Staff Training, Education & Procedures
and
Creating an Employee Handbook

The need for training and development

Employee training and development are part of good management practices and good risk management strategies. The following issues and changes in an organization many indicate the need for employee training and development:

- Employee's request
- Employee survey results
- Evaluation deficiencies
- Individual development plan
- Law and regulation changes
- Need to develop new leaders
- New employee
- New equipment
- New manager
- New program
- New technology
- Reassignment
- Safety issues

Benefits of employee training and development include:

- Employees are better prepared to help the organization achieve its goals
- Staff are more productive
- Employees are more motivated
- Well trained staff require less supervision
- A pool of employees are ready to replace others who leave
- Staff that engage in continuous learning are better able to meet the challenges of changes in the organization
- Staff are able to manage/work on new programs
- Your organization will be more successful at attracting and retaining employees

Creating a learning environment in your organization

A positive environment for learning is always critical for success, whether it is the environment of a classroom or the environment of your organization. The learning environment provided by an organization is a function of the organizational culture. Organizational culture means the values, attitudes and beliefs reflected in the mission, goals, and practices of the organization.
The Board of Directors and senior staff of your organization set the tone for the organization's culture. Do their decisions and actions view learning as a positive way to improve individual performance and the performance of the organization? Are these positive outlooks reflected in the value statements, policies and structures that guide the operation of the organization?

Here are some ways organizations that value learning provide a supportive learning environment:

- **Recognize that learning is part of everything the organization does**
Opportunities to learn happen all the time. Organizational cultures that support learning recognize learning as an ongoing process, not an event. A new piece of legislation may be used as a learning tool for all staff. A proposed special event may become a learning opportunity for an employee who has expressed an interest in event management.

- **Support the expectation of learning with resources for learning**

An organization shows that it values learning by including employee training and development in the annual budgeting process. Items included in the annual budget reflect the priorities of the organization.

- **Encourage learning at all levels**

Opportunities to learn are made available for everyone in the organization from the Board of Directors to the most junior staff.

- **Recognize that mistakes are learning opportunities**

One way an organization shows that it values learning is in its approach to mistakes. Failure is critical to the learning process and must be considered in the context of the individual's role, potential, and future success. When people fail, they might react in one of three ways: Learn from the mistake, continue to fail or become reluctant to try again.
In today's workplace environment, leaders must develop a culture that removes the punishing effects of failure to help people to take risks, are creative and are trying to grow. This is completely different from employees who have mistakes that are the results of disobedience, breaking company policies, etc. It is important to encourage people to learn from mistakes rather than being afraid to admit their mistakes for fear of disciplinary action.

- **Have a policy on employee training and development**

A policy on employee training and development shows that the organization values learning. Professional development policies usually include guidance on:

How often employees are expected to take formal training - once a year, once every two year, etc.

The types of development programs that are acceptable.

When and how employees will be reimbursed for off-the-job programs.

- **Provide time for learning**

Time for learning in the workplace is important for the success of an employee development program. This means giving employees time to learn without the interruptions of every-day activity.

- **Allow for practice of new skills on-the-job**

Learning does not end when the activity is over. Opportunities to use the knowledge and skills they have learned on-the-job will ensure that people retain what they have learned.

Creating an Employee Handbook

Google: Creating An Employee Handbook

Guideline for Creating Your Own Handbook:
https://www.sba.gov/content/employee-handbooks

Example of a Handbook:
https://www.nfib.com/documents/pdf/faststart/model-employee-handbook.pdf

There are free online services for creating your own handbook:
http://www.formfindr.com/employee-handbook