



Posters, Notices, and Communication

Overview

Launch a communication campaign to ensure that all employees are informed. This helps them buy into the HR policies and procedures that affect them.

There are several ways to get your human resources message across; the more frequent and varied the message, the more likely employees will be to remember it.

Legal issues

Federal and state employment laws require that employers post various notices in the workplace explaining the rights of employees. Some mandatory notices include, but are not limited to, the “Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law” poster, a notice regarding the Employee Polygraph Protection Act, and a Fair Labor Standards Act notice with information on the minimum wage, overtime pay, child labor laws, etc.

Required notices must be posted prominently and conspicuously where they can be readily seen by both employees and applicants for employment. Many employers display the required posters in an employee lunchroom or break room, as well as in the HR area or by the main entrance to the workplace. Individual posters meeting the requirements of each federal and state law are available from the various regulatory agencies responsible for their enforcement. The federal government provides versions of the posters in Spanish as well as English.

Communication tools

In addition to these mandatory posters and the employee handbook, which will be covered in the next section, there are several other methods of communicating with staff as a whole. You may wish to adopt some or all of the following:

✓ Newsletters

Often published monthly or quarterly, employee newsletters are a popular way to convey information. You can announce new policies, benefits changes, job openings, business issues,



employee service anniversaries, employee awards, and community activities. You can also use newsletters to promote awareness of governmental regulations and legislation affecting company business.

✓ **Bulletin boards**

To be effective, bulletin boards must be placed in prominent areas where all employees will see them. Your company may need only one board for all employees, or perhaps one in each department.

✓ **Training meetings**

Little is more effective than a group presentation to ensure that everyone receives the same message and that it is not tainted by rumor or secondhand interpretation. For employees who miss in-person training meetings, presentations can be recorded and viewed at the employees' convenience. In addition, online training that employees can take at any time is a helpful resource for many employers.

HR staffers and supervisors can confirm that employees understand policy and procedure with one-on-one meetings with employees. These can be formally scheduled, or time can be set aside for open office hours to answer employee questions.

✓ **Intranet**

If every employee in your workforce has a reliable means of access, consider using an intranet for communication, which allows distribution of information to all employees, at all locations, at the same time.

✓ **E-mail and Internet use**

E-mail may be a simple, quick way to communicate companywide HR information to your workforce, but try not to rely solely on it for all correspondence. Technology has certainly made real-time communication possible, but this also makes it easy to communicate first and think later. For example, the Reply All command or access to a companywide distribution list can become problematic.

A strong Internet use policy can protect your organization from inappropriate uses or compromising company security. A policy should be established that determines who owns the information distributed over internal mail or the Internet, who will audit archives for message content, whether personal messages are allowed, who enforces discipline for misuse, what constitutes misuse, and how long archives will be retained. *Note:* Employees should be informed that many archives can be accessed even though employees have deleted files from their individual computers.

**✓ Orientation**

The most important meeting at which to communicate HR policy is the new employee orientation meeting. Orientation can be accomplished in a comprehensive one-on-one session on the employee's first day or worked into group sessions during initial job training. Most likely, employees will be required to make several important decisions about compensation and benefits soon after starting new jobs. Your orientation can help them make the best decisions.

You may wish to break down your orientation into two parts: company information provided to employees by the HR staff and job or departmental information provided to employees by supervisors. If supervisors are responsible for this information, you can assist them by providing necessary materials and giving them tips on how to present it.

✓ Open-door policy

Whether employees have questions or complaints, they should feel that they can come to the HR department for information. You should let employees know about the policy, especially the best times and the right people to contact.

Take action

Communication with employees is vital, and it is important to tap into as many avenues of communication as possible.