

## **New Employee Orientation**

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We all know how critical first impressions are. They establish a foundation for everything that follows. New staff are forming an impression of you, just as you are of them. It is suggested that new staff receive a thorough orientation to their new job and the organization for which they will be working. In this way they will get a good impression of you, and you will provide them with the initial information and tools they need to be successful.

What follows is a list of activities and/or topics which should help new staff become productive colleagues. Each organization should tailor this list to their own unique situation and to the new staff member, and decide who will take responsibility for each item.

### **Before new staff member arrives:**

- Distribute an announcement to current staff, including a photograph if possible
- Send the new staff member:
  - A welcome letter
  - A job description
  - Instructions for first day and week
  - When & where to arrive, who to ask for
  - Where to park
  - Suggested office attire
  - What to expect for the first few days
  - Orientation to people, job, office, department, and organization
  - What to expect regarding meals, breaks, and time for personal business
  - Initial work responsibilities
  - Required or recommended reading, such as any publications created by your department
  - Other advance preparation

### **First day of work**

Meet with supervisor (and others as appropriate) for office orientation

- Office goals and objectives
- Primary activities
- Relationship to rest of organization
- Office organization
- Office culture
- Service culture

- Confidentiality
- Ethics
- Working with supervisors, colleagues, assistants, and/or volunteers
- Managing office conflicts
- Review and discuss questions about job description and evaluation criteria
- Policies and procedures specific to office, for example
  - Working hours
  - Telephone techniques and etiquette
  - Correspondence styles
  - Staff meetings
  - Budget and accountability
- Get assigned work space
- Meet with colleagues and support staff
  - Brief overview of their responsibilities and assignments
  - How they relate to or support the new staff member
- Meet with assigned support staff (if appropriate \*)
- Discuss office organization (files, supplies, etc.)
- Handling incoming and outgoing mail
- Office circulation files
- Office resources (directories, dictionaries, style manuals, computer program manuals, staff listing, etc.)
- Using the telephone
- Meet assigned "buddy" for orientation to the environment and for informal help
- Office dress code
- Where to put coat and personal belongings
- Restrooms
- Refreshment area, lounges
- Office supplies
- Copy machines
  - How to use
  - Refilling paper supply
  - Policies about number of copies and making personal copies
- Fax machines
- Calendars
- Coffee/coffee fund, gift fund
- Where to go for lunch & breaks \*\*
- End-of-day routine: lights, telephones, doors, computer, etc.

### **Within first week of arrival**

- Set up work area
- Start work
- Supervisor checks in frequently to clarify expectations and answer questions
- Colleagues check in to answer questions and offer support
- "Buddy" checks in daily to answer questions and offer support
- Meet with department business manager to cover, as appropriate

- Timecards
- Vacation/sick/personal leave policies
- Keys
- Access to the office on nights and weekends
- Telephone: access code, personal calls, paying for personal long-distance calls
- Stamps, parking permits
- General review of accounting
- Listing of account numbers
- Journal vouchers
- Travel and reimbursement (especially for business travelers)
- Company credit card
- Telephone credit card use (saves money over paying the full rate from a hotel room, for instance)
- Paying bills, making deposits, transferring between accounts
- Meet with company Human Resources Services
  - Complete all necessary paperwork
  - Review company personnel policies and procedures
  - Learn about benefits (health & life insurance, retirement, select benefits, etc.)
  - Learn about company orientation
- Get company ID
- Get company parking permit (if appropriate)
- Meet with MIS personnel for computer assistance
  - Overview of policies & procedures, including confidentiality and piracy
  - Assessment of knowledge of and comfort with computer hardware and software
  - Hardware: turning on, backing up, printing, shutting down, etc.
  - Software: word-processing, data processing, e-mail, etc. as needed
  - Arrange further training and support as needed
- Tour the building and immediate area

### **Within six months of starting**

- Meet key people and offices within the company
- Meet on a regular basis with supervisor to discuss issues, and review job description, expectations, and performance
- "Buddy" checks in on a regular basis to answer questions and offer support
- Attend company's new staff orientation (provides an overview of company people, departments, policies, and procedures, and includes a tour of the company facilities)
- Have 90-day performance dialogue

### **Notes:**

\* It would be valuable to assign a "buddy" to a new staff member, preferably a peer from

the office area, of whom the new employee can ask any question without fear of reprisals. A colleague who is relatively new to the organization might be the best choice because they have a fresh perspective and they are familiar with questions a new staff member might have. If a "buddy" is not assigned, someone else should cover these topics.

\*\* Because of financial, personal, and legal implications, a lunch companion should not be a formal part of the schedule if lunch is not a reimbursable expense. The new employee should not feel obligated to eat lunch with staff in the event that they feel they cannot afford it, or if they need the time for personal business. A lunch companion may be offered as a courtesy with brown bagging as one option.

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Here is a true story. My dentist did a "clinical" evaluation of my teeth. That is his fancy way to say he looked in my mouth and stared at my teeth with his own two eyes. He found no cavities in his "clinical" evaluation. I felt happy and relieved!

But then he took a quick x-ray. Imagine, the x-ray immediately spotted a cavity hiding behind one of my fillings!!

In other words, what you see is not always what you get!!! An objective x-ray found a lot more important information than a highly trained eye.

Likewise, some applicants seem fine in a job interview. But, they then proceed to flop after you put them on the payroll. In fact, huge amounts of research prove most interviewers poorly predict how an applicant will perform if hired.

So, it is crucial for a manager to use special "x-rays" to spot potential trouble lurking within an applicant—and also uncover skills and talents that will prove beneficial on-the-job. Here are five superb "x-ray" methods you can use immediately to help you hire high-achievers—and stay away from underachievers.

### **1. Pre-Employment Tests**

Research shows that customized tests are the best way to accurately predict on-the-job performance. You can use three types of tests:

- Behavior tests—to evaluate interpersonal skills, personality, and motivations
- Abilities tests—to predict brainpower in problem-solving, vocabulary, arithmetic, grammar, and handling small details
- Character tests—to detect a "bad apple" who has a bad work ethic or might steal

Tests can be given in paper-&-pencil test booklets or on the Internet. Importantly, only use tests designed for pre-employment assessments.

Customize tests you use by doing a "benchmarking study" to find out how your highly

productive, low-turnover employees typically score. Then, you can quickly compare applicants' test scores against scores of your most productive employees. Of course, you can show preference for applicants who score like your winners.

## **2. Remember One Truism**

When I deliver my speech or seminar on *Hire the Best—& Avoid the Rest*<sup>™</sup>, I always point out: Whatever behavior you see from the applicant during the screening process is likely to be the very best behavior you will ever see from that person! Surely you have witnessed this truism.

Let's say you want to hire a high-energy person. Candidate A stays very high-energy during your entire screening process, including all in-depth interviews. Candidate B starts interviews high-energy (a good sign) but then acts increasingly drained as the interviews go on (a bad sign). Candidate A is much more likely to be high-energy on-the-job than Candidate B. Do not expect Candidate B to suddenly explode with energy if you hire that person.

## **3. Referrals from Your Best Employees**

Winners hang around with winners. Losers hang around with losers. Your best employees probably hang around with high-achievers. Ask those employees to refer applicants.

## **4. Bio-data**

I'm not referring to DNA. Instead, bio-data is biographical data. Here's how to benefit from bio-data. Grab the files on your superstar employees. Look for common work-related experiences or education that most of them have.

For example, one company I consulted wanted to hire salespeople to sell a service (not a product). Upon examining bio-data of the company's superstar salespeople, we found the high-achieving salespeople had worked selling services. Most of the company's underachieving salespeople worked in sales, also. But, the underachievers sold products, not services.

Interestingly, the same company also discovered most of its superstar salespeople worked at McDonald's for six months or longer in high school or college. This showed an interest in serving customers (after all, that is what McDonald's stresses) plus stick-to-itiveness (lasting six months or more in a normally high-turnover job). So, start digging into your bio-data treasures located in employees' files.

## **5. RJP**

RJP stands for realistic job preview. To do an RJP, (a) show applicants exactly what they will do on-the-job if you hire them, (b) let applicants think about it for 24 hours, and (c) then ask applicants if they want to take the job. Research shows employers who give detailed RJP's get two results:

- less employees accept the job offer

- applicants who accept the job offer are less likely to turnover

Importantly, an RJP needs to be super-realistic. For example, I consulted a tire company that had great difficulty getting people to work in "purgatory"—a horribly hot room in which hot, just-made tires were moved on the tire molds. Anyone who worked in the "purgatory" room spent all day covered in sweat and thick white dust. No wonder most people quit that job after a short time!

I recommended using RJPs. The company worried, "Applicants won't take the job if they know too much about it!" I said let's try RJP anyway. Sure enough, after seeing this awfully hot and dusty job, only a small percentage of applicants took the job. But, those who did stayed a long time.

### **Do It Now**

If you remember these points, you can hire the best—and profit from it:

- what you see is not what you get—but it is the best you will see
- use customized tests, since tests predict job success better than other methods
- take advantage of predictors right under your nose, including referrals from winners, bio-data, and RJPs

Importantly, you can start these valuable methods today so you immediately start hiring the best.

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