Keep Our Place A Smoke-Free Space

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Background

Smoke-free workplaces protect staff from passive smoke and de-normalise smoking, creating an environment where more people achieve long-term smoking cessation. Smoke-free workplaces support people trying to quit and encourage people who smoke to make a quit attempt. As well as fulfilling legal obligations, a smoke-free policy sends a strong message to the community that a workplace is committed to providing a healthy environment for all staff and visitors.

Aims and Objectives

Working in partnership with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) we co-designed a project to increase awareness of the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Program and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business leaders and their organisations to promote and maintain smoke-free workplaces through:
• reviewing and fully implementing smoke-free workplace policies; and
• promoting the benefits of being smoke-free among employees.

Approach

We invited 15 organisations (10 ORIC registered and 5 non-ORIC) from 5 states (Qld, SA, NSW, NT, WA) to participate. In collaboration with local TIS teams, we worked with each organisation to update policies and practice. After engaging the organisation's executive and gaining consent to proceed, staff were invited to a change workshop led by the local TIS team. This workshop included:
• education about the benefits of being smoke-free in the workplace; and
• input into policy the new policy/existing policy changes.

This ensured any policy changes were led by the workforce, not imposed on them. This is important since policies that have local ownership and commitment are more likely to be followed.

Outcomes

We have co-created (with participating organisations and TIS teams) a resource package to support the creation, implementation and review of smoke-free workplace policies. Our approach includes a five-step process to engage and work with an organisation, tailoring activities to each workplace context (Figure 1) which is detailed in a program guide. Other resources include workshop materials, policy templates, and collateral with strengths-based messaging (to support self-empowerment and self-efficacy). This resource package is freely available from the TIS website (https://tacklingsmoking.org.au/introduction-to-activities/smoke-free/) and has been shared with ORIC.

Feedback from participating organisations demonstrates the acceptability of the approach. The majority of participants agreed that the change workshops were useful, interesting, and motivating (Figure 2). Most participants were either confident or very confident they could maintain a smoke-free workplace (Figure 3).

Insights and Lessons Learnt

Establishing a smoke-free workplace policy can be challenging for organisations. Bringing everyone together for a change workshop was complicated by time constraints, having a dispersed workforce, or concerns from staff that this was just another example of outsiders coming in to dictate how they should live their lives. Taking time to explain the collaborative approach and win people's trust is critical to success. Working at the pace of the organisation and tailoring activities to suit their needs and unique context is essential, even if this means the process takes several months to complete.
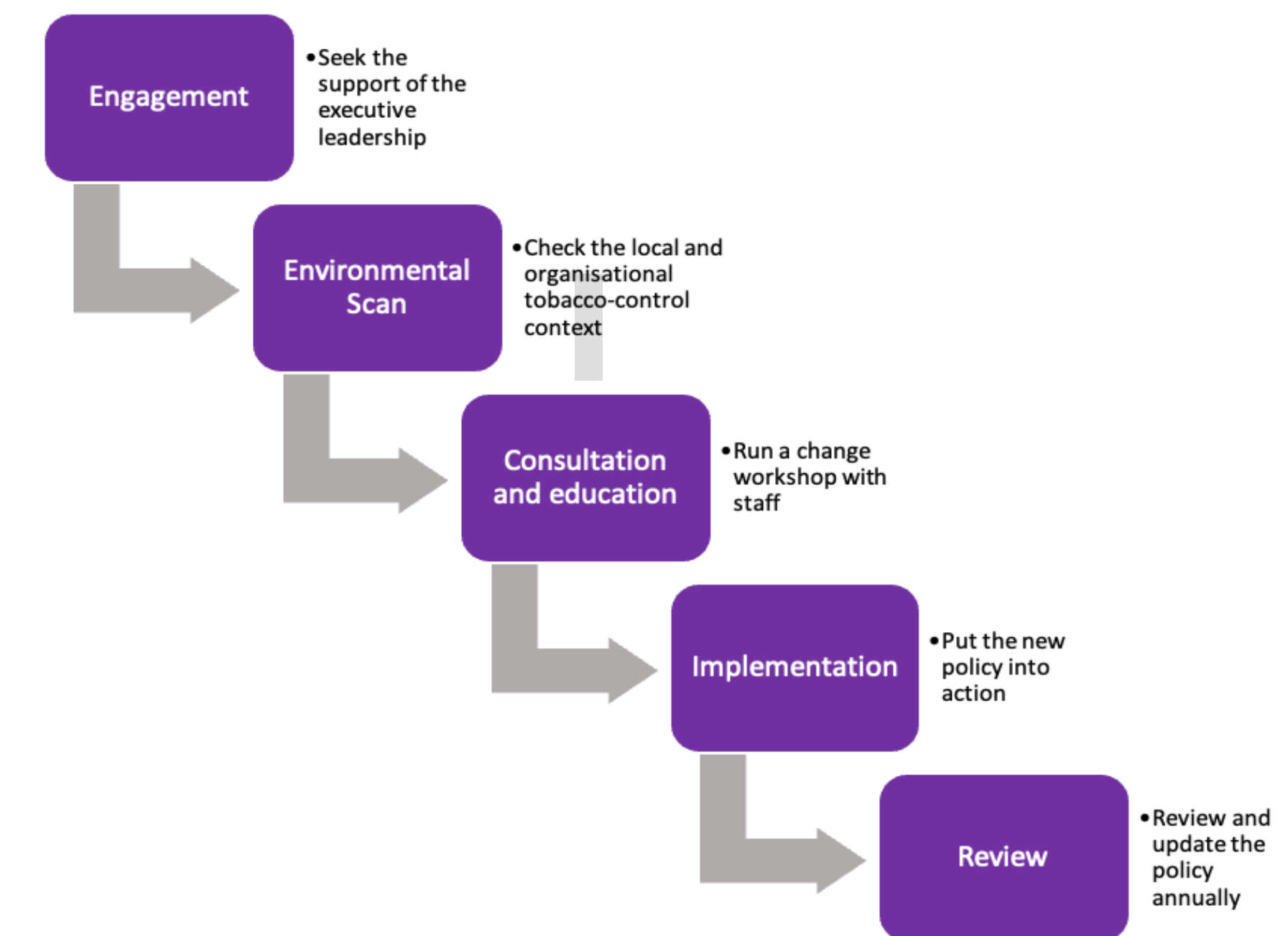

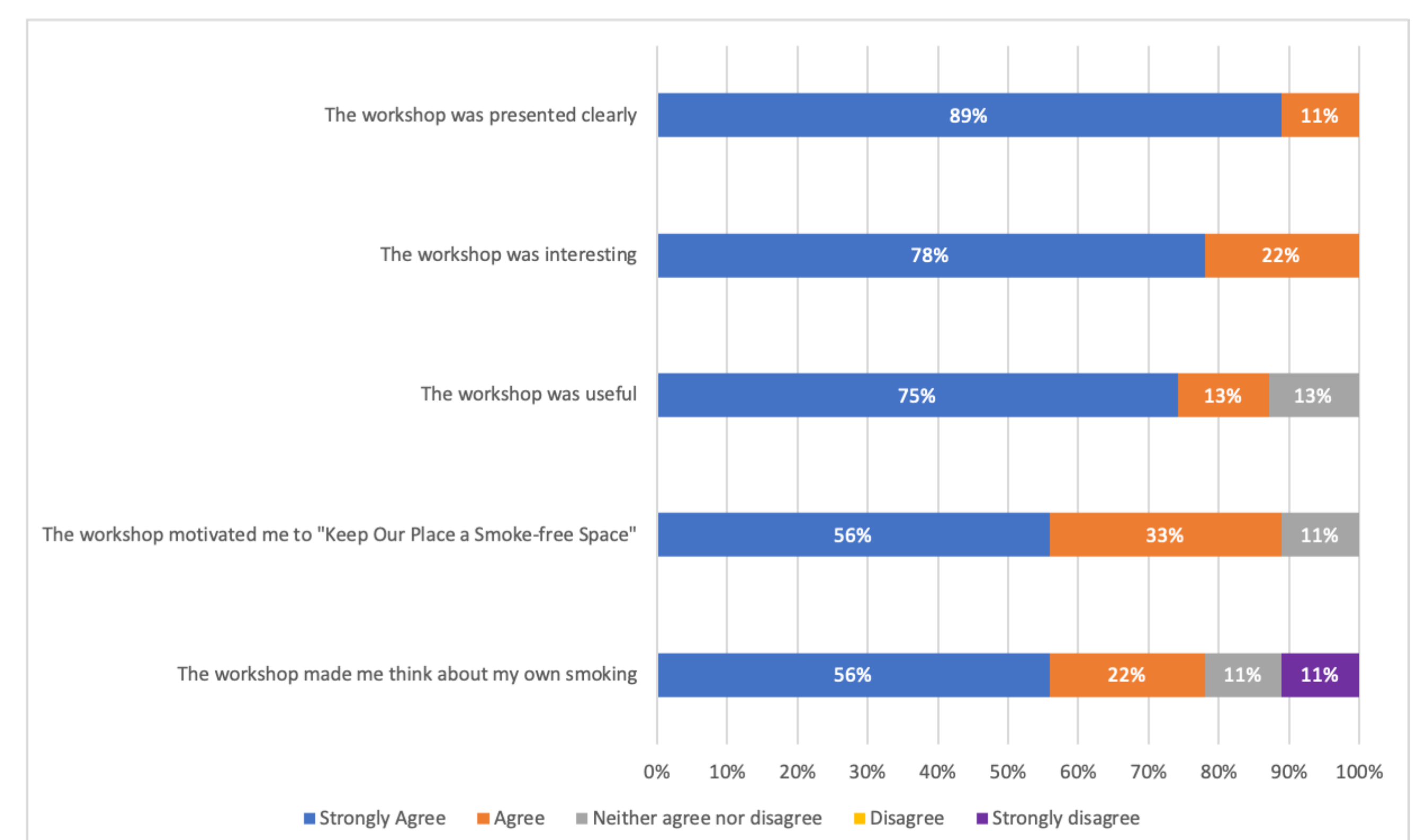Figure 1: Five steps to developing an effective smoke-free policy

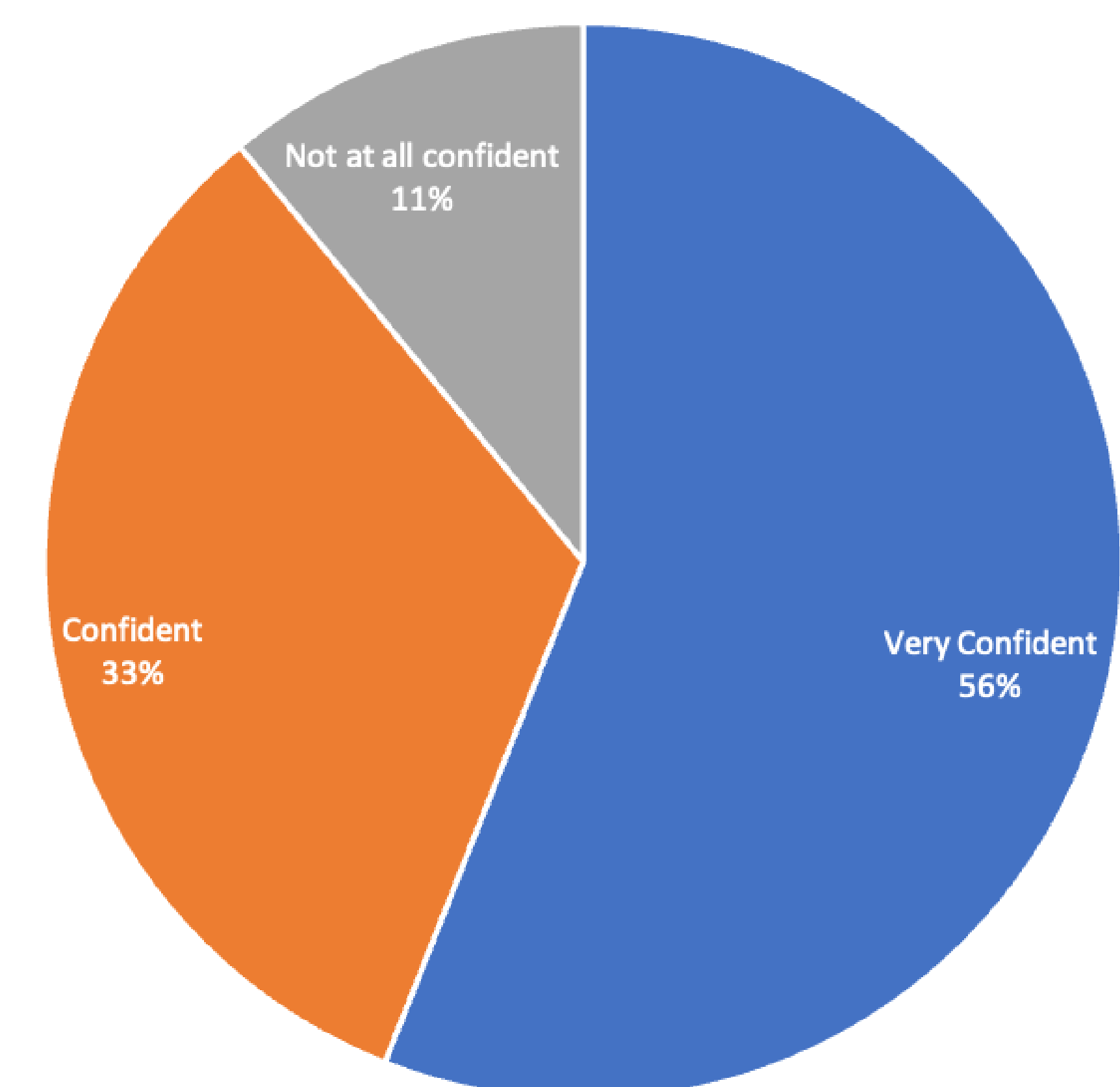Figure 2: Change workshop feedback

Figure 3: Participants' confidence in keeping the workplace smokefree