

ORGANISING THE INDUCTION OF NEW RECRUITS.

Checklist 001

» INTRODUCTION

It makes sense – for both the individuals and the organisation – to help new recruits integrate as quickly as possible into their new surroundings and to become efficient and proficient in their work. Failure to do so can, at the very least, lead to erratic progress, with possible hidden costs such as waste of materials or the loss of customers. A good induction will help to minimise turnover of new employees and facilitate integration and subsequent productivity.

» DEFINITION

Induction is the process through which a new employee is integrated into the organisation, learning about its corporate culture, policies and procedures, and the specific roles and responsibilities of their new job. Induction should not be viewed in isolation but should be treated as an extension of the selection process and the beginning of a continuing employee development programme. Rather than limited to a one-day introduction, induction should be planned and paced over several days or weeks, marking the beginning of the new employee's personal and professional development within the organisation, and allowing the employee to settle into the organisation. In the USA, induction is known as orientation.

» ACTION CHECKLIST

1. Review the positioning of the induction

Ask yourself whether your current organisational or departmental induction process does the job you require it to. Ask recent recruits for their views. Does the induction achieve the objective of familiarising the new employee with the organisation and settling them into their new job? Consider whether the induction programme represents the end or the beginning of their learning within your organisation.

2. Check the scope of the induction programme

Check whether your induction covers:

- › a tour of the premises showing and describing the facilities
- › an explanation of the organisation chart showing where the new employee fits in
- › clarification of terms and conditions, and health and safety information
- › an explanation of company policies relating to HR, technology, security and so on
- › exposure to, and an explanation of: the organisation's culture and values; the work of other departments; the company's products and services; and a brief organisational history
- › strategic objectives and business plans for the next operational cycle
- › a clear description of the requirements of the individual's job role
- › a clear set of immediate and short term milestones to work towards

- › a list of people they will need to get to know.

3. Appoint a mentor

Consider asking someone on the same grade or level of the newcomer to act as a friend and adviser for the first few weeks. This will be particularly useful in a large, complex organisation and in helping to explain details not fully covered elsewhere. Take the utmost care to ensure that the mentor is the right person, with the time to do the job as you would wish.

4. Plan the induction and involve and inform others

An induction programme should be drawn up, and certainly authorised, by the newcomer's line manager. The mentor should also be involved in the process. Others who will be working with the new employee should be made aware of the induction programme, whether or not they will be involved. The induction plan should comprise three stages: the first day or two should cover the bare essentials; the first three or four weeks should facilitate learning through a mix of approaches; and within three to six months the newcomer should have become familiar with all departments.

Take a look through the programme and check for variety, thoroughness and a balance of learning, practising and doing. Plan to sit through several of the sessions with the new recruit.

5. Prepare the work area

If there is a long gap between one employee leaving and the new one arriving, work areas and desks tend to become dumping grounds for others' unwanted or excess materials. A few days before the new employee arrives, make sure that their work area is clear, clean and tidy. First impressions count for a lot in the welcome you intend to provide. Check that all relevant equipment, including computer work station, telephone and stationery is available and in working order. Check that the relevant usernames and passwords have been set up so that the new employee can login. Don't forget the little extras such as an internal telephone directory, and maybe a telephone manual.

6 Introduce the recruit to the organisation and the department

On the first day, it is usually the HR Department who informs the newcomer of housekeeping arrangements (catering arrangements, for example), and covers issues contained in the staff handbook (such as salary payments, leave arrangements and the sick pay scheme). Health and Safety procedures will also be high on the list as they are a legal requirement.

Make sure that the new employee has copies of any necessary documentation, the organisation chart and job description, for example. This should be accompanied by an initial but clear briefing on the structure of the chart, the role of the newcomer and the fit between the two.

The new employee must also be introduced to the department and team in which he or she will be working. Although the newcomer will be introduced to people around the organisation, a detailed look at what other departments do will follow at a later stage of the induction process.

7. Emphasise the importance of organisation policies and procedures

New employees must be made aware of policies and regulations based on legislation, particularly in the area of health and safety, at an early stage. Other procedures based on national standards, such as ISO 9001 and Investors in People, and schemes such as internal employee development or mentoring, should also be introduced.

Remember that it is easy for new employees to be overloaded with information on the first day of an induction and will not be able to absorb or remember all the details of these procedures. Build time into the induction schedule for reading, assimilation and questions and make sure that your new recruit knows where to find the information they need – on the organisational intranet, or in a departmental or personal staff manual, for example.

8 Plan a balanced introduction to the work

Whether learning and development are handled by the 'sitting-with-Nellie approach' or by professional trainers, a mix of explanation, observation, practice and feedback is advisable. Beware of information

overload. The new employee should be given some real work to do to avoid boredom and to give early opportunities for achievement.

9 Clarify performance standards

Make the performance levels you require are clear from the outset. An employee cannot be expected to meet standards of which they are unaware. Where appropriate, discuss medium and long-term needs and opportunities.

10. Conduct regular reviews of progress

These should be made during the induction programme, for example, on a weekly basis, to ensure that the employee's needs and objectives are being met. It may be necessary to adapt the programme to match individual learning requirements and speeds. Reviews will usually consist of informal chats, but a more formal appraisal interview may take place at the end of the programme, particularly if there is a probationary period for new recruits. The views of the employee on the overall induction process should be sought so that the design of future programmes can be improved.

It is not always to foresee how long the induction process will take. However, good they are, induction programmes will result in a certain amount of overload and important questions often arise after several months in the new job. Ensure that even after the official induction is over there is someone to whom the newcomer can address further questions.

» POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Managers should avoid:

- › forgetting that starting a new job can be a stressful experience for many
- › overloading the newcomer with too much information, too much listening and too much of the same thing at any one time
- › making assumptions about the recruit's learning, assimilation and integration
- › enlisting the services of an inappropriate mentor
- › omitting to identify development or training needs at an early stage
- › forgetting to review the new employee's progress regularly
- › sticking rigidly to the programme if experiences - or expressed needs - are showing that the recruit's needs are other than expected
- › omitting an overall evaluation at the end of the programme, or when the induction moves into a new stage.

» ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

Introduction to human resource management: a guide to HR in practice, 2nd ed.
Charles, Leatherbarrow, Janet Fletcher and Donald Currie
London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2010
(See Chapter 8 Induction and Retention)

Dynamic induction: games activities and ideas to revitalize your employee induction process, Susan El-Shamy
Aldershot: Gower, 2003

Employee induction process, Susan El-Shanny
Aldershot: Gower, 2003

The induction organizer, Mike Tilling
Aldershot: Gower, 1999

These books are available for loan to members from the CMI Library. [Click here](#) for more information.

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Welcome aboard! Lars Hyland
Training Journal, May 2010, pp 37-40



NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

This checklist has relevance for the following standards:

- › Unit DA3: Induct people into their roles



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