UNIT 4 (MANUALS)

Definition of a Manual:

Manuals are universal documents that can be understood by ordinary people. It explains certain operations and processes of different departments. In our everyday life, we have got on hold of a manual, with or without taking notice. Whether it is how to install software or how to use our mobile phones or how to run a business, manuals have been a part of our lives. Having a manual is a big step in growing the business. We have to know that not many documents are as important as a manual for any type of business.

Just for example, we have bought the latest I Phone there was a manual on how to use this model. In business also, we need to have a manual on how to operate the business, how to make the product, how to give good customer service, how to make a balance sheet, and so on.

Importance of Manuals:

**1) Avoid Information Gap**  
Manual gives consistency to the company. It gives us instructions and guidelines on how to do a certain thing or job. For example, when an employee is promoted to managerial position, manuals give him/her the overview of the roles and responsibilities of that position.

**2) Launching of new products or services**  
When you make a new product or service, you need to provide a Manual that contains the how-to’s, components, functionality, and processes.

**3) Valued Customers**  
For customers to gain information about the product. And for consumers to understand the product well and how to get the utmost benefits from the product.

**4) Valuable Tool**  
Manual is a valuable tool for understanding technical knowledge in fields such as law, construction, and finance. It is especially important for consumer electronics products, medical equipment, construction machinery, computer and its accessories. Furthermore, this type of manual is a guide on how to do or make finance reports in relations to accounting and auditing matters. Today, an online business also requires an audit for the website. Technical audit allows you to identify errors related to the operation of the hosting and software code of the company’s website. The solution of technical problems is the basis for the subsequent successful promotion of the project in search engines. It is necessary to use tools such as [Sitechecker.pro](https://sitechecker.pro/website-crawler/) to audit the site in order to understand the main shortcomings and correct them. Based on the audit, an action algorithm has been created that will promote your resource to the TOP search results.

In the process of making a manual, information in different departments of the company will be collected and organized. It will also make us aware of the different functions, processes, rules, and operations of the company and the interplay and collaboration between different departments.

The advantages of having Manual are as follows:

**1. Reduced Time and Cost to Productivity**  
We can improve the quality of our products and services. There will be lesser complaints and clarifications regarding how to use or how to install our products.

**2. Shared Information**  
We can share knowledge and wisdom which are compounded before to only one person or department. For new employees, this will also reduce the time for their training since the Manual would give them the standards and procedures they need to abide by. It will also give the employees a general overview of how the company operates and their respective roles and responsibilities.

**3. Reduce and Minimize risks (Risk hedge)**  
Businesses can avoid having misconceptions or misunderstandings; Having a Manual sets the rules, guidelines and policies of the company operations.  
Manual also set the standards for the company to ensure profitability and growth.

**4. Maximize potentials**  
Manuals are universal to the company. For example, when a business outsource certain functions, a Manual provides consistency and quality assurance. Referring to a Manual increases the productivity and profitability of the company

**5. Avoid “Knowledge trap”**  
Having a manual avoids “knowledge traps”. This means information or processes that is only known to one specialist or experts in that field. Worst case scenario in any company is having only one person who knows this knowledge or skill and is capable in doing that particular role or job.

**Thus, manuals are an essential tool to avoid knowledge traps.** Since Manuals explains in layman terms, any technical data or information of that specific department or field of work can be understood by ordinary people. Having said this, As manuals can relay knowledge and information to staff, they help in improving work performance and productivity.

Types of Manuals:

1. Product Manual  
This is also called the “Instruction manual”. It is a manual that instructs users how to use the product.

2. Installation Manual  
This is a manual on how to set- up or install the product.

3. Troubleshoot Manual   
A type of manual used to fix parts of the product.

4. User Manuals  
A type of manual that focuses on different kinds of users- administrators, maintenance personnel, beginners, managers, or students

5. Operations Manual  
This is the manual for operations of the company or businesses. It is a set of standards and procedures for operations, work standards, and policies of the company.

6. Crisis Management Manual  
A manual on how to respond to crisis or tragedies such as earthquake, fire, storms, tsunami, or violence in the work premises.

7. Audit Manual  
This type of manual is a guide on how to do or make finance reports in relations to accounting and auditing matters.

## User Manual

It is a manual which provides the reader with guiding information about any product. It is a book capable of being conventionally carried as a ready reference.

Importance of User Manual

They are paramount even in the digital age. It is a technical document with a quite specific purpose, to help non-technical people pinpoint and solve problems without expert assistance. It contains all the essential information for the user to make full use of the information system. The manual includes a description of the system functions and capabilities, contingencies and alternate modes of operation and step by step procedures for system access and use.

Information included in a User Manual:

1. Instructions: The most obvious are those step by step directions on how to assemble, operate, or troubleshoot the product.
2. Precautionary information
3. Reference information
4. Getting started information
5. About the product
6. Technical background

General guidelines for user manuals:

* Provide a physical user manual with the product
* Make sure the instructions actually map on to the product in all respects.
* Include a one-page quick start guide.
* Present instructions as step-by –step procedures.
* Tell the user what functions there are, and what they are for, instead of just telling how to use them.
* Avoid marketing techniques.
* Ensure that the writers are part of the product design team.
* Write the user manual in sync with the products development timeline.
* Make sure that the writers have the product, understood the product and actually use the product as they write.
* Consider the needs of the disabled user (ie., low vision, colour blind) and provide alternative manuals in Braillie, large print, audio etc.,
* User test the product and the user manual with real users.

Product Manual

It is also called as Instructional Manual or Owner’s manual. It is an instructional book or booklet that is supplied with almost all technologically advanced consumer products such as vehicles, home-appliances and computer peripherals.

Product manual contains:

* Safety instructions
* Assembly instructions
* Installation instructions
* Set up instructions
* Operational instructions
* Programming instructions
* Maintenance instructions
* Troubleshooting instructions
* Service locations
* Regulatory code compliance information
* Product technical specifications
* Warranty information

Until the last decade of twentieth century, it was common for a product manual to include detailed repair information, but as products became more complex, this information was gradually relegated to specialised service manuals.

Product Manuals are often multilingual.

Operations Manual:

. The **operations manual** is the documentation by which an organisation provides guidance for members and employees to perform their functions correctly and reasonably efficiently. It documents the approved standard procedures for performing operations safely to produce goods and provide services. Compliance with the operations manual will generally be considered as activity approved by the persons legally responsible for the organisation.

The operations manual is intended to remind employees of how to do their job. It is either a book or folder of printed documents containing the standard operating procedures, a description of the organisational hierarchy and contact details for key personnel and emergency procedures. It does not substitute for training, but should be sufficient to allow a trained and competent person to adapt to the organisation's specific procedures.

The operations manual helps the members of the organisation to reliably and efficiently carry out their tasks with consistent results. A good manual will reduce human error and inform everyone precisely what they need to do, who they are responsible to and who they are responsible for. It is a knowledge base for the organisation, and should be available for reference whenever needed. The operations manual is a document that should be periodically reviewed and updated whenever appropriate to ensure that it remains current. The operations manual can be a digital or paper document. Digital format has advantages for revision control and can be distributed easily and at low cost.

Content:

Content will vary depending on the organisation, but some basic structure is fairly universal.

 Typical sections include:

* Organisational hierarchy
* Job descriptions
* Contact details
* Documented processes and systems
* Occupational health and safety instructions
* Emergency procedures
* Company History
* Products & Services
* Policies and position statements

There are two basic categories of information:

1. Information that is relevant to all people in the organisation, and often also to clients and the general public
2. Information that is relevant to specific positions.

There may be statutory or regulatory requirements for specific content. In some cases the CEO may be required to authorise the operations manual by signature, and this authorisation may be required to be present in the document. A version number and date of commencement may be required, and it may be a controlled document.

### Organogram or Organizational chart:

The organisational hierarchy is commonly and effectively described by an organisational chart, or organogram, a diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its sections and members which gives the reader an easily understood picture of where key people fit into the organisation.

### Job descriptions:

A job description is a document that describes the general tasks, duties, and responsibilities of a position, and may specify the functionary to whom the position reports, specifications such as the competence, qualifications, registration, certification or skills needed by the person in the job, and a salary range. Formal job descriptions help people understand their roles within the organisation and identify each other's responsibilities.

### Contact details:

These include names and contact details for key persons within the organisation and important external contacts.

### Documented processes or Standard operating procedure:

### A Standard operating procedure is a set of step-by-step instructions compiled by an organisation to help workers carry out complex routine operations. SOPs aim to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance while reducing miscommunication and failure to comply.

### Occupational health and safety instructions:

### Risk assessments and risk management policies.

### Emergency procedures:

Any emergency procedure that would be the standard response to a reasonably foreseeable emergency in the normal course of business would be detailed in the operations manual as a reference. There might also be specifications on how frequently exercises should be held. Some frequently encountered emergency procedures include:

* Evacuation plans
* Fire drills
* Response to release of hazardous materials
* Disaster recovery plan. How to re-establish operations following an unexpected catastrophic event.

### Policies:

A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization.

Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision making.

Policies that assist in subjective decision making usually assist senior management with decisions that must be based on the relative merits of a number of factors, and as a result are often hard to test objectively, e.g. *work-life balance policy.*

Policies that assist in objective decision making are usually operational in nature and can be objectively tested, e.g. *password policy.*

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