

I.2. General company policy

The company as an actor in economic and social life. It aims to identify the endogenous and exogenous determinants of this actor in order to explain its past behaviour, predict its future behaviour and, above all, guide it.

– Every company is more or less guided by the general policy, whether explicit or implicit, of its management team, which is the result of their motivations, training and culture, but also of the powers they have and those they face.

I.2.1. Definition of company policy

The origin of the word politics comes from ancient Greece, where it referred to the art and practice of governing the city. A company's policy can thus be defined as the set of principles, rules, values and standards that guide its governance. It is a pillar of corporate management that is linked to management strategy. Established and supported by senior management, corporate policy is a guiding framework for the organisation's activities and defines its long-term vision.

– General policy is generally reflected in the choice of overall objectives that the company intends to pursue and the strategies it develops to that end.

– General policy:

- constitutes both a way of viewing the company and its environment and a style of governance;
- serves as a frame of reference for the various decisions that will be made;
- enables the company and its managers to avoid the risk of evolving in a random manner at the sole discretion of events.

I.2.2. How to implement a company policy?

Creating an effective company policy is a process that requires careful planning and a thoughtful approach. Here are five essential steps for developing one:

1. Define the policy's objectives

The objectives of the policy must be clearly identified. What aspect does the company wish to regulate, clarify or improve? The objectives provide clear guidance for the company and define the direction to be taken in the short, medium and long term. They create a shared vision for all members of the organisation and enable it to be explained and disseminated.

2. Analyse the company's context based on facts

All relevant information that could inform the creation of company policy should be included in the decision-making process. Analysing the company's strengths and weaknesses, known as SWOT analysis, is a key part of developing a management strategy. It helps to identify strengths to build on and areas for improvement. By taking into account the context of the company, it helps it to manage its risks and position itself in relation to its competitors.

3. Assemble a working team

The success of a company policy is the result of collective work. Identify the internal and external stakeholders who will be influenced by the corporate strategy. Their contribution is invaluable in ensuring that the policy is realistic and relevant.

Involving key employees in a collaborative policy creation process is a way to engage them and gain their buy-in to the corporate strategy.

I.2.3. The benefits of an effective corporate policy

➤ Influence on corporate culture

By establishing core values that must be shared by all employees, corporate policy helps shape the corporate culture. It thus promotes a consistent and unified working environment. When corporate strategy encourages positive values such as integrity, social responsibility and innovation, it enhances employee fulfilment and loyalty.

➤ **Consistent decision-making**

Corporate strategy is a guide for decisions made within the organisation. It provides clear parameters for solving problems and setting priorities. Managers can refer to and rely on company policy to make decisions that are consistent and aligned with the vision and values.

➤ **Human Resources Management**

Company policy establishes standards for recruitment, training and staff evaluation. It also defines rules of conduct and professional expectations, which facilitates conflict resolution and staff management.

Defining a social policy is essential for creating a healthy and ethical working environment. Companies must therefore offer benefits that enable employees to balance their professional and personal lives, such as flexible working hours or company crèches, for example.

➤ **Company reputation**

A strong corporate policy strengthens a company's reputation both internally and externally. When a company commits to ethical, sustainable and socially responsible practices, it gains the trust of its customers, partners and investors. This trust can translate into increased loyalty, greater attractiveness for recruiting talent and higher profitability.

➤ **Current challenges and corporate policy**

In this era of digital and environmental transition, corporate policy is a means of integrating change into strategy and successfully adapting the structure to the new context and societal expectations. The company can thus make strong commitments to Corporate Social Responsibility, emphasizing the importance of the company's contribution to society and the environment. It demonstrates that it applies a social policy and invests in sustainable development.

1.2.4. The benefits of corporate policies and procedures

Implementing company policies and procedures has many advantages, including:

- Clarifying expectations

Writing policies and procedures for your teams ensures that the company's expectations of them are clear. This can promote employee efficiency and even improve job satisfaction among team members and managers.

- Making consistent decisions

When policies and procedures spell out values, priorities, and procedures, it makes it easier for employees and teams to make decisions. The framework provided by policies and procedures often brings consistency to everyday choices made at work and larger decisions.

- **Offer consistent quality products and services**

Policies and procedures improve the consistency of the products and services you offer, which can help your company build a good reputation and attract and retain customers.

- **Optimise productivity**

Policies and procedures can help streamline decisions and optimise the productivity of your teams and your organisation.

1.2.5. Steps in drafting company policy

Here are the steps to follow when writing your company's procedures:

1. Identify your objectives

Set specific objectives. Start by assessing the objectives of your organisation as a whole, then define those of each department and even the role of each employee in achieving these objectives. You can use the SMART method to define your objectives (a project management and goal-setting technique that helps you formulate clear, achievable and measurable goals to ensure they are Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time-bound). Feel free to involve your team members to get different perspectives.

2. List the tasks and processes that require a procedure to be put in place

Only certain tasks require a detailed procedure. Identify them and prioritise them by asking yourself a few key questions:

- How complex is the procedure?
- What would be the consequences of an error?

- Have there been any recent changes?
- Do these tasks cause confusion among employees?

List the tasks, processes and activities that require a policy or procedure in your company. The need to formalise a process depends on your industry and the specific context of your company. There may be best practices for your industry that you can draw on. You can also consider the challenges you and your teams face on a daily basis and the solutions that could be implemented.

3. Structure your company policy

Think about how you want to present your policies and procedures. Define the main points and then explore each category to add the necessary elements. Examine what is required for your industry and formalise your policies accordingly. Some companies and industries may require specific sections.

4. Gather the necessary information for each procedure

In order to detail your company's procedures, you need to gather all the necessary information to cover all aspects. Take into account any questions employees may have had in the past and any problems that may have arisen. However, be careful to select only relevant and essential information so that you can remain concise when writing the document. Put yourself in the shoes of the employee or user of the guide and think about what they will need to fully understand and apply the procedure.

5. Write your policies and procedures

Once the structure has been defined, you can begin writing. This step can be done as a group in order to choose the most appropriate vocabulary for each policy and procedure, or it can be delegated to specific groups or departments. If your organisation has specific rules for developing new policies and procedures, be sure to follow these guidelines.

6. Proofread and edit

Once your policies and procedures have been drafted, proofread them carefully and make any corrections you deem necessary. Do not hesitate to ask a colleague to proofread them as well and suggest any necessary changes.

7. Publish and distribute

Once your policies and procedures have been finalised, you can publish and distribute them to your employees electronically or by printing an employee handbook.

1.2.6. Tips and advice for drafting your company procedures and policies

In this section, you will find some tips and tricks to help you write your company policies:

- ✓ **Work as a team.** Working in a group is often more creative and productive than working alone when writing your company policies. You can set up a working group bringing together people with an overview of the different aspects of your organisation.
- ✓ **Use a template.** If you plan to develop a large number of policies and procedures, you can use a template to simplify the process. This can also be a good way to ensure that your policies and procedures are developed in a consistent manner.
- ✓ **Weigh your words carefully.** Ensure you use professional and specific language. Avoid vague and overly general wording and take care to express precisely what you want to implement. Be concise. Where possible, try to limit the length of your company procedures and policies. This will make them clearer for employees who read them.
- ✓ **Comply with applicable law.** Throughout the process of drafting policies and procedures, ensure that all your guidelines comply with current legal requirements. If necessary, consult a solicitor to review your policies before implementing them.