

5 HR Essentials Every Small Business Needs

A Free Quick-Reference Guide from Nearanna Consulting

Whether you're hiring your first employee or managing a growing team, these five foundational HR practices help protect your business, keep employees engaged, and keep you compliant with the law.

1. Get Your Job Descriptions in Writing

A clear, written job description sets expectations from day one. It should outline duties, reporting relationships, required qualifications, and whether the role is exempt or non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Review job descriptions annually to keep them accurate.

2. Build an Employee Handbook

A handbook communicates your policies on pay, attendance, conduct, benefits, leave, and workplace expectations. It's one of your best tools for consistency and legal protection. Have employees sign an acknowledgment of receipt and update it whenever laws or policies change.

3. Document Performance — The Good and the Bad

Regular check-ins and written performance notes create a paper trail that supports raises, promotions, and, when necessary, disciplinary action or termination. Aim for timely, specific, and factual documentation rather than vague impressions.

4. Know Your Classification Rules

Misclassifying employees as independent contractors or as exempt from overtime is one of the most common (and costly) HR mistakes. Review each role against current federal and state guidelines, and when in doubt, get a professional opinion before finalizing pay structures.

5. Create a Simple Onboarding Checklist

A consistent onboarding process — paperwork, equipment, introductions, training, and first-week goals — helps new hires feel welcomed and productive faster, and reduces early turnover. Even a one-page checklist makes a noticeable difference.

Need help putting these into practice? Nearanna Consulting partners with small and mid-sized businesses to build practical, compliant HR systems — without the corporate overhead. Visit us at www.nearannaconsulting.com to learn more or schedule a free consultation.