

Documenting Discipline

Mike Deblieux

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Introduction

Documenting Discipline shows you how to use progressive discipline as a positive management tool. It shows you how to meet with an employee to help him or her correct a problem. It provides you with a format for writing disciplinary action memos. It focuses on your responsibility as a supervisor to help an employee understand and correct workplace problems.

This book addresses the two types of employee problems—poor performance and rule violations. It shows you how to investigate, approach, and resolve these problems in a positive manner. It also shows you how to document by using the FOSA+ system. FOSA+, facts, objectives, solutions, actions, plus your positive approach to discipline, will help you solve employee problems and protect you and your company from unnecessary legal liability.

Before applying anything you learn in this book, it is important to find out how your organization wants you to handle employee problems. This book gives you a format and an approach. Your company human resources and legal experts can help you apply what you learn within the policy framework of your company and the legal requirements of your state.

As you move forward with the new information you gain from reading this book, remember that the best-kept secret in management is that the way you approach a problem employee determines whether the employee will work to solve the problem or continue on a downhill slide toward termination. If you approach a problem employee in a negative manner, he or she will likely fail. In many cases, you will become involved in a legal review of your actions that will, at the very least, be very uncomfortable. If you approach the problem employee with a constructive and supportive manner, you will significantly increase the chances that the employee will correct the problems you have identified. As a result, you will avoid unnecessary liability for you and your company.

Remember that every employee represents an investment to you and your company. When you add up the cost of hiring, training, and developing an employee, you make a considerable investment in that employee. Before you move to give up on that investment, you should make every effort to assure that you have tried to get the most from it.

Book Objectives

You are most likely reading this book because you want to improve your managerial and supervisory skills. As you begin to invest your time, we think it is important for you to be thinking about what you will gain from this experience. At the beginning of each chapter, we list goals to help you see where you are headed. Here, we would like to help you see what you will gain from reading and applying the entire book.

What You Will Gain

Clearly, the main thing we think you will gain is a new appreciation for your responsibility to carefully and accurately document the steps you take to counsel, coach, and discipline employees. We want you to have an increased awareness of the role you can play in helping an employee be successful. We also want you to be more aware of your role in limiting the legal exposure you and your company can face in dealing with employee problems.

After reading this book and completing the exercises it contains, you should be able to:

- ◆ Collect accurate facts to use in making decisions about performance and rule-violation problems.
- ◆ Set specific objectives to show an employee how to correct a problem.
- ◆ Offer solutions to help an employee find a way to reach your objectives.
- ◆ Clearly inform an employee of the action you will take if the problem is not corrected.

You may have some additional goals of your own. Take a minute to list them below.

About the Author

Mike Deblieux is a nationally recognized human resources management trainer and consultant. He is president of Mike Deblieux Human Resources in Tustin, California. He designs and presents training programs on human resources-related issues such as Documenting Discipline, Writing Performance Reviews, Interviewing, Preventing Sexual Harassment, and Equal Employment Opportunity. He presents over 100 programs each year to a variety of private, public, regional, state, and local organizations.

Mike provides a full range of HR consulting services to small- and medium-sized companies. He writes and updates employee handbooks and personnel policy manuals.

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