Welcome to **[your company name]’**s employee handbook

**Introduction**

This could be a head start for your employee handbook:

*If you’re a new member of the team we’re so pleased you joined us! This handbook will help you get up to speed on how our company operates with useful signposts to people, tools or guides that will not only help you ramp up faster but also make every day at [your company name] a little bit easier, so you can focus on doing great work you enjoy.*

*Our employee handbook is accessible by anyone so that prospective candidates or customers can get a better understanding of* ***[your company name]*** *- its history, product, customers and the way we work.*

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## 1. About [your company’s name]

This is the best place to express everything about your company. Feel free to gather your values, vision, and mission to make your employees feel aligned with them. Regardless of the product or service, this section allows you to share critical information about it. It’s the right place to get creative about how someone can quickly share with a third party what your company does.

Briefly, share with your employees the following:

* Values, vision and mission
* How did it all start?
* How to explain your product or service to someone
* How your teams are structured

### a. Our values, vision and mission

Depending on the format of this handbook (e.g. PDF, website, third-party app like Confluence), you can share your company's values, vision, and mission as text, a brief presentation, a video, or any other preferred way.

What is your company motto? What impact do you want to create in the world? What are the stable values that govern you?

The more realistic and descriptive you can be, the more you will give your employees the opportunity to follow the same vision and integrate into your company.

For example, at Workable, we envision a world where there are no barriers between talent and opportunity. What is your vision for your company?

Be concise and robust.

### b. How did it all start?

In every company there is an underlying story of success, or not. Show your employees how you managed to grow a company like this and make them feel like a part of this story.

The **Google** story began when Larry Page met Sergey Brin at Stanford University in 1995. Despite initial disagreements, they formed a partnership in 1996. Together, they built Backrub, a search engine that used links to determine page importance, which was later renamed Google. Google quickly caught the attention of the academic community and Silicon Valley investors, and with a $100,000 investment from Sun co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim, Google Inc. was officially born. The team moved from their dorms to a garage in Menlo Park, California, owned by Susan Wojcicki, where they worked tirelessly on their mission to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

**Shopify** was created by its founders who were looking for a shopping cart solution for their snowboarding ecommerce site but couldn't find one, so they built their own using Ruby on Rails. Their solution ended up being perfect for many others, and they ran the business independently for six years before raising funds from VCs and eventually going public, resulting in a valuation of $14 billion.

Jon Oringer, a professional software developer and amateur photographer, utilized his skills and personal photo library of 30,000 images to launch a stock photo service known as **ShutterStock**.

**Workable** was founded by Nikos Moraitakis and Spyros Magiatis, who had previously worked together for five years at Upstream. They realized that great hiring was essential to scaling a business, but the recruitment software available at the time was outdated. With the aim of creating a beautiful product, building a successful business, and creating a workplace they love, they founded Workable to provide modern recruitment software.

Regardless of the size of the company, there is always an interesting story to share about how it all began. Write this story in an engaging manner and allow your employees to gain a deeper understanding of the organization they are working for.

### c. How to explain your product or service to someone

In a company, there may be complex procedures and multiple products or services for your audience. Perhaps your new hire is not familiar with them from day one. People will ask them about their new workplace and the domain of activity.

Here, you can write a short description of your services or products to clarify your target market and strengths making it easier for someone to explain it.

### d. How our teams are structured

It is important for your new hire to have a comprehensive understanding of your company's hierarchy. You can provide a link to your organizational chart or briefly explain the various departments, their missions, the managers, and the cities in which they are based if you are a hybrid or remote company.

## 2. Our Product & Customers

In this section of your employee handbook, it is necessary to mention a few things about the process of designing a new product and how you track your customers’ needs. Who is your buyer persona? What is your target group? How do you manage to get new customers in the funnel? This is a great place to take a more detailed approach towards product development and growth.

You can include optionally the above subcategories:

* How the product is made
* Who we sell to
* How we get customers
* Learn more about the product and customers

### a. How the product is made

By describing the process, you can make it easier for a new employee to understand the progress of new development.

At your company, especially if it is a service, you may constantly enhance it by launching new editions, features, or even creating entirely new offerings, enabling the company to stay competitive, meet customer needs, and foster innovation.

What is the process of product development in your company?

You may begin the product development process by gathering customer feedback through surveys, interviews, focus groups, social media, customer support interactions, and sales data.

This valuable feedback is probably stored in a centralized repository, such as a CRM system or a product management tool, for easy access and analysis.

Your cross-functional teams may collaborate to analyze and prioritize the feedback, ensuring you address critical areas for improvement and align with customer needs.

You may create a product roadmap to provide clarity and direction, regularly reviewing and updating it to adapt to evolving requirements.

By utilizing project management software, you can effectively track progress, assign tasks, and facilitate collaboration.

Your dedicated quality assurance team conducts comprehensive testing to ensure high-quality, reliable, and user-friendly products/services.

After launch, you collect customer feedback to continually improve and meet their expectations.

Depending on your market (product, service, infrastructure), you may follow different guidelines in the production.

Feel free to explain them briefly here.

### b. Who we sell to

It is time for a new presentation. You can use infographics to depict the different segments of your customers. Additionally, you can provide more information about your ideal customer profile/buyer persona. This will greatly aid your new employees in better understanding who you sell to. It can prove to be very beneficial for all positions within your company.

### c. How we get customers

What is your competitive advantage that makes customers prefer you? Is it your excellent customer service experience? Is it the special features that only you offer? Or is it your brand awareness that makes prospective customers eager to work with you? Describe the top reasons someone is interested in your brand and explain them.

You can also add some infographics here that show the sources driving traffic to your product or service and be clear about how these are generating new leads.

### d. Learn more about the product and customers

How can an employee gain a better understanding of your product or service from the client's perspective? Do you have a video explainer that is typically sent to new customers to guide them through the product? Is there a trial use available for employees to experiment with the product? Perhaps your employees could test your manufactured products in some way? Depending on your industry it’s always good to have your employees check and use your product.

It is important to explain to new hires how they can become familiar with what you sell. This will drive their future decisions in many cases.

## 3. Some of our rituals

If you have annually planned events for business purposes or entertainment, here is the place to write them down for your new hire. These ‘rituals’ can be:

* Retreats
* All-hands meetings
* Performance reviews

### a. Retreats

Is it a summit at an all-inclusive hotel or an annual team-building event in nature? Describe your efforts to improve employee satisfaction. If you organize such annual events, this is the perfect opportunity to showcase them.

### b. All-hands meetings

If you regularly organize all-hands meetings throughout the year, it is important for your new hires to be aware of them. This is because these meetings provide an opportunity to gather all employees, including managers and stakeholders, to discuss matters concerning your company. It is crucial to explain the importance of these meetings to ensure everyone is on the same page and can contribute to the success of the company.

### c. Performance reviews

This performance management tool can help you recognize high performance and boost productivity within your company. By providing your employees with a detailed approach, you can help them understand the significance of these reviews. Some companies link these reviews to bonuses or salary increases.

## 4. The company cadence

Things are getting more serious here as this is where we explain the company's cadence. This may include the company's budget forecast procedures, critical executive meetings throughout the year, employee survey periods, critical product announcements, and the flow of information throughout the company.

### a. The things we do every year

Write an informative piece about the major procedures of the company and the missions behind them, and explain why you are sharing this information. These annual or biannual events play a crucial role in shaping the future of the company. They set the rhythm of your company and they can set or reset new goals for the organization.

## 5. Mode of work (hybrid, remote, work from office)

This section is entirely optional and is intended for companies that have implemented a hybrid or remote working environment. In this chapter, you can explain the work policies and rules that are of utmost importance to your employees. Depending on any additional rules you may have in terms of hybrid working or working from abroad, you can add new subchapters here.

### a. Working from home or the office

You can list here all of the office addresses where someone can work, and additionally explain the company's work-from-home policy. If there is a rotation policy that permits or obliges everyone to work in a hybrid format, it must be presented clearly. If all approaches are acceptable, list the benefits of both options.

### b. Work from abroad

If you offer your employees the ability to work from abroad, but there are limitations, you must provide those limitations here.

### c. Getting together in real life

Does your company have a plan for getting employees together? If you regularly organize team bonding events such as dinners, retreats, nature activities, etc., please feel free to write them down here.

## 6. Operating Principles

We are certain that your company operates under specific principles, and sharing them with new hires is an excellent step. This will help them better understand the culture of your organization and position themselves in a way that enables them to contribute to the organization's success.

You are free to express your own principles here. To aid you in this process, we have chosen to provide a set of principles for you (some of them are in Workable’s employee handbook) to take as inspiration.

### a. Know where you want to be

What are the qualities that drove the company's success? How can your new hire learn from them and continue this journey? Let them know where you want to be, how you position your company in the market, and what your aspirations are. This way, you can both be looking at the same goal.

### b. Drive a performance culture

Perhaps you want your employees to focus on their performance. In order to do so, it is important to explain to them why keeping track of their performance is crucial and how it can assist them in achieving greater things within the company. To help them understand, consider using an example of a team whose performance plays a significant role in their development (you can draw inspiration from sports).

A performance culture could include:

* Clear Goals
* Constructive Feedback
* Ownership and Accountability
* Collaboration
* Teamwork
* Continuous Learning and Development

### c. Make the difference

Your employees want to feel valued while working for you. Your efforts should be directed towards achieving this goal. This means that everyone must take their role seriously and work towards a greater objective. You do not need employees who share the same perspective on everything. Collaboration is essential for success, and diverse opinions can contribute to it. Describe how an individual can have a positive impact on your company. Is it through their ideas, work ethic, or dedication? Take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts.

### d. Keep exceptions exceptional

Maintaining a high-performance team necessitates minimizing exceptions and embracing clear, streamlined processes. Underestimating the time and effort required to manage exceptions is common, and their impact affects not just the individual involved, but also other team members.

By avoiding unnecessary exceptions, your company ensures efficiency and productivity, benefiting both your organization and customers.

### e. Avoid process escalation

To avoid unnecessary process escalation at your company, it is important to foster a culture of open communication and collaboration. Encouraging employees to address concerns and challenges at an early stage helps prevent issues from escalating further.

Providing clear guidelines and training on decision-making authority empowers individuals to make informed choices without constant escalations.

Unnecessary escalation at work can occur in various scenarios.

For instance, a minor disagreement between team members over a project's approach quickly escalates into a heated argument, creating tension and disrupting productivity.

Another example is when a supervisor immediately involves top-level management in a minor performance issue instead of addressing it directly with the employee. T

his escalates the matter unnecessarily, undermining trust and bypassing opportunities for constructive feedback and growth.

Additionally, escalating a customer complaint without first attempting to resolve it at the frontline level can lead to an unnecessary involvement of higher management and potential damage to customer relationships.

If you feel that this principle is crucial for your company, please use this space to expand on it.

### f. Foster collaboration with international colleagues

Whether you have hires beyond the border or closely cooperate with companies around the world, you can share this principle with your new hire. Here is a sample with basic guidelines you can use:

When collaborating with international colleagues, it's crucial to consider time differences, opting for asynchronous communication like email when possible. Plan meetings thoughtfully, accommodating different time zones. Take the initiative to learn about their country, customs, and holidays, either through research or by asking colleagues directly.

Remember to see your colleagues as individuals with personal lives and interests. Ensure clarity in communication, as cultural and language differences can lead to misunderstandings. Give the benefit of the doubt, assuming good intentions in case of errors. Whenever feasible, utilize video chats or meet in person to strengthen relationships and foster a sense of connection.

### g. Embrace diversity

Embracing diversity means actively recognizing, respecting, and appreciating the differences and unique perspectives of individuals from various backgrounds.

If your company has a principle of diversity, it’s the right time to elaborate on it.

Here is a sample you can use to explain it to your employees:

You can embrace diversity in these ways:

* Foster inclusion: Actively include and involve colleagues from different backgrounds in discussions, projects, and social activities. Seek their input and make sure everyone's voice is heard and valued.
* Cultivate cultural awareness: Educate yourself about different cultures, traditions, and customs. Show genuine interest by asking questions, attending cultural events, or participating in diversity and inclusion workshops.
* Challenge stereotypes and biases: Be mindful of your own biases and prejudices, and challenge them. Avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes and treat each individual as unique.
* Be open-minded: Embrace different perspectives and approaches. Listen attentively, be willing to learn from others, and consider alternative viewpoints when making decisions.
* Engage in dialogue: Initiate respectful conversations about diversity and inclusion. Engage in discussions that promote understanding, empathy, and awareness of diverse experiences.
* Support and advocate: Stand up against discrimination, prejudice, or exclusionary behaviors. Be an ally for colleagues from underrepresented groups and support inclusive policies and initiatives.

You can implement diversity by following some of these examples:

* Actively seeking diverse perspectives in team meetings and ensuring everyone has an opportunity to contribute.
* Participating in employee resource groups or affinity networks that celebrate different cultures, ethnicities, or identities.
* Collaborating with colleagues from diverse backgrounds on projects, embracing their unique ideas and approaches.
* Attending diversity and inclusion training sessions or workshops to enhance cultural competency.
* Mentoring or being mentored by someone from a different background, fostering cross-cultural understanding.
* Supporting and participating in initiatives like Pride Month, Black History Month, or International Women's Day to raise awareness and celebrate diversity.

## 7. How we hire

By making the way you hire known, you increase the transparency of your business and help attract more talent. Although employees have already been hired at the moment, it’s important to confirm that there is a dedicated process in place.

In this section, you will explain your company's hiring process and suggest a referral system if it is utilized in your hiring strategy.

### a. Our hiring process

This chapter is crucial for your company, and it needs to be properly integrated here. What is your hiring process? If you divide the process into stages, you can outline them in this section. For instance, you may begin with a screening interview or a one-way video interview. The next step could be sending assessments and assignments to your candidates, followed by an interview with the hiring manager and/or an executive interview. Finally, you may request reference calls. Whatever your procedure may be, it is highly recommended that you document it here.

### b. Referrals

In this section, if you utilize a referral system, you must provide your new hire with any useful information and the procedure for suggesting someone for a specific job position.

Referrals in hiring bring numerous benefits to organizations. Referred candidates align well with company culture, resulting in higher quality fits. Hiring processes are faster and more efficient, bypassing lengthy sourcing and screening stages. Referred candidates exhibit higher retention rates and job satisfaction, enhancing long-term employee engagement.

## 8. Benefits

If your company offers amenities to employees, this is the right time to mention them. Are there any requirements for receiving these benefits?

You may provide a pension plan, private health insurance, or company bonuses. Perhaps you offer equipment to new hires to work more efficiently.

In other cases, you may offer extra days off (PTO) per year depending on specific circumstances (blood donation, volunteering etc.)

Please feel free to list your benefits in this section.

Here are some benefits you may have or you want to include in your company:
Health Insurance: Companies often provide health insurance coverage, including medical, dental, and vision plans, to support employees' well-being and help cover healthcare expenses.

* Retirement Plans
* Paid Time Off (PTO) under circumstances (blood donation, volunteering, unexpected events)
* Flexible Work Arrangements (flexible work hours, remote work options, or compressed workweeks.)
* Employee Assistance Programs (mental health, work-related stress)
* Professional Development (training programs, workshops, mentorship opportunities, or tuition reimbursement.)
* Performance Bonuses:
* Stock Options or Equity
* Wellness Programs
* Parental Leave

Take the time to elaborate on each benefit by creating a subsection.

### a. Vacation / PTO

Here, you need to gather all the benefits related to vacation. These could include summer bonuses, fully paid vacation, discounts on hotels, flights etc.

### b. Company Bonus Scheme

Explain to your new hire the structure of your bonus and the requirements for earning it.

#### Some useful things to mention

This section will assist you in including any useful information that was not suitable for the above but is still essential.

It could be a brief biography of the founder or the board of directors, office regulations, or a presentation featuring the company's investors. Perhaps you want to be transparent about your revenues and wish to share some charts with your new employees.

It is up to you to create your subsections and include information about anything you consider significant.

**Some ideas:**

* Performance Metrics
* Get to know our founder
* Our investors
* Office rules

## 9. HR FAQs

This section needs to include answers to common questions and directions for getting assistance. Your new hire wants to know more about holidays, sick leave, and the flow of information within the HR team.

You can either provide a link to your help center or write some common questions and answers here to assist them.

**Some useful questions:**

* Where do I find my time off balance?
* I'm sick. What should I do?
* I want to work from the office/home, what should I do?
* I have a new passport/ID/home address? Do I need to provide it to you?
* I want to attend a training, who should I speak to?
* How do I submit expenses?
* Where can I find a calendar of public holidays?

## 10. IT FAQs

This includes information on how to contact IT, if there are sessions for software installation, hardware guides, and more.

## 11. Meet your HR team

Introduce the HR team and explain how they can support your new hire. Provide contact details and clearly outline their responsibilities.