



Orientation Can Make or Break a New Hire's Experience

As a component of the onboarding process, orientation is the initial phase of an employee's journey within a company. It's when the employee is introduced to their role, team and the organization on their first day. Orientation is the foundational step in acquainting new hires with information pertinent to their role and workplace, laying the groundwork for successful integration into the company culture and environment. It sets the tone for the employee's experience and influences their productivity and long-term commitment to the organization.



Gallup reports that only 1 in 8 employees strongly agree that new hires at their organizations receive an excellent orientation and onboarding experience.

The primary objectives of orientation include familiarizing new hires with the company's mission, values, policies and procedures; introducing them to their roles, responsibilities and colleagues; and fostering a sense of belonging within their teams and the organization. Effective new hire orientations aim to accomplish these key actions:

- Complete essential employment paperwork.
- Communicate company policies and expectations.
- Help new hires transition into their new roles.
- Answer any questions or concerns that arise.

A standardized orientation program ensures that all new hires receive a consistent experience on their first day.

The Importance of Orientation

Employers don't get a second chance to make a first impression with new hires, so the process is critical for organizations. A successful orientation process can yield the following benefits for employers:

- **Improved productivity** — Orientation provides new employees with a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and performance expectations. When employees know what is expected of them from the beginning, they can focus their efforts more effectively and are likely to become productive more quickly.
- **Enhanced performance** — Many orientation programs equip new hires with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel. When employees understand their roles and have the necessary resources and support, they are more likely to perform well and contribute to the organization's overall success.
- **Welcoming company culture** — Orientation can make new hires feel welcome and help alleviate stress, anxiety or first-day jitters. When done effectively, the process also introduces employees to the company culture, facilitates connections with colleagues, clarifies expectations and provides support.
- **Strong sense of belonging** — New hire orientation helps foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among employees by introducing them to the company culture and values. When people feel like they belong

at work, they are more productive, motivated and engaged, which can help them contribute to their fullest potential.

- **Reduced turnover** — A comprehensive new hire orientation program can increase employee engagement, satisfaction and commitment. Effective orientation and onboarding programs can increase retention rates as employees feel more supported by and connected to the organization.
- **Cost savings** — By reducing turnover and improving productivity, new hire orientations ultimately save organizations money in recruiting and training and reduce lost productivity costs. Orientation can also help organizations satisfy legal requirements and avoid related penalties.



The Wynhurst Group found that new employees decide whether they feel at home in the first three weeks at a company, and 4% of new employees leave a job after a disastrous first day.

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A formal orientation process ensures that new hires receive consistent information about company policies, procedures and expectations, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings or conflicts down the line. Evaluating and continuously improving the new hire orientation process is essential to ensure it remains aligned with the company's evolving needs. Furthermore, employers can gather feedback from new hires, check in with managers, solicit feedback during exit interviews, and track key performance indicators to evaluate effectiveness. By systematically assessing the effectiveness of the orientation program and implementing changes for enhancement, employers can continuously improve the onboarding experience for new hires and optimize outcomes for the organization. This proactive approach demonstrates a commitment to employee development and ensures that the orientation process remains relevant, engaging and impactful in supporting new hires' success and integration into the organization.

New hire orientation is crucial in setting the stage for positive employee experience and long-term success with the organization. While part of the overall onboarding experience, orientation is a one-time event that employers don't get a second chance to redo.

