

# Why it's good to feel 'at home' in the workplace

Starting a new job is like buying a home – you want assurances that you've made the right decision. And that's why induction programmes play such a critical role in staff retention, says TIM BRYANT.

**F**indings from a recent recruitment and retention study carried out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development indicate that 19% of individuals who quit their jobs do so after less than six months.

What goes wrong in those first few months, and what can be done to ensure that new starters stay the course?

To answer these questions, it's useful to look at the analogy of buying a home. The home we choose is simply the one that 'feels right' for us, the one that we can best visualise ourselves living in.

So, decision made? Not quite. Despite this positive emotional response (or negative if you

disliked the property) you will quite naturally begin to analyse and interpret that emotion.

Consumers often experience what's known as 'buyer's remorse' – that feeling when you suddenly realise that your heart momentarily ruled your head; your decision was driven primarily by 'emotion' rather than 'information'.

But this remorse is far less common when it comes to homes because – even if the prospective buyers have fallen in love with the property – they carry out a 'second viewing'. And this time it's driven not by emotion but rational thought – an opportunity to check the finer details, to ask searching questions and to clarify any niggling queries. In essence, it's a

chance to view objectively the property to ensure that its actual features and specification really do match your specific needs and requirements.

As a consequence of the second viewing, house buyers feel doubly confident about their decision to proceed to purchase – they feel both inspired and informed.

This 'heart and head' process comes into play with any commitment, whether it's a new house, car, partner, or job.

Having chosen to join your organisation, a new starter will naturally begin to review and analyse their decision. The "was I right to join this company?" question is akin to the 'second

viewing'. And employers need to act fast – ideally within the first two weeks – to ensure that 'buyer's remorse' doesn't set in.

Following the principle of the 'second viewing', after inspiring the heart it's now important to 'inform and reassure' the mind.

The new recruit's line manager should follow up the company induction 'experience' with a review of the induction checklist. This checklist (see table) can act as a vital source of reference later in employment.

On completion of the induction checklist, a new starter should feel confident in their overall understanding of the finer details of their new organisation – what is expected of

them, and the potential they have to develop further. Most importantly, they are beginning to recognise that they have a future with this company.

To sum up, an effective induction programme can have a

huge impact upon how quickly new employees settle into your business and the speed at which they develop to reach their full potential. Just remember to follow the principles of 'inspire first, then inform and reassure'.

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## The face of the brand

Having designed and delivered an induction programme for a major vehicle retailer, I've met hundreds of new recruits. Some were joining the motor industry for the first time, others had rejoined the industry after working in another sector, and others had experience gained with another vehicle brand.

But all had one factor in common – from a customer's perspective they represented the 'face of the brand'. This hugely empowering thought is critical for new recruits to consider as they begin to recognise the significance of their role.

My induction programme explored the history of the brand, the future strategy of the company, the brand values of the organisation and how these could be brought to life, together with an opportunity for recruits to drive the full vehicle range.

New starters always left the induction feeling proud to represent the brand and, most importantly, feeling that their individual contributions were hugely valued by the manufacturer.

But often came the comment that this was the first time anybody had described the importance of their role to them in this way.

**Tim Bryant**

## CHECKLIST EXAMPLE Source: CIPD 2007

Category	Detail
Company culture and values	e.g. Company background. Company vision. Brand values and culture.
Organisation	e.g. Organisation chart. Telephone system. Computer system.
Terms and conditions	e.g. Absence/sickness procedure. Holidays/special leave. Performance management system.
Health and safety procedures	e.g. Evacuation procedures. First aid facilities. Health and safety policy.
Financial	e.g. Pay – date and method. Company benefits. Pension.
Training	e.g. Training opportunities. Personal development plan. Appraisal process.