



HR Solutions for Small Business, LLC

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The “HR-Lady” for Nonprofits & Small Businesses

“Should I use a colleague’s Employee Policy Handbook?”

I recently responded to callers of a human resources hotline.

A business leader from a small manufacturing company called with a question from an employee who resigned early in the year.

This employee resigned from his job in March and wanted to be paid out for his unused vacation. Seems easy enough. So, I asked two questions. First, what have they done for other employees who left the company? More importantly, how does the employee policy handbook address this (common) question?

The manager went onto to say they recently revised their policy handbook. Sounds good so far. Then she tells me that a colleague from another small business shared his handbook and my caller basically used his with only a few changes.

This is not the first time I have heard from a small business leader about using another firm’s employee policy handbook. While up front it seems to save you time, you often miss out on thinking about what is important to you, your business and your employees.

The other organization hadn’t made it a priority to address how to handle unused vacation or paid time off when an employee resigns. Because my caller used this firm’s handbook, she missed out on having discussions with her leadership team then making thoughtful decisions about what was right for them.

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The moral here is if you plan to take advantage of the human resources tools your small business friends have created be sure to spend some time reflecting on what is important to you.

My caller had a difficult conversation with the employee. The conversation might have been easier had they done the following. First, decide for themselves whether to payout unused vacation or paid time off. They may have decided not to pay out any unused vacation or paid time off. Or, they may have decided to pay it out on a prorated basis.

Second, document the policy in the employee handbook.

Finally, communicate verbally to staff and provide staff the handbook.

Have a policy which reflects your values. Communicate the policy. These steps provide clear expectations for employees and help to ensure consistency in managing the policy.

Before you copy your friends policy handbook, contact HR Solutions for Small Business, LLC to help you evaluate what is important to you, your business and employees and help you remain compliant.

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