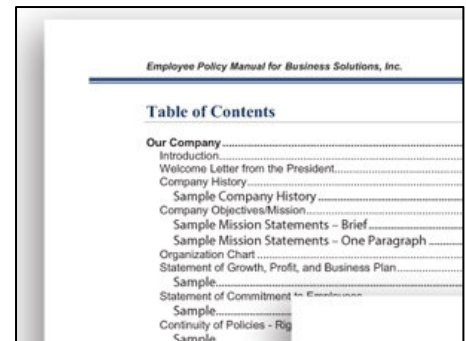


How To Write An Employee Manual

Restaurant managers constantly strive to get employees to do things the right way-every time. A written employee manual is the best way to train employees to do things correctly. This article will help you write an employee manual that your staff will enjoy reading, thoroughly understand and consistently follow. By using these guidelines, you will be able to train employees better and improve customer service.



Employee Policy Manual for Business Solutions, Inc.	
Table of Contents	
Our Company	
Introduction	
Welcome Letter from the President.....	
Company History.....	
Sample Company History	
Company Objectives/Mission.....	
Sample Mission Statements - Brief.....	
Sample Mission Statements - One Paragraph.....	
Organization Chart	
Statement of Growth, Profit, and Business Plan.....	
Sample.....	
Statement of Commitment	
Sample.....	
Continuity of Policies - Rig.....	
Sample.....	

Why You Need a Manual

Writing an employee manual will save you time in the long run and help protect your business.

- **A manual frees you up.** Many times employees ask you the same questions over and over again. By putting the answers in written form in a manual, you will eliminate the need for employees to always come to you with questions about office procedures, etc.
- **A manual improves your training.** Don't you prefer to plan a trip with a reliable map? An employee manual serves as a roadmap to do a job correctly. The more procedures that employees are officially told about, the more confidence they'll have.
- **A manual will improve your consistency of service.** The more you leave to your employees' judgment, the less likely it is that they will do things the way you want them done. Your customers want consistency, not greatness one minute and mediocrity the next.
- **A manual shows your employees that you mean business.** It adds an air of professionalism to you and your restaurant.
- **A manual is an effective symbol to take to your banker when you're applying for a loan.** It makes your operation look less "fly by night" and more professional.
- **A manual reduces staff conflict** by stating in writing who is responsible for specific tasks.
- **A manual provides a document to back you up if you must fire someone** who then files for unemployment or goes to a labor board with a complaint.

Now that you understand the benefits of writing an employee manual, you need to outline your manual quickly and easily. Performing this step will reduce oversights and missed instructions. The next step will help you write your manual.

How to Write Your Manual Quickly and Easily

The key to writing a successful employee manual is to know what you are going to say before you say it and then to say it in an organized manner.

- **Use a tape recorder to dictate your outline.** Carry your tape recorder and the outline around with you for a week. Every time you find yourself with a spare moment, refer to the outline and talk into the tape recorder. Speak like you are addressing new employees and walking them around your operation.
- **Announce the title of the section as you begin talking about a topic** into the tape recorder. For example, begin your comments by saying, "Personal Hygiene continued: All cooks must wear hats or hairnets."
- After a week of talking into a cassette player, **turn the tape over to a typist who transcribes tapes.** If you don't know of someone who offers this service, look in the Yellow Pages under "Typing Service" or "Word-Processing Service." Tell the typist to type out everything you said on the tape and to double-space it.

- **When you receive the transcript back from the typist, read it through from beginning to end.** Then, using a red pen, write headings and make marks symbolizing the start of each new line. Edit out all repetition and unnecessary remarks. Reword any phrases if needed. You will be surprised how little you need to change. If you need to rearrange the order of some material, simply draw arrows indicating to the typist where information is to go. You can even get out your scissors and move sections around with a cut-and-paste method.
- **Return the draft to your typist with any special instructions.** The retyped document you later receive from the typist will be your new employee manual.
- **Meet with staff members to get their input** on what the employee manual should say. This will help employees embrace the document.
- **Include pictures or a series of photos with brief captions to illustrate procedures** such as emptying the trash and paging guests.
- **Make employee manuals multilingual.**
- **Add some fun to spark employees' interest** such as trivia about your restaurant.
- **Once the finished product returns from the typist, dictate a test.** Scanning the manual, dictate a test for your employees to take after they have reviewed the manual. Ask specific questions about every section. For example, ask "What is our policy about personal phone calls?" Have the typist prepare this section in test form, numbering the questions and leaving a line space after each.
- When your manual and test are prepared to your liking, **instruct a printer or copy shop to make several copies**, perhaps bound into a notebook with a label and logo on the front.
- **Ensure that all the procedures you outline in your manual fall within the boundaries of the law** by having your attorney read your manual.

Now that you understand how to write an employee manual the right way, you need to know what to say. The next step will offer you ideas on policies to include in your manual.

What Your Manual Should Say

The next step is to include all policies and procedures that employees need to know. The following areas will serve as a guide for your manual.

Operational Procedures

- **Clock-in.** Explain your policy, such as "All employees should report to work 10 minutes prior to their scheduled time."
- **Smoking.** Explain your policy, such as "Smoking is not permitted in the kitchen, prep area or on the floor in front of customers."
- **Horseplay.** "There will be no horseplay in the kitchen or prep area."
- **Phone calls.** "No personal phone calls are accepted during business hours. You will, however, be contacted if you have an emergency phone call."
- **Answering the telephone.** Tell employees exactly how you would like them to answer the phone, such as "Thank you for calling Juanita's Restaurant. This is Hugo. May I help you?"
- **Solicitations.** "Juanita's prohibits any solicitation or distribution of literature by employees or guests during restaurant hours."
- **Paychecks.** "Pay days are every other Friday."
- **Advances.** "Juanita's does give advances to employees."
- **Absence, illness or tardiness.** Explain your policies on these matters.
- **Personal property.** "Juanita's is not responsible for lost or stolen property. However, if we do catch someone stealing, we will prosecute."
- **Personal business.** "Juanita's requires you to conduct all personal business off the premises and on your own time. For instance, take care to schedule doctor's appointments for times when you are not expected to work."
- **Age requirements.** State here the minimum age requirements for each position.
- **Accidents.** Explain your way of handling accidents in the restaurant: where to put an injured customer, how to call for medical help and what to tell other guests.
- **Customer complaints.** Explain your policy for handling customers' complaints, such as whether free drinks or meals are offered.

- **Employee meals.** Explain whether discounted or free meals are offered to employees. State when and where such meals are to be eaten and your policy about taking food home.
- **Breaks.** Explain your policy on employee breaks.
- **Parking.** Explain where employees should park.
- **Scheduling.** State here when the schedule will be put up, where it will be placed and when the final day for schedule requests is.
- **Dress code.** Be very specific, for example, "no pants with holes."

Personal hygiene

- Hair should be neatly trimmed.
- Clothing should be clean and neat.
- Hands should be clean and free of cuts and sores.
- Fingernails should be short and free of dirt.
- Employees must wash their hands after using the bathroom, eating food or using tobacco products.

Employee benefits

- **Insurance.** If you make insurance available to your employees, explain how long they must work to become eligible and what percentage of the premiums you will pay.
- **Promotions.** Include a statement such as "Juanita's is an equal opportunity employer, and all promotions are given on the basis of job performance, not race, gender, creed, color or religion."
- **Training.** Explain your training program: "All employees of Juanita's are trained on the clock to the highest standards with the goal being excellent service to our customers."
- **Uniforms.** Explain the details of your uniform program here.
- **Vacations.** If you offer paid vacations to long-term employees, explain terms and eligibility here.

Menu breakdown

- Outline your menu briefly and offer some examples. Tell your cooks what the servers need and your servers the details of preparation. For example: Roast beef sandwich. Four ounces of roast beef served with mustard, mayonnaise, lettuce and tomato on a kaiser roll. Comes with chips and a pickle. Server brings napkin.
- Place food and drink specifications in a separate handbook so you won't need to update the manual every time you change your menu.

Greeting, seating and table service

- In this section, outline your ideal procedures for how to serve a table. Include key phrases you want servers and hosts to use. Explain your seating chart. Be detailed about how you want tickets rung up. If servers are to carry their own banks, specify how much change they should bring to work.

Abbreviations

- If you're using a hard-check system, have all staff use the same abbreviations. Give the examples here.
- Liquor: Seagrams VO (VO), Scotch (S), Canadian Club (CC), Gin (G),
- Beer: Budweiser (Bud), Coors Light (CL)
- Mixers: Water (W), Tonic (T)
- Food: Mayonnaise (MAYO), Cheese (CHZ)

Alcohol awareness

- It is the policy of Juanita's to not "overserve" alcohol to our customers. We want to encourage a relaxing atmosphere for social drinking, not intoxication.
- Look out for signs of overconsumption: Bad posture such as leaning or slumping in the chair. Suddenly becoming talkative. Bothering customers outside of one's party. Foul language. Getting overly friendly. Glassy or red eyes. Lack of coordination in walking.
- When you see signs of intoxication, take action: Don't let an intoxicated person drive. Give the person complimentary food and nonalcoholic beverages. Call the person a cab. As a last resort, have the manager call the police.

The last page: an employee agreement

- Instruct your employees to read and sign an agreement acknowledging that they have read the manual and keep the document on file. Include a statement like the following: "I have read the Policies and Procedures Manual and hereby acknowledge a clear understanding of same. In addition, I hereby agree that as long as I am employed by Juanita's, I will make every effort to uphold and maintain the policies and procedures contained therein. It is also my understanding that violation of said policies and procedures constitutes grounds for dismissal." If your restaurant operates in an "at will" employment state, you might want to also include the statements: "I further understand that my employment is at will; that is, both the employer and I remain free to terminate the employment relationship for any reason, with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time regardless of the length of my employment or the granting of benefits of any kind. I understand that no contract of employment other than "at will" has been expressed or implied, and that no circumstances arising out of my employment will alter my "at will" employment relationship unless expressed in writing, with the understanding specifically set forth and signed by myself and the employer's top executive." Include space for the employee's name, the date of signing and a witness's signature on the document.

Now that you have written your manual you must ensure that employees learn and use it. The last step illustrates how to enforce your manual.

Employing Your Manual

The final step is to ensure that your employee understand and use your policies. Here are some steps to ensure that they follow your instructions:

- Take the time to **train your trainers** on how to guide employees through the training materials.
- **Create outlines** to help lead employees through their training. Training outlines specify what section of the material to review for the next day.
- **Employ task-oriented training.** For example, one day a bartender might focus solely on learning how to use the point-of-sale system and the next day he or she might learn how to make drinks.
- Before employees take on the full responsibilities of the job, be sure to **verify that they have the needed skills.**
- **Eliminate formal written tests.** Instead, have employees complete fun exercises that test their knowledge, such as a "Jeopardy"-style quiz.
- **Observe employees to see whether they can do a job.** Have your servers wait on the management staff.

An employee manual is an excellent tool to improve customer service and operational efficiency. By first creating an outline and planning what to say, you can make the construction of your employee manual quick and easy.

Source: National Restaurant Association