# Drafting An Effective Employee Handbook

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A well drafted employee handbook continuously proves to be an invaluable tool for business owners and management. Think of it as an instruction manual set in the context of your business. Many small business owners think that it is unnecessary because of the size of their organization. Think again.

Employee handbooks are the best way for business owners to share their mission statement and identify the company's expectations. They improve the efficiency of a business by enumerating guidelines for employee performance, conduct, discipline and benefits. It is also an excellent way to limit the liability of an employer by providing clear guidance on the company's position of discrimination, retaliation and harassment. Simply stated, every business should have an employee handbook, regardless of its size.

Generally, an employee handbook should contain relevant information on at least the following company policies: family and medical leave, paid time off, benefits, employee discipline, reporting structure, social media/electronic communications, compensation, sexual harassment/discrimination, confidentiality and employee conduct. It is important that the employee handbook clearly identify that it is not intended to create an employment contract and that the terms of employment are at-will. Additionally, it is important that the employer be vigilant about securing a written acknowledgement from all employees upon hire or revision of the handbook, confirming that the employee has received the handbook and understands its terms. There is a reason why in nearly every employment lawsuit, there is a request for production of the employee handbook and written acknowledgment. A properly drafted employee handbook will serve as a tool to shield the business from liability.

Drafting these polices and their inclusion in an employee handbook can prove difficult. It is important that the employee handbook is frequently updated to address revisions in the law or various regulations in the industry. Therefore, it is important to consult with an attorney to develop a comprehensive employee handbook for your organization, whether large or small. Would you run your business without insurance? Obviously, the answer is no. Business owners frequently ask if they need

an employee handbook.  And as you have read here the reasons are considerable.  It is a must!