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One of the key tools in sharing information with your workforce is an employee handbook. This employee handbook template covers a range of topics and policies that you may want to touch on when conveying your company's mission, culture and practices to employees.

Keep in mind that employee handbooks typically don't necessarily represent a guarantee of employment or a contract. It simply lays out the commitments, responsibilities and expectations that help you create a fair, equitable and welcoming workplace.

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1. Introduction and overview

The purpose of this handbook

Welcome your new employee to the team and introduce the purpose of your employee handbook. For example, the purpose of your employee handbook may be to familiarize the new employee with the culture, expectations and policies that shape your workplace.

It's also important to explain a little bit about your company. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- We've been in business since [year].
- We operate on the philosophy that [company philosophy].
- Our main goal is [company's main goal].
- Our mission: [company mission statement].

A welcome from the CEO

This section should be a personal take on the history, achievements, goals and vision of the company from the CEO's vantage point. It should avoid buzzwords and jargon and strike a relatable, personable note that puts a human face on the company's leadership and executive team. You can also include short biographical notes about other senior team members here.

An overview of [company name]

In this section, expand on the bullet points in the above section entitled "The purpose of this handbook" and present an [overall history of the company](#) and an engaging picture of its performance. Illustrations, charts and quotes from team members, founders or satisfied clients can help to make this content both accessible and memorable. It should also cover the most expansive versions of your mission and vision statements.

Changes in policy

State how often your employee handbook is updated (e.g., quarterly, annually, on an ad-hoc basis), and consider including a disclaimer that the policies stated in the current version of the handbook supersede the content of documents from prior years.

Additionally, consider offering a way for employees to provide feedback if they spot mistakes or inconsistencies in the document.

2. Workplace policies

Explain why you've adopted certain workplace policies, as well as which employees these policies apply to. If they apply to everyone at your company, make sure to say so.

Equal opportunity policy

For American companies that are answerable to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, you may be required to include an [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) policy statement](#). These statements typically explain that you do not discriminate against employees based on gender, age, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability or veteran status when it comes to hiring, promotions and the workplace in general.

You can also give an overview of your non-retaliation policy for those who report discrimination, harassment or inappropriate or offensive behavior.

Accommodation policy

Use this section to discuss accommodations per the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and any other applicable federal and state regulations. You may also give an overview of how employees should request reasonable accommodations.

Non-solicitation policy

Requesting money or other forms of support or participation in groups unrelated to a company is called solicitation. This also includes disseminating commercial, political or religious literature.

Include your non-solicitation policy here, including specific situations in which employees may solicit from their colleagues. For example:

- Organizing an event for another employee
- Seeking support for a charity or cause the company has authorized
- Inviting colleagues to authorized nonbusiness events such as recreational activities or volunteer opportunities
- Soliciting participation in a legally protected employment-related body such as a union

3. Employment relationship

Employment types

In this section, describe the [employment classifications](#) at your company (e.g., exempt, nonexempt, temporary, regular full-time, regular part-time), including the average number of hours each type of employee works per week.

Exempt and nonexempt employees

This section of the employee handbook template applies to American companies subject to the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA). Fair Labor Standards Act and its regulations specify two types of employees: “nonexempt” employees who are covered by the FLSA’s requirements for minimum wage and overtime pay, and “exempt” employees who meet certain criteria that put them outside this category.

Use this section to describe the difference between exempt vs. nonexempt employees. Consider providing an HR contact so employees can confirm whether their position is exempt or nonexempt.



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At-will employment

Note: This section may not be relevant for companies outside the U.S. This document assumes your company is subject to American law and labor standards.

If applicable, include an at-will employment policy statement. This type of statement would typically explain that either the employee or the company may choose to terminate the employment relationship at any time for any nondiscriminatory cause.

Recruitment and selection

Be transparent about how your recruitment and selection process works. This may involve background checks for the final contenders for a position, checking references provided during the application process, verbal and written job offers, etc.

Non-compete and nondisclosure agreements

If you plan on having employees sign non-compete or nondisclosure agreements (NDAs), explain when they'll be asked to sign each document (e.g., when hiring is finalized).

4. General employment information

Payroll schedule

State your company's payroll schedule, including how often employees will get paid (e.g., weekly, biweekly) and how they'll get paid (e.g., bank transfers/check).

Compensation

Use this section to outline your timekeeping policy and procedures and any other requirements for accurately reporting time worked. Other compensation details, like how often you conduct wage and salary reviews, can also be helpful.

Expenses and reimbursements

Some activities and job requirements involve expenses that are reimbursable. Include your policy on tracking and reporting [expenses for reimbursement](#). Consider providing a list of business expenses that are reimbursable at your company (e.g., business travel, relocation, training and professional development) and the procedure for getting these activities pre-authorized.

Remote work

Outline your work from home policy, including who is eligible to work remotely, how often employees can work from home, communication expectations and any technology requirements.

Overtime

This section should include your overtime policy, in accordance with applicable state, local and federal regulations.

5. Benefits

Introduce this part of your employee handbook by explaining which types of employees are eligible for your benefits program.

Insurance

This section should provide general information on the types of insurance programs you offer to employees and who they can contact for more details.

Social Security and Medicare

Give a brief overview of Social Security and Medicare matching programs, including who to get in touch with to find out the current percentage of tax withholding deferrals.

Vacation days

Provide clear instructions regarding how much paid vacation time is available to employees and guidelines to follow when requesting time off.

Family and Medical Leave Act

If your company is subject to [The Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), consider an overview of when employees are eligible for leave and the process for requesting leave.

Other Types of Leave

Explain the process for taking time off for sick leave, performing jury duty, voting leave, or taking military leave, depending on the laws of your state or locality. Include whether such leaves are paid or unpaid and the documents they'll need to provide.

6. Professionalism (Code of Conduct)

Attendance

In this section, highlight the importance of [being on time and present](#) for work each day, including what to do in emergency situations and an overview of disciplinary actions for unscheduled absences.

Dress code

Outline your expectations on dress code, whether it's business, business casual, smart casual or casual. Additionally, note if there are specific situations that may require a more formal dress standard (e.g., client meetings).

Cell phone and technology use

Provide guidelines for using digital technology and the internet at your company, including your cell phone at work policy, corporate email usage policy and social media policy. Consider covering details like how to handle confidential data, types of websites to avoid and cybersecurity best practices.

Confidentiality

Provide details about your employee confidentiality and privacy policy, including disciplinary action for both intentional and unintentional breaches of data and tips for keeping information secure (e.g., locking and securing confidential files, using secure devices when viewing and storing confidential data).

Substance use

If you have a smoke-free or drug-free work environment, give a brief overview of your expectations and requirements in this section.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's personal goals are no longer in line with their responsibilities. Consider including specific examples of what conflict of interest might look like at your company and outline your expectations for acting in accordance with ethical business practices.

Harassment, discrimination or violence

Having a happy and productive workplace means making everyone's safety and comfort a priority. In this section, describe your policies and expectations on general workplace harassment, sexual harassment and workplace violence.

What to do about harassment or violence

Outline your company's process for reporting harassment or violence in the workplace.

7. Exit policy

Every employee's time with the company comes to an end eventually. This section discusses your company policies for handling that process.

Disciplinary actions

Explain the steps in your disciplinary action process. For example, your process might start with verbal warnings and informal meetings before escalating to formal written reprimands, formal disciplinary meetings, performance improvement plans and termination.

Employment termination

Give a breakdown of the reasons why an employee may be terminated (e.g., breach of contract, misconduct). Include any details about payout of paid time off in the event of termination.

Resignation

A voluntary resignation is one where the employee initiates the separation or termination of employment. This section should explain the voluntary resignation policies at your company, including when it's considered automatic (i.e., in the case of job abandonment where an employee doesn't come to work for a certain number of consecutive days without notice).

Returning company property

Explain your rules on returning company property and equipment after termination or separation from employment.

References

When an employee leaves your company, they may ask you for a [reference letter](#). In this section, consider explaining that you'll provide references for employees who leave in good



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standing upon request or otherwise confirm a former employee's employment with the company. Make sure that your reference letter policy is in compliance with federal, state and local laws.

Exit interviews

[Exit interviews](#) can be a valuable way to refine your company policies and procedures. If applicable, include details about your exit interview process so employees know what to expect.

8. Employee acknowledgment

Provide a space for employees to acknowledge that they've read and understood the policies laid out in your employee handbook.