

Staff Induction: 7 Top Tips For Getting New Employees Up To Speed Fast

The quality of your staff induction says more about your managerial style and company culture than you think. At its simplest, employees work harder for companies that care for them, and hard working employees keep customers happy, bringing money into the company. You put loads of effort into attracting and retaining customers - can you say the same about your new employees?

Staff induction can range from pitiful, or downright boring, to effective ways to harness the enthusiasm and energy of your new employee.

Pitiful Induction

= *Dis-hearted Employees*

At the pitiful end of the spectrum, a new starter will be lucky to have a workspace waiting for them and maybe a couple of people say hello as they begin their new job. Why would this person bother to work hard when it's obvious the manager and company don't care about them?

Mediocre Induction

= *Bored Senseless Employees*

Okay, so you've got the message you've got to put some effort into a staff induction. At this point resist the temptation to dust off company annual accounts, health and safety folders and other weighty, detailed information.

Information overload will dull the senses and de-energise quicker than you can say "the company had an outstanding 9.73% year on year growth in pre tax profit in 2005". Yawn, boring!



Effective Induction

= *Engaged, Enthusiastic Employee*

So what is an effective staff induction? If all you remember is that your new person is a human being, with all the associated wants and needs, you will do well. No matter how senior, a new person will have concerns about fitting in or their ability to do the job, worry about getting lost or looking stupid.

Help them relax and engage in their new surroundings by addressing these concerns BEFORE you start on the company indoctrination, oops, I mean induction:

7 Top Staff Induction Plan Tips

- Show location of food, drink and bathrooms as a top priority.
- Have an expenses paid team lunch on first day.

- Tell existing employees about the new person, and encourage them to stop by and say hello.
- Provide an organisation chart and office seating plan, to help make sense of the blur of people, names and departments.
- Have all security passes ready and waiting.
- Advance book next 6 months review, team and other regular meetings.
- Have a trusted team member explain the unwritten rules and subtleties of office politics.

Effective staff induction sets the tone of the relationship between employee and employer. With thought and a small amount of prior organisation, you can get the relationship off to a flying start by using an effective staff induction.

Public Speaking: Use Visuals for Maximum Impact

Have you ever attended a presentation where the speaker read directly from her/his PowerPoint slides? Did you wonder why they didn't just give you the handout and let you go home?

PowerPoint and other visuals are tools to supplement your presentation; many presenters, however, hide behind their visuals as a way to avoid interacting with the audience.

Here are some ways your visuals can enhance your presentations, rather than putting your audience to sleep.

1. Stand and Face the Audience

I recently attended a presentation where the speaker sat at a table and pushed keys on her laptop to run her slides. She sat facing sideways, looking from her computer to the screen on the left (to read the many bullet points), then back to the audience on her right. It was an uncomfortable set up, and she had to contort her body to see the audience and still manipulate the keyboard.

Sitting in a chair diminishes your authority and makes eye contact difficult in a presentation or workshop setting. No, you are not the Supreme Ruler, but you are the subject matter expert for the moment, and it's important to stand tall where everyone in the room can see you. Stand facing the audience, with your computer to the side. You can still see the computer from where you are, but you can also more readily interact with the audience. You shouldn't need to look at the screen unless you want to emphasize something by indicating it on the screen. Using a laser pointer is preferred to walking over to the screen to point at something.

2: Use a Remote Device

Had this presenter used a remote to advance her slides, she wouldn't have had to sit in front of her computer. Remote presentation devices allow you to stand up to 100 feet away from the computer running your PowerPoint. They have many features, including next slide, previous slide, black screen, cursor control and laser pointer function. They also range in price, so you don't have to spend a fortune. Using a remote will make your presentations much more fluid and allow you free movement around the stage and interaction with your audience. Choose a radio frequency (RF) remote over infrared (IF), as radio frequency gives you much more range of motion and you don't have to worry about objects blocking the signal.

3: Use Notes

It's not necessary to be tied to your computer if you have your presentation notes handy. If you're using PowerPoint, print out the slides on paper so you can follow along, or just use your outline. Place the notes on a table next to you where you can keep an eye on them without using them as a crutch. Remember, the bulk of your presentation should be in your head already. Notes are just placeholders for the information in your head.

4: Use PowerPoint for Good, not Evil

Bullet points have become the standard presentation mode when using PowerPoint. However, this method is not necessarily the best way to get your message across. Frequently, presenters attempt to put their entire presentation into bullet point format in order to get everything onto slides. This is not



necessary or desirable, unless you want to e-mail the presentation to your attendees and tell them not to bother coming.

It's your job to engage the audience, to keep their attention and to make them want more. It's your job to inform, yes, but to do it in a way that your audience remembers vividly what you told them AND retains it for more than two days. Bullet points are hardly engaging. . . and they don't tell a story the way your words and expressions can. Think back to some speakers you've really enjoyed. Do you remember their bullet points or do you remember their energy and powerful way of expressing themselves?

5: Beyond PowerPoint

It's entirely possible to give an engaging presentation using nothing but a flip chart and markers. This "old school" presentation method is still a great way to incorporate audience input and use spontaneously generated ideas as part of your workshop. If you feel that you're leaving out something, make sure to provide handouts at the end of your session.

Visuals can enhance a presentation and help your audience to synthesize the information you're sharing. At the same time, visuals can become unwieldy, distracting or boring, dragging down the liveliness and spontaneity of a presentation. Use visuals thoughtfully and sparingly, relying more on your own personality and passion to bring a presentation to life.



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