

CEP Magazine – December 2018

Three ways to future-proof your policy management processes

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When it comes to corporate compliance, not knowing is no longer an excuse. From employee treatment protocols to workplace safety regulations (and everything in between), proper policy management processes can be the difference between ironclad operations and compliance nightmares.

Unfortunately, for many organizations, the old ways still reign supreme. With multiple departments managing their own policy documentation and distribution processes, many find themselves wrought with inefficiencies, lack of ownership, and, as a result, compliance issues.

To combat these issues, organizational leaders must identify ways to bring ease to their policy management processes while also future-proofing themselves from growing — and more stringent — compliance regulations.

Achieving your goals

From my experience, three successful means of achieving these goals are to centralize your policy documentation, automate the distribution processes, and employ gamification to boost employee buy-in.

Centralize your policy documentation

The first step to centralizing your documentation is understanding what you have, where it is, and what form it is in. When disparate groups control their own documents, teams often find that their employees are faced with conflicting messages and different file formats, which can complicate and even hinder their ability to receive and accurately respond to the policy documentation.

When disparate document repositories exist, leadership teams must look for ways to streamline and centralize these assets. For many, this can be as simple as creating an intranet page or an internal server folder where employees can easily access, review, and complete all necessary documentation.

By centralizing all policy documentation, organizations also benefit from greater consistency in message and policy development. Additionally, by providing better policy visibility to leadership teams, all documentation can more easily be reviewed and receive leadership sign-off prior to distribution.

Lastly, by centralizing all policy documentation, organizations can take the first step in ensuring their policy records are up to date and in compliance. Because all teams will have full transparency into current organizational policies, any updates or changes to the policies can be easily identified and distributed as they arise.

Automate your policy distribution processes

With a centralized policy documentation library at your disposal, the next step is finding a way to quickly and efficiently manage and distribute new and updated policies as well as capture and record employees' policy acknowledgements. For many, the answer is automating the change management distribution processes.

First, automation allows organizations to streamline document distribution by automatically delivering the proper documentation to the appropriate member of the workforce. As different departments are required to acknowledge/comply with policies specific to their roles, an automated system ensures that each department receives their relevant and required documentation.

Second, automation is crucial for organizational change management. As policies are updated, having an automated distribution system allows teams to efficiently distribute these updates. In many cases, these systems can be configured to automatically send out any updates as they are added to the centralized database. The result is real-time distribution of pertinent information to all relevant parties.

Finally, many automation systems have the capability to create records of the distribution and acknowledgement of organizational policies. By creating a centralized system of record with this information, team leaders can quickly identify what information has been sent out as well as who has and/or has not seen it. Such data allows them to conduct personalized follow-ups on policy acknowledgements, where needed, as well as provide quick access to all records should a compliance audit occur.

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