



Document, Document, Document

True Story -

The Vice President of HR of a mid-sized business was working with a department manager regarding an underperforming front-line employee. To date, the department manager had held several conversations with the front-line employee about performance without any positive change occurring. Now, the decision was being made to release the front-line employee for underperforming.

When the VP of HR manager asked the department manager for documentation, the conversation came to a screeching halt.

The manager had failed to document the performance-related conversations and, even worse, the front-line employee had received high marks on his annual performance review! The manager stammered about "feeling bad" about giving low marks. As a result, several more months of poor performance were endured before the front-line employee could be terminated.

Now, we could discuss the importance of manager training, given the clear gap. For now, we will focus on the importance of documentation.

Simply put - Document, document, document. It is one of the most important things a company can do, no matter the company size. Document disciplinary issues, performance discussions, safety issues, violations, investigations, misconduct and other similar items. Documentation needs to be clear, factual, and show that the employee was notified of the issues and consequences of failing to follow through. (Note - If it is not already developed, create a company policy for documentation.)

A lawsuit can destroy a business. Not only is there the actual cost of the lawsuit to consider, but the negative publicity internally and externally to the company. Documentation provides protection from this type of exposure. Furthermore, documentation protects from enduring months of underperformance costs, as in the above example.