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Project Manager, Uberlingen, Germany
(June 2005)

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Time to plan the induction programme

The purpose of induction is to ensure the effective integration of staff into or across the organisation for the benefit of both parties. Research has shown that tailor-made programmes increase staff retention. Figures of one-and-a-half times the annual salary have been quoted if recruits leave within the first six months, and around 13% of new recruits do. So the costs of poor induction add up.

All new recruits, whether full or part-time, in large or small organisations, need a well planned induction or orientation programme. Elements include:

- orientation (physical) - describing where the facilities are
- orientation (organisational) - showing how the employee fits into the team
- health and safety information - this is a legal requirement
- explanation of terms and conditions
- details of the organisation's history, its products and services, its culture and values sometimes called 'socialisation'
- a clear outline of the job/role requirements.

But the process doesn't begin on the first day. It begins at the recruitment stage and continues into employment. The length and nature of the induction process depends on the complexity of the job, and the background of the new employee. A 'one size fits all approach' won't work, as each employee is different.

Even so, it's possible to have 'pre-prepared' programmes for certain types of staff used regularly, such as job-sharers, temporary staff, contractors, promoted staff, transferred staff and remote workers. Your organisation may also have other groups with specific needs - graduate trainees, people returning from career breaks, long-term absence or maternity/paternity leave, senior appointments, technical specialists, or directors.

As line manager, you have overall responsibility for your new recruit's induction. A minimum will be to explain the departmental organisation, the requirements of the job, the purpose and operation of any probationary period and the appraisal system. You may also be responsible for the housekeeping aspects such as completing employee forms, taking bank details, explaining the induction programme.

You may not 'deliver' all parts of the programme (e.g. health and safety information) but you will need to ensure that things happen. So a prepared induction checklist will be useful for you and your new employee to 'tick off' things together after the elements have been covered. The checklist could be divided into:

- Pre-employment
- Health and safety
- Organisation
- Terms and conditions
- Financial
- Training
- Culture and values.

How you implement the programme will depend upon you and your organisation - but it's useful to use a range of training methods to appeal to differing learning styles. Mixing formal induction courses with one-to-ones, on-the-job training (sometimes called 'sitting with Nellie'), and e-learning programmes will give variety. Mentoring or 'buddying' schemes are used in some organisations. Get feedback from your most recent recruits to see what worked, what didn't and aim for improvement!

Designing an appropriate and cost-effective induction package is a complex task. They have to provide all the information that new employees and others need, and are able to assimilate, without being overwhelming or diverting them from the essential process of integration into a team.

Linda Emmett, Information Manager, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. CIPD is the leading professional institute for those involved in the management and development of people.



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Information Manager, UK

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