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## **Action: ASAP, Inc., Employee Handbook**

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#### Author Note

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Abstract

A project focused on the employee/employer relationship within a septic and excavation company located in the Treasure Valley. My mission was to create an administrative document defining the expectations of new and current employees, paired with their expectations from the company. This is an entirely new document to ASAP, Inc. as the company has grown and is seeking a better approach to defining the employee/employer relationship.

*Keywords:* Human Resources, Employee and Employer expectations, Policies, and Safety.

### **Introduction to your Capstone Project**

I am currently employed by ASAP, Inc. The owner, Isaac Gordon, bought the company in 2017 and moved it from Council, Idaho to the Treasure Valley, expanding the services provided by the company. Since 2017, the company has grown from 2 employees to a height of 15. Due to this expansion, problems have occurred with employees due to a lack of new employee orientation. One of the solutions we examined, which I have chosen to complete, was the creation of an Employee Handbook from which the employee/employer relationship will be clearly defined, along with the expectations of both parties.

### **Section 1: Innovative Approach**

ASAP, Inc. currently has 13 employees that range in scope from managers to drivers to laborers. A new employee, on his/her first day, provides a copy of their driver's license, Social Security card, and address. After filling out the necessary tax forms, they are sent to the job site to begin work. There is no clear definition of duties nor supervisory structure, or expectations from the employer. This has created confusion for employees at all levels and has led to a high turnover rate that has left the company scrambling on several occasions.

After examining the issue with the owner, it was decided that an employee handbook would be created for issuance at the time of hire. Our intention was to document stated procedures, providing the employee with answers to day-to-day operations and thereby allowing the employee to focus on the job and not administrative matters such as pay and time-off procedures.

After reading through three handbooks from various businesses, I felt I had a firm understanding of the aim and purpose of my handbook. I then spoke with the business owner and a few employees to discern what they felt was imperative that I include in the handbook. Using the Idaho Department of Labor and OSHA Safety Guidelines as additional resources, I completed my first draft. I then shared the draft with the owner and added additional topics that he desired, specifically relating to sub-contractors working under his authority. My next step was to contact the attorney the company has on retainer to conduct a legal review, ensuring compliance with labor laws.

While examining the initial problem my either/or statement was identified as *Either ASAP, Inc. creates a clear employee handbook or the company will need new employee training to define duties and roles*. With the creation and distribution of this handbook, the owner is now confident that past issues will be resolved and future employees will join the team with a clear understanding of their role and expectations from the company.

## **Section 2: Emotional Intelligence**

I believe the single most important party involved in this process is the employee. An individual seeks employment in which to sustain their livelihood. Some employees come to us in order to learn a trade and grow within a profession, while some come for only a paycheck, with no desire to learn or progress beyond that of a basic laborer. It is our goal to hire individuals that possess a desire to learn and grow, but this is not always possible, especially when we find ourselves short-handed. Keeping this in mind while working on this project, I realized that from

the new employee's perspective, beginning a job with clear expectations will allow for a quick introduction to our field and a greater opportunity for advancement.

In addition to providing a valuable document for the employee, the company can now focus on the expansion of the business and the day-to-day tasks required to satisfy the customer. This handbook has also made it easier for the job-site managers as the employee now has a clear direction of functions and duties, allowing the managers to better manage the projects and not the administrative questions from the employees.

### **Section 3: Creative Thinking**

I initially researched laws pertaining to employee handbooks and gathered useful information from the Idaho Department of Labor website. I then perused 3 handbooks from separate businesses, an orthodontic facility, a hospital, and an advertising agency. From this, I was able to create a foundation from which to begin. Using OSHA safety guidelines, I was able to insert industry-specific items relating to safety, however, I discovered that this (safety practices) is a separate field from which I was working regarding my project (human resources). After speaking with the owner, we have both determined that a safety manual is a must for the company and I will soon begin that.

After conducting my initial research and writing two drafts, I then contacted the company's attorney for a legal review of the handbook. While speaking with him, I learned that a legal review process is not mandatory but it is highly recommended to ensure compliance with labor laws. As this was my intent for the review, I feel that the issuance of this handbook will not create liability issues for the company.

As this company continues to grow and we complete more projects as a sub-contractor under larger construction companies, additional needs, such as the safety manual, have been identified and my duties within the company continue to grow. Having the experience of completing this project through non-traditional means (using different industries as examples) has provided me with a mindset that looks away from the routine, allowing for the creation of a document, or project, that expands the abilities of the company while also providing the necessary protections.

#### **Section 4: Your Innovative Solution**

Working through my examples, I was able to glean specific information related to the employee/employer relationship, which became my main goal for the project. Also, with the labor law aspect in mind, I wanted to create a document that protected both the company and its employees. I reinforced this aspect through the legal review process, ensuring the message provided is consistent with the labor laws related to the topics I included.

My solution has provided the company with a valuable document from which a relationship between the employee and employer can be established from the start. This will provide the employee a better understanding of procedures, without having to learn as you go, and the employer can focus on other stakeholders in the business, mainly the customers. This handbook will also relieve the first-level managers of the need to explain procedures to the new employee.

In addition, by providing safety rules specific to each job site, we will appear as a more professional and dedicated company, focused not only on the needs of the customer but that of the employee also.

### **Section 5: Results**

We provide services not only to the homeowner but also to small business builders and large construction companies. We use products that are made with individual company names and logos emplaced on them. By becoming a more professional company, we have considered the businesses we represent as their names are on our completed jobs. By conducting ourselves in an efficient manner, we better represent the companies that we work with on a daily basis.

The stakeholders that can benefit from this are not only the owner but the companies we work with and the customers we serve.

After introducing the handbook, I found the majority of the responses from employees to be positive as “administrative” issues are now clearly stated in the handbook and the new employee can answer questions themselves. The first-level managers are absolutely happy with this as they now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, for themselves and the laborers, allowing them to manage the project more and personnel less.

A key stakeholder for this project, the owner, can now focus more on the customer, rather than have to explain his procedures, which were never in written form. This has allowed him to shift his focus more towards further expansion of the company while at the same time affording him some legal protection regarding labor and employee issues.

### **Section 6: Conclusion**

This project began last semester while researching topics for my capstone project. After deciding on this project, I began my initial research into employee handbooks and the laws related to such items. After finding some items related to liability issues in companies that do not possess such items, I related my findings to the business owner. He made the decision to make this a priority and I immediately began working on it. As I now work from home, it was a difficult process to obtain feedback from other employees. I was eventually able to get time with a handful of employees and watched as one quit due to her not appreciating what was going to be introduced. While this incident was somewhat expected, I had assumed there would be some pushback from employees, overall the issuance of this document has been well received. As this is a new document, future evaluation will be required to ensure the document is clearly understood by all involved parties.

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