

Proposed Technical Revision of ISU Dining Student Employee Handbook



Submitted to ISU Dining

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English 314H: Technical Communication
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Proposal Abstract

The ISU Dining Employee Handbook is a required training material for all student employees at campus retail and dining centers. Students are responsible for all information contained in this manual; they must sign that they have read and been presented with this material. However, numerous issues with the present document make it hard for the intended audience to read and retain the information. By making changes to the format, wording, layout, size, and overall presentation, we hope to create a more effective handbook for student employees.

Current Situation

ISU Dining is one of the biggest student employers at Iowa State University, providing part-time jobs for over 800 students. All employees are required to attend an orientation session in which they are given training via a general presentation of the material presented in the handbook before the start of term. This handbook provides a reference for students about company policies, and is required to be kept on the job during the first few weeks. If problems arise, employees are advised to consult the manual before reporting the issue. Upon understanding the material in the text, they are required to sign a contract saying that they have read and understood the material presented to them.

Although the document is revised annually, it is deficient in readability, usability, content, sustainability, and design. The most important change we propose is reformatting the document into a smaller, booklet form. Additionally, the paragraph form and current Garamond typeface makes for a dull read – the information is more difficult to find when it is buried under lines of text.

Content-wise, the current handbook contains some unnecessary and/or misplaced information, especially in regards to the history of the establishment. Some of this information can be shortened, reworded, or even deleted. On the other hand, there is some important information we felt was lacking, including contact information of each retail and dining location. Overall, the document exudes a dry feel due to its long lines of text, lack of visuals and lack of welcoming content. In order to create a positive welcome to the incoming employees, we felt the need to include student quotes and profiles, as well as photographs of establishments.

Though the company already has popular sustainability and food waste initiatives, this manual can be made less wasteful. As there are hundreds of copies of this currently 18-page document circulating, it would be beneficial for the establishment as well as university to cut down on its paper usage.

Lastly, contributing to this dull image is design. In order to make the document more aesthetically pleasing, we propose to change the look from paragraph style to block-modular style.

Overall, this project has been on the backburner for years. We hope that the changes we propose contribute to a better working environment for these student employees, as well as increase readership among them.

Benefits of Implementation

The redesigning of the Student Employee Handbook would have significant benefits in a couple of different areas.

Sustainability

- The resizing of the manual would result in an estimated 40% reduction of paper waste due to front to back printing and smaller dimensions.
- Portability and durability improvements from the booklet format would increase the likelihood that the employees would keep it for future reference.

Usability

- Revision of content would appeal to the intended audience, in this case, student employees.
- Smaller chunks of information would create a more effective and accessible guide to the important information.

Aesthetics

- More pictures and graphics would increase comprehension of the policies and procedures.
- A more visual document would draw the attention of the audience while conveying a professional feel.
- Inclusion of pre-existing ISU Dining graphic elements would better enforce its brand identity.

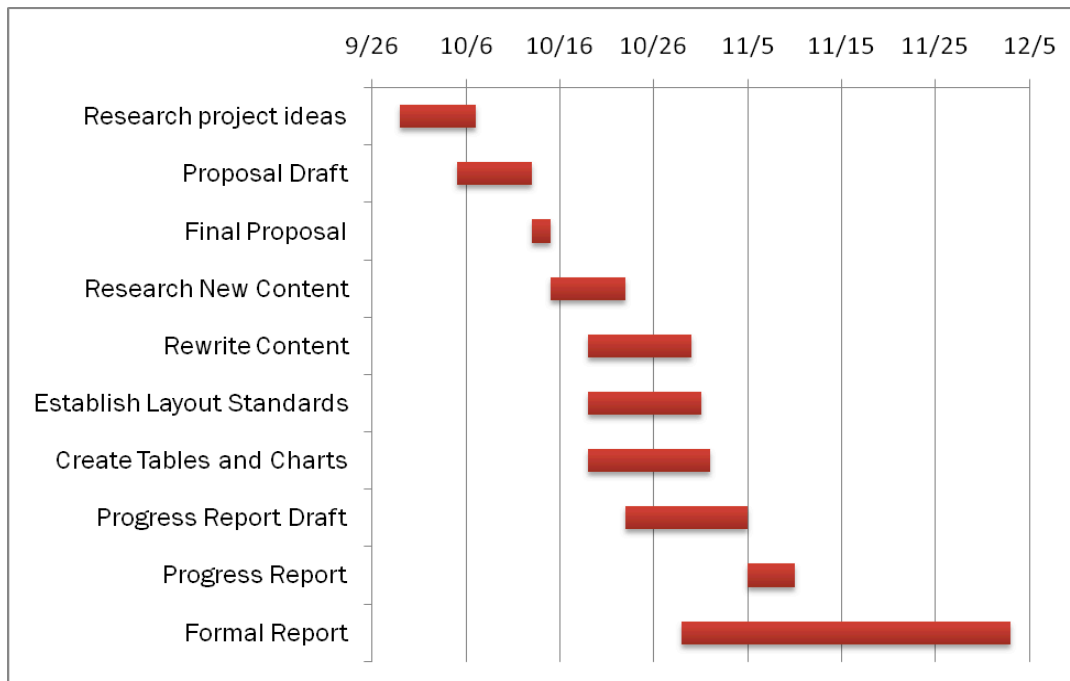
Plan of Action

Goals and Methods

1. Cut down and reformat information to increase readability and usability
 - a. Chunk out table of contents with a few primary categories
 - b. Rework unnecessary information, such as the section on history
 - c. Convey more information through the use of tables and charts
2. Rewrite content to better appeal to student employees
 - a. Establish consistency of tone
 - b. Add new content for student use
 - i. Notes page
 - ii. Contact information
3. Decrease paper waste
 - a. Redesign the manual as a booklet (centerfold)
 - b. Print the manual in a double-sided format
4. Create a more aesthetically pleasing document
 - a. Establish hierarchy of font styling
 - b. Pull graphical themes from existing ISU Dining promotional material

Projected Schedule of Action	Start	End
Research project ideas	9/29/2009	10/7/2009
Proposal Draft	10/5/2009	10/13/2009
Final Proposal	10/13/2009	10/15/2009
Research New Content	10/15/2009	10/23/2009
Rewrite Content	10/19/2009	10/30/2009
Establish Layout Standards	10/19/2009	10/31/2009
Create Tables and Charts	10/19/2009	11/1/2009
Progress Report Draft	10/23/2009	11/5/2009
Progress Report	11/5/2009	11/10/2009
Formal Report	10/29/2009	12/3/2009

Gantt Chart for Schedule



Organization

Costs

Though printing of drafts will be split by proposal team, ultimate responsibility for printing the final product will reside with ISU Dining's Marketing department. All other minor printing costs will be taken care of by proposal team.

Management

Specific personnel overseeing this project are Brittney Rutherford, Communications Specialist for ISU Dining, and Lee Honeycutt, associate professor in English. For the team itself, organization would be a joint effort in sharing responsibility for the project.

Qualifications

We believe our team is qualified to do this project because we are all undergraduate students in the Technical Communication course, offered by the English Department at Iowa State University. Therefore, we have the resources and knowledge to complete this task effectively. In addition, we also have background with the client, ISU Dining. All three of us have eaten on campus extensively, so we have a general knowledge of how the establishment is run. More importantly, a member of our team has firsthand experience working with the client as former student employee; she has actually undergone the training and orientation session in which the

product would be used. On the other hand, another member of the team works for the administrative side of ISU Dining, and has access to their promotional material (including fonts, photos, styles, etc.).

Conclusion

The Student Employee handbook is an important learning material: it serves as a reference, orientation, and guide for new student employees. For an establishment as big as ISU Dining, which employs over 800 students and serves thousands more, it is vital to have an updated, effective, and sustainable product. Therefore, we propose a comprehensive revision of the current handbook in the following areas: format, size, content, and layout. It is our hope that by doing so, ISU Dining can better serve their student employees and provide a more effective training session.

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Class: English 314H – Project Proposal Group Style Sheet
Project: ISU Dining Student Employee Handbook

Working with your project partner, create a stylesheet for your upcoming project proposal. Use Word's stylesheets to make decisions about typographic choices for each of the document elements shown below.

Title Page Title

Abstract

Headers and Footers

Heading Level 1

Heading level 2

Body type

Picture Captions

Numbered Lists

Bulleted Lists

Tables