

The Basics of New Hire Orientation



Every organization should tailor its orientation to its own unique environment. A well-planned orientation can result in an increase in productivity, compliance with policies and procedures, improved job satisfaction and retention, and promote communication among all staff members.

General Orientation

- Send a letter prior to the new hire's start date, welcoming the individual to the organization.
- Provide an employee handbook prior to the orientation to give the new hire a chance to become familiar with policies and procedures.
- Prepare the new hire ahead of time to bring appropriate documentation in order to complete all necessary paperwork (i.e., Form I-9).
- If available, provide an organizational chart to show "who is who" within the organization.
- Highlight each section of the employee handbook and concentrate on specific policies and procedures that will make the new hire's first couple of weeks an easy transition.
- Provide information on benefits even if the new employee is not immediately eligible.

Departmental Orientation

- Take a company tour, introducing the new hire to department heads and key employees that the new individual will have direct contact with through job responsibilities.
- Familiarize the new employee with the workflow in the department and how the new employee's job is affected.

Job Specific Orientation

- Make sure the trainer is prepared for the new employee.
- Help the new hire get comfortable in the work area.
- Start the "on the job" training process at a pace that is comfortable for the new employee.
- Be clear and concise with job expectations and timelines.
- Encourage and be open to questions.

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An employer's new hire orientation program is a reflection of how well the company communicates its policies and practices, and is the key to effective employee relations. Next to the interview process, it can be the most important first impression that an employer gives a new hire.

A well-organized orientation program has three segments:

1. General Orientation

Usually conducted by a human resource representative and covers policies and procedures, standards of conduct, and new hire paperwork.


2. Departmental Orientation

Conducted by the department manager or direct supervisor of the new hire, and covers specific department policies and procedures.

3. Job Specific Orientation

Conducted by a peer or senior level coworker, and covers specific job responsibilities, methods, and requirements.

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