



Employee Handbooks Can Be Useful Business Tools

There are approximately 6 million firms in the US that have employees. And for everyone that manages employees, there is a virtual minefield of organizational and legal issues that must be navigated. Perhaps that explains the fact that approximately 17 million firms, usually sole proprietorships, choose NOT to have employees.

Employee handbooks are often expected only in larger firms, where the investment in time and production for a glossy brochure full of carved-in-stone policies seems well spent. However, it might just pay to take another look. Smaller internal organizations and even companies with few employees, including sole proprietorships, may benefit from centralized, standard procedures.

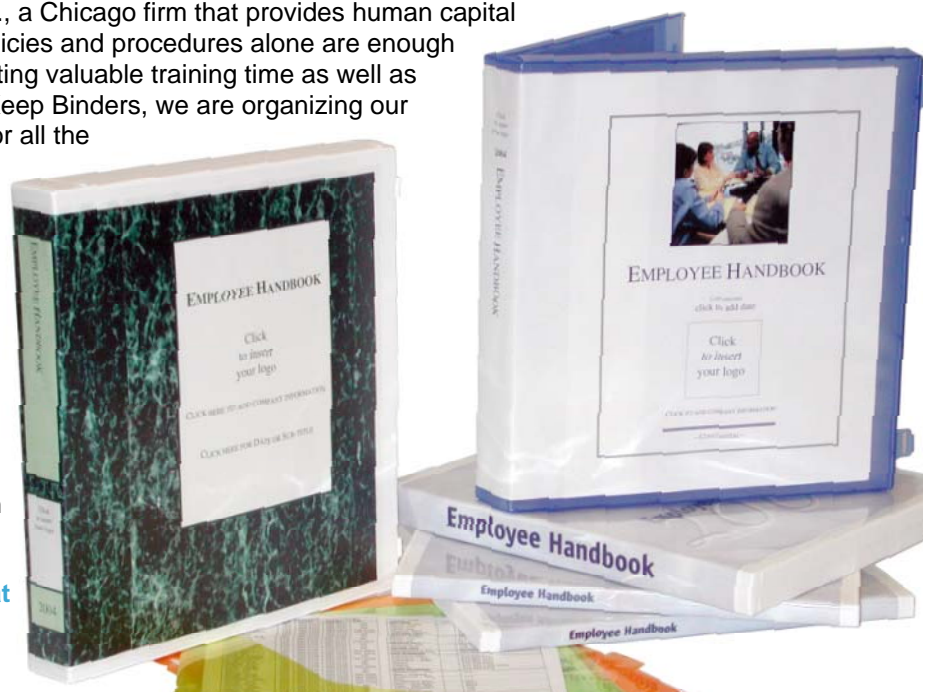
An employee handbook can be an easy reference tool that looks professional and is easy to update. A great way to do this is with the UniKeep organization system. UniKeep View Case Binders(TM) are fully enclosed and stackable with an easy to use full wrap overlay that lets you create custom covers with a single sheet of paper. The durable, 100% polypropylene rings are easy to use and when combined with UniKeep accessories like snap in tabbed pockets and customizable indexes, the possibilities are endless while the content can always be current. Covers and indexes can be customized with your own company logo and information using templates, shown here, from www.unikeep.com.

There are several things to consider when compiling a company handbook. **Who will use the handbook?** If you need to distribute this to a large number of employees, it makes a lot of sense to spend the extra time to nail down as many details as possible before anything is formally distributed. But smaller organizations often demand less structure. Revisions can become a useful and educational part of the editing process for teams that are struggling with their first handbook.

Why do you need a handbook? There are legal implications regarding the standardized information that you provide to all employees and there are financial implications regarding standardized processes. But you can also think of the handbook as your list of "Frequently Asked Questions". It's a good rule of thumb to expect each standard form like time sheets, expense reports, vacation requests, and applications for direct deposit to have a basic policy or procedure that documents how it's used.

"The 'Employee Handbook' is an invaluable tool in harnessing a company's tacit knowledge," says Meegan Addy, Business Manager at Exceed, Inc., a Chicago firm that provides human capital management solutions. "Learning the policies and procedures alone are enough to keep a new hire busy for a month, wasting valuable training time as well as the time of his or her peers. In using UniKeep Binders, we are organizing our handbooks to provide a central location for all the paperwork a new hire needs to ease their entry to our firm. The more time they can dedicate to learning our business and not shuffling paper work, the quicker they will become satisfied and contributing members of our team."

A handbook can be a useful tool for firms with no employees. In this case, it becomes a centralized resource for customer directories, sub-contractor lists and contacts, retirement and pension



Get this and other organization ideas at www.unikeep.com

