

Boise State University

ScholarWorks

IPS/BAS 495 Undergraduate Capstone Projects

Student Research

Spring 2023

Emerald Lawns: Employee Manual

Joshua S. Black

Boise State University

—

Emerald Lawns: Employee Manual

Joshua S. Black

Boise State University

Spring 2023, Dr. Margaret Sass

Author Note

Joshua Black is a student at Boise State University and an employee at Emerald Lawns, Inc.

Joshua Black can be reached via email at joshuablack511@u.boisestate.edu

Abstract

This paper will go through the process of creating an employee manual for my current company. I will touch on each aspect that guided me to the manual that I wrote and what I feel deserved to be in it. The manual was a culmination of different ideas from my boss and other employees with long years in the industry.

Keywords: training, universalise, growth

Emerald Lawns Employee Manual

Having worked at Emerald Lawns for the last three years I have seen quite a few employees come and go. I have noticed that many that start are all in different areas and don't know what is going on in the rest of the company and that they are trained all in different ways resulting in different results for our customers. I decided to try to design a manual that would help universalise training and understanding of the company. With permission to try and tackle this problem from my boss I decided that this may be the best way to create something for all employees to fall back on so that they can grow in the company and thus help the company to grow. I wanted to do this as with graduation coming up I wanted something to leave this company and my boss before I moved on to a new job. I had been around long enough to gain a lot of experience and knowledge about the industry and the company to know what each area looked like. I wanted to produce something that can be used later down the line so that new employees will come in with a stronger understanding and basis to grow from. I am hopeful that this work will help them be better technicians and work with the customers in a more beneficial manner.

A lot of my project dealt with research. I spent a lot of time going through past articles and employee agreements and talking with the two heads in the company to find what was really needed for the manual. I was able to work with a new employee and train him up and use that experience as research to see what they need to be able to excel. I took different manuals and handouts from past companies of employees and the boss to see what worked and what didn't. I then took what I found and tried to tie it all together into something that was simple enough for new people to understand and also have enough information and knowledge in it to help lead the

new employees into new areas of the business and see what they really wanted to do. After writing up what I had and organizing it into a printable manual I went over it with my boss and found what he liked and what he didn't. After this meeting I did some last minute changes and shining and got it to where everyone was happy with it.

Process

When starting this project the main question I was facing was How might I design a training program and material that reflects Emerald Lawns standards for lawn, tree, and pest control care? I decided that I can either design a sales training that is geared towards newer customers or I design a practical training designed for current customers benefits. I decided that the emphasis for my project should be the employees as they were who would be affected first and ideally most through it. I still wanted to keep the customers in mind so I couldn't do just a typical training session that dealt with the how to's of the company. I knew from experience that a lot of customer issues could have been solved by having someone that knew more about the company and the services we offer doing the service initially rather than wasting time and having to do service calls with someone else from the other sections coming out. I decided to then try to find a way to create a universal manual that tackled all of the biggest problems that our company faces. This way each employee has enough knowledge to answer questions and set up a service for the customer that tackles their issues. This would allow the customer to be happy about the service they already received and rest easy knowing that the other issues they are facing are already being addressed as soon as possible.

This manual was designed with three groups in mind, the owner, the employees, and the customers. The main target and audience of it is the employees. Because of this I wanted to

make sure that this would be something that would be accessible and helpful to any section of the company. As an employee manual I knew that it was going to be mostly used for new employees however. I decided to have this then be their introduction to the company and thus include our non compete clause and non disclosure. That way it was something that people being interviewed or starting soon would be able to first see what they were getting into and have a better understanding of the company. It was also geared in mind to show them what they could be able to do within the company. I designed the manual to be something that employees are able to look at and find what they want to be licensed in next. I wanted this to be something that they could do simply because they receive a raise with each license they obtain even if it is in a different section then what they currently work in. This project does not bring much benefit to me in the occupational sense as I am already fully licensed and can't grow any more in the company. It is however something that benefits me as my farewell to an employer and company who have been very good to me. I knew that this was my last year at the company and wanted to do something that helped show my appreciation.

I tried to approach this project as creatively as I could and I think I did a good job with it. I will say that I have no experience with employee manuals and do not know if this is standard at all. I wanted to approach it in a way that anyone could jump to whatever section they wanted or needed to. My vision for it was somewhat like a tell your own story book. I try to introduce all of the information that a new employee needs at the beginning to then jump to whatever area they are working in and then go to the next area they are interested in. While it may not be unique within the world this is definitely something unique within the company and any

company I have worked for. Rather than having something that was a large read I wanted something that could be quickly glanced at and sectionalized so as to not overwhelm readers.

What I ended up with is something that is innovative within the company and that I feel solves the problem that I was facing with training and new employees. I think that my Tell Your Own Story approach was something that I have not heard of before and works well within the company and shows what the value of Emerald Lawns is.

Results

I have not been able to fully measure the impact of this project as we are still looking for new employees however, the current employees and boss have been very receptive. I will continue to follow the project as I believe that a big impact from it will be a decrease in our average service calls and a rise in sales to current customers. This will also be the biggest impact and benefit to the customer as one of the major stakeholders. The owner also will have less to deal with as the manual addresses multiple issues that employees come to him with. He is very pleased to see what I came up with and is excited to implement it and have it be a staple for every employee. The employees now have the benefit of having their questions out in the field to be easily answered with a few turns of a page. They are able to answer more customer questions now more effectively which is a great benefit because of how destructive this season can be with everything waking up.

Conclusion

Some of the results that I anticipated was push back from some of my colleagues but surprisingly I have had none and everything has been taken well. I do still anticipate a decrease of service calls from customers and I am excited to continue following the project and potentially

updating it. All other results have been about what I expect which I am happy about and glad to see that the manual is being accepted as well as it is. I do think about what I could have done differently as I still ponder the idea of redesigning the manual for a customer pamphlet which I may still do in the next few months. I think that besides that there isn't much I would have done differently besides add more. I was thinking of adding in different labels of products we use and having them be part of them but we change products so often even in the middle of the season that it didn't seem viable to be a part of what is designed to be permanent.

References

D. Adams, personal communication, April 21, 2023

J. Biermann, personal communication, April 19, 2023

Takatori, S. K., & Hirnyck, R. (2019). *Idaho Pesticide Applicator Training Manual: A Guide for Safe Use and handling for pesticides for applicators, dealers and consultants*. University of Idaho Extension Publishing in cooperation with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

Parker, R. (2006). *Turf & Ornamental Weed Management principles*. College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Cooperative Extension, Washington State University.

Appendix

☰ Manual

☰ Non Compete