

Who's that, what are they doing here, when did they start?

Does any of this sound familiar to your workplace? Something employers can overlook is the other half of the new employee induction process.

Much focus is often placed on having a thorough induction plan for new employees. However, while we want to make new employees feel welcome and at ease when they start with a new business it is just as important for existing staff to feel equally at ease with somebody new joining the team. Most people experience some degree of uncertainty when faced with change and this is as true for existing staff welcoming someone new to the team as it is for other organisational changes. Ensuring there is clear, timely communication of business developments and variations to the norm goes a long way to ensuring changes in the business achieve the desired outcomes and that they are positively received.

While some new employees join a business to fulfil an existing role, employers often take the opportunity to make tweak the role (i.e. heightening the level of the role, introducing new job functions etc). It is these changes that existing staff may be unaware of if not communicated, causing uncertainty and a level of anxiety. Often, are the details about the new employee that existing employees really want to know:

Who are they – what are their qualifications and/or background, why were they selected for the role?

Where did they come from – a like business, an industry competitor, out of town/country?

What about the position they will fill - is the job the same or different from that of the previous incumbent, if it is different why have changes been made, what impact will this have on existing staff and will it require them to do anything differently?

Location – where will they be located, what area will they cover, who will they be working with and report to?

How do you answer these questions?

The following are ideas that are easily implemented:

- When an employee is leaving the business advise staff whether the vacancy will be filled internally or externally and the likely timeframe for recruiting
- Keep staff up to date on the recruitment process e.g. we have advertised, we are interviewing next week, we are down to the final two, we have offered the position to someone.

- Let staff know when the new person will be starting and a bit of general background about them.
- When the new employee starts introduce them to all the team. Arrange an opportunity for staff to get to know the new person on both a formal and informal basis, e.g. dedicated one-on-one time with staff they will be working closely with to discuss how their roles fit together and/or a morning tea.
- In larger organisations it may be appropriate to advise staff of the new employee's arrival via a company-wide email with general details like their name, their position title, the work they will be doing, who they report to and where they will be working.

While all this will be of great benefit to the new employee it will ensure your happy, harmonious team remains so and avoid those awful water cooler and corridor questions from existing staff along the lines of "Who's that, what are they doing here, when did they start?" A well planned induction programme is not only necessary for new employees but should include existing staff as well. It not only helps the new employee to fit into your business, the team, the culture and role; it enables your 'new' team as a whole to continue being effective and contributing positively to the business.