

Restaurant Founder

Employee Handbook Builder Workbook

A step■by■step guide for restaurant founders to build a professional employee handbook.

From Restaurant Startup: Lessons from the Trenches

Restaurant Overview

Guidance: Describe the basic information about your restaurant concept.

Example: Example: Modern Italian neighborhood restaurant focused on handmade pasta and seasonal ingredients.

Mission Statement

Guidance: Define why your restaurant exists. Your mission should guide culture, hiring, and guest experience.

Example: Example: 'Create a neighborhood restaurant where great food and genuine hospitality bring people together.'

Core Values

Guidance: List 4■6 values that define how your team behaves.

Example: Example values: Hospitality First, Respect the Craft, Team Before Ego, Consistency Matters.

Service Philosophy

Guidance: Explain how guests should feel when they dine with you.

Example: Example: Guests should feel welcomed, relaxed, and taken care of.

Guest Service Standards

Guidance: Define the key behaviors staff must follow when interacting with guests.

Example: Example: greet guests within 30 seconds, maintain eye contact, anticipate needs.

Front of House Expectations

Guidance: Outline professional standards for servers, bartenders, and hosts.

Example: Example: strong menu knowledge, proactive communication, polished presentation.

Back of House Expectations

Guidance: Define expectations for kitchen staff.

Example: Example: food consistency, sanitation standards, teamwork during service.

Professional Conduct

Guidance: Describe how employees should behave toward guests and coworkers.

Example: Example: respectful communication, professionalism under pressure.

Attendance and Scheduling

Guidance: Explain attendance rules and shift expectations.

Example: Example: employees must arrive ready to work at the scheduled time.

Compensation Structure

Guidance: Explain how your restaurant handles pay structure, tips, and payroll.

Example: Example: hourly wages plus tip pool distribution.

Appearance Standards

Guidance: Describe dress code and grooming expectations.

Example: Example: clean uniform, minimal jewelry, professional appearance.

Training System

Guidance: Outline how new employees are trained.

Example: Example: orientation, shadow shifts, menu education, service training.

Communication Systems

Guidance: Explain how management communicates with staff.

Example: Example: daily pre-shift meetings and weekly team meetings.

Discipline Policy

Guidance: Describe how performance issues are handled.

Example: Example: verbal warning → written warning → final warning → termination.

Workplace Safety

Guidance: Define safety expectations for staff.

Example: Example: proper knife handling, reporting hazards immediately.

Alcohol Service Policy

Guidance: Explain rules for alcohol service.

Example: Example: verify identification and refuse service to intoxicated guests.

Guest Recovery

Guidance: Explain how staff should handle guest complaints.

Example: Example: listen carefully, apologize, and involve a manager if needed.

Founder Message

Guidance: Write a message to your team explaining the culture and expectations of your restaurant.

Example: Example: explain the importance of hospitality and teamwork.

Employee Handbook Acknowledgment

Use this page in your final handbook for employee signatures confirming they have read and understood the handbook.

Employee Name

Signature

Date
