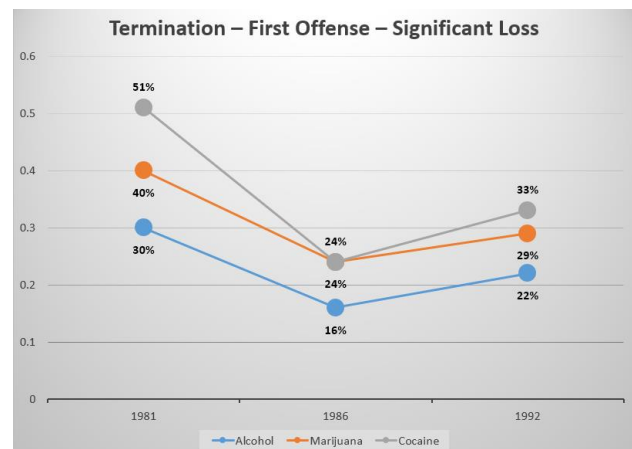
Policy and Procedure Are the Primary Focus of Most Training

- Respondents reported that 58% of organizational training efforts related to substance abuse focus on policy and procedure. But they believe this should be substantially less - with a much greater emphasis placed on education and prevention.



Reactions to Substance Abuse Are Quicker and Tougher

- While responses to specific incidents of substance abuse have changed dramatically over the years, some of the most significant changes in the responses appear in this latest survey. Organizations responded with quicker early referrals to employee assistance programs - followed by much quicker terminations. And there's a rise in terminations occurring on a first offense.



Recommendations

Throughout this report, a number of recommendations are made concerning drug use, policies, training, and management issues. The following are highlights of the major recommendations.

1. All organizations must admit to the problem and take steps necessary to deal with the problem. No organization can afford to ignore the problem or deal with it in a superficial way. The problem must be attacked with the reality that failure to curb the increasing levels of substance abuse will prove damaging to the health of any organization, damaging to an organization's efforts to improve customer service, or quality.
2. Organizations must develop creative, broader solutions to the problems of substance abuse. They must examine the substance abuse problem - not as a separate "personnel" problem - but as one which is as much related to organizational success as quality. And it's much more integrated with issues like recruiting, training, compensation, and management than some individuals and organizations have been willing to admit.
3. Organizations must develop creative strategies for preventing substance abuse in the work force. This means new policies for intervention and treatment, new training programs, new programs for employee productivity and morale, and new programs for job and individual enrichment. An integrated approach that includes management style, organization culture, and employee assistance efforts must be considered.
4. Training is not the only element in an organization's effort to confront substance abuse. But its absence seriously hampers efforts for successful implementation of a policy or employee assistance programming. Organizations must increase training efforts. And there is a corresponding need for new training materials for substance abuse programs.
5. There must be a more intense examination of the factors in the workplace that might contribute to substance abuse in the workplace.

The Study Authors

James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR is the founder of Far Cliffs Consulting. In addition to the Ph.D., he holds lifetime accreditation as a Senior Professional in Human Resources.

Dr. Schreier has been researching the problems of alcohol and drug abuse in organizations for 15 years. He has conducted major national surveys of company experiences, problems, and policies in 1971, 1976, and 1981. Dr. Schreier has spoken throughout the United States and in Europe about various aspects of the drug abuse problem in organizations and education. Dr. Schreier has appeared on numerous radio and television talk shows to discuss the drug abuse problem in organizations. He has published extensively on the problem and has participated in national efforts, including the 1986 "Controlling Substance Abuse" report, published by The Conference Board.

In 1990, Dr. Schreier presented at the 5th Annual European Employee Assistance Conference in Ireland. In 1991, he was invited to return to make the opening address at the 6th Annual European Employee Assistance Conference.

Brian J. Pugliese is the president of Far Cliffs Consulting and the Director of Human Resources Research. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, with a specialization in human resources from Marquette University. Before joining Far Cliffs Consulting, Brian worked for Andersen Consulting in Chicago. Brian is currently enrolled in the American University/National Training Laboratories Master's Degree program in Human Resource Development.

Far Cliffs Consulting is a management consulting organization, dedicated to improving both individual and organizational performance.

Human Resources Research, regularly conducts research projects into critical human resource and management issues. Current projects include the on-going, twenty-three-year study of substance abuse in the workplace, research into the ethical issues of recruitment, selection, and job-hunting practices, and an examination of management literacy.

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