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Corporate Perspective

How to add bees to the hive

Do you remember your first day on the job? Were you confident or were you a little anxious?

Most employees start a new job feeling a little uneasy about meeting their supervisor and coworkers. Most of them are often concerned to prove themselves and to “fit in” at the workplace. They also have many questions about their new work environment and wonder whether they can really do the job.

What is orientation?

A comprehensive orientation for the new employee:

- Provides the new employee with information that helps them come up to speed quickly;
- Paints a precise picture of their department and the organization a whole;
- Introduces the new employee to departmental and company goals, policies and procedures, as well as customs and traditions;
- Relieves the new employee’s anxieties about starting a new job; and
- Inspires the new employee to have a good attitude toward their new employer and his/her job.

Why is it important?

Orientation is important because it lays a foundation for the new employee’s entire career with the employer. It’s often been said that the job turnover can be reduced by having a good orientation program. First impressions are important since they establish the basis for everything that follows. Without orientation, a new employee sometimes feels uncomfortable in his/her new position and takes longer to reach his/her full potential.

Orientation is important because it:

- Provides the new employee with concise and accurate information to make him/her more comfortable in the job;

- Encourages employee confidence and helps the new employee adapt faster to the job;

- Contributes to a more effective, productive workforce;

- Improves employee retention; and

- Promotes communication between the supervisor and the new employee.

What to cover

Suggested topics to cover during orientation:

- History, mission, and goals of the organization;
- Position description and responsibilities;
- Expectations of the supervisor;
- Career development;
- Safety precautions;
- Responsible computing policies; and
- Benefits and other personnel policies.

Who will do it?

- Human Resources
- Hiring Manager
- Supervisor

It is possible to create a PowerPoint Presentation or video production that will cover most of the information (except benefits). Perhaps the President of the Company can give a history and the overview of the company.

It is important that the Orientation Program takes place during the first day and certainly the first couple of days of work. Be sure to have a check off list and give the new employee time to ask any unanswered questions. Some companies have a “buddy” system where a person working closest to the new employee will become a “buddy” to show him/her around the new environment and be there during lunch periods and breaks. When employees are not “welcomed” properly, turnover can become a problem.