
SOP Starter Checklist

Document your first set of standard operating procedures — starting with one role and 20 questions.

Step 1: Choose Your Starting Role

Pick the role with the highest turnover or the longest new-hire ramp-up time.

- Role selected: _____
- Most experienced person in this role identified (they write the first draft)
- Average ramp-up time for new hires in this role: _____ weeks

Step 2: Collect the 20 Questions

Ask your most experienced person: "What are the 20 questions every new hire asks in their first 30 days?"

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Step 3: Write the Answers

- Write for retrieval — answer findable in 30 seconds
- Use headings that match how your team would search
- Front-load the action steps; context and rationale after
- Person who does the work writes the first draft
- Policy (the "why") separated from procedure (the "how")

Step 4: Make Them Findable

- Storage location chosen (shared drive, wiki, knowledge base)

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- Consistent naming conventions matching how the team searches
- Tested: team member can find a specific answer in under 30 seconds
- Team told where to find the new documentation

Step 5: Assign Ownership

- Named owner for each SOP (a person, not a department)
- Review cadence set: quarterly for high-use, annually for the rest
- Simple process for flagging outdated content
- First review date scheduled: _____

Step 6: Repeat for the next role. Each one gets faster.

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