

The ultimate employee onboarding and induction guide



Introduction

If there's one thing I've learnt in my career, it's that people are at the core of every business.

Your team believes in your mission and work tirelessly to help bring your vision to life. They're the ones who continually show up for you and are always willing to go the extra mile. They're the cogs in your well-oiled business machine and let's face it – without them, you wouldn't be where you are today.

But, we all know that growing a business is hard, and finding the right people to help grow your business is even harder.

So when you've found exceptional talent for your business and you're ready to begin the onboarding process, how can you make their first impression a great one? How can you welcome them into the business in the best possible way? How can you give them an onboarding and induction experience

they'll remember for all the right reasons?

Like I said before, it's your people who have the ability to make or break a company. The people who determine the success of your business and believe in your mission just as much as you do.

Later, when I started running my own businesses I was able to put what I'd learnt along the way into effect.

I made sure to hire people that not only knew what they were doing, but who I could also have an honest working relationship with.

If your employees are engaged and excited to get stuck in from day one, your business will thank you. That's why we wrote this guide to help you do just that. Read it, share it and let us know your thoughts – we're always up for a chat.



Ben Thompson

Chief Executive Officer and
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Onboarding & Induction

When a new employee starts it can be easy to let them rush into things. However, for their long-term success within the company, we'd advise against this. Before they start you'll need to ensure that their contract, policies and paperwork is all up to scratch. Then when they do start, there should be a proper induction plan in place to ease them into the business.



Usually, hiring new staff comes with a mountain of onboarding paperwork. However, that doesn't mean your new starter's first day should be all about filling in forms, dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

Far from it. There are much better ways to get your new hire off to a great start. Before we run through the onboarding checklist there are a few things you need to consider when it comes to making sure the onboarding process is the best experience possible for new employees.

Workplace culture within onboarding

Employees are more likely to invest themselves personally in a company's success if they feel aligned with the business. This starts by understanding the culture. It's essential to get your new employees involved in your company's culture on day one. The best way to do this is for new starters to spend time with employees from different areas of the business with various levels of seniority.

Likewise, implementing a buddy system ensures your new starter has someone to talk to, which is so important in the first nerve-wracking weeks of a new job.

Mission, vision and goals

If you want your new starter to embody the company's mission, vision and values, then you need to share this as part of your onboarding process and show them where the business is headed. It's equally important for everyone to understand their own goals and how they relate to the big picture. Communicating the goals of their role during the onboarding process will help new hires focus their efforts towards achieving them.

Onboarding new employees

Getting to know all the new faces and personalities in a business can seem daunting at first. Your role is to help new employees settle into their new team and get to know the clients, colleagues, managers, etc. they will work with so that they become recognised and integrate naturally.

Employee onboarding is a process

If you're going to ace first impressions, you need to start your onboarding process well before day one. Beyond the onboarding pack, it's important to think about how you're going to immerse your new starters into your company culture and instill in them the knowledge and behaviours that will lead to their long-term success.

Here's some practical ideas to help you create an onboarding process that helps your new employees get off to a flying start.



Before an employee's first day:

Work Space

- ☐ Prepare your new employee's work area and office space and equip it with supplies
- ☐ Order appropriate access keys/security cards and make sure they work
- ☐ Order business cards, if applicable
- ☐ Arrange for parking, if required
- ☐ Send out any equipment and technology for remote employees via a courier
- ☐ Give them details about any remote working allowances

Technology Access

- ☐ Order technology equipment (computer, iPad, phone) and software
- ☐ Set up their system in advance and assign them to a printer
- ☐ Arrange for access to common drives
- ☐ Add their name to relevant email lists

General Communications

- ☐ Share the news about the new starter with everyone in the business so everyone's ready for their introduction. It's a good idea to share something personal about your new hire such as their love of coffee or their favourite footy team. In this way, other employees have something they can use to break the ice with them when they meet
- ☐ Assign a buddy or mentor the new hire can rely on to show them the ropes and answer their questions, even show them the best place to grab lunch

First Day:

- ☐ Have a small gift waiting for them such as your company t-shirt, mug or keychain
- ☐ Give them a tour of the office or workplace and introduce them to key team members
- ☐ If you haven't already given them an onboarding pack before they started, make sure you present it on their first day, and give them time to complete the paperwork over the week ahead
- ☐ Meet with them and their manager to explain the expectations of their role. The new starter needs to know what they're supposed to be doing, and how that contributes to the company bottom-line
- ☐ Have their manager assign any simple tasks
- ☐ Take them out for lunch with their manager and buddy or mentor

First Week:

- ☐ Introduce them to employees from different areas of the business and have them shadow them so they can experience the business from many different aspects.
- ☐ Meet to check they've signed the paperwork and have accessed, read, and acknowledged your company policies
- ☐ Check-in with them and their manager regarding any first tasks
- ☐ Have their manager assign them their first project

First Month:

- ☐ Hold regular check-in meetings and evaluate their progress after a month in the company
- ☐ See how they're getting along with the rest of the team and whether they're enjoying their work
- ☐ Assess and action training needs
- ☐ There you have it! An onboarding checklist to keep in your back pocket for when you have new employees starting in your business. Remember, first impressions count.

Induction Mistakes

Now, here's what NOT to do! Induction mistakes that aren't good for business.

Mistake #1. Not following up with a new starter in the lead up to their first day

So you've made the candidate a job offer, set a start date and then... radio silence. Why?

I'm not saying you need to pester the poor person everyday until they start with countdown-like announcements – but checking in a few days before their first day just to remind them of anything important they might need to bring, or giving them a run through of how the day will go might help them feel more at ease. Starting a new job can be nerve-wracking so making sure they're at-ease before they start goes a long way.

Mistake #2. Not being prepared for your employee induction

Always be prepared. If someone is coming to start a new job, it's your responsibility to make sure they have everything they need to get up and running as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

Mistake #3. Overloading your new starter with information

Don't overwhelm your new starter with too much information. This could result in them feeling disheartened and that they're not a good fit for the role. Instead of having a full-on induction day, why not try an induction week? So that your new starter has plenty of time to learn the ropes at their own pace.



Quinn's Hero Tip

Something we implemented at Employment Hero HQ is that we now start all new employees on a Wednesday. This means they have 3 days of training, induction sessions and welcome meetings that teach them everything they need to know about the business and their new role. They then have the weekend to digest it all, do some independent work if they need to and then come in fresh on the Monday ready to deep dive into their new role.



Mistake #4. Handing them a mountain of paperwork

The classic mountain of paperwork imagery that we all know and love is back... but it's still as true as ever. No new employee wants to start off their new career with a large amount of paperwork to sieve through.

Mistake #5. Impersonal experiences during employee induction

Make your new employees feel like one of the team, not just another number to the business payroll.

Mistake #6. Not introducing them to the team or wider company

You want new starters to feel at home as soon as possible, so make sure everyone knows who they are, why they are there and that they are welcomed.

Mistake #7. Assuming your new starter knows the lingo

Your team might not be using universal or industry specific language, so you shouldn't assume that your new starter knows what you're talking about.

Why not go that extra step for your new starters by creating a cheat sheet or glossary? This means that every new starter will always have something they can use as a resource to get themselves up to speed with the business lingo.

Mistake #8. Not asking for feedback

Feedback is key for any growing business, and this is the same as growing your people. Don't bombard them with feedback questionnaires on their first day. We suggest sending them a few brief questions at the end of their employee induction process and again at the end of their probation to get some honest feedback about how they found the process.

Mistake #9. Responsibilities are not clear

If the new starter finishes the induction or onboarding process without knowing the main responsibilities of their new role, something wasn't made clear to them. And that fault is on you.

Mistake #10. You stop training

Just because the induction process is over, don't stop supporting your new employee with their professional development. Make sure there's always a way for them to learn more information – whether that's about the company or specific to their job role.



Quinn's Hero Tip

At Employment Hero we get all our new starters to feel out a short and sweet bio about themselves which includes a bit more information about them, their LinkedIn profile and a quote about why they are excited to join the Employment Hero team. We then send this round to the entire business so everyone can learn a little more about our new starter.



How do you ensure employees stick around?

When you're hiring new employees, it makes sense to start them off with an initial probation period which you outline in your letter of offer or employment contract.

In this way, you can assess their suitability for the role and fit within your company in a relatively low-risk way.

Employers are on probation too

Don't think of a probation period as a "get out of jail free card". This is no one-way street. Yes, you can swiftly terminate employment during this time if your new hire does not meet expectations. But, at the same time, your new hire can just as easily use the probation period as their fast exit out of your business. Remember, you're on probation too!

How probation periods work

Many employers use probation periods of between three to six months. It's totally up to you as the employer to define the length based on your needs. During this time, either party can terminate the employment, but it's important to understand that a probation period does not give you the licence to fire an employee outside the framework of the Fair Work Act.

While on probation new employees are subject to the same conditions of employment as your other employees. You must pay them at the prescribed rate of pay as outlined in the applicable award or enterprise agreement. And they accrue and can access entitlements such as annual leave and personal/carer's leave just like everyone else.

If an employee doesn't pass their probation, you need to schedule a meeting and advise them in writing. They are still entitled to receive notice when their employment ends as per the NES or applicable award. And you must pay out any unused accumulated annual leave hours.

Where the probation period is successful, it's good practice to meet with the employee and tell them that their employment will continue beyond the probationary period. Give the employee a letter advising them of this and keep a copy of this letter on the employee's file. With Employment Hero, this process is done electronically (no paper required).

Extensions

Now and then, an employee will get to the end of the probationary period, but you still haven't made up your mind whether to offer them ongoing employment. Whenever this happens, you can extend the probation period for another few months as long as your contract of employment stipulates this. If you think this is something you'd like to introduce, make sure you state in your letter of offer that your probation period is for an initial number of months but you can extend it for an additional amount of time at your discretion.

More risk in terminating an employee

It's important to be aware that as soon as your employee clocks up six months of employment – or 12 months if your business has fewer than 15 employees – your employee is able to make an unfair dismissal claim if terminated, whether they're on probation or not.

5 tips for managing a new starter probation period

As part of your onboarding program, it's important that you or the relevant supervisor takes steps to actively manage new employees during the probation period.

1. Clearly defined expectations during a probation period

Set out performance and learning goals. By clearly managing the expectations, you provide certainty to your new employee as to what he or she needs to achieve to pass the probation period.

2. Regular meetings

Regularly check-in with your new hire to get a real sense about how they're progressing. This gives your new employee every opportunity to raise questions about the business and their role. At the same time, you get to see their attitude and personality up close which will help you make a call on whether they're a good fit with the other staff members and your company culture.

3. Real work

Sounds obvious, but if you don't give your new hire suitably challenging work during their probationary period, how can you possibly assess whether they are right for the role?

4. Mentoring

By providing a mentor you can help new employees better get used to your company's working environment. With ready access to an experienced colleague, they know who to turn to for advice and information and support. This helps improve their self-confidence and ability to meet expectations.

5. Hire or fire? Probation period end results

Before the end of the probationary period, you must make a decision as to whether you want to keep the employee or terminate their employment. If you want guidance for how to approach successful and unsuccessful probationary periods, the Fair Work Ombudsman's website has template letters that you can use.

Where you decide to terminate the employment based on unsatisfactory performance during the probationary period, you need to follow the usual steps the Fair Work Commission sets out for dismissals of this nature.



Want more HR compliance tips?

Getting help with probationary periods and doing all you can to ensure new starters pass their probationary periods with flying colours (or else weed out potential bad fits really early on), is just the tip of the HR compliance iceberg. Download our Essential Guide to HR compliance to make sure you're doing the right thing by your business.



What does Employment Hero do?

Employment hero is a complete HR management solution for small to medium businesses. We empower SMEs by providing automated solutions for employee management and engagement, payroll and employee benefits. Over 5,000 Australian businesses use Employment Hero and together we collectively manage over 200,000+ employees.

Employment Hero HR

Bring all your HR into one, easy-to-use place

With Employment Hero HR you can paperlessly onboard staff, provide induction content, conduct visa checks and performance reviews. We also help you stay compliant with built in contracts, policies and HR templates ready to go.

Employment Hero Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

Candidate management made simple

Our ATS allows you to simply create not only a new job ad in platform, but also a related, customisable hiring process. Our ATS and candidate management system enables you to post to multiple job sites with a single submission. We integrate with scores of Job boards including (but not limited to) SEEK, Indeed, Jora and many more. You can also track candidates, build a shortlist and send contracts as soon as the successful applicant has been chosen.

Payroll

Easily manage payroll and workforce planning

Employment Hero Payroll automates your manual tasks, is Single Touch Payroll (STP) compliant and helps you manage your payroll and workforce planning in one easy-to-access place.

Employee Benefits

Keep your team rewarded and engaged

We know it's hard for you to compete with the salaries, benefits and perks offered by larger employers. We want to level the playing field for small to medium sized businesses by giving you the resources to be more competitive.

Global Teams

Find and hire talent compliantly from anywhere in the world

Global Teams allows businesses of all sizes to easily hire anyone, anywhere in the world. This means SMEs can now access the best talent, wherever they choose to live. Increase efficiency and stay focused on running your business while we help you find the world's brightest talent, from over 50 different countries world wide. We also fully automate local compliance, so you can focus on your people rather than policies and paperwork.



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About Employment Hero

Employment Hero is the smarter way to manage people, payroll and productivity for SMEs with big ambitions.

Employment Hero empowers SMEs by providing automated solutions to help launch them on the path to success by powering more productivity every day.

Employment Hero services over 200,000+ businesses, collectively managing over 1,000,000+ employees.

Employment Hero is launching employers toward their goals, powering more productive teams and taking employment to rewarding new heights.

Our features include:

Recognition

Shout Outs (Peer to peer recognition)

Policy templates

Letter templates

Applicant tracking system

Employee happiness scores

Feedback

1:1s

Performance reviews

Learning management system (LMS)

OKRs (Objectives and Key Results)

Custom surveys

And so much more...

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