

# YOUR GUIDE TO WRITING A HANDBOOK



**Back in the 1980's and 1990's there were Q1 signs all over the place in factories and on ads. It was an identifier of excellence. It has been a concept that has stuck with me through all those years.**

**Say what you do, Do what you say and Prove it.**

It applies to so much in life, including how to write a handbook for your company. I hope you find value in this approach to writing your handbook. The entire piece should be concise and to the point with easy-to-read language.

Please take the advice below to heart as you work through what your company needs.

Thank you,

Carol King

Founder

King Health Solutions

### **Step 1: Define the Purpose and Scope**

**Say What You Do:** Start with a clear mission for the handbook. Define who it's for (employees, contractors, etc.), and what it covers (e.g., policies, expectations, culture).

**Do What You Say:** Align every section with the company's values and operational reality.

**Prove It:** Include a welcome message from leadership that reinforces culture and commitment. Reference the handbook in onboarding and training.

### **Step 2: Outline the Content Structure**

Organize the handbook into clear, digestible sections. Typical categories include:

- Introduction and company values
- Employment policies (e.g., hiring, termination, classifications)
- Code of conduct and behavior expectations
- Compensation, benefits, time off
- Legal compliance (EEOC, FMLA, ADA, etc.)
- Health, safety, and workplace security
- Technology and social media use
- Disciplinary procedures
- Acknowledgement page

### **Step 3: Write the Policies**

**Say What You Do:** Use plain language to describe policies and procedures. Be clear and concise—avoid legalese.

**Do What You Say:** Ensure that your current practices actually match what's written. If they don't, update your policies or change the practice before finalizing. \*Consider scheduling internal audits throughout the year to make sure you're following your own policies\*

**Prove It:** Reference actual procedures, forms, and points of contact. For example, if you say employees can report harassment confidentially, explain how and to whom. \*Try to avoid using employee names as points of contact and instead use departments or specific positions. This helps keep your handbook relevant and accurate in the event of an employee leaving or changing roles\*

#### **Step 4: Review for Compliance and Consistency**

**Say What You Do:** Include all state and federal legal requirements applicable to your business (wage laws, anti-discrimination, leave policies, etc.).

**Do What You Say:** Verify policies are being followed in real-world operations.

**Prove It:** Have HR, legal counsel, and department heads review the draft for accuracy, legality, and enforceability.

#### **Step 5: Finalize and Publish**

**Say What You Do:** Deliver a final, approved version to employees in a consistent format (print or digital).

**Do What You Say:** Make it accessible. Train managers and staff on how to use the handbook.

**Prove It:** Include an acknowledgment form to be signed by each employee and stored in their personnel file.

#### **Step 6: Implement and Train**

**Say What You Do:** Communicate clearly that the handbook is a guide to expectations and accountability.

**Do What You Say:** Use it actively in orientation, policy enforcement, and performance management.

**Prove It:** Keep records of training, policy distribution, and signed acknowledgments. These demonstrate that your policies aren't just words—they're part of how you operate.

#### **Step 7: Maintain and Update**

**Say What You Do:** Set a schedule for regular review (at least annually).

**Do What You Say:** Update policies when business operations or laws change.

**Prove It:** Keep version control records, update acknowledgment forms, and document when updates are shared with staff.

Summary Checklist

Step | Focus Area | Outcome

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- 1 | Purpose & Scope | Alignment with mission
- 2 | Content Outline | Clear structure
- 3 | Policy Writing | Clarity & accuracy
- 4 | Compliance Review | Legal soundness
- 5 | Publish & Acknowledge | Formal adoption
- 6 | Train & Implement | Operational integration
- 7 | Review & Update | Ongoing relevance