

Put it in Writing: Include Employee Performance Expectations in Agreements



Performance expectations to include in your next employee employment agreement

Employment relationships work best when all parties know what to expect of each other. When the employee understands not only what the job involves, but what performance measures and expectations accompany the job, it can be easier to decide if the job is the right fit before signing an employment agreement.

Clearly defined performance expectations make it easier to assess and measure success on an on-going basis. Performance expectations provide the opportunity to catch problems early in the process and provide an ongoing opportunity for evaluation and communications.

Effective employment agreements usually provide information on salary and compensation, job duties, hours of work, benefits and even termination, severance package information and more. But clearly defined performance expectations are often missing.

How easy is it to outline performance in an agreement? Not as difficult as you might think. When you are crafting an employment agreement there is a fine line to walk between overdoing it and putting in nothing at all.

What Performance Expectations Might You Include in the Agreement?

When an employee signs an agreement there should be a stipulation within the agreement that says the new employee agrees to abide by the policies and procedures of the organization. By doing this an employer is already laying out some general performance expectations.

Basic performance expectations

- **Work Structure Expectations:** Hours of work, breaks including lunch breaks and expectations around arrival and departure times (for some employees); notification of absences from work for any reasons (sick time, vacation time, personal time).
- **General Job Activities:** Completing work on time and to a standard required by the organization; engaging in specific work related tasks that may be unique to that individual employee

Additional performance expectations to consider

- **Ongoing Education, Training and Skills Development:** this may include specific criteria including frequency and types of learning; if certain licenses, certifications or memberships are required include the expectation for maintaining these (and who should pay for these qualifications)
- **Effective Behavioural Performance:** this may include ethical behaviours, participating in team projects or activities, communicating to others, maintaining emotional control, displaying initiative and so on.
- **Work Objectives or Targets:** In some jobs these will be easier to identify and define. Jobs that include sales targets or a certain level of production can have the targets and levels included in the agreement. The more specific the better. Simply saying meeting or exceeding 'sales or production targets' is not as effective as providing specific numbers.
- **Special performance expectations:** Employees may be hired for very specific purposes. Consider the case where an employee is hired to find inefficiencies and cut costs, increase employee retention and more.

Keep in mind when including performance expectations you should consider how and when you will measure these expectations.

When creating an employment agreement check over your policies and see what you might be missing as it applies to agreements with your employees. Individual employees may require the insertion of individual performance expectations in their specific contracts.

HR Insider Resources

[Sample Employment Agreement](#)