

2016

Integrating New Employees to the Workplace

Center for Learning & Organizational
Development

hr.oregonstate.edu/training

3/28/2016



Integrating New Employees to the Workplace

Significant time, energy and resources are dedicated to recruiting and selecting faculty and staff to OSU. Once a person is selected, integrating the person into the workplace is just as important. How well employees are integrated directly affects how quickly they'll be able to contribute. In the larger picture, it also impacts the organization's overall retention rate.

First impressions matter, especially for new employees. Research indicates that, in the first year, new employees make the decision whether to stay or leave. Subconsciously a new employee is assessing how well the organization meets the expectations promised during the recruitment phase. The assessment equates to the continuum:

The ideas in this handbook will emphasize new employee orientation and assimilation as an extension of the hiring process.

A number of tools and ideas will be offered so that you can customize what you do for your unit.

What did I get myself into?

I know I made the right choice.



Research also suggests that many organizations treat the recruitment and selection process as a separate activity from that which brings the new employee on board.

A good place to begin thinking about the orientation process is with you.

Exercise: Reflect on your experience(s) entering a new job. What do you recall that went well and stood out for you that your supervisor, co-workers or the organization did?

What didn't go well or what didn't happen that you wish your supervisor, co-workers or organization would have done?

Having reflected on your own experience, make a list of options that you may want to consider as part of an orientation and integration effort within your unit. What have you experienced, seen or heard from others and which represent the potential activities or things that you could do?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| A. _____ | E. _____ |
| B. _____ | F. _____ |
| C. _____ | G. _____ |
| D. _____ | H. _____ |

Consider: What Employees Want in a Job

The most recent research of new employees by the Gallup Organization finds that what is important to new employees is:

- Good rapport and trust between the immediate supervisor and the employee
- Opportunities to use talents, skills and abilities
- Job security
- Compensation/pay
- Reliable and meaningful communication between the employees and supervisor

Beyond the basics, employees want these items:

- On-the-job training/professional growth
- A competent supervisor
- Meaningful work that contributes to the organization's mission
- Clear expectations of the job
- Accountability- high standards across the unit
- Recognition and appreciation

Exercise: As you consider this list, what additional ideas would you incorporate into an orientation and integration plan for new faculty or staff?

The Tangible and Intangible Costs of Unsuccessful Integration

The costs of an unsuccessful integration are high. These costs impact the unit and often extend beyond the unit in a form of poor service and the unit's reputation. When an unsuccessful integration disrupts the unit, it can take years for the group to recover.

The Cost of Turnover

A rough equation used to determine replacement cost is 1.5 x salary annualized. Organizational impact is high. To illustrate, assume an organization of 3,500 employees with an average annual salary of \$60,000. Organizational costs at different turnover rates are:

10%	350 employees x \$60,000 x 1.5 = \$31,500,000
5%	175 employees x \$60,000 x 1.5 = \$15,750,000
1%	35 employees x \$60,000 x 1.5 = \$3,150,000

Other direct or indirect costs include:

- Redistributing the workload and lost productivity
- Added stress and overwhelm
- Repairing any disrupt created by conflict and misunderstandings
- Reestablishing a healthy work environment if disrupted
- The time, energy and resources to conduct a new search
- The time, energy and resources to training and assimilate a new person
- The impact on morale
- Reestablishing trust of management

A Three-Tiered Approach to Successful Orientation

Given the unique structure of OSU, a three-tiered approach is a practical method for assimilating new employees. This tiered process includes these levels:

1. Programs and support at the institutional level.
2. Activities at the department and college levels.
3. Supervisor support, assimilation and training.

The first level represents those activities provided by central administration that include supporting departments and processes. Departments may include, but are not limited to, Employee Benefits, Business Centers, the Office of Human Resources, Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, and etc. Additional supporting units include OSU Computing Services, Telecomm, OSU ID Center, Ombuds Office, and more.

The second level integrates the new employee with coworkers, mentors, organizational culture, and unit processes and procedures. When the employee successfully integrates at this level, they

It is in the best of the manager to monitor acceptance of the employee and be proactive.

Employees leave mostly because of the supervisor. Salary is not usually the factor for why employees leave.

become part of the units' community. If an employee is not accepted, they can become an "outsider." The more quickly the employee is accepted and understands the culture and processes of the unit, even things such as social norms. The more quickly the employee is accepted and understands how the unit functions, the more productive he or she will be.

The third area is what occurs at the supervisor level. Developing an effective working relationship between the supervisor and manager is critical. Research shows that supervisors contribute up to 75% of the reasons employees leave. An effective supervisor/employee relationship can be established by putting the following concepts into practice to engage the employee:

1. Discussing workplace issues that occur on a regular basis.
2. Providing meaningful and challenging work that clearly contributes to the organization. People want to make a difference.
3. Encouraging positive reinforcement through recognition of good performance. Share the impact and contributions of the employee's work to the progress of the organization.
4. Committing to the personal and professional growth of the employee.
5. Allowing a degree of autonomy, ownership and control by the employee.

All three levels are important and affect productivity and retention.

Tier 1: Orientation at the Institutional Level

This listing is not-all inclusive, but represents some of the activities in place to help employees assimilate to OSU. Activities include:

Business Center - Human Resources (<http://hr.oregonstate.edu/my-business-center>)

Generally, new employees' first contact will be with their business center. Business centers have orientation programs in place for new employees. For a listing of business centers and what departments and colleges they serve, click the above link. New employees are encouraged to contact their business center for questions regarding their new hire materials.

Inside OSU (<http://hr.oregonstate.edu/inside-osu>)

This website is designed to help new employees find resources to assist them with helpful resources. Information includes:

- Understanding the "big picture" of OSU.
- Health and retirement benefits overview and enrollment.
- Schedule of orientation and training sessions.

- Life balance at OSU resources.
- Information about the surrounding community.

Training Programs

Relative to the new employee's position, safety, Banner computing systems, Canvas (learning management system), Cayuse, manager and supervisor training, and more training programs are available.

For a listing of many of the training resources and organizations that provide training at OSU, visit <http://hr.oregonstate.edu/training/osu-learning-opportunities>.

Support Units

This would include OSU Computing Services, Telecommunications, the Key Shop, Parking Services the OSU ID Center and more. A new hire triggers some of these events to occur and the new employee will receive notice. For others, the new employee's department or business center will direct them.

New Classified Employee Checklist (exhibit attached)

Classified employees, by nature of their work, will complete with their supervisor a New Classified Employee Checklist. This checklist addresses many of the items that the new employee and supervisor need to pay attention to in the onboarding process.

Tier 2: Orientation at the Unit/College Level

The size of units and colleges vary widely, so orientation activities within the tier may be different for each, and many have their own way of doing things when assimilating a new employee. The following ideas are activities you may put into place:

1. Introductions and meetings with others

Spending time together to get to know co-workers and colleagues will speed up the learning curve. While this is common practice, understand that it can also be overwhelming for the new employee to get quick introductions to many people. Consider having the new employee schedule 15 or so minutes with each co-worker to better understand what they do.

2. Tour of the unit/department/college

Including a tour of the department or college, accompanied by a colleague, will familiarize the new employee with the surroundings and larger mission of your workplace. This may be a good place to discuss common practices or "the rules of the road (this is how we do things around here)" to help the employee understand how the culture works, and also outline the employee's expected behavior that defines common practices.

3. Support network

Connecting the new employee with others is the first step in building a network of relationships. Developing a support system that includes you as the supervisor, co-

workers and colleagues is critical to success. This support network might extend to organizations, committees or learning groups across campus or outside of campus.

4. A mentor or buddy

A mentor (in addition to the supervisor) who understands your office and OSU can provide a valuable learning experience for the new employee. This gives the employee a colleague's perspective with opportunity to ask questions and figure out the inner workings of the unit.

“Rules of the Road” (What’s Important around Here?)

Each organization has its own attitudes and beliefs about what is important and what the requirements are for success. These attitudes and beliefs are based on certain values, and these values become the basis for how to “be” in the organization. It also shapes the culture, one with rites and rituals that tells people what is expected of them, how to relate to others and where they stand among their peers and the unit.

In some organizations, the rules are explicit; in others, they are ambiguous or subtle. Also, cultural differences among people may not have the subtle rules be obvious. Well-meaning supervisors and co-workers may not share how things are done because they may assume that the new employee already knows or they forget how it was as a new employee to know these things. Examples of what to do are below:

Rules of the Road List of Ideas:

1. Office etiquette.
2. Who, how and when people socialize.
3. Performance recognition and appreciation.
4. Appropriate celebrations (do we celebrate birthdays, completion of projects, and etc.?)
5. Who to consult on work projects.
6. Dress code.
7. Language standards.
8. Memo and report formats.
9. Communication methods.
10. Office décor.
11. Emergency preparedness.

Tier 3: Supervisor Level

This level is most important to the success of the employee. Supervisors who work closely with employees when welcoming and assimilating them develop a much better connection. Consider these ideas in your conversations with new employees:

1. Review the employee’s position description

- a. Provide the context of the position.
- b. Share how the position fits in with other positions in the unit.
- c. Share the “big picture” view you have for the position.

- d. Discuss the major job duties.

2. Discuss expectations and standards

- a. This provides measureable standards that build from the major duties, and a basis for on-going communication regarding performance.
- b. It brings major duties down to a practical level.
- c. It helps the employee understand when a job is well done or needs improvement.

3. Establish regular meetings to discuss performance (both positive and negative), progress made, and other work items.

- a. "Regular" is defined by you and the employee. In some positions, this means daily; in others it means weekly. This will be less frequent as the employee becomes more familiar with the job.
- b. This is a primary tool to build the relationship and set the pattern for how you will communicate with each other.

4. Discuss and agree on how feedback will be given.

- a. Feedback on performance should be expected and it is important for the employee to know how well they are doing.
- b. Many managers and supervisors find it difficult to give constructive feedback even though they understand it is important.
- c. Discussing a process on how to give and receive feedback is easier to do when you're not working on top of any issues.
- d. It begins with two simple questions:

Tell me what works for you with respect to giving and receiving feedback.

Tell me what doesn't work.

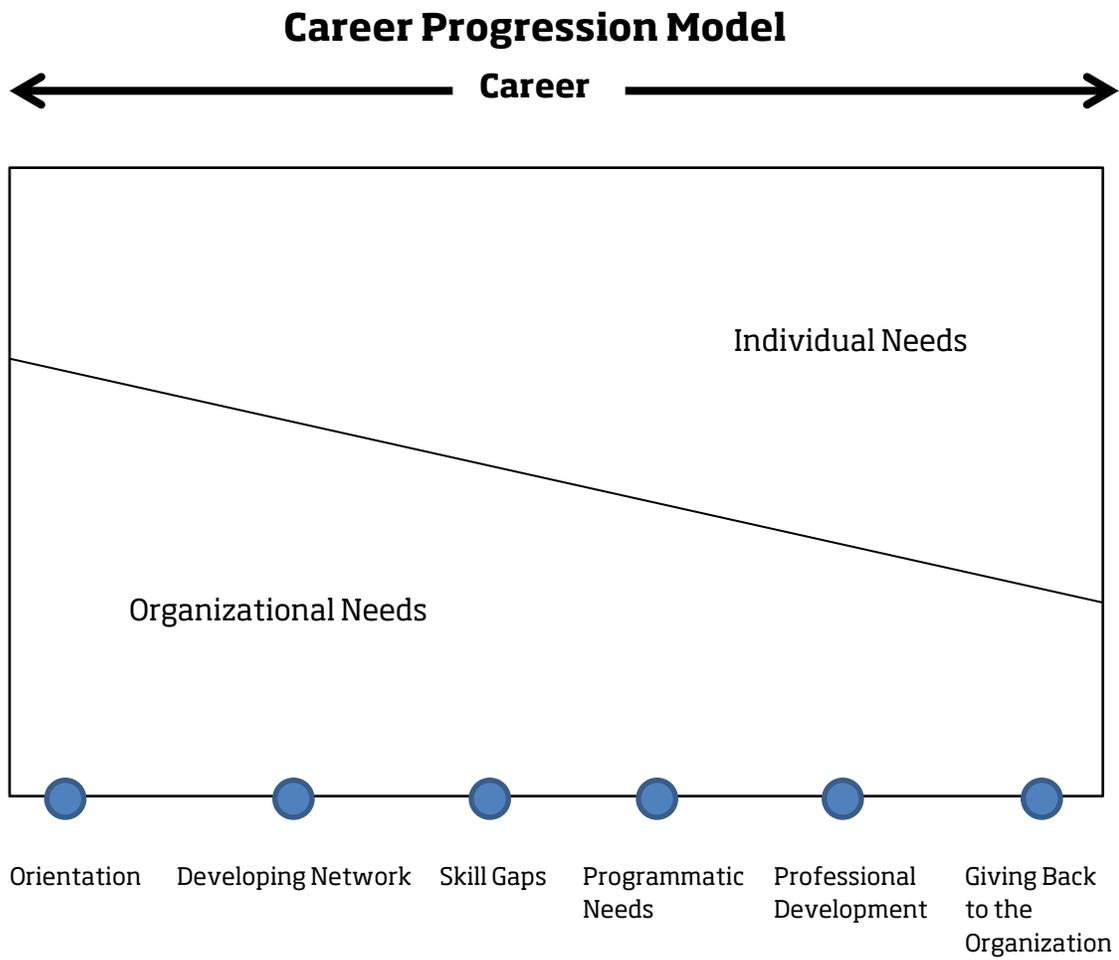
From these two answers, make some basic agreements with each other.

5. Develop a working agreement for how to disagree and raise dissenting viewpoints

By the nature of hierarchies, power differentials automatically exist. Unless there is agreement and understanding for how an employee in a lower position can raise or is encouraged to bring forward opposing viewpoints, the employee is likely to opt for silence. This hinders their ability to feel valued.

6. Discuss career progression opportunities.

Consider following the "Career Progression Model" with respect to balancing individual and organizational needs.



Five Questions You Can Ask That Contribute to a Good Working Relationship

1. What is the best way to manage you?

This gets at style preferences and allows the person to share what works and what they get frustrated by. It also allows them to share what motivates them.

2. What is the best way to communicate with you?

This allows you to discuss preferences for in-person, phone, or e-mail. It allows you to discuss preferences around open door policy, scheduled meetings, and what and how to share information.

3. How often would you like to meet?

This allows you to close the expectations gap for what the employee and supervisor expect. Initially you may agree to meet more frequently, and this may change as the employee learns and becomes competent in the various duties of the position.

4. What challenges you?

This helps you to identify employees' strengths and talents, and the types and levels of tasks they can take on. Related questions might be, "Why did you accept this job and what were the reasons you left your previous two jobs?"

5. As part of your orientation and assimilation, what would you like to learn?

This will help you manage expectations and understand what you've missed in the integration plan.

Exercise: Indicators of Work Group Acceptance or Rejection of a New Employee

ACCEPTANCE SIGNALS	WARNING SIGNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team members remain friendly with the new employee after the honeymoon period is over.• New employee's good ideas are accepted with enthusiasm.• New employee's poor ideas are rejected with feedback as to why they won't work.• Other employees/team members see information and/or ideas from the new employee.• New employee is included in organizational functions as appropriate.• Input is appropriate, relevant and timely.• Employee is seen as "one of us."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team members avoid new employee whenever possible.• Ideas are accepted or rejected without evaluation.• Team members support poor ideas to set up the new employee for failure.• No one seeks input from the new employee. His/her ideas and opinions are not valued.• New employee is left out of organizational functions.• Input is inappropriate, premature or too late.• Employee is seen as an outsider.

Now, please reflect on the following observations for a new employee in your unit.

New employee: _____

1. What specific behaviors are you noticing or observing in the new employee?
2. What are you hearing from other employees or colleagues?
3. What is the new employee saying?

Conclusion/Summary Points

With tangible and intangible costs so high, it makes sense to invest the time and energy into welcoming and integrating a new employee.

1. Helping a new employee build effective relationships within and outside your unit is critical to their success.
2. Connecting the new employee to the internal and external resources of your unit and the institution will enable them to do their job better.
3. Establishing regular, on-going, and straight forward communication on how well they are doing their job and in building their network allows you to reinforce what is going well and help make corrections while they are minor concerns.

By implementing an internal unit/department integration plan, you increase the likelihood of the employee succeeding and speed up their ability to contribute and be productive.