



Policy deficits - the business information missing link

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A business that does not pay attention to policy or the business that has policy that is inappropriate or out-of-date is badly managed, out of step with its aims and objectives and can be said to be out of control.

Questions to ask of policy that ensure that it is applicable to all stakeholders and at the same time, meets the needs of the business are:

- Is it meeting local and specific needs?
- Is it clear, unambiguous and universal in its content?
- What is the transfer of knowledge and is there continuity in that transfer?
- Is ownership by staff a problem?
- Is availability to staff addressed?
- How is an ongoing business focus managed?
- What is the process for ongoing review and change wherever and whenever required?

There are two kinds of policy to be considered and they are about the policy of information management itself or any policy for operating and running the business which is actually business information.

In both cases, when management hasn't created policy for what needs to be done, they can't expect their employees to do the right thing and care about the business as it's not their business, their money and their time.

Why are they expected to care and why are they expected to do without policy, instinctively know what to do?

The minute that a business notices the absence of information management policy and written general policy they are on the path to turning the business around and managing for success.

And without an information management policy, all the other policy might just as well be filed away with the resources and other support materials in a bottom drawer and known only to the person or group that collected it or thought it up in the first place.



Most of the time nobody notices that policy is missing, out-of-date and not meeting the current needs of the business and it takes a crisis to change the practice. And that crisis may be at huge cost to the business even ruining its reputation. And sometimes the crisis shows up some time after the damage has been done, after the business has suffered and even after the gaps have been filled.

The power of policy can never be underestimated and if the one thing that you take away from reading this article is the need to look carefully at how your business values and manages its policy and to look at how accessible it is, you will be on a winner.

It is crucial to answer questions of where policy is and whether it is written down and whether it is accessible. That is just as important who sets the policy, how often is it reviewed and updated, who needs to use it and how it affects others.

Stories of missing policy and the effects it had on the business, productivity, safety, security and the economic bottom line abound. Evidence of the effect on staff morale is also available everywhere.

One of the stages of the Ten Steps to Best Business is about the issue of policy, its value and its power.

The **Ten Steps to Best Business** establishes **Business Information Organization (BIO)** on the intelligent network and this is the approach that businesses are taking on as the 21st century best practice breakthrough they had to have now.

The **Ten Steps to Best Business** are free to choose and free to use but if, after reading this article, you don't check out the state of your policy and its availability, you will be letting your business down.

Don't leave it to your staff to point out that the policy that could have avoided the incident that ruined your business or your reputation or lost you that important deal was missing or unreliable. The time to check is now.

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