

Build a Training Program for New Employees

We are all aware of the implications of poor hiring and training decisions. They can cost the company time and money, and they can result in low employee morale. One basic step to ensuring that new hires get off to a positive start is to conduct an effective employee orientation and training program. Employees who are properly trained and introduced to the company early feel better about their choice of employer and usually fit in more quickly. This is a win-win situation for both the company and the employee.

In-house training programs are quickly becoming vital for emerging businesses. For these developing organizations, it is of utmost importance to bring new hires up to speed quickly and keep them up to speed as the company grows and evolves.

Many employers believe they lack the budget or knowledge to develop such a program, yet creating an in-house training program does not have to break the bank and - moreover - the knowledge is held first hand.

In fact, with a little time and effort, you can develop your own in-house programs. Here's how:

Perform Feedback Surveys of Your New Hires - Use this to see where your orientation program is lacking. Most companies would be surprised to hear from recent hires about things they wished they had learned or known from the beginning. How many people in your office still do not know how to use the copier or have poor phone etiquette? These are easy problems to solve through even an informal training program. Keep the process going by using proper evaluation tools, and administer evaluations on a regular basis. Keep track of both employee achievements and areas of improvement for a streamlined ongoing evaluation process.

Prepare an Employee Policy Manual - Manuals are a great way to wrap up all of the company's policies and expectations in one convenient location. Businesses that do not already have a manual or any documentation of the sort might consider asking business partners or clients (if appropriate) to borrow their materials. Many human resources consulting firms will be glad to assist you in preparing handbooks and policy development.

Make an Agenda - Each new employee should be included in the initial orientation process, but the process should not end after the initial orientation program. When a new hire starts, companies should reserve the day to orient new employees. Create an agenda ahead of time in order to complete appropriate paperwork, explain policies and procedures and familiarize new hires to the firm's environment.

Have a checklist of items to cover such as:

- Conditions of Employment
- Probationary Periods
- Company Culture and History
- Employee Benefits
- Advancement Opportunities and Evaluation Processes
- Payroll Policies
- Administrative Items, such as I9 forms, W2s, benefit enrollment paperwork, payroll processing
- Time Reporting Procedures and Policies
- Company Policies, such as sexual harassment, vacation, confidentiality and Internet usage
- Features that Set Your Firm Apart, such as special benefits and employee relations

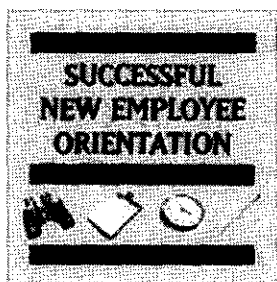
One person should be assigned - possibly someone dedicated to human resources management or a supervisor - to spend this day with the new hire(s).

Develop a Buddy or Sponsorship Program - Assign new hires a sponsor/buddy on their first day on the job. Sponsorships provide a bridge and support system for new hires and their transition into a new workplace. Include peers, administrative staff, front office employees, management, and others who will be working with new staff members in the orientation process. Incorporate a formal introduction process for each new hire, and make an effort to ensure each new employee is introduced to all of the staff in his or her department.

This will ensure that others in the firm have an active role in the success of the new member. Use the *buddy or sponsor* system to help new employees become familiar with the overall culture and work ethic of the firm. A buddy system gives the newly hired employee a person to whom he or she can ask basic questions such as what is the dress code, where are good places to eat, how are client introductions handled, and so on.

Be Committed to Ongoing Training - Re-orientation is key to a well-rounded, successful training program. Firms should focus on training employees from the beginning from their first day throughout their employment at the firm. The overall goal should be to keep all employees well informed of the firms' products and services. In addition, for employees who work with clients on a regular basis, businesses should provide frequent training on providing excellent customer service and soft skills.

Throw away the attitude of, if I spend the time training and mentoring, my staff will just take what they have learned and move on. The key to introducing a training program is to know that money does not have to be an issue -- at some level, a program can be established and adhered to with commitment from the firm. In the end, developing a good orientation and training program, whether low-cost, or high-end is a win-win for all involved.



Successful New Employee Orientation, by Jean Barbazette

AccountingWEB US 21 Jun 2001

Copyright © 2002 AccountingWEB, Inc. All rights reserved.