

If you have to

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If 440,000 Americans are doing it, is it something you ought to be doing, too? Sure. If 440,000 people are eating fat-free yogurt, maybe you should, too. If 440,000 people use PowerPoint, maybe that's something you should explore. If 440,000 people watch The Voice, you might as well check it out, right? So, what are 440,000 Americans doing every year? What really cool thing should you be trying to be a part of? They're dying. From smoking.

When you smoke in your car with the windows closed, consider yourself one of the 440,000 invited to the party in the sky. When you stand outside the pharmacy smoking a cigarette while you wait for your bronchitis or COPD medication, you already know you're in the IN crowd of 440,000 folks who have paid the ultimate price to be included.

When you walk into my office with a smoky cloud swirling around you, I assume a couple of things about you that may or may not be true, but experience shows me, they're probably safe assumptions. I assume it's almost impossible to quit; if it were easy to quit smoking, fewer people would choose to continue. Some would smoke on, but many would not. So, I assume you're in a tough spot. But I also assume that if I hire you, my company's insurance premiums are going to go up. I assume you're going to take more breaks than your non-smoking colleagues, and more sick days, too. Basically, I assume you're going to cost me something.

I don't care if you smoke. I won't refuse to hire you because you smoke. I might even stand outside the restaurant with you while you have one after dinner. All I ask is that, when you meet me for a job interview, you refrain from lighting up in your car on the way, you don't stop for one on the sidewalk outside my window before the meeting, and you smell like everybody else when you come in.

I don't care if you smoke, but I wish you wouldn't.

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