



PCPS BRIEF

November PCPS Brief

The Right Start: Welcoming New Hires into the Firm

The PCPS Human Capital Center in the PCPS Firm Practice Center contains a wide range of practical information and resources that PCPS members can use to improve their chances of identifying and holding on to the most talented staff members. This month's Brief is based on "The Assimilation Process and Orientation Program," a tool in the Center's Orientation/Assimilation section. The material for this section is based on original content provided by RanOne and its People Development System and was edited by the PCPS team at the AICPA. Visit the PCPS Human Capital Center at www.aicpa.org/pcps, under "Resources."

Finding and retaining the best people is a critical issue for firms of all sizes. A new staff member's first impression of the firm is an important introduction and welcome to the practice, so his or her experience on the first day should be a positive one. New hires are likely arriving full of enthusiasm, energy and high expectations. A productive and well-organized orientation can confirm their expectations and set the stage for a rewarding future with you.

A firm's orientation and assimilation program will vary based on firm size and other factors. However, all practices should have some procedures in place because a formal approach means that the new team member:

- Becomes productive in a short time.
- Is more likely to stay with the firm.
- Develops a positive impression of the firm.
- Feels valued within the firm.
- Is less likely to suffer initial stress and anxiety.
- Feels encouraged to succeed.
- Senses that they can use their skills and contribute to the firm.
- Feels as though they can ask questions and that someone is listening.
- Receives the same consistent training and firm messages as other new hires.

The formality of an orientation program may depend on the firm's size and — to some extent — its culture. However, all firms can use some of the following steps to better integrate promising new hires into the practice:

Welcome them in advance. It's a nice touch to send new hires a letter from the managing partner as soon as they are hired that welcomes them to the firm, confirms where and when they should arrive and offers any other advice or information they should know before their first day.

Introduce them to people and processes. New staff members should be acquainted with all the people they'll be working with so that they feel like part of the team. Remember, too, to show them around the office and give them a rundown on the facilities, working hours, security measures and other details of day-to-day office life. Be sure that someone spends enough time with new staff to ensure they have a working knowledge of your technology and all office systems and procedures.

Involve the staff. Your existing team members all have a role to play in making their new co-worker feel welcome and helping them to settle into the office environment. As a result, consider asking current staff members to provide input on your orientation process and to volunteer to take part in it. This will demonstrate that you value their opinions and participation and the new recruit will appreciate getting to know his or her co-workers.

Assign a buddy. Consider asking an existing staff member to be the new person's buddy. This should be someone at the same career level or maybe someone from the same college who will make an extra effort to welcome the new hire. Buddies might:

- Call the new hire before their start date to introduce themselves.
- Go to lunch with him or her on the first day.
- Be available when the new hire needs help.
- Follow up with the new hire during the first week, second week, first month and first three months.
- Introduce him or her to at least five people within the firm.

Get new staff started right away. Give new people a manageable assignment on their first day so that they feel immediately engaged and productive.

Be consistent with information and messages. Every firm has its own procedures, workflow arrangements, review processes and other practices with which all staff should be familiar. New staff will be more productive and more confident and assimilated if they are not forced to make guesses about your expectations and procedures.

Tell them who you are and what you stand for. Orientation is a great time to summarize for new hires your firm's mission and core beliefs, the services you offer, the clients you serve and what sets you apart from other practices. Take this opportunity to

inspire your new team members and make them proud to be a part of your firm.

Distribute the same set of written material to all new hires. The PCPS Human Capital Center contains a wealth of materials that firms can use or adapt, including an Orientation Agenda, Orientation Guidance for Presentation or Event Leaders and Welcome Talking Points. They can be found in the Assimilation Checklists and Agendas Tools document.

Make the program interactive because orientation consists of a great deal of dry material. Whenever possible, let them ask questions, test out your technology and get to know your facilities.

Feed them! It's a nice welcome to offer a light breakfast and a lunch — with other staff members if possible — on the first day.

Give them an orientation gift, such as a mug, pen/pencil set, portfolio or business card holder with your firm logo. The little things go a long way in welcoming the new hire and making him or her feel a part of your team.

Practical Benefits

A well-executed orientation and assimilation program delivers many practical benefits, chief among them more confident, productive staff members who are more likely to remain with the firm because they feel they belong. Visit the PCPS Human Capital Center for more information on orientation and many other aspects of staffing.

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