

The McKenzie Mailer

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UPDATE

Thanks for all of the positive feedback from last month's issue, "Motivation – A Matter of Trust".

A week after the newsletter was distributed, I received an article entitled, "Only a Third of Employees Surveyed Trust Their Employers".

The article, which appeared in the Orlando Business Journal, cited research conducted by Davis & Co. which found that only 33 percent of over 38,000 employees surveyed believe their companies are telling the truth, with the majority saying that companies lie, withhold information and "spin" messages.

"Employees have known for years -- they always know -- when their companies aren't giving them the straight story," says Alison Davis, CEO of Davis & Co. "And the more companies attempt to package and withhold information, the more employees get their information from unofficial channels. Over time, this contributes to a deep and lasting mistrust."

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Generic Handbooks are for Generic Companies

It is getting much easier to purchase an employee handbook these days. Go on the internet and there are handbooks for as little as \$29.00. One site even says that you can have your own customized handbook in 10 minutes. Hopefully, you care enough about your company and your employees to spend more than \$29.00 and ten minutes developing one of the most important documents you can give to your employees. An employee handbook is the first impression new employees have of your company. It is a document that communicates your mission, what is expected from your employees and, in turn, what your employees can expect from you, the employer.

There are a few "must haves" that should be included in a handbook. These include:

1. The company history, along with a vision of where you expect to be in the future. This includes your mission as well as the behaviors you expect in serving your customers as well as fellow employees.
2. A policy statement on Equal Employment Opportunity, harassment and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This policy should include a mechanism whereby employees who feel that they are being discriminated against or harassed by a co-worker can lodge a complaint that will be investigated promptly and as confidentially as possible. This is your first line of defense in the event that a charge of discrimination is filed against your organization.
3. An electronics communications policy stating that the computers, telephone systems, e-mail, voice mail, company issued PDA's and cellular telephones are the property of the company and subject to search and monitoring.
4. A violence in the workplace policy. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires this. It is also a great idea to spell out your safety rules and accident reporting procedures.
5. Time off policies including vacation, holidays, sick or personal time are important. A Family and Medical Leave Policy as well as a personal leave of absence policy should be included. Do your employees know how you will handle it when they are called to jury duty? What about a death in the family?
6. Hours of work, normal starting and ending times, when paychecks are distributed, a definition of excessive absences and tardiness – and how they are coordinated with workers compensation and family and medical leave.
7. A brief summary of the benefits offered by your company.
8. An employment at will statement along with an signature page where the employee acknowledges receipt of the handbook.

If you have developed a customized handbook – congratulate yourself.

A generic handbook cannot possibly cover all of the important points about *your* company that should be included. Your company is not generic, so why settle for a generic handbook?