



Staff Development Services

Building A Successful Business One Employee at a Time May 1, 2004

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Hiring & Coaching

Orienting the New Hire into Your Firm

Part 4 in our series

“Building a Successful Business One Employee at a Time”

Orienting the New Hire Into Your Firm is the fourth article in our series, ***Building a Successful Business One Employee at a Time***.

Attracting Quality Candidates, Conducting the Successful Interview and Matching the Right Person to the Right Job can be reviewed in issues 3, 4, and 5 of our newsletter. Back issues are available at www.staffdevelopmentsservice.com.

You have attracted the top candidates for a position with your firm, conducted a successful interview and found the right person for the job. So your job is done, right? No! Perhaps the most important step, and the one most often overlooked in the hiring process, is the employee orientation. Because all the time, money, and effort spent finding the right person is for nothing unless you can retain the employee. Making sure that happens starts the minute the new hire steps through the front door for orientation.

Retaining good employees is one of the best ways to help

firms improve their bottom line.

There are no set rules for a good orientation but there are certainly some basic things to keep in mind when developing one for your firm. First, remember that an orientation is important for every new hire—an attorney, receptionist, case manager, office administrator—everyone! Of course, the attorney is the key employee but how successful and effective can he or she be without the right support staff in place?

A new hire should never feel unsure of what he or she is supposed to do from the minute they step through the door on orientation day. Everyone is busy in a law firm and the tendency is to let the new hire wait until someone gets a break to start the orientation—big mistake! The new employee begins his day a little bit nervous but full of excitement and anticipation of the new job. But he becomes more nervous and less excited as he sits and waits for someone to acknowledge that he exists and begins to wonder if he has made a good choice.

Who participates in the orientation and how long it lasts varies from firm to firm. But a checklist for

each participant to use as a guideline should be compiled to assure that all the basics get covered. You can go to <http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/compleat/w96wood.html> for an example of a checklist to help get one started for your firm.

Someone should be assigned to be the new hire’s coach and needs to greet the new employee as they come in the door and immediately begin the orientation. The office manager or the human resource director could cover things such as pay schedule, benefits, office procedures, etc. The receptionist may cover use of the copier, incoming and outgoing mail, etc. Of course, a person who is presently doing the job for which the new hire was employed should be part of the orientation to explain the specifics of the position. This person could be the assigned coach.

A key participant in the orientation process is one of the principles. (Continued)



**Staff Development
Services**

7028 White Bridge Lane
Leland, NC 28451

Phone: 910-253-6471
Fax: 910-253-6409

Email: john@staffdevelopmentservices.com

***Building A Successful Business
One Employee at a Time***

Welcome to these new clients

Walker & Walker — Jackson, MS
Gerald C. MacRae — Los Angeles, CA
American Therapeutic Massage — Detroit, MI
Stark & Stark — Lawrenceville, NJ
Jim S. Adler & Assoc. — Houston, TX
Law Offices of James S. Farrin — Durham, NC
Joel Bieber Law Firm — Richmond, VA

(continued from page one) Fifteen minutes spent discussing the firm's history, goals, and vision for the future by this person can truly make the new hire feel part of the team and make them want to take ownership in trying to help the firm meet its goals. The principle should make sure they remember this person's name so that they can address him/her as their paths cross in the office later.

The last person to provide an orientation is the immediate

supervisor who briefly covers the employee handbook. The supervisor needs to be sure to point out the rules that are most important to them and, therefore, are strictly enforced. This person also needs to make sure the new hire understands what is used to measure performance for employee reviews. This helps prevent future misconceptions.

Often new employees feel they should have all the answers after the orientation and as they begin their

new job. It should be stressed during the orientation that the new employee should never hesitate to go to his/her coach if in doubt of what should be done. Any employee who feels that they should have all the answers or is afraid to ask questions can be dangerous!

At the end of the orientation the new employee should have a smile on his or her face, feel confident, and anticipate a long career in their new workplace home.

On the lighter side of life when you have a "I hate my job day" try this:

On your way home from work, stop at your pharmacy and go to the thermometer section. You will need to purchase a rectal thermometer made by "Johnson and Johnson". Be very sure you get this brand.

When you get home, lock your doors, draw the drapes, and disconnect the phone so you will not be disturbed during your therapy. Change to very comfortable clothing, such as a tracksuit, and lie down on your bed. Open the package and remove the thermometer.

Carefully place it on the bedside table so that it will not become chipped or broken. Take out the material that comes with the thermometer and read it. You will notice that in small print there is a statement: "Every rectal thermometer made by Johnson and Johnson is personally tested."

Now close your eyes and repeat out loud 5 times, "I am so glad I do not work for Quality Control at the Johnson and Johnson Company."

Have a nice day and remember, there is always someone with a worse job than yours.