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EMPLOYEE INDUCTION

➤ Introduction

When you take on a new employee, it is important that you give them the right induction that will benefit themselves and your business. This induction period can be considered the foundation for getting the most out of the employee and determining their long term success in your business.

Induction should be given at the beginning of employment and may stretch for several weeks or even months. During this time, the quality of the induction will have an effect on how the employee visualizes your business and how well they will integrate into it.

Some companies often make the mistake of ignoring induction periods. Instead, they leave the new employee to pick things up themselves and from existing employees, which costs time and money. This defeats the idea of induction which is to integrate the employee so that they reach their full potential as soon as possible.

If your new employee is to be recruited through an interview, then it is a good idea to start the induction at that specific time.

Even if the applicant isn't definitely going to be your new employee, it still gives them a chance to maintain interest in your business.

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➤ **What Do They Need To Know?**

You may want to start off with the overall look of the company moving through to the finer details. When informing the employee, you may decide it is worthwhile giving them a tour as you go over the relevant points. The following are guides for what you may want to include, but feel free to add anything that you feel is necessary.

Introduce your company by specifying the size (no. of employees, branches, etc.), the history and how your company operates. The employee may have already researched your business, but any additional information is always good to know.

Let them know about any procedures you have in your business. This may include the terms and conditions of employment, disciplinary action, and dress code. Also, show them what to do and where to assemble in case of fire.

Inform them of anything concerning their job: give them a job description listing what tasks are involved, their responsibilities and accountabilities. Tell them what training is needed (if any) to match their job requirements. If tools, equipment, computers, etc., are involved, make sure they know where and how they can obtain them. If your business has many forms, letters, etc., it's a good idea to build an induction manual for them to keep. The manual should show and explain the basics of completing, say, a form from start to end. Where necessary, an induction manual can also cover systems and procedures relevant to the employee's task. With an induction manual, the main concern should be with the quality of its contents: take

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time, effort and care if you start this task.

Coming down to the personal needs of the employee, point them in the right direction of the toilets, cafeteria, snack/drink machines and anything else that they may require.

Employee's involvement with other employees is important. Tell them about any activities/social outings that occur both in and out of work time. This could be a game of football after work on Tuesday or a pint of beer at the pub during Friday lunchtimes. Involving them early with the social side of working will give them a feeling of being 'accepted' and welcome.

➤ **When They Need To Know**

As said earlier, induction can start from the selection process, such as the interview. But it is important that some things are brought to new employees' attention before they start their first day at work. These are the terms and conditions of employment which they may already have in writing if you issued them. Additionally, they will need to be aware of where to go, who they should ask for and what they should bring along to prepare for their first day.

You, too, may want to prepare for their arrival by making sure that you obtain any necessary equipment for them (working computer, safety gear, etc.). If you have involved others in assisting with the induction (detailed later), create a timetable to let them know when they are required.

Some information may be given when your new employee actually starts

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their first day. This is a big day for the new employee and what happens will usually form the basis of their impression of your company. Make sure that they are made to feel welcome in every department they may venture into. Often, this day is used to inform the employee about company procedures (outlined earlier) and to complete any necessary paperwork concerning their details (bank details etc.). Introduce the employee to everyone that they will be working with. This way, there will be no strangers around when they come to work the following day.

It is important not to overload the employee with too much information on the first day as you don't want them to forget the most important points (no one will remember it all). Remember: induction takes time to be successful.

Other things you may decide to introduce when necessary during the course of their early employment. Within this period, it is the time when the new employee may start to compile a list of questions about the job or company. These insecurities often lead to the employee leaving or progressing at a much slower rate. It is therefore in your best interest to have a follow-up meeting, say, in the form of an appraisal to compensate for this matter. Usually done after 2-3 months from initial employment, it gives you (or whoever is running the induction) a chance to offer further information and for the employee to ask questions about their concern.

➤ **Who Should Do the Induction?**

If you are unsure about the best way to pass on the information, then leave it all to whoever will be the new employee's superior. However, you may

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decide that it is relevant to break down the information to be given by the relevant departments. For example, your personnel department may inform them about employment contracts and procedures.

If the new employee is working with others, you may offer the responsibility to one of his/her future colleagues. This way can benefit the new employee because they will be making a new friend at the same time and could see it as a doorway to their social involvement.

If this isn't yourself, then you may think it is best to leave the induction to the person who is most interested in the effectiveness of the induction scheme. They will then perhaps make it their responsibility to ensure that the new employee integrates into the company with the right balance (job/social/personal involvement).

Whoever you allocate to do the induction will start to form a good relationship between those involved (or not, as the case may be).

➤ **Summary**

A good induction can determine how quickly your employee settles into the business and the speed at which they develop to reach their full potential. Giving the employee all they need to know about their time at your business will further determine its effectiveness.

The importance of how long the induction should be has been stressed throughout the article. Take as long as you need until you believe (and have been acknowledged) that the new employee has been integrated

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completely into your business. Have a 'follow up' appraisal to sort out any queries that they (or yourself) may have.

Involve everyone that you feel is essential to create good relations between the new employee and those that they will have connections with. Make the employee feel welcome and comfortable in all areas that will involve their presence.