

NEW HIRE ORIENTATION TIP SHEET

Engage with your New Employee Before their Start Date

Effective orientation programs start before the actual date the new employee begins work.

Send a welcome e-mail. Tell your new employee how excited the company is to have them onboard, and provide valuable information like available resources, access to their e-mails, the Company's organizational chart, communication tools, and so forth. You might decide to share resources via an online portal or as simple as google docs.

Make a phone call. It is helpful to have an introduction call with your new employee to welcome them and explain the onboarding process and timeline. Let them know you are accessible throughout the process. Provide clear and concise instructions.

Plan your Orientation Program

The employee's initial questions are often fundamental and cover items such as hours of work, paydays, grooming and dress code, vacation time, sick leave, breaks, training or performance questions. Familiarize your new employee with the policies and procedures of your organization. An employee handbook can be a helpful handout, allowing employees the opportunity to read through the expectations and rules of their new workplace and use it as a resource document. Your policies around absenteeism, harassment, theft, and training should also be explained to ensure no misunderstandings. Ensure that your new hires have reviewed your Health & Safety plan and are familiar with your Health & Safety policies and procedures at the workplace, how to communicate these to customers, and other communication protocols.

Welcome your New Employee

Nothing beats a great first impression, so start with a warm welcome. Introduce the new employee to all key staff, especially everyone the new hire will be working throughout a shift. It will be important for the new employee to understand the "big picture," how each position relates to the others on the team, and how the team relates to other departments or areas of the operation. If possible, the owner/General Manager or CEO should also meet with the employee. This allows the Senior Leader to impart company values and ideals, and lets the employee know that the owner is a hands-on part of the business.

Explain the Company's Mission, Vision, Values, and Policies

The general orientation should be designed to ensure that new employees understand your company's mission, values, vision, policies and procedures. If your company is adamant about providing exceptional customer experiences or is passionate about teamwork, then the orientation program can ensure that this message is provided in a consistent way to all new hires.

Share Your Company's History

Let your company shine. Brag about how the company started and how it's growing. Talk about your culture of teamwork and why you enjoy your own job. Showing pride in your company helps employees know they are part of something bigger. It also instills pride, making their adjustment more seamless.

Provide the Basics of the Workplace

Never underestimate the simplest things. Point out the location of the washroom and lunchroom. A quick tour of the facilities, including where the new employee can store personal belongings and take breaks, is appreciated. Mention security and safety issues, such as how to lock up or call for help. Review your policy on Internet and telephone usage on company time. This attention to detail speaks to the care you have for new employees. Outline behaviour expectations and practices in your workplace, including acceptable treatment of tools, property, other employees and customers, as well as workplace safety and emergency procedures. It is often helpful to assign your new hire a "buddy" who can answer simple procedural questions later.

Complete All Paperwork

Companies can also use the orientation program to have new hires sign up for the company's benefit programs and payroll. Employees want to know when, how and what they get paid. Review their salary, benefits, paydays, and, if appropriate, the probationary period and performance-appraisal time. Make sure applicable income tax and benefit forms are signed.

Some companies also provide basic training (such as WHIMIS and safety procedures) at this time. If a union represents the new employee, there is often a component of the program that has the union representative explain the requirements and benefits of union membership.

Set Job and Employee Expectations

Review the job description, pointing out what's expected regarding hours, staff meetings, workload, training and job appraisal. Pay particular attention to sharing your customer service philosophy. Laying out this foundation provides a clear guideline of performance, and it sets the foundation for the employee's time with your company.

Begin the Training Program

On the first day, provide preliminary training, whether it's how to run the cash register or how to handle phone calls. The first day of work is truly the first day of training. Explain that you'll offer ongoing training in the days ahead—whether it's mentoring one-on-one, job shadowing, or attending a training session.

An effective orientation program sets the tone for new employees. It allows you to motivate them to be successful, encouraging them to do their best. That makes new employee orientation a sound investment for all concerned.

Don't Stop After Day One

Effective onboarding programs are long-term projects and can take anywhere from 3 - 12 months.

New Hire Checklist

Because an employee's orientation can be broken into multiple phases, you might want to cover these fundamentals as soon as possible. Create a simple first-day checklist to keep from overlooking important steps.

You only have one opportunity to make a great first impression, and for employers, the orientation of new hires is that opportunity. A positive working relationship with your employees leads to lower staff turnover, higher productivity, and higher employee morale. Take the time to do it right and reap the rewards of a satisfied new hire. Ultimately, this will help improve your bottom line.