



5 Do's and Don'ts of Staff Training

BY ALANNA TURCO

Congratulations, you've hired a new team member! But did you know that one in four employees quit in their first year due to poor training or a lack of training? Imagine the time, cost and impact on morale that this continuous employee turnover causes.

Here is a list of actions that every manager should *always* do and *never* do during the training process.

DO

1 Do...create a detailed training schedule. This should be created prior to your employee's start date. Break the schedule down by day, time, topic and person responsible for delivering the training. For example: Monday 9:00–9:30 is tour/

introductions with Susan; 9:30–10:30 is shadow at front desk; and so on. A detailed schedule ensures that all key areas are covered. It also lets you and the organization make a great first impression and helps employees feel more secure in their new job. The overall length of the training will depend on the complexity of the position.

2 Do...break training into chunks. Learning a new job can be overwhelming, and studies show that chunking down training (rather than providing an "information dump") makes information easier to commit to memory. For example, with a receptionist you might start with the phone greeting rather than starting with everything about handling phone calls and emails.

3 Do...leverage your team's strengths. Involve your team in

training the new employee. Select employees who excel in specific skills. This approach lets the new employee learn from the best and also provides great development and team building opportunities for current employees.

4 Do...incorporate practise into all training. When an employee is brand new, it's best to have them practise on you and fellow staff members rather than with members. Build role playing and practise scenarios into your training schedule. These will increase the new employees' confidence and ensure that they are delivering the required level of service and experience.

5 Do...assign a mentor. You can tell new employees 100 times that you have an open door policy and that you are always available to help. But the reality is that most of them won't feel comfortable coming to you. A designated buddy who they can turn to (in addition to you) can be a great resource.

DON'T

1 Don't...cram everything into a short time frame. Training is more effective if delivered in a manageable steady stream.

2 Don't...assume they know how to do the job and don't need training. Even if your new employee has been hired for a role they have held elsewhere, there is still much to learn. Ensure they understand your facility's culture and philosophy, procedures, policies and expectations of the job and the company.

3 Don't...assume that they fully understand and have absorbed everything you have taught them. Throughout the training process ask the employee to feed back to you their understanding of what they have learned, and conduct mini role plays. Provide resources and tools to help them. This ensures that everyone is on the same page.

4 Don't...spontaneously have the new employee shadow someone who has not planned for it. Job shadowing can be an extremely effective way of training, but it can backfire if the new employee shadows an employee who is not happy about it. Be courteous, and be sure it is a good time for your long term employee to help out.

5 Don't...jump to discipline if the new employee doesn't immediately perform up to the expected standard. People rarely perform new tasks perfectly right away. In the early days, praise all successes and support your new employees with supportive coaching and regular helpful feedback. FBC

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