

## Basic Employee Orientation and Onboarding Checklist

In most businesses, the hiring of new employees is an ordinary occurrence. There should be no more “fuss” made over a person with disabilities than over any other newcomer. In fact, making an inappropriate fuss could make a new hire feel very uncomfortable and could undermine efforts to provide a respectful welcome. Providing a comfortable and supportive introduction is key to ensuring successful onboarding for all employees.

Compare your company to a ship embarking on a journey. The crew must be prepared, the equipment must be in good working order, and the itinerary must be carefully planned before any passengers come on board. Similarly, your company should ensure that all staff members are informed, accommodations are in place, and an onboarding plan is available.

**HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS for successful orientation and onboarding of new employees. (All of these suggestions are tested HR best practices.)**

### BEFORE THE NEW EMPLOYEE BEGINS WORK:



- Reach out to your local service provider for additional assistance if needed.
- Talk to your staff about the new employee’s first day on the job.
- Learn how to greet, communicate and interact with people in non-traditional ways (e.g., interacting with people who are blind, who use a wheelchair or who are autistic.) Read more in Tool #5: Greeting a Candidate with a Disability.
- Provide co-workers with awareness training if there is a need to highlight specialized disability support (e.g., if the new employee has a guide dog or mobility issues).
- Prepare all documentation, including support agreements with local service providers, company policies, operating procedures, safety procedures, emergency instructions, employment contracts, job descriptions, employee information sheets and benefit packages. **MAKE SURE THE INFORMATION FOR EACH NEW EMPLOYEE IS IN A FORMAT APPROPRIATE TO HIS OR HER DISABILITY AS REQUIRED.**
- Ensure that any previously discussed accommodations are in place and that all equipment to be used by the new employee is in place and adequate.
- Consider identifying a support person, mentor or go-to person for the new employee.

**NOTE:** The typical probationary period for new employees begins once appropriate accommodations have been made.

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Gilbride, D.; Stensrud, R.; Vandergoot, D.; Golden, K. Identification of the characteristics of work environments and employers open to hiring and accommodating people with disabilities. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, Spring 2003, p. 130. Extracted from the website of the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS).



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### FIRST DAY ON THE JOB:



- Provide orientation information in a suitable format for the person with a disability. This may mean written, audio, large text or Braille materials, or simpler language for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- Explain and show where the lunchroom, breakroom, restrooms and supply rooms are located.
- Introduce the new employee to his or her go-to person who will then explain the “management structure” and will serve as the first point of contact for any work-related questions.
- Introduce the new employee to colleagues, suppliers and customers.
- Have someone accompany the new employee during breaks and lunch.

### Does your workplace use Employee Support Groups [ESGs]?

ESGs are groups of employees who join together in the workplace based on shared characteristics or life experiences. ESGs are generally used to provide support, enhance career development and contribute to personal development.

Nowadays, ESGs have expanded to include “interest groups” focusing on specific activities such as job responsibilities, environmental advocacy, community service, volunteerism and workplace wellness. ESGs provide insightful information for all employees. (Read more in Tool #7: Maintaining Successful Employment.)

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### WITHIN 30 DAYS ON THE JOB :



(read more in Tool #7: Maintaining Successful Employment]

- Assess the overall teamwork of the work unit, and decide whether any intervention is needed. Obtain feedback from co-workers.
- Confirm whether job accommodations continue to be appropriate, as applicable.

### Understanding the importance of accommodations

The most efficient and appropriate accommodations are those that promote inclusion and overcome initial employment barriers. Accommodations benefit the entire workplace and enhance the comfort of all employees, including those with disabilities.

Accommodations may be as straightforward as modifying employment conditions, making minor workplace adjustments or supplying equipment designed to assist with job duties. In all cases, accommodations must fully respect each individual's right to privacy, autonomy and proper support.

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