

Top Tips for Effective Induction

An effective induction process helps new employees get off to the best possible start in your team or department, by ensuring that they fully understand their role and the part they play in the wider organisation. These tips contain some useful suggestions to help you create an effective and enjoyable induction.

Get the basics right

A good induction programme should ideally be **tailored** to address the specific needs of each new employee. As a minimum an induction programme should include:

- **A physical tour** of the office or department so that employees can see for themselves where things are and how your team operates.
- **A guide to the organisation's overall structure**, its key functions, products and services, its goals and objectives and its culture and values.
- An explanation of how the new employee will **fit into the team**, the team's goals and how the new employee will contribute to them.
- **Introductions with key people** in the organisation (either face-to-face or using technology).
- **Key health and safety information** (this is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety Act).
- **A clear outline of their job requirements** and key terms and conditions of employment.

Remember the little things

A smooth, well-planned induction will help your new team member **feel valued and engaged** from their very first day with your organisation. Don't forget to show them the location of staff areas (e.g. cafeteria/kitchen area and bathrooms) as well as local amenities (e.g. shops, post office, bank), particularly if they are new to the area. Give them a copy of your department's **organisation chart** and **office seating plan**, as this will be a big help when it comes to making sense of the initial blur of names and faces! Have any security passes ready, and ensure that their PC and desk are set up ready for use and that basic stationery items have been provided.

Introduce colleagues personally

Remember to tell your existing team members that a new person will be joining the team. You should **personally introduce** your new employee to each member of your team, as well as to any **key contacts** in the wider organisation and externally (the latter can be done by phone or email). Encourage your team to make the new employee **feel welcome** and to be on hand to **answer any questions** they might have.

Allow a period of initial observation

Many people feel more confident about taking part in a new task or activity if they **know what to expect** first. Help your new employee get to grips with 'the way things are done' in your team by allowing them a period of time to watch and observe how things operate. For example, you could allow new employees to attend team meetings and **observe key processes** or tasks before undertaking them. This will give your new team member time to reflect, as well as the opportunity to ask questions before performing tasks themselves.

Appoint an induction 'buddy'

Everyone likes having someone they can turn to if they need help or advice, even if this is just a simple reminder about how to use the photocopier. Consider assigning an induction 'buddy' to a new employee who would be **responsible for helping them settle in** and find their feet. This person can also be invaluable when it comes to explaining the **unwritten customs and practices** of the team and organisational culture.

Depending on the type of role, it might be necessary to provide **more formal support**. For example, if your new employee has managerial responsibilities, and no prior management experience, you might offer some **coaching** or assign them a **mentor** to support their continued development.

Take things slowly

Remember that starting a new role can sometimes be an overwhelming experience, so **try not to overload** your new employee with too much information in the early days. **Give them time** to absorb new information, and ensure that they know you are available to help, guide and support them as they settle into their role. Rather than throwing them in at the deep end, if possible have some **initial straightforward tasks ready** for them to get started on. This will help to build their confidence and knowledge, and they can progress to more complex work, as they get up to speed.

Set performance expectations

An important area to get right early on is to **explain your performance expectations** to your new team member. By the end of the first month, you should aim to have put together some **personal objectives** with them to give clear direction and focus. You could also start putting together some ideas for their **personal development plan**, including areas in which they have acknowledged or shown limited knowledge or skill during the induction. It is also a good idea to **advance-book performance reviews or 1:1 meetings** for the next few months so they don't get missed.

Encourage teamwork

There is really no substitute for helping a new start get to know their colleagues than by **participating in tasks and activities together**. These can range from formal, work-related, to fun, and social. Why not start things off on the right footing by arranging a **team lunch** on your new team member's first day? This will help them get to know their new colleagues in a more relaxed setting. You might also consider running an **informal team-building activity** to help team members get to know each other, particularly if several new faces have recently joined your team.