

Your staff handbook

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Identifying and preventing fraud

Lengthy employment contracts, containing a huge amount of detailed information about terms and conditions, entitlements and procedures, are increasingly being replaced by short specific contracts and staff handbooks containing all the details of the matters applying to the whole workforce.

This simplified arrangement can be to the advantage of both employer and employee - here, we look at the reasons for preparing an employee handbook, and some of the things you should put in it.

If you would like discuss how we can assist you, please contact us on 01494 675321 or by email at info@rousepartners.co.uk

Why should I have one?

A handbook is an effective way of communicating information about your company. It is good practice to be able to offer new staff a well written, comprehensive guide to your company's rules, procedures and employment policies. Not only does this promote good staff relations but it can also act as a training aid and save management time, because employees know where to look for relevant information rather than having to ask.

You can also use the handbook to fulfill your obligation to supply written information about basic terms and conditions of employment, although if you do this, it is essential to make clear which parts of the handbook are contractual. If items contained in the handbook form part of a contract of employment, reference to the handbook should be made in the statement signed by the employee.

What should be in it?

A good staff handbook might contain the following elements:

- ▶ **Company information:** This might include an explanation of the nature of the business, its objectives and history. You could also add a welcoming note to new staff from the Managing Director.
- ▶ **Terms and conditions of employment:** Include information about salaries, hours of work, overtime, holidays, sickness, company cars, fringe benefits, parental leave and pension plans.
- ▶ **Disciplinary procedures:** Explain the company's policies on time keeping, dress, internet use, smoking, discrimination and so on. Describe procedures for discipline and for employee grievances.
- ▶ **General and specific company policies:** As well as explaining your stance on general issues such as health and safety, data protection and training opportunities, include a guide to your specific do's and don'ts in areas like parking and employee's personal use of company equipment.

Tips

- ▶ Make sure you update the handbook to keep abreast of changes in the law. Rather than having an expensive, glossy brochure it is sensible to present the information in loose-leaf form so that only the relevant pages need to be changed, or even to keep the handbook up to date on your company intranet.
- ▶ It is important to get good advice when it comes to contractual issues. Ensure that your actual procedures are the same as those stated in the handbook.
- ▶ Try to involve your staff in the production process. Is the information presented in a clear and friendly tone? Are there follow up questions they would wish to ask? If so, include the answers in the handbook.

How we can help

For further information regarding support and professional advice from our team, please contact us.

Trusted advice, *imaginative solutions.*

It's the old adage that all accountants are the same, but ask yourself this; what kind of service would most add value to your personal or business position? In our opinion, the quality of advice and service is what separates a good accountant from a great one. This is where Rouse Partners can make a difference for you.

Our award-winning team make it their business to get to know you and your specific needs. Whether your goal is to grow your business, increase your personal wealth or improve your work-life balance, by understanding your challenges, we will address them together.

We also know how important it is for you to have a team that you can rely on for timely advice and reassurance. At Rouse, our people are our most important asset and we will select team members who offer an optimum mix of experience, specialism and knowhow. From your Partner, to your Tax Advisor, each team member will be accessible to you or your team and be proactive in seeking solutions.

At the heart of our way of working is a determination to think differently, to challenge the 'status quo' and to ask 'what if?'. Whether you are facing a complex tax, accounting or management situation, we are ready to find a solution.

Contact us today to discuss how we can support your personal or business tax needs:

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