

Orienting a New Employee

Hiring a new employee involves a lot of time and effort.

The faster they can get up to speed, the quicker you get a return on your investment. Here are some tips that will help you in this area.

Assign a "Buddy"

Every new employee needs a "buddy". This is someone they can turn to who can answer the question: "How are things done around here?".

The buddy could be their new manager, but not necessarily. What is important is that they do have someone to turn to.



If you are hiring a new Service Tech, for instance, assign one of your other techs to look after the new person. Choose someone who has been around a while, of course. Use it as an opportunity to acknowledge one of your better techs for the good work they do.

The buddy should be someone who is very familiar with the organisation. If they **also** have

a good understanding of the area into which the new employee is being dropped, all the better, but this is not essential if it cannot be organised that way.

The buddy system is designed to give the new employee someone to turn to for the simple, everyday things.

Establish the End Result

Once the employee is oriented to the new environment, the manager should ensure that he or she understands what the **overall objective** of the job is.

The **end results** should be made clear.

The Top Performer will already be asking you this, if they have not already figured it out for themselves.

But the not-so-top performer will benefit greatly by having this clearly stated for them.

The essence is:

"What is the *outcome* of performing this job well? And what is the *measure* by which this outcome will be judged?"

The Replacement Position

Taking over a job that someone else has been performing is quite different from stepping into a newly created position. Where the new employee is **replacing** a previous incumbent, you should ask yourself one very important question:

"Did the previous holder of this job produce good results?"

If the answer is "Yes", then the new person should have some way to find out **how and why** that previous person was so successful.

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On the other hand, if the previous employee made a mess of the job, their methods of operating should be avoided at all costs. But it would help if the new person knew (by the example of the unsuccessful employee) what *not* to do.

The New Position

Moving into a newly created job, with no previous incumbent, is a totally different story, of course.

In this instance, the new employee must learn about the position from the manager who has created the job in the first place. Here is where your Top Performer will shine. If you, as the manager, can define the end results that are required in the new position, a new and results-oriented employee will quickly work out what the job is, and begin to get on with it.

If the new employee is not a totally competent high flyer, the manager will need to spend some time making sure they understand what the position is about. The manager will need to do a thorough job of creating a clear and concise Job Description.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are a big thing these days. Having valid descriptions for every position in a company is one of the quality certification requirements. Even small companies are putting more focus on writing job descriptions today.

See the related article — “How to Write Job Descriptions” — for a full explanation on how to write Job Descriptions. Go to www.uman.com.au and then click on “Employer Articles”.

A job, or “position”, description is certainly a valuable document. It will help a new employee get a good grasp of what is required. But if that is all the new person has to go on, *they are missing some vital information*.

Let’s look at an example of what we mean here.

Suppose you are promoting a Sales Person in Victoria to Sales Manager in Queensland. This person is being promoted because they have achieved outstanding results as a Sales Rep. So now you have to hire a new Sales Person in Victoria to fill the gap in the team.

Obviously, it will be of tremendous help to the new person if they know *how and why* the promoted Sales Rep was able to be so successful.

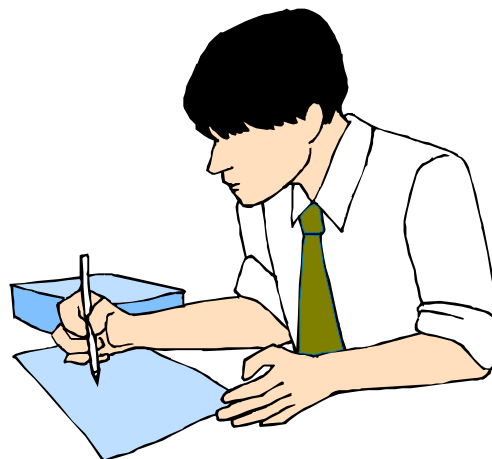
But a “Job Description” does not tell them that. It tells them what the job consists of and what they are supposed to achieve. But it does not tell them precisely *how* the previous successful person was able to be so effective.

Of course, a part of the success could be attributed to that previous person’s abilities, knowledge, approach and style. But there will also be many tips, tricks and techniques that the new person could learn from the departing Rep. These are the things that can greatly aid their achieving a decent productivity level as rapidly as possible.

How do you get this valuable information into the hands of the new Rep? The answer is a “Job Write-Up”.

Job Write-Up

This only applies to positions that were previously held by another; not to newly created positions.



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And this is not something written by the manager of the group – listing the goals, procedures, areas of responsibility and accountability.

No. **A Job Write-Up is done by the departing employee.**

It goes into detail on the peculiarities of the job. It covers those things that can only be learned by **doing** the job.

This is **highly practical** stuff. For example, the successful Sales Rep may have found:-

1. **An effective way to arrange his sales kit, so as to get the sales message across more easily.**
2. **That the best time to catch the Managing Director of a certain large client is to call him before 8:00AM.**
3. **A workable strategy for organising the daily calls, so as to maximise the time.**

You can see that these are all things that are **peculiar to that particular job**, but are not things that are normally included in a regular Job Description. These are also things that **only the departing employee can document**, which brings us to the next point.

Always Get A Job Write-Up

When someone is moved from one position in your company to another, always get them to do a Job Write-Up.

This applies regardless of whether they were successful or not.

If the incoming person is not given the opportunity to understand all the finer points and specific bits of data that are peculiar to that job, they will take much longer to get up to speed.

And if the outgoing person has made a mess of the job, the newcomer has a list of what **didn't** work.

How to do a Job Write-Up

A Job Write-Up can be as complex as a detailed report on the exact, up-to-date status of all the major projects that are currently running.

Or, it could simply be a brief list of some of the more important things that the new person should know about.

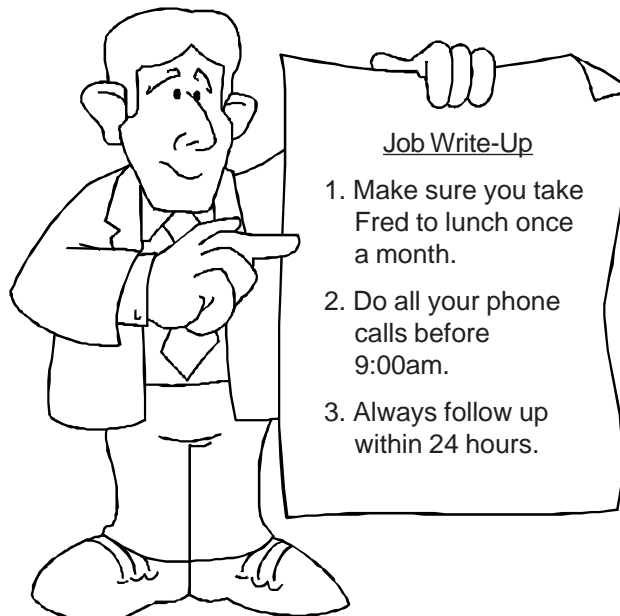
Even if the outgoing employee is being dismissed, they should be encouraged to write up some sort of summary of the important things that are happening in their job

and the way they performed the various activities.

They will actually feel better about leaving when they do this.

The crux of the Job Write-Up is that it should make it easier for the new person to step into the shoes of the employee who is leaving. The test is:-

Does the Job Write-Up enable a new person to step in and begin operating with some degree of effectiveness?



Summary

In summary, if you want your new employees to have a flying start, ensure that they have:-

- **A buddy.**
- **A clear idea of the end results required of the job.**
- **A Job Description.**
- **A Job Write-Up done by the outgoing employee.**

With each of the above things in place, the new employee will have a much better chance of rapidly becoming productive. You don't want him to look like this, two months into the job...

