

8 Principles for a Powerful Policy Suite



Want your policies to have the greatest impact in your organization? Apply these principles to set a solid foundation.

1. Limit the content of policy instruments to statements that *set* rules.
2. Put statements that restate, explain, or illustrate rules into guidance documents, along with all other instructional text, advice, and commentary. In other words, a Policy is not the same as a Document-That-Explains-the-Policy.
3. Distinguish policy from procedure. Good policy doesn't micromanage; it sets direction and targets. In contrast, good procedure leads people step-by-step.
4. Reduce duplication. A rule need be set once only. Every repetition is a restatement and belongs in the guidance documents.
5. Distinguish roles from responsibilities—they are not the same thing.
6. Put the majority of roles and responsibility statements into your governance documents. Restrict the policy to statements creating new roles or assigning new responsibilities.
7. Align your terminology. The word "employee" can't mean one thing in an IT policy and something else in an HR policy.
8. Check the tone of voice. Your policies are a reflection of your attitude. You don't convey that you value cooperation, inclusion, and respect when the wording of your policies shows that your real goal is obedience.

Web lewiseisen.com

LinkedIn [Lewis S. Eisen](#)

Twitter [@lewiseisen](#)

E-mail leisen@pfx.ca



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