



Where Do I Work?

ORIENTATION FOR THE NEW GUY

by Rachel Downey

Every person employed by your business is representing your company. Even if they don't have front line responsibilities with your customers or clients, they certainly get asked at networking events or parties what they do and where they work.

Implementing a formalized Orientation Program at your small business does a number of things:

- It makes employees feel welcomed and get this-oriented-to their new environment.
- A day of orientation is a good buffer for getting settled into a new job. For them and other employees. And it helps them have a positive first experience with your company that will set the tone for the weeks (and years) to come.
- Productivity will be increased. It's a lot easier for an employee to make a copy when they know how the machine works and everyone is less frustrated when their files are named correctly and saved in proper folders.
- This is an opportunity to introduce the newbie to a more formalized explanation of your company history, goals and Brand.

I own a branding and environmental graphic design firm. We have seven employees. Even at our small size, each new person to come on board is engaged in a day-long orientation to the company on their first day of

work. The orientation is given by two or three people switching off throughout the day, allowing the new guy to get to know several people while giving the old-timers time to get their work done.

First, we ask them to come in a little later that day. That allows the rest of us to get settled in, check our email and prepare some coffee before they get here. Then, we work through several segments of Orientation, following through a check-list. Here are some ideas that you can apply to your own business.

BASIC OFFICE TOUR

Walk them around and introduce them to everyone, explaining this new person's role. Discuss things like parking, security, what to do in an emergency, basic office policies and where they can go nearby to grab lunch. Show them your library and how it works and where they can find

office supplies. Train them on office equipment and give them their keys, explaining lock up procedures if they are last to leave.

TECHNOLOGY

If you work on computers, try to have their computer station set up with files they will need for their work, basic office communication documents and corporate fonts and logos. Show them how to access their email, printers and the server if you have one. If they are given a laptop, explain expectations on its use.

Inclusion and communication is key to successfully living and breathing your brand, even with a new personality in the mix.

Discuss back-up procedures, piracy policies and how to name and save files if you have conventions for that (and you should). This is when you can show them how to set up their voice mail, transfer calls and provide instruction on phone etiquette.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Give them all of the required paperwork to complete if they haven't done it already. Include the Employee Handbook, Corporate Handbook, Brand Guidelines and any other policies or agreements you

continued

might have. At our company, we also have non-disclosure agreements, an ergonomics folder (we allow them to select any special desk accessories they may need to reduce strain), and a freelance policy. As required by law, we also show them the location of our Bureau of Workers Comp Certificate.

This is a good time to discuss work hours and professional development policies and provide an overview orientation to key clients of the company.

EMPLOYEE OVERVIEW

This segment should be done by an owner, principal or their direct supervisor. Review their job description, performance reviews, communication and reporting procedures. Show them a proof of their new business card for approval and ask

them to keep an early perspective journal that they can share with you later on. This will help you, as owner, understand how you can improve early experiences.

make the
most of that
first day!

BRAND ORIENTATION

Ideally, you have already talked with your new employee about the culture, values and brand of your company. This is one of the criteria you both use to decide if this rela-

tionship is a good match. Now is your chance, as owner and visionary, to get into more depth, explaining the history, position, philosophy and mission of the organization. Talk about your brand and how you want to be perceived by your target markets and why you think this new person is a great addition to furthering your business goals.

Inclusion and communication is key to successfully living and breathing your brand, even with a new personality in the mix. It is an exciting time for both parties, make the most of that first day! ■

About the Author

Rachel Downey, Principal Design Consultant, Studio Graphique
rachel@studiographique.com



As principal and founder of Studio Graphique, a Branding Consultancy and Environmental Graphic Design firm, Rachel is the resident visionary for the organization and its staff. She has established the philosophy, direction and culture of the firm which is a highly collaborative and creative environment focused on improving life experiences and opportunities for the immediate community and beyond. Rachel holds a BFA in Visual Communication Design from Kent State University and is a graduate of the Cleveland Bridge Builders, a year-long program for aspiring leaders. She has studied at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland and is certified in Reiki I. Rachel resides in South Euclid, Ohio with her son Simon, 5, and husband Jason, an architect.