File by FIFO — Complete Product Overview

Comprehensive source document for NotebookLM audio generation

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What is File by FIFO?

File by FIFO is a cloud-based disciplinary management system designed specifically for South African businesses. It helps managers issue warnings correctly, even if they have no training in labour law.

The name "File" reflects what it does—it creates proper files and documentation for disciplinary matters. "FIFO" is the parent company, FIFO Solutions.

The Problem File Solves

Every year, South African businesses lose millions of rand at the CCMA (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration) because of poor documentation.

Here's what typically goes wrong:

Untrained managers make mistakes. Most supervisors and department managers have never been taught how to issue a proper warning. They either do nothing (letting problems fester), or they overreact (jumping straight to dismissal without proper process).

Paper gets lost. Even when warnings are issued, they're often typed in Word, printed, signed, and filed in a drawer somewhere. When you need that document two years later for a CCMA case, it's gone.

Progressive discipline isn't followed. South African labour law requires employers to follow progressive discipline—you generally can't dismiss someone for a first offence. But without a system tracking warning history, managers often skip steps.

Language barriers cause confusion. South Africa has 11 official languages. When a warning is issued in English to someone who speaks isiZulu at home, they may not fully understand. Later, they claim they didn't know what they were signing.

Legal jargon scares managers. When managers see 200-page labour law manuals, they freeze. They don't want to do something wrong, so they do nothing at all.

The result? Businesses end up at CCMA with weak cases. Legal fees alone can run R15,000 to R50,000. If the case is lost, the employer may have to pay 12 to 24 months of the employee's salary. A single bad termination can easily cost R180,000 or more.

How File Solves This

File takes a completely different approach. Instead of giving managers a template and saying "good luck," it guides them through the entire process step by step.

Think of it like TurboTax for disciplinary matters. You don't need to know tax law to file your taxes with TurboTax—you just answer questions and it produces the right forms. File works the same way for warnings.

The 10-Phase Warning Wizard

When a manager needs to issue a warning, they open File and click "Issue Warning." The system then walks them through ten phases:

Phase 1: Employee Selection. The manager searches for and selects the employee involved. They immediately see that employee's warning history—any previous warnings, when they were issued, and whether they're still valid.

Phase 2: Category and Recommendation. The manager selects what type of misconduct occurred—things like attendance, conduct, or performance issues. Here's where the magic happens: the system analyzes the employee's history against South African labour law and recommends an appropriate warning level.

For example, if someone has never had a warning for attendance before, the system might recommend a verbal warning or first written warning. If they already have two written warnings for the same issue, it might recommend a final warning.

The manager can override this recommendation if there's a good reason, but the system records that they made a conscious decision to deviate.

Phase 3: Incident Details. The manager documents what happened—the date, time, location, and a factual description of the incident. The system encourages fact-based descriptions, not emotional opinions.

Phase 4: Employee Response. This is crucial for fairness. The manager records what the employee said when they discussed the incident. Maybe the employee had a genuine emergency. Maybe they acknowledge they were wrong. Maybe they declined to comment. Whatever they said gets documented.

Phase 5: Expected Standards. The manager states clearly what behavior or performance is expected going forward. This might reference company policy or simply state the standard clearly.

Phase 6: Improvement Plan. The employee commits to specific improvements with timelines. The manager also sets a follow-up review date to check progress.

Phase 7: Review. Before moving to signatures, the manager reviews everything for accuracy. They can go back and edit any phase.

Phase 8: Script and PDF Review. The system generates a warning script that the manager reads aloud to the employee. This script is available in all 11 South African official languages—English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, and siSwati.

The manager also previews the PDF document that will be generated.

Phase 9: Signatures. The manager signs first, then shows the employee the document. The employee sees exactly what they're signing before they sign. If a witness is present, they can sign too.

Phase 10: Delivery. The manager chooses how to deliver the warning document—email, WhatsApp, print, or QR code. The document is stored permanently in the employee's record.

Why This Approach Works

The genius of File is that it makes it impossible to skip steps. A manager can't issue a warning without documenting what happened. They can't skip recording the employee's

response. They can't forget to set a follow-up date.

Even an untrained supervisor, issuing their first-ever warning, will produce a document that meets South African legal standards.

The 11-Language Support

South Africa is a multilingual nation. File supports all 11 official languages because ensuring the employee understands the warning is critical for fairness—and for CCMA defense.

When a warning is read in the employee's home language, they can't later claim they didn't understand what was happening. This shows good faith on the employer's part and strengthens the documentation if it's ever challenged.

The PDF Document

The final output of each warning is a professional PDF document that includes:

- Company letterhead and branding
- Full employee details
- The misconduct category and description
- Complete incident details with date, time, and location
- The employee's response in their own words
- Expected standards and improvement commitments
- Review date and follow-up plan
- Consequences of further misconduct
- Employee rights (right to representation, right to appeal)
- All signatures with timestamps

This document is automatically stored in the cloud. It can be accessed years later, exactly as it was created. No more lost papers.

Who Uses File?

File has three types of users:

HR Managers have organization-wide access. They can see all employees, review warnings from all departments, and configure the system.

Department Managers (HODs) can only see their own team. They issue warnings to their direct reports, book HR meetings, and report absences.

Executives and Business Owners have read-only access to see trends and metrics across the organization.

Mobile-First Design

Many managers don't sit at desks all day. They're on factory floors, in warehouses, visiting job sites. File is designed to work on any smartphone—no app download required.

A supervisor can issue a warning right there in the moment, while the incident is fresh, using their phone. The interface has large buttons, clear text, and works on slow connections.

The ROI Argument

Here's the financial case for File:

A typical CCMA case involving unfair dismissal can cost: - Attorney consultation: R2,500 to R5,000 - CCMA representation per day: R8,000 to R15,000 - Preparation and documentation: R5,000 to R10,000 - If you lose—unfair dismissal award: 12 to 24 months of the employee's salary

For a mid-level employee earning R20,000 per month, losing a case could cost R240,000 to R480,000 in compensation alone, plus all the legal fees.

File's annual subscription ranges from R5,000 for small businesses to R25,000 for large enterprises.

One prevented CCMA case pays for five to fifteen years of File.

Even if File only prevents a single case over the life of your business, it pays for itself many times over. But typically, having proper documentation prevents multiple cases because:

1. Employees are less likely to file frivolous claims when they know everything is documented
2. Cases that do get filed are more likely to be settled favorably when you have strong documentation
3. Managers are more confident addressing issues early, before they escalate

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How Businesses Typically Lose at CCMA

File addresses the five most common ways businesses lose CCMA cases:

No written warning. The manager gave a verbal warning but didn't document it. File creates documentation every time.

Skipped progressive discipline. The employer jumped straight to dismissal without building a warning history. File tracks the history and recommends appropriate escalation.

Wrong procedure. The employee wasn't given a chance to respond before the warning was issued. File requires documenting the employee's response.

Lost documents. The warning existed but no one can find it. File stores everything in the cloud permanently.

Language barrier. The employee claims they didn't understand. File delivers warnings in all 11 South African languages.

Security and Compliance

File is built on Google's Firebase platform, the same infrastructure used by major corporations worldwide. All data is:

- Encrypted in transit and at rest
- Backed up automatically
- Accessible only to authorized users
- Stored in secure data centers
- Fully POPIA compliant

Organizations own their data and can export it at any time.

Pricing

File is priced based on employee count:

- 0 to 20 employees: R5,000 per year (R417 per month)
- 21 to 50 employees: R8,000 per year (R667 per month)
- 51 to 100 employees: R12,000 per year (R1,000 per month)
- 101 to 300 employees: R15,000 per year (R1,250 per month)
- 301 to 500 employees: R20,000 per year (R1,667 per month)
- 500+ employees: R25,000 per year (R2,083 per month)

There's also a one-time setup fee ranging from R1,000 to R2,500 depending on the tier, which covers account configuration, employee data import, and initial training.

Getting Started

Implementation is straightforward:

1. Account setup—configure departments and settings
2. Import employees—usually from an existing spreadsheet
3. Create manager accounts—invite department heads and HR
4. Brief training—managers learn the system in about 30 minutes
5. Go live—start using File for all disciplinary documentation

Most organizations are fully operational within a week.

Summary

File by FIFO transforms disciplinary management from a legal minefield into a guided process. Even managers with no HR training can issue legally compliant warnings. Every warning is documented, stored securely, and available when you need it.

The system doesn't just protect businesses from CCMA claims—it also ensures employees are treated fairly and consistently. Progressive discipline, proper documentation, and clear communication benefit everyone.

For South African businesses, proper disciplinary documentation isn't optional—it's essential. File makes it simple.