General Business Standards

General business standards are reflected in the Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, and behavioral expectations. It is the combination of what is legally required and what is morally right. It is the commitment you as the business owner make to your employees and customers, and the commitment your employees make to your business and its customers.

Your standards define how your company acts, which, in turn, builds trust in your brand. They can be guidelines that describe quality, performance, safety, terminology, testing, or management systems, to name a few. They can comply with authoritative agencies or professional organizations and be enforceable by law, such as required medical degrees for doctors or credentials for financial planners. Or they can be voluntary rules you establish to create confidence among your clients that your business operates at a high and consistent quality level, such as a restaurant only using the highest quality, locally-sourced ingredients.

Standards must align with your mission, business objectives, and organizational leadership, and be implemented consistently across your enterprise. Employees need to buy into the value of adhering to standards so everyone is pulling in the same direction and reinforcing your brand. Standards are what your business aspires to, but they don’t guarantee performance. You need to create processes to control how your standards are implemented, and measure and evaluate how they help your business grow. Written guidelines, technical specifications, product inspection processes, management and financial audits, and even customer surveys can be effective performance indicators and help you determine if you’re meeting your standards, or if the standards need to be adjusted in some way.

Common commitments and standards include:

* Good customer service
* Quality products and services
* Sustainability
* Cultural Competence
* Safety
* Human Rights
* Employee Rights
* Transparency
* Community
* Security
* Integrity
* Professionalism
* Stewardship