

On-boarding & Orientation

BY NICOLE RIVARD, SPHR

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY SOUND

A critical element in fostering greater employee retention is to start your new hires off right. You may do this by providing them with the fundamental information they will need as an employee on their first day. Though you may be ecstatic to have your open position filled and may have an immediate need to throw them in the water without a life ring, you should resist taking this course. The best companies to work for are the ones that have a thorough and effective on-boarding process. This process often lays the foundation in the employee's mind as to what kind of company they will be working for and how things are done in that company. Your new employee will have a greater chance of success with your company if they know what to expect, where to go for information, and an understanding of your policies and procedures from the start.

A new employee's first day should include some sort of orientation which covers several key areas. First, the employee will need to be familiar with general housekeeping items. This can be accomplished by giving a tour of the work facility. You may also take this time to introduce the new employee to his/her coworkers and personal workspace, which should be equipped with all of the tools needed to effectively do his/her job. Depending on the position, these tools may include computer logins, special software, and e-mail setup.

Once general housekeeping items are out of the way, you can then move into the more formal aspects of the orientation. You will want to have your new employee complete all of the necessary government and company required paperwork on their first

day. Once that is complete, it is a good idea to communicate work rules, policies, and procedures. This may include providing them with an employee handbook, communicating timekeeping requirements, grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures, and safety procedures.

After you've communicated work rules, policies, and procedures, it would then be appropriate to give the employee a background of the company and introduce them to the culture. This may include sharing the company's history, mission, vision, values and core purpose, and letting them know how their position contributes to the company's overall success. You might also communicate the company's performance management process and opportunities for growth and development in this section of the orientation.

Depending on the company, industry, and position, your orientation program may be a few hours or a few days. It may be presented by one person or several. However it is presented, it is important to ensure that your new employee has the information and training they need to be successful. Other items that may be included as part of the orientation are safety training, any industry or position specific training, benefits orientation, and a departmental orientation. It may also be helpful to assign each new employee a "buddy" for the first month or so as a go to person to answer questions once orientation is over and help the new employee get acclimated to the company culture. Having a successful on-boarding and orientation program is an integral step in creating a successful company.

Nicole Rivard, SPHR is the Human Resources Manager at the Holiday Inn Santa Barbara/Goleta.