

Getting to Green Tape: Twenty-Five Questions for Managers

For managers wanting to design and implement effective organizational rules – AKA green tape -- ask these questions.

The Need for a Written Rule

1. What problem does this rule seek to solve?
2. What objectives will this rule seek to serve?
3. How big is the problem that the rule seeks to solve?
4. What is the worst that will happen if you do not write a rule to solve this problem?
5. Is a written rule being proposed based on one occurrence of a particular situation? If so, why?

The Logic of the Rule

6. What purpose does this rule serve?
7. What are the requirements for the rule?
8. How do you think the rule will solve the problem and achieve rule purposes?
9. Who are the stakeholders to the rule?
10. What are the stakeholder perspectives on the rule purpose, requirements, and logic?
11. What are potential unintended consequences for the rule?

Rule Control

12. Does the rule impose more control than necessary for achieving rule purposes?
13. What happens if stakeholders ignore the rule?
14. What are the incentives and disincentives for stakeholders to follow the rule?
15. How might this rule become overly controlling, through interpretation or enforcement?
16. How will we prevent this rule from becoming overly controlling through interpretation and enforcement?
17. Will the rule permit exceptions? What will happen if exceptions are not permitted?
18. What messages does the proposed rule send to stakeholders?

Rule Implementation

19. Who is responsible for implementing the rule?
20. What rule implementation resources are required for compliance and enforcement?
21. What could go wrong during rule implementation that would undermine rule effectiveness?
22. What other rules, processes, procedures or activities are impacted by this rule? Will adoption of this rule require changes to other rules?
23. Is the rule clearly written so that the majority of people to whom it applies can read it and understand it without requiring independent interpretation?
24. How will rule purposes and requirements be communicated to relevant stakeholders?
25. How will feedback be gathered from rule stakeholders throughout the rule implementation process?