

t and leads into continuous development. New recruits are briefed about performance standards and expectations, with learning needs established, and attempts are made to socialise them into the organisation. Typically, this is expressed through mission statements that articulate organisational goals, which are transcribed into departmental/divisional objectives. Much of the literature on performance management assumes this phase of the process is concerned with corporate communications, job descriptions and key accountabilities, each of which are considered elsewhere in this book. Induction training and initial socialisation into employment are rarely mentioned, but this is a critical time for establishing understanding about, and commitment to, wider corporate and departmental goals. Acas (2015b, p4) states that 'induction is a vital part of taking on a new employee. A lot of hard work goes into filling the vacancy or a new role, so it is worth working just as hard to make the new recruit feel welcome, ready to contribute fully and want to stay.' A formal induction need not be expensive, and the huge benefits gained from a systematic process far outweigh the costs of recruiting new staff if large numbers of people leave at the time of the 'induction crisis'. Approximately one in five new starters leaves an organisation within six months (CIPD, 2017b). Induction is important to the psychological contract as new employees consider whether their employer owes them more than agreed, and how much they owe the employer. In balancing this reciprocity of promises, if the employee concludes that the employer does in fact owe them more, this has obvious implications for discretionary effort.

Irrespective of whether or not a structured programme is in place, all employees go through an induction phase. In many organisations, especially those that do not have a specialist HR manager, this may be little more than a rudimentary greeting before being shown to their place of work. New recruits may be told to ask questions if they need assistance and they are left to get on with the job, as it is assumed they have the required technical or administrative skills to cope. The rite of passage may consist of practical jokes (for example, taking up a job at a restaurant and being told to 'go and find a left-handed spoon') and there may be little attempt to explain anything about the company mission, philosophy or policies. Even information about health and safety, disciplinary rules and company procedures may be dealt with informally, despite their importance in setting the tone of the workplace and defining acceptable behaviours. The problems associated with such informality are obvious. Employees may feel isolated and confused, unaware of rules and procedures and they may struggle to learn how to do the job. Low morale and commitment are likely to result if they end up breaking safety or disciplinary rules, and they may leave. Each of these

problems represents a cost to the employer, either in direct financial terms (lengthening the amount of time it takes for the newcomer to be productive, poor-quality work, time spent on disciplinary issues, re-advertising jobs) or in public relations terms. Additionally, where new starters feel uncomfortable, they will not be honest about their training and development needs. In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that employees question the depth of employers' commitments to people as their most important resource.

CASE STUDY 8.2

Onboarding

This case highlights onboarding at a number of organisations from different sectors of the economy to show the range of approaches taken and the degree to which they prepare new starters for work at each organisation.

New starters at the BBC take their 'Upfront' induction course prior to their face-to-face onboarding. The course is structured as a 3D virtual journey through 10 modules that cover the 'values, structure, resources and culture' of the corporation. The BBC's headquarters is used to illustrate the internal and external context in which the corporation operates, which helps to 'orientate new staff within the organisation and introduce concepts' that are examined in further detail during the face-to-face stage of the induction process. The progress of new inductees through the Upfront course is tracked and scored. This innovative approach helps to ensure that new starters are systematically onboarded into the BBC and identifies where elaboration or further information is needed at an individual level.

Software platforms have been designed to help mid- to large-sized organisations with the onboarding of new staff. For example, see [Enboarder.com](https://enboarder.com) and [Hibob.com](https://hibob.com).

Deliveroo has attracted attention over the onboarding of delivery riders following increasing reports of collisions or near-misses with members of the public. A *Watchdog* investigation in 2019 found that the onboarding programme could be completed in as little as 30 minutes and did not include compulsory safety training or a requirement to be a proficient or safe cyclist. Riders were not required to watch the firm's safety videos as part of the onboarding, because they could be viewed (or not) in the rider's own time. Deliveroo responded by saying that all riders are offered free, government-recognised training programmes, and that 'if a rider is found to have broken the rules of the road, Deliveroo will not work with that rider.'

SOURCES: Adapted from BBC Academy (www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/collections/bbcupfront); hibob.com; www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/15pGSD3N0nQs4Wc8l0M8z1/takeaway-delivery-riders

Planning induction is a balancing act which incorporates empathetic understanding of the stresses new employees face. Although there is a considerable amount of information to get across, new recruits do not want to be bombarded with copious amounts of reading and information to digest, and they

also want to settle into their personal workspace and be given meaningful tasks. To ensure interest and relevance, the induction programme needs to be individually tailored in line with the newcomer's experience and job specification. This usually translates into a combination of group and one-to-one activities paced over a period of time and may include an element of self-accessed online information. Line managers should play an important part, as building a positive relationship at this stage will set the scene for future interaction (CIPD, 2019f), but often line managers regard induction as a chore. Others likely to be involved in induction include HR specialists, health and safety officers, IT staff, peer group, chief executive/MD and possibly trade union representatives (Acas, 2015b; Armstrong with Taylor, 2020).

HR specialists typically maintain quality assurance standards and deliver parts of the induction programme – such as information about welfare, wage and salary administration, grievance and disciplinary procedures. Specialists can aid line managers by designing policies and training in conjunction with them, and monitoring their effectiveness. Data on labour turnover crisis points, on the results of exit interviews, and on evaluating the experiences of recent recruits should all feed back into the process. A successful induction typically features the following steps (Acas, 2015b):

- **Step 1.** Before the new employee starts work, they should be sent useful information about the organisation and the employee's induction including who they will meet on their first day and who will mentor them. Their workspace(s) should be prepared.
- **Step 2.** First day. The new employee is shown around, introduced to new colleagues, managers and mentors.
- **Step 3.** First week. The employee should be informed of a full who's who, how the organisation works, its rules, how any facilities work, the new employee's role and how they fit in. They should be informed how their performance is to be assessed and let them try some tasks.
- **Step 4.** First month. It should be informally established how the employee is settling in, if any further training or coaching is needed, and if there are any other concerns. Reassuring but realistic feedback should be provided on how they are doing.
- **Step 5.** First three months. The employee's performance should be reviewed. What's good? What must improve? Any further support as a programme with timed goals should be agreed.
- **Step 6.** First six months and/or end of probation. Decide if a probationary employee is to be kept on, fairly dismissed or offered extended probation where the contract permits. Their performance should be reviewed and goals for the next six months should be established.

- **Step 7. 12 months.** A full performance management review or appraisal should be conducted. The employee should be asked for feedback on the effectiveness of their induction.

Acas has produced a helpful induction checklist, at: www.acas.org.uk/media/3609/Outline-of-a-job-induction-checklist/doc/Induction-checklist.doc

Reflective activity 8.2

Using the Acas guide entitled *Starting Staff: Induction* (2015b), work together in small groups to plan an induction/onboarding programme for a particular individual and job role with which you are familiar. Be prepared to justify your programme. The document can be downloaded from aca.s.org.uk.

There are three broad perspectives on the nature and purpose of induction. The first views it as an *administrative* exercise, designed to give information about the job, procedures and the organisation. The key point is not to include too much as this will lead to information overload. Typically, the following is covered:

- Physical orientation – where everything is located.
- Orientation – how the person fits into the structure.
- Health and safety information (required by law in the UK).
- Terms and conditions of employment.
- Culture and history of the organisation, corporate social responsibility.
- Job/role requirements.
- Company rules and policies, for example, disciplinary and grievance procedures, equal opportunities policies, site speed limits, energy conservation.
- Employee development opportunities and sports and social amenities.

The second and third perspectives analyse the underlying philosophy of the process and its interpretation. The *social integration* perspective assumes that informal groupings have a powerful influence on how quickly a newcomer settles in and feels loyalty and commitment. An example of a successful induction programme is found in [Case Study 8.3](#).

CASE STUDY 8.3

Pret a Manger

Two college friends who wanted to offer healthier fast food established Pret in London in 1986. It now has over 450 outlets. Most are based in the UK, but it is also expanding internationally with shops in the United States, France and Hong Kong.

Recruitment, selection and induction are interlinked at Pret. Job applicants are assessed against its three desired behaviours: passion, clear talking and team-working. If these core behaviours are demonstrated, applicants work in a Pret store for an experience day to enable them to learn more about working for the company and to see how they perform with existing team members. At the end of the trial day, members of the team vote on whether the applicant should be appointed or not. Either way, applicants are paid for the trial day and, if successful, are sent on a 10-day induction and training programme. Pret's retention rate is high for the industry. Team members stay an average of 20 months. Consequently, it has adopted a similar approach with its Itsu and Veggie Pret chains.

SOURCE: Pret a Manger, pret.com/jobs/team_member.htm and itsu.com/jobs/

Some organisations allocate a buddy to help new recruits socially as well as professionally, in some cases even making contact before the employee starts work to offer help and advice where appropriate, for example with relocation. Picking the right person for this is obviously important, and would usually exclude the line manager. Someone of similar age and status with a good grounding in the work would be ideal (Armstrong with Taylor, 2020). There are obvious advantages in introducing new starters to a range of people across a variety of functions. Similarly, there are advantages in having a buddy within the work team, as they can help with queries about the work role, essentially acting as a mentor. There may be groups of workers for whom some support is particularly appropriate, such as school-leavers, long-term unemployed, employees with disabilities, or new recruits from another culture (Acas, 2015b). Of course, buddies may also need some training and support in these cases.

The final perspective – *cultural control*, or *employee branding* – makes use of various techniques to ‘educate’ employees about the company values and ethos, aiming to integrate them with existing organisational cultures. This perspective is associated with Japanese and US companies, exemplified by uniforms, badges, baseball caps and company credit cards. This *cultural control* perspective is often dismissed, but induction can be a powerful device for integrating new employees, gaining their commitment and inculcating them with a sense of belonging and identity, which forms a basis for effective performance ‘beyond contract’. There is a fine line between cultural control and what some see as ‘indoctrination’.

Reflective activity 8.3

Do you think there is any substance to the view that some aspects of induction get dangerously close to being interpreted as indoctrination?

For employees who are relocating internationally to a new organisation and/or national culture, induction is even more critical, and yet it is often neglected. Web-based learning can be an asset here (Chu and Chu, 2011), but expats and any partner and family members accompanying them are also likely to require general and targeted support (David et al, forthcoming). Apart from settling into a new organisational setting, many issues arise when adapting to an unfamiliar country, finding schools and accommodation. Activities for partners and children are of particular importance as their experiences are likely to be less structured, but if they don't settle, international assignments may fail. Induction is more complicated and more critical for international expatriates as, financially, the costs of recruitment, relocation and training are usually extremely high and failed assignments generate negative publicity.

An effective induction programme enables new employees to become productive quickly, improves motivation and commitment, and ensures new starters get the same information. Essentially, induction is the start of the employee's development, in which the line manager plays a critical role. It is important to ensure that programmes are updated regularly to embrace new developments and to keep up to date with the law and internal procedures. However, many organisations allow their induction programmes to stagnate.

8.4 Performance review

While induction sets out performance standards and expectations, performance review (PR) forms the second stage of the performance management and development process. This comprises a meeting between the employee and line manager, with formal review taking place on an annual or more frequent basis, and more frequent informal meetings in between. The process should be continuous, but often the ongoing and unsolicited support (such as the telephone call or the 'chance' conversation just to check that all is going well) is overlooked. The 'review interview' then becomes the sole event when staff are praised or criticised, and when training and development needs are identified. Informal meetings should not replace the formalised PR, when adequate time is devoted to overview all performance issues in a structured and focused manner.

Ideally, the review should be an honest and open conversation between colleagues that summarises what has happened since the last review, based on fact

rather than opinion. There should be no surprises, as issues should have been dealt with as they arose. Learning from mistakes and motivations arising from successes are both more likely if they are immediate. The manager uses counselling skills to actively listen and to offer constructive feedback, as well as to agree on future aims, career and personal development plans. In terms of self-development, every phase should be done jointly between the appraiser and appraisee and it is most effective if it includes self-assessment. The employee's involvement is especially important when determining objectives to ensure that these are appropriate and owned by the individual. The interview may also give employees an opportunity to comment on leadership, support and guidance from their managers. Increased informal feedback generates trust and confidence in line managers, and ultimately the review