

Buddy System

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Most new employees begin their first day of work full of excitement and enthusiasm. Depending on first impressions, this initial enthusiasm for the organisation can be either extended and nurtured or destroyed. Everything that happens in the first few days will affect the new hire's perception of the organisation and the colleagues he or she will be working with.

Why the Buddy System

A buddy system builds a personal connection between the organisation and the new employee from the first day. The new employee is made to feel part of the organisation, gains more confidence and, as a result, becomes productive more quickly. We encourage new employees to have a buddy who is outside of their own department to ensure that new employees have an understanding of what other employees do and get to know other colleagues outside of their own work group. Here's what some employees have to say about the buddy system:

I'm usually shy about meeting new people. The buddy system got me talking to people I otherwise probably wouldn't meet.

After working here three years, I still go to lunch with my buddy at least once a month!

My buddy made my first days at the company a lot less confusing and a lot more enjoyable.

Who is a Buddy?

At a minimum, the buddy should:

1. Take new employees to lunch in their first few days of employment
2. Provide an opportunity for new employees to ask questions without feeling intimidated
3. Ensure open lines of communication with new employees while respecting confidentiality
4. Offer encouragement
5. Check with the new employee every so often to answer questions and offer support (particularly in the first month of the new employee starting)

A Buddy is Not...

The buddy system does not replace the supervisor's responsibilities regarding department orientation or on-the-job training. It is not the responsibility of the buddy to train the new employee. The buddy should direct the new employee to the supervisor if the questions become more complex or involve the work itself. Also, the buddy is not responsible for the new employee's performance. The buddy is only there to help the new employee become socialised to the organisation.

So how does it work?

I have set up a wiki page for this buddy system, it will have the names of all current new employees and buddies. Prior to an employee commencing, I'll work with the hiring manager to choose a buddy and let you know if you are the buddy for our next new hire. So if your name is there, then you are the nominated one!



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