

Induction Planning 101

One of the biggest reasons that employees underperform or leave their new roles within the first three months is because they don't know what to do, they are unclear of expectations and the business they are joining has not integrated them in to the team culture. Ensure that the time you invest with your new employees' results in improved employee performance, productivity and profitability by implementing an informative and helpful induction programme.

While an induction programme is usually a mix of generic (about the company expectations) and specific (what the employee is expected to do in their role), the length and nature of it depends on the complexity of the job and the background of the new employee.

What are the benefits of an induction programme?

- Lowers turnover
- Improves employee morale and motivation
- Reduces recruitment costs
- Lowers training costs
- Makes understanding the job, the team and culture easier for the new employee
- Reduces anxiety for the new employee
- Increases productivity

With so many benefits why wouldn't you put a new employee through an induction programme?

Often it simply comes down to time and arguably if you are inducting a new employee, you can't perform your normal role of running your business and this means reduced productivity. However, given the benefits, committing a few days to ensure that the new employee is welcomed in to their new team and shown the ropes is vital to their success and ultimately the success of your business. Time spent at the onset will save you time and money down the line.

Who should do the induction training?

Arguably, the business owner would be preferable as they know the business already and can give greater insight into the culture. Though you need to ensure that they 'understand' intimately the requirements of the job – which means that often the line manager may be more appropriate, which often is also the business owner!

Alternatively, if you have a high volume of new recruits or simply do not enjoy training, you could devise a programme with an external HR consultancy (like Pod Consulting) who could run the programme for you, thus enabling you to focus on your core business. This way you can ensure that the skills sessions, theory and any case studies and role plays are undertaken in the class room setting with experienced trainers before the new employee does the 'on the job' training with you (the business owner or manager), putting the theory into practice.

It is also a good idea to get the rest of the team involved in the induction process i.e. the receptionist to outline the administrative procedures and how to answer the phone; a peer whom the new employee could observe 'on the job', the business owner to give an overview

of the strategic direction of the business and explain how the employee's role adds value to the business objectives; the accountant to explain how the employee gets paid and any financial expectations etc. Do remember however, that you need to get competent, conscientious and high performing employees involved in the process, it will not help your business to get those with poor attitudes or the poor performers involved.

Ongoing training

It is important to remember that once the induction programme has been completed, the training goes on... and on... it is your job as business owner or manager to check regularly that the new employee is settling in and getting to grips with their new role. It is during weekly catch ups that you informally discuss how the employee is getting on, what work they are doing and any areas of concern. During monthly catch ups (follow ups should be for three months and on the monthly anniversary of employment) you should review the job description and highlight the areas that the employee has mastered (green), the areas that they are gaining an understanding of (amber) and the areas where they are not performing well (red). The traffic light system gives you early warning signals to potential performance issues and/or to alert you to where additional training is needed.

Performance management

Often employers will include a probationary period in an employee agreement. Undertaking an induction process and doing regular catch ups with new employees will help you review performance and if appropriate advise new employees on specific areas where you expect to see improvement.

What needs to be included?

How much you include is really dependent on the size and the focus of your business, following are some essentials for inclusion:

Manager's Checklist

- Contact the new employee a few days before they start – tell them you are looking forward to having them on board and confirm their start time and who will be meeting them
- Welcome the new employee personally, do the team introductions
- Tour of the office
- Business values, mission and goals
- Purpose of the business
- Who's who in the team and business
- Training on all aspects of the role (working through the job description)
- Performance expectations and performance review processes
- Administration relating to employment agreements, tax information, KiwiSaver
- Logins and passwords to all relevant systems and programs
- Where to find ... stationery, forms, documents etc
- Policies and procedures
- Health and safety regulations
- What to do if there are problems or questions

Induction Pack

- Induction timetable (for the first week – ensuring that any time with other employees, clients and/or suppliers is in all relevant diaries)
- Organisational chart
- Business plan (abridged)
- Policies and procedures
- 'How to' manual
- Job description and person specification
- Contact lists for employees
- Performance metrics/review processes
- Forms and templates

Remember to focus on what is really important in the early days and set a timetable. It will take a while for your new employee to full assimilate all the new information that they are being introduced to in their first days with a new business.

At Pod Consulting we create induction plans to enable your business to quickly utilise the skills and experience of your new employees, while helping them to fit in to your business, the team, the culture and role.

Pod Consulting – Tailored HR solutions for your business