

Factsheet – Onboarding

Why It Matters

Leaving a new employee to make their own way in your business, finding things out by chance as they go along, is inviting disaster. Left to their own devices, it is likely that your new team member will make mistakes, not do their job as well as they should, and feel dissatisfied with their new workplace. A planned onboarding process covering the new team member's first six months will help avoid a negative experience and integrate them as quickly and painlessly as practicable.

The Basics

Onboarding is the process of bringing a new employee into your business, introducing them to all the people, policies, and practices they need to do their job. Early on, the performance and behaviour standards are set. This allows the new team member's performance to be reviewed and a decision made about their ongoing employment before six months is up.

The Detail

A well thought out onboarding process is key to integrating a new team member, so they can feel welcomed and be a productive and contributing part of your business. Typically onboarding includes:

- **The Paperwork:** Make sure your new team member has completed all the necessary paperwork before they start work. This includes:
 - Having the team member signing their offer, or contract of employment and giving you a copy. There should **always** be a document that records the offer and acceptance of employment and the terms. Relying only on verbal offers of employment is not good business practice.
 - Completed Tax Declaration Form.
 - Completed Superannuation Standard Choice Form.
 - Completed Employee Details Form and Payroll Details Form.

- ☛ **Induction:** Have a planned and documented induction process that starts on the new employee's first day and is completed as soon as possible. An induction process can vary depending on the job the new team member performs and should be documented. Usually inductions cover things like:
- Having someone greet the new employee and be responsible for their induction. This is normally the team member's supervisor.
 - Instruction on entry and exit for the workplace, including lights, alarm system, fire extinguishers, evacuation procedure, emergency exits, and muster station.
 - Checking all sign-on paperwork has been completed and collected.
 - Reporting to Work – Where and when to turn up, and timekeeping requirements.
 - Tour of the premises, pointing out road access, parking, meal rooms, toilets, showers, emergency exits, evacuation routes and muster stations, and smoking areas.
 - Introductions to:
 - Key staff and contacts
 - Buddy and team mates
 - Safety Briefings on:
 - Issue personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Chain of Responsibility
 - Fatigue Management System & Work Diary
 - Speeding
 - Mass & Dimension Limitations
 - Load Restraint
 - Safety Management System
 - Hazard & Incident Reporting
 - Company Safety Rules
 - Hazardous & Dangerous Materials
 - Work Standards Briefings:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Duties & Responsibilities
 - Wages & Conditions of Employment
 - Performance Reviews
 - Disciplinary Procedures

‣ Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying

- Equipment Familiarisation
- Job Familiarisation

- ☛ **Buddy:** A buddy is a workplace mentor assigned to a new team member for the first few months after they start to help them understand their new workplace quickly. The buddy is not the new employee's supervisor and the new employee does not report to the buddy. The choice of buddy is important. It should be some one that is willing to take the role on, knows the way your business works, and models the values and behaviour you want from all employees.
- ☛ **Training Needs:** Your business must make sure that all its employees are competent to do the work required of them. Soon after the new employee starts, their supervisor should sit down with the new employee and compare their skills and qualifications to those needed to perform their job. If any gaps are identified, a plan needs to be developed about how these can be closed. This could mean on-the-job or formal training.
- ☛ **Performance & Behaviour:** It is important for a new employee to have your business's standards of performance and behaviour explained to them from the beginning of their employment. This way they will know what is expected of them from the start and reduce the chance of problems due to ignorance.
- ☛ **Review:** All new employees should have their performance and progress reviewed at least once formally during the first six months of employment. The review should assess how closely they match your standards and expectations, and what improvement is required to be the employee you need.
- ☛ **Probation & Minimum Employment Period:** There are two important periods of time that can start with a new employee.
 - Probation: This is a pre-set period during which the new employee and you assess their suitability for the new job. Probationary periods are not automatic or compulsory. The new employee needs to be told of the probationary period when offered the job. The length of the probation period should depend on the complexity of the job and how long it would reasonably take to be sure they are suitable. Between three and six months is a common duration. A new team member should have their performance reviewed during the probationary

period. A probationary period can be extended if you believe the new employee needs more time to get up to speed and their contract of employment provides for extensions.

- **Minimum Employment Period:** The *Fair Work Act 2009* sets a minimum employment period for all employees. Despite the name, this has nothing to do with compelling you to employ someone for any length of time. Instead, it means that an employee that has their employment terminated during the minimum employment period cannot make an unfair dismissal application. The minimum employment period for a small business (less than 15 employees) is 12 months and for other employers it is six months.

• **Ongoing Employment:**

It is important to use the reviews(s) of a new team member's employment during the first six months to decide whether their employment should be continued. The employee should be told this will happen before they start with you. If there are any performance issues the employee should be made aware of them and given a chance to explain their side of the story and to improve before any decision is made to dismiss them.

Need More

NatRoad's advisers have substantial experience in recruitment, onboarding, and general human resource management. For more information and advice about onboarding issues, contact a NatRoad adviser on (02) 965 3000 or info@natroad.com.au.