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RECRUITMENT

Giving new employees the best possible start

You have just secured a great new recruit for your business and now that's out of the way you can get back to running your business... But, wait just a minute. Before that great new recruit starts, you need to spend time putting a staff induction program in place. This program will maximise your chances of ensuring a smooth transition for the new employee into your business and assist them to be a productive and efficient team member as quickly as possible.

And I know that is easier said than done, particularly if you are a small business with resources stretched to breaking point and no dedicated human resources function to attend to the task. But a well-designed induction program is a 'win-win' for both employers and employees and once in place it can be used as an ongoing template for all future new recruits.

A comprehensive staff induction program should be about creating a positive impression as well as providing insight into your company. New employees are entering unknown territory with respect to their manager, team, work environment and culture, so it is important that they are made to feel welcome as soon as possible and experience a structured introduction into their new workplace.

In putting together an effective staff induction program the following points should be considered as part of that process:

- Welcome - organisational structure, meeting other employees, social programs, facilities tour
- Logistics - access, keys, after hours, phones, email, mail, breaks, overtime, expected start and finish, cab charge, car parking etc.
- Administration - pay day, bank details, annual, sick, bereavement and parental leave, leave without pay, emergency contact, superannuation, public holidays, family friendly policies
- Legal requirements - relevant legislation, equal opportunity, safety, harassment, privacy and confidentiality, termination, incident and accident reporting
- Supervisor meeting - expectations, budgets, targets, performance incentives, career prospects, role defined, relationships defined, communication channels, evaluation and assessment

- Training - desirable skills, external and internal opportunities, costs and rewards, mentoring programs
- Questions - an opportunity to ask questions of anyone in the company. Invariably, new employees will have a lot of questions, so it is also a good idea to consider allocating some time with a number of representatives from each functional area of your business so they can not only get to know each other, one on one, but also gain a comprehensive understanding of that person's role in the company. This should also assist in integrating the new starter with existing employees and dispel any "us and them" mentalities that can sometime arise.

It is also worthwhile developing the items covered above into a manual that can be easily accessed by anyone in the company. This will not only reinforce policies for you but will ensure a uniform approach for new employees as well as a point of reference for existing staff.

Also, ensure that any staff induction program has some flexibility and is developed specifically to meet the needs of each new employee after taking into consideration their level in the organisation, relevant work experience and their new position description. Also, seek feedback from your employees, existing and new, on any elements of the induction process that can be improved or modified to ensure that the process remains relevant and up to date with company procedures and objectives. As well, keep abreast of any legislative changes that will impact on your business and that need to be updated in your induction manual e.g. health and safety, privacy guidelines etc. The induction process really starts from the time you make an offer to a new recruit and continues until they are completely comfortable within your business. Investing time and attention to a thorough induction process should minimise the period it takes for new employees to "fit in" and will have the added benefit of increasing their workplace satisfaction, productivity and, in turn, improve team retention, commitment and spirit in your business. **m**

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