



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Orchestrating Orientations

Orientations are orchestrated by the HR manager and follow a checklist. This ensures that all aspects are covered and gives new employees a sense of where they are in the process.

Three phases are suggested for an orientation program.

Phase I: The Basics

The first phase of orientation should take place at the start of the first day on the job or, even better, a day or more before the job starts.

The basics include what people need to know right away in an unfamiliar workplace. This will allay anxieties about how they can be reached in an emergency, the location of washrooms or where and when they will get lunch. Phase I also involves starting personal files. Safety information that is not job-specific can also be covered here.

Phase II: Personnel Policies

This phase should happen within the first week on the job, if not on the first day. It consists of a review of the personnel policies in the employee handbook. Employees can be asked to read it in advance and tested on its contents in the form of a short written quiz with multiple-choice and true/false answers. There need not be any penalties for wrong answers, but employees are more likely to take the policy handbook seriously if they know they will be tested.

Phase III: The Business

In this phase the mission, history and internal structure of the business, its products and its customers can be covered. This could involve several sessions, preferably before the new employee's impressions begin to strengthen.

Mission: This part of the orientation process shows new employees the vision of the company. The HR Manager can share personal accomplishments and his/her own interpretation of the company's goals during this time as well.

History: A scrapbook with local newspaper articles and photos of former and present buildings, customers, products, and before-and-after pictures can be displayed.

Internal structure: An organizational chart is a good visual aid. An indication of where the new employee fits in should also be given.

Customers: Discuss expectations for customer relations, thereby giving a sense of who the customers are and how the company serves them. Role-playing scenarios give new employees a vivid picture of what customer service means at the company.

Products: Beyond the training that each employee receives in his specific job, the orientation should cover the company's product standards, product locations, and answers to common customer questions. Purchasers could give short presentations featuring actual products, preferably with samples for trial.