Best Practices for Departmental Managers

Part 1

Part 2, which will include Property, Human Resources, IT, and Disaster Recovery, will be included in our next newsletter.

General Management

• Research and become familiar with all laws and regulations relating to your specific operations. Develop written departmental procedures for critical operations.
• Become familiar with regulations and policies concerning confidentiality including:
  o FERPA – protects privacy of student data and records
  o GLBA – protects customer data such as social security numbers
  o HIPAA – protects privacy of patient information
  o SEVIS – maintains data on international students
  o University Information Confidentiality Policy
• Secure documents containing confidential information and restrict access to sensitive data including social security numbers, student data, credit card numbers, and medical data. Shred such documents when no longer needed.
• When no longer required, zip drives, disks, CD's, DVD's, and computer hard drives should be erased or destroyed. (Hard drives are removed and/or destroyed by Procurement Services when a computer is salvaged.)
• Require new employees to become familiar with departmental and university policies and procedures. University policies are located at https://secure.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/index.jsp.
• Review university policies and procedures which “belong to your department” at least once a year. Update, add, or delete information to ensure that the university policy website is current and accurate.
• Encourage employees to develop their skills by participating in training.
• Ensure that employees are cross-trained so that critical duties are covered in the absence of key employees.
Financial

- Be alert to warning signs or “red flags” of fraud within your department. Examples include one employee who “does it all”, rush requests, unexplained variances, employees who do not take vacations, employees living beyond their means, etc.
- Obtain a working knowledge of your budget and how to get budget information from SAP.
- Perform a monthly budget-to-actual expenditure review and examine supporting documents to assure that all expenditures are authorized purchases. Question any unusual transactions.
- Before signing any document, ask yourself “how do I know this is correct”. Train yourself to know what areas of a form are important to review. Select a few “hot button” items to review before you sign. Never sign anything unless you know what your signature on the document means.
- Ensure that no single person handles all phases of a transaction (creates, approves, and reconcile, etc). Separate the duties or ensure at least one level of review. This reduces the possibility of errors or fraudulent activity.
- Keep funds received and petty cash adequately secured at all times.
- Establish accountability for cash by limiting access to one or two individuals.
- Deposit cash and checks daily.

Purchasing

- Ensure employees have a working knowledge of the University Procurement Policies and Procedures.
- Establish and clearly communicate who in the department is authorized to initiate and approve purchases, transactions, etc.
- Make certain that all employees authorized to create purchase requisitions are thoroughly familiar with General Ledger codes for proper coding of all transactions.
- Maintain supporting documentation for all purchases.
- Review Daily Purchase Notification Reports for accuracy and appropriateness.

Presented By: The University of Mississippi
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