The Handbook: A Jewel in Your Book Series
A perspective on your handbook

My Books!

Fun Fact:

Reading 15 minutes a day puts you in the Top 1% of Learners in the world

Tom Thomas
Handbook vs Procedure Manual

**HANDBOOK**

• The handbook familiarizes employees with basic college policies and programs.
• Outlines the general expectations of the college.
• Provides general overview of how the college/your department operates.
Handbook vs Procedure Manual

**PROCEDURE MANUAL**

- Procedure Manual details specifically how work should be done.
- Procedure Manuals are much more detailed and department specific (recreation, intercollegiate sports, recruiting and travel, fitness center, etc.)
- Details processes to meet expectations.
Handbook vs Procedure Manual

- The handbook is your **rulebook**.
- The procedure manual is your **playbook**.
- They serve different purposes, but work in tandem with each other.
Handbook vs Procedure Manual

**HANDBOOK**

- All purchases must be made through approved official department purchase orders.

**PROCEDURE MANUAL**

- Authorized personnel may complete purchase orders (PO).
- PO’s must include detailed description and exact cost of items.
- PO’s must be approved by the AD before purchase.
Why a Handbook?

• Advantages?
• Purpose?
• Protection?
• Benefit to employers and employees?
Why a Handbook?

• A REFERENCE
• MOTIVATION
• CONSISTENCY
• PROTECTION
Why a Handbook?

A REFERENCE
As a Reference

• Need some information, go to the handbook.
• With a handbook, everyone knows the rules of the workplace.
• When an employee breaks a rule, you can refer to the handbook. It helps make enforcement and discipline easier.
MOTIVATION
As a Motivator

• A handbook might include information about history and goals.
• A handbook can give employees a sense of being part of something larger.
• It can build a sense of pride, keeping employees excited about the department and the success of the campus.
CONSISTENCY
Consistency

• A handbook helps ensure that people across the organization understand operation and handle issues consistently.

It should provide a **consistent framework**

for people to follow.
Consistency

• A handbook shouldn’t be an “Instructional guide” on how to manage or deal with every conceivable issue.
• Consistent framework will be a positive hallmark of your tenure.
PROTECTION
Protection

• In most states, winning an unemployment claim requires proof that the employee was on notice of a certain rule and had been warned that violating the rule would lead to disciplinary action.

• A well-written handbook may be key to a successful defense of unemployment, improper termination, or other legal claims.
Handbooks

WHAT’S INCLUDED?
What’s Included?

• Welcome and introduction.
• Purpose of handbook.
• Mission statement.
• Statement of priorities.
• Background information about the department and college.
What’s Included?

• Benefits – (HR information).
• Suggestion and complaint procedures.
• Workplace rules and policies.
• Standards of conduct.
• Employee’s role and responsibilities.
What’s Included?

• Employer’s role and responsibilities.
• Hours of work.
• Lunch periods and breaks? Ha!
• Overtime policy.
• Attendance and punctuality.
What’s Included?

• Time card information.
• Pay day.
• Wage and performance reviews.
• Resignation or termination.
• Summary and acknowledgement disclaimers (reviewed by your legal counsel).
Protection

- Handbooks can create unintentional Employment Contracts.

- If you’re not careful in the wording in you’re your handbook, it may be considered a binding contract.
Protection

SO, WHAT DO WE DO?!?!
Avoiding Claims

• State that the handbook serves as a guide, and is not a contract. It does not promise, directly or indirectly, a term of employment.

• Make sure that the handbook is carefully worded to avoid binding language and reserve the right to revise the handbook at any time.
Include a Disclaimer

• Include a concise piece of language that clearly says that your handbook is not an employment contract.
• This handbook does not represent contractual terms of employment. It should serve as a guideline of policies which may be subject to periodic review and change.
HOW DO WE WRITE THIS?
Effective Publishing Methods

• Select the size, shape and format of your handbook.
• If it is too small, it will probably get lost.
• If it is too big, it will probably be put somewhere out of the way and rarely consulted.
• Typical handbooks range from 5” x 7” to 8 ½” x 11”.
Effective Publishing Methods

What about the language and style?
Effective Writing Style

This is an official document for your employees and you want them to read and comprehend it.

• Make it easy to read, but not too informal.
• Keep sentences short in length.
• Limit discussion of any subject to one page or less.
• Use drawings, charts, and cartoons as much as possible.
• Leave plenty of white space on each page.
Effective Writing Style

• Limit the size of the handbook. Don’t make it complicated.

• Use a personal rather that informal style. (Instead of saying “Employees will be paid on a bi-weekly basis,” say “You will be paid every two weeks.”)
Effective Design Style

Design Tips
Effective Design Style

• Do you want the cover to be colorful?
• Do you want to include the college or department logo or motto on the cover?
• Do you want the printing limited to black and white, or do you want different colors of ink?
• Do you want colored paper for the pages?
Effective Design Style

• Do you want drawings or photographs in your book (Make sure they are good quality and print well)?

• Do we highlight what we want people to see (what we think is important)?
SUSTAINABILITY
Publishing Options

• Forgo paper altogether by providing your handbook in an electronic form.
• Use a format that everyone can read, but that only you can edit (PDF).
Handbook Ideas and Examples

- [http://www.woosterathletics.com/information/help](http://www.woosterathletics.com/information/help)
Final Considerations

- A handbook should be tailored to your organization and should reflect how you conduct business.
- Handbooks that contain typos, are copied askew, are out of date, contain inapplicable policies and looks sloppy or unprofessional send a message that you don’t really care.
Final Considerations

- No handbook works if employees do not have easy access to it and you cannot “prove” an employee received and understood that he or she was required to abide by it.
- Include a signed acknowledgement form that your handbook was received, read, and understood.
Final Considerations

• Refer to the handbook yourself, at department meetings and in individual meetings with your employees.

• Modeling this type of behavior will lend a sense of acceptance to using the handbook.
Final Considerations

- Review your handbooks regularly and refer to your human resources office for compliance.
- Review changes, as they are made, with your entire department.
- Have your athletic direct report (ADR), HR, and legal counsel review and approve your handbook.