

B2B: Winds of Change

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The current economic situation in Russia requires employers to make quick, accurate and efficient decisions. A large number of companies have already dismissed some of their staff members. Today, the main goal facing managers is to revise the job description of every single employee in the company and to evaluate their effectiveness. Those employees who remain with the company will have to take on additional responsibilities. In turn, employers must assess the work of each employee more carefully.

Now is a good time to review your company's documentation system. It is necessary to create it in a way that works to the benefit of the employer and allows for quick revision of HR-resources.

When preparing for such a situation, HR-managers should carefully revise all the documents available in the company. It is always much easier to lay off employees in a crisis, especially when the motivation is staff reduction. However, even after crisis conditions have passed, a company will be forced to lay off employees. Indeed, they are unlikely to quit without causing problems related to conditions set by the employer. Point dismissals are always much more complicated for a company than mass ones. Although it is important to note workers laid off during crises are also trying to take care of their futures and receive maximum benefits and payouts, which a company may not be able to provide.

First of all, it is recommended to start with employees' job descriptions. When considering a labor dispute in court, lawyers often lack a clear reference to the need to fulfill the work plan. The phrase: "the employee must provide a plan of operation on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual basis" significantly increases opportunities for an employer to apply penalties to the worker who does not cope with the agreed to planned tasks. Thus, all of these types of plans should be mentioned within the job description. Although most companies do not follow the practice of weekly planning, employers should make use of it. If an employee is

a contentious person, it is better to give him a weekly work plan under signature to directly control the quality of his work.

Additionally, in the job description for each employee it is important to mention in detail the obligation to provide reports that follow a standardized format. To maintain coherency, it is necessary to mention that the employee is responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in each report. The employer must issue an order to digitize document flow in order to simplify the completion of reports.

The majority of employee job descriptions do not use specific and clear language regarding their work in the company. Frequently this fact becomes a major obstacle in court disputes to prove the non-fulfillment of an employee's duties. For example, an employer can write in a job description that an employee is "responsible for promoting a product." Unfortunately, this vague formulation of duties will not allow the employer to apply disciplinary action. What should be written there instead? For example, "The employee must hold an event to promote the X product in accordance with the work plan." Or, for instance, if the employee has to meet regularly with clients, what does lawyer expect to see in documents? "The employee must hold meetings with the client in accordance with the work plan and to report the results of these meetings in the terms established by the work plan."

All these clarifications in the job description are designed to make the relationship between employer and employee much easier. They help to avoid the risk of labor disputes and conflicts.

Another risk is the problem of regulating the working time of regional staff members. Often, these workers do not have a permanent place of work. It is difficult for an employer to conduct quality assessments of these types of employees. Nevertheless, the company needs to find an appropriate way to regulate the number of work hours issued. One possible solution is for an employee to be required to carry a phone and call the manager at regular intervals and provide a report on the work done at the end of the day. However, in order to make this type of arrangement legitimate, it must be fixed in local company regulations.

Developing a proper documentation system within an organization is an issue of high importance. In the recent years it has become even more so, because penalties for non-compliance with labor laws have increased sharply. Thus, the documentation system should be made sufficient enough for employers to pass all inspections by the State Labor Inspection, to prove their case in a labor dispute with an employee in court, and also to allow employees to get social guarantees. Indeed, documents are the only evidence of good faith on the part of the employer.

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