

INDUCTION OR ONBOARDING

An overview of which one to use with new employees.

What are some successful ways of starting new employees into the furniture removals industry? It is important that you carry out some type of induction, orientation or onboarding process to familiarise them on the industry standards and how their workplace operates. As an employer you want them to understand the principles of the industry and to become productive and committed in their new job role as quickly as possible.

Different businesses use different methods, whether it be through an induction, orientation or onboarding process, but they all have the same overall objective introducing a new employee into their business as quickly and smoothly as possible.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE INDUCTION PROGRAM?

An employee induction program is where a new employee is welcomed into their position, learns about the business and meet their co-workers on first day or over a few days. Induction focuses on the new employee's responsibilities:

- paperwork finalisation, eg: superannuation, taxation forms, etc.,
- an overview of the business,
- preview of policies and procedures,
- assignment of tools for their position, whether it be a computer login, uniforms, personal protective equipment and so on,
- a tour of worksite and facilities,
- emergency evacuation procedures,
- WH&S training and compliance training,
- what their employee benefits are.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION PROGRAM?

The orientation process is a more formal process and extends over longer period, from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the job responsibilities and position. It aims at adjusting the new employee into their job role, department, responsibilities and work environment. This makes them feel valued, assists in forming meaningful work relationships and is aimed at reducing employee turnover. This happens after:

- the induction process,
- a specific training program has been organised for the employee,
- an outline of job responsibilities and expectations,
- work systems and processes are explained in detail,
- shown how to use tools and equipment for their job properly,
- assigned a mentor or buddy.

The reason for this is to:

- builds strong relationships and proper communication,
- is used to review and provide feedback to the employee.

It is fundamental that every business carries out one or both an induction and orientation program with new employees so they understand rules, regulations, company culture, company policies and procedures. The purpose for a proper induction and orientation process helps a person find a place among their co-workers, lets the employee build up to their potential at work, lays a strong foundation of trust and finally encourages quality employees to stay and reduces staff turnover.

WHAT IS ONBOARDING?

Onboarding is a longer process and starts from the hiring process. This is when job descriptions and

interviews are used to establish what the working conditions and culture expectations are. It is where new employees are integrated into the workplace culture by meeting fellow employees and managers. Setting up training programs and mentoring the new employee until that person can fully adjust to their role and team.

In other words, understanding how things work, getting acquainted with company culture and making them feel welcome and valued as a team member. You need to have an onboarding checklist to follow, some companies will have a human resources person or department who will assist with this type of implementation. The onboarding checklist involves:

Prior to starting:

- prior to starting, send an email to confirm the start date and provide them with any information they may need for their first day, eg: paperwork, company benefits, dress code, parking etc. or
- invite them prior to starting to complete paperwork, meet their key team members and include a member from their work team to give them account of what to expect in their new role.

First week:

- for their first day make sure what they need for their job is organised, eg: workstation, computer login, orientation program, and so on,
- introduce them to their co-workers in a relaxed social setting, such as a morning tea or lunch,
- give them a schedule for their first week, it may be meeting people they have to deal with, attending meetings, providing a well layout training program,
- assign a mentor or buddy who they can ask for advice or assistance,
- instruct them on any programs or systems they will need to use,
- assign them achievable tasks to get them working.

First month:

- continue to work with the employee to integrate them by giving them larger tasks,
- schedule regular one-on-one meetings to evaluate their performance and make sure they feel comfortable.

In second and third month:

- check and review the employee's performance and gauge their feelings about the role and work environment,
- expose them to more of the company culture.

At six months:

- Manager/s and/or mentor meet with the new employee and do a six-month performance review to evaluate the employee's job tasks,
- to see if the employee has been fully integrated into the team and company culture.

First year:

- Conduct a performance review,

- Check how the employee is doing with their role and team,
- Ask the employee about the onboarding process to determine if it was successful or where improvements are needed.

Whether you use induction, orientation or onboarding, training is a very important part of the new employee's induction process. Make sure that the induction is tailored specific to your workplace, safety, policies and procedures, that they are instructed on everything they need to know about their role. If the job is task specific, make sure they have the correct training and knowledge plus the relevant documentation and certificates, eg: specific vehicle class licence, WH&S certificate.

Depending on the new employee's position will determine which type of process you choose to implement. If the person is a driver

or a labourer in the depot you may decide to combine the induction and orientation methods because you need to have workplace health and safety plus specific training for their job. If the new person is a supervisor or scheduler the onboarding process would be the better method to initiate them into the business, to understand all the policies and procedures, plus provide the relevant training.

If new employees are inducted properly into your business, you will find they will feel valued, have a positive attitude, will stay and feel part of their team, this will lead to less staff turnover for your business. Additionally, happier employees improve well-being, they are more engaged, productive and leads to a lower rate of absenteeism.

An in-depth article on each of the different processes will be covered in future issues of *On the Move*. ●