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Employee handbook pdf

An employee handbook provides valuable information to new and established employees. It gives all employees a reference source for the company policies and rules. Although it may be given to new employees as part of their orientation (introduction to the company and company expectations), there may be changes in policies and procedures that need to be noted in the handbook. Updating employee handbooks is an important role for human resources or managers and supervisors. Since the handbook is an important tool, processes should be developed to determine how changes should be made. Multi-coloured books image by Maria Grin from Fotolia.com Determine what changes should be made to the handbook and why. Check with the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) to see if there are any new federal or state laws that affect employees. Perhaps there are changes in the health or compensation benefits that the company provides, or maybe significant events such as physical threats or sexual harassment issues have occurred. These are things that would need to be changed or added to the handbook. Write the handbooks in easily understood language. For example, it may be wise not to use a lot of complicated legal jargon that may be confusing rather than helpful. Avoid any controversial phrases such as "permanent employee" or any words that may imply a contractual agreement. Also, ensure that old, inapplicable rules are deleted and new rules are placed appropriately. Seek legal advice from the company attorney or other legal entity regarding the changes. It is important that all materials distributed to employees be reviewed for possible future lawsuits. Anything included in a handbook may be considered the written word of the employer. Companies may be well served to have the handbooks reviewed in advance of distribution. Schedule communication of the handbook changes. Employees need to know that new policies or procedures have been developed and are included in the revised edition of the handbook. Some companies may hold in-person meetings with employees to discuss the changes and provide opportunities for employees to ask questions. Other companies may send out memos to employees if the handbook is located online. It may be a good idea to have employees sign a form acknowledging that they have received the new handbook, and place it in their personnel file. Tips Do review the handbook annually. Do have legal entities review the handbook. Warnings Do not write new policies without distributing them to employees. An employee handbook is a critical document for setting clear expectations for new employees, providing policies for all employees to follow, and making it easier for you know how to deal with problems with your employees when they arise. Among other things, your employee handbook should cover everything from dress code and vacation days to your code of conduct and nondiscrimination policies. Additionally, it should set the tone for what it's like to work at your company -- your employee handbook isn't just a list of "what not to do". It's also a chance to express your company mission statement, and workplace culture. For instance, maybe you want to allow for casual dress Friday's, to provide your employees the opportunity to feel more comfortable before the weekend. This is an exciting employee benefit, and one you should clearly outline. Here, we'll cover the nine elements you must include in your employee handbook in an employee handbook template, and provide a sample employee handbook for further inspiration. Employee Handbook Template To know what to include in your employee handbook, take a look at our template. Employee Handbook for [Company Name] Introduction to company & values. Here, you'll want to describe your company's history, including when you were founded, by whom, and why. Additionally, you'll want to briefly include your company mission statement, and add some insight into your company culture. What do you prioritize in the workplace? Autonomy, continuous education? Include that here. Essentially, give your new employee the elevator speech of why your company matters, and why they should be excited to be apart of it. Code of conduct In this section, you need to give your employees a general overview of information regarding ethics and compliance. Ultimately, a code of conduct allows you to emphasize your company's values, and the desired behavior you wish to foster in your leaders and employees. These rules can allow you to fairly regulate and assess an individual's behavior. You'll want to include as many specific details as possible -- for instance, let employees know your definition of excessive tardiness, and how tardiness will be disciplined. Alternatively, you might include specific dress code requirements in this section. Additionally, your code of conduct section will be a reference point for employees when they're dealing with difficult ethical dilemmas in their day-to-day. It's a section that tells them what your company values and considers right from wrong, along with resources for employees when they encounter ethical predicaments. Equal employment and nondiscrimination policy The U.S. Department of Labor requires many businesses to include an equal employment and nondiscrimination policy in their employee handbook. Plus, you want each employee to know that discrimination or harassment of any kind won't be tolerated in your workplace. Even just one instance of discrimination can create toxicity for an entire company's culture. Computers and technology policy You'll need to make clear what your employees can and can't do with the technology you provide them. Among other things, let employees know whether you have the right to see emails they send on company computers, whether you expect them to avoid social media while on their work computer, and how much privacy they should expect while using company property. Additionally, you'll want to inform your employees whether certain actions on company technology are fireable offenses. Compensation and benefits policy Simply put, your employees want to know about their benefits regarding health care, dental, vision, life insurance, stocks, etc. In this section you can also let them know about benefits such as tuition reimbursement, commuter benefits, parking, employee referral bonuses, and 401(k) plans. You'll also want to include critical information regarding salary, payroll deductions, and compensation increases for specific job descriptions to convey how each employee can advance their income. Additionally, you'll want to document the payment schedule for each employee (weekly or bi-monthly). New hire and separation policy Let your new employees know whether they need to wait to receive their benefits (and how long), what steps need to be taken if an employee wants to quit, and information regarding your progressive discipline policy. By outlining the steps you take for discipline, you're ensuring a level of fairness and establishing prohibited behavior. You'll also want to outline what an employee is entitled to if they are terminated, and for how long they can expect certain benefits. Leave policy It's critical you outline how much paid and unpaid vacation time each employee gets, as well as how much time they get for medical leave and paid family leave, as well as sick time. Some of these policies, such as family medical leave, are enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor, so you'll often need to comply by the same standards as other businesses in your state. Non-disclosure Agreement and Confidentiality policy To ensure your employees don't misuse confidential information either regarding your internal operations or your clients, it's critical you outline what you constitute as confidential information. Your business is bound by law to protect certain information, and you'll want to make a list and ensure your employees are aware of what information they can and can't share. Among other things, this likely includes your company's internal business plan, your client's information, and employees' financial account information. Signature page A signature page is important for two reasons -- first, it confirms the employee received the handbook, and incentivizes each employee to read it through before signing. Second, if you're ever dealing with a wrongful termination lawsuit, it could help with your defense. Sample Employee Handbook While your employee handbook will be undoubtedly unique and particular to your culture and company values, we've created a sample employee handbook to help get you started. However, many of these sections are too personal and legally sensitive to include in a sample. For instance, when writing a non-disclosure agreement, you'll need to review state and federal laws and will need the guidance of a lawyer. Employee Handbook for Healthy Tea & Co. Introduction to company & values. Welcome to Healthy Tea & Co.! Started in 2011, Healthy Tea & Co. aims to create healthy, organic tea and drink products and market them to people who want to live healthier lives. Founded by Hannah Jones and Mark Pluto, we pride ourselves on being a workplace that focuses on employee happiness and autonomy, diversity and inclusion, and helps our customers find products on the shelves that are both delicious and nutritious. What is important to know when joining our team at Healthy Tea & Co.? We value independence and autonomy, and for that reason, we allow our employees to work either in-office or remotely. We like to have fun, which is why we have casual-dress Friday's, ping pong tables, and monthly team outings. We encourage continuous learning and want our employees to seek out growth opportunities, so we offer employee-taught trainings on a variety of topics, tuition reimbursement, and a free book program. Ultimately, as an employee at Healthy Tea & Co., we expect you to remain honest and trustworthy with your team, willing to think outside the box, and excited to experiment and ask questions about our products and our systems, because we as a company value growth and innovation. [Code of conduct would go here] Compensation and benefits policy The amount of compensation you will receive is provided in your offer letter. In addition, Healthy Tea & Co. must deduct specific amounts from your paycheck. These mandatory deductions (required by federal law) include: ● Social security (pre-tax) ● Medicare (pre-tax) ● Federal withholding taxes (pre-tax) ● State withholding taxes (pre-tax) Health & Wellness Benefits include: [Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance would go here, as well as Life Insurance, Dependent care, Healthcare Spending Account, Accident Insurance, etc.] Leave policy At Healthy Tea & Co., our vacation policy for PTO entails the following: 0-2 years tenure = 15 days 2-5 years tenure = 20 days 6+ years tenure = 30 days Additionally, in compliance with state laws, we offer 5 sick days, which can be used for personal illness or to take care of a sick family member. In the U.S., we observe the following holidays: New Year's Day Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presidents Day Patriots Day Labor Day Thanksgiving Day Christmas Day [Financial benefits, such as 401(k) or employee referral bonus, would go here] [Equal employment and nondiscrimination policy would go here] [Computers and technology policy] [Anti-discrimination policy would go here] I have read all of the provisions of this agreement and I understand, and agree to, each of such provisions, effective as of the date first entered above. _____ (sign here) _____ (date) Code of Conduct Samples To ensure you have all the inspiration you need to create your own code of conduct section in your employee handbook, take a look at some of these inspiring company code of conducts‘: Originally published Dec 27, 2018 8:00:00 AM, updated December 27 2018 If the main body of your Employee Handbook is ready, use this template to conclude it and ask employees for acknowledgement of r... Having clear processes for when employees leave your company can mitigate legal risks and negative feelings. Use our template as... Working hours and leave policies are vital parts of an informative Employee Handbook. Outline your working time policies by modi... Employees need to be well-informed about benefits and perks your company offers. Use this template as a guide and include it in ... Your employee compensation and development policies help you explain how you reward your employees and motivate them to achieve ... Your Employee Code of Conduct is one of the most important parts of your Employee Handbook. We created a code of conduct templat... Your workplace policies help you build a lawful and pleasant workplace where your employees can thrive. We crafted a template to... Wondering where to begin your Employee Handbook? After you welcome employees and introduce your mission, explain basic aspects o... From a code of conduct to benefits and perks to employment details, this employee handbook template has everything you need to s... All companies need to communicate their mission, values and expectations to their employees. Employee handbooks are a good means to put these elements together. Here’s how to write a helpful and engaging employee handbook: What is the purpose of having an employee handbook? Your handbook’s content and level of detail depends on how you intend to use it. An employee handbook may be a repository of all your policies or a way to welcome new hires. Using your handbook to guide new hires is a good idea. Melissa Escobar-Franco, Workable’s HR Manager in Boston, says: “An employee handbook gives new hires tangible information to help them settle into their new jobs. It’s a consistent message on who we are, how we function and what we expect from our employees.” Without the help of a handbook, it may take employees time to grasp a company’s culture and organization. In 2012, game development company Valve released a handbook for new hires to explain its organizational structure: Screenshot via Valve A good way to approach creating your handbook is to keep it focused on welcoming new hires and providing only the information they need (e.g. summaries and statements.) You could keep detailed documents of your policies in an intranet, a HR information system (e.g. BambooHR or Namely) or a shared folder. What to include in an employee handbook An effective employee handbook includes: Your company’s mission, vision and an overview of its culture. Guidelines for employee conduct. Details on legal aspects of employment. Summaries of perks and benefits. Descriptions of company processes. Craft an outline with these elements in mind. Here’s a possible outline with some examples for each section: Decide what policies to include based on your specific needs. Provide only short summaries of complicated topics (e.g. benefits) and link or refer to full policy documents. In general, avoid overloading your handbook with prohibitions. Make it more attractive by adding a personal touch like a letter from a senior leader. Here’s an example from the employee handbook of Agnes Scott College: Screenshot via Agnes Scott College If you are creating a longer and more complete version of your handbook, explain legal issues too (e.g. at-will employment or worker’s compensation.) As your company grows and laws change, you may need to address new topics. Communicate your plan to revise and update your handbook (annual or mid-year reviews are useful.) Put a process in place to share every significant change through bulletins, newsletters or other means. Mind the presentation An unattractive, complicated document risks remaining permanently on employees' “to-read” list. Take some time to think about your format, layout and audience. Printed booklets are concrete, but they are also harder to update and demand reprinting and redistributing when something changes. Even then, a creative approach goes a long way. For example, e-commerce company Zappos created an employee handbook in the form of a comic book. Zappos reframed its policies as stories and ultimately made them easier to read and remember. Digitized books or interactive web pages capture people’s attention and make it easy to link to other resources. Software company Basecamp’s brand new handbook on GitHub is a notable example: Screenshot via Basecamp This approach helps Basecamp update its handbook easily through GitHub and get direct feedback. It also adds to their employer brand, as passive candidates, interns and newly hired employees can get insight on how the company works right from the source. Not all companies make handbooks that create a buzz. But, they can craft effective handbooks with the right design. If you don’t have an internal design team, consider hiring a freelancer. Add pictures, schemes and even videos, when possible, to make your handbook engaging. Use clear and attractive language Employee handbooks should not read like business contracts or legal documents. To encourage employees to read and remember your messages, use language to your advantage. Here are a few tips: Focus on the positives. Even when you are indicating a prohibition (e.g. no smoking indoors) explain why it’s important and how it adds value to your company as a whole. Keep your language welcoming and instructional, rather than authoritative. Speak to your audience. Avoid using passive voice or addressing abstract entities (e.g. “the employee.”) Use “you” and “we” to make your handbook more personable and accessible. Add humor when possible. Your handbook isn’t meant to be hilarious, but adding a few humorous lines (or pictures) will make it more pleasant to read. Disqus calls its handbook a “Culture Book.” It is written in an amusing manner throughout: Screenshot via Disqus Use a tone that matches your culture. Your handbook’s tone mirrors everyday work life at your company. A consultancy firm with strict professional standards will probably write its handbook in a professional, formal tone. Conversely, tech companies might use a more casual tone. Keep it short and simple. Use as few words as possible and avoid jargon, technical terms and complicated words. Employee handbooks are multi-purpose tools. Use them to inform employees about your company’s values and clear confusion on important topics. When you are done writing, ask your attorney to inspect your handbook for legality. And listen to employee feedback to ensure your policies make sense.

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