Onboarding New Staff

A new employee's first days with your organization can inspire them and confirm they made a great choice—or leave them treading water in a sea of doubt. Use this framework to ensure new employees experience a great start with your organization.

Pre-Orientation

Consider these steps to help an employee feel welcome and well-prepared for their first day.

▶ If it works with your new employee's schedule, **invite them for an in-person or virtual tour of the facility**. If your employee will relocate for the role, this visit could include a house-hunting trip and community tour and could incorporate the employee's family.

▶ **Mail or email need-to-know first-day information** to the employee, including details about benefits, the organizational chart, and background information on your nonprofit.

▶ **Send the new team member a care package** with mission-related 'swag.' This could include cookies, coffee, a mug with your logo or slogan, or other logo swag.

▶ **Match the new employee with a buddy or mentor who will connect with them before the first day** to answer questions about work life and workplace culture.

> *"What's the dress code?"*
> *"What can I expect on my first day?"*
> *"Where do employees tend to eat?"*
> *"Are cameras optional or expected during remote meetings?"*

Orientation

This process introduces new employees to the organization's structure, vision, mission, and values. It includes a review of your handbook and key policies. It may also include required employee paperwork, an introduction to necessary administrative procedures, and completion of mandatory training. The volume of information covered in orientation can overwhelm new employees, so it's best to deliver it over a few days or a week.

Some key things to consider:

▶ What do new employees **need to know** about this work environment to make them more comfortable?

▶ What **impression** do you want to make on a new employee's first day?

▶ What policies and procedures must employees know on the first day to avoid mistakes on the second day? *Focus on essential issues.*

▶ What special touches (desk, work area, equipment) can you include to make new employees feel comfortable, welcome, and secure?

▶ What positive experience can you provide for the new employee that they will be eager to share with friends or family at the end of their first day? *The experience should make the new employee feel valued by the organization.*

▶ What support does the new employee's supervisor need so they can be available to the new team member on the first day to offer personal attention and communicate that they are an important addition to the team?

Reminder!

Remind the new hire's mentor or buddy to reconnect on the first day to show them around, make introductions, and start training. Make sure your mentors/buddies feel comfortable and equipped for their roles.

The mentor or buddy relationship should continue for 90-120 days and can continue longer if the pair make a great connection.

Helpful Resources.

Understanding Employee Onboarding - Society for Human Resource Management

Employee Orientation: Keeping New Employees On Board - The Balance Careers

Employee Orientation Vs. Employee Onboarding: Why You Need Both - Insperity

Creating an Exceptional Onboarding Journey for New Employees - Gallup

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Special Considerations: Remote Orientation

All of the considerations on the previous page apply to remote employees, but connecting with new people remotely brings additional challenges. Here are a few ideas to address those and ensure your new employee feels like part of the team no matter where they're located.

▶ Pre-record a welcome video with an introduction from each team member that appears in the new employee's email inbox on their first day.

▶ Hold a team-wide welcome meeting via video-conference.

▶ Hold regular virtual team-building conversations and exercises.

▶ Host virtual lunches or coffee breaks.

▶ Conduct regular video check-ins between managers and new employees to provide virtual coaching, share feedback and encourage getting to know one another.

After Orientation

Your new hire is off to a great start; congratulations! Don't stop curating the journey. Onboarding a new team member doesn't end with orientation. The entire onboarding process may last a year, according to analytics and advice firm Gallup.

Here are some key questions you'll need to help your employee navigate during that process.

▶ What do we believe in around here?

▶ What are my strengths?

▶ What is my role?

▶ Who are my partners?

▶ What does my future look like here?