



## So you want new recruits to hit the ground running?

### ▲ The company and background

There is always a danger that if you recruit new people and don't help them feel part of a new organisation you can easily lose them within the first few months. It is expensive to recruit, and it's even more expensive to have to begin the whole process all over again. You not only lose out financially, but you also end up with gaps in your resources, which inevitably has knock on effects to your clients and, ultimately, your bottom line.

The company concerned in this case study was an outsource service provider. They had recruited 10 people for brand new roles as a part of a major change within the Customer Relationship Team. Their introduction to the company had to be fast, effective and thorough.

The smooth assimilation of new people into an organisation is particularly essential when the new roles are a crucial component of a frontline Customer Service Team. Clients do not necessarily want to be passed on to staff who are not fully versed on how the company works, what services it can offer and how any problems might be resolved.

### ▲ The problem

Unfortunately the organisation did not have a really good induction programme. Their HR department had a project in the pipeline to design a new induction programme, but this was some way off and not ready for trial.

The company recognised it needed to improve its recruitment, training and staff retention. If it was to achieve all it set out to do in line with the new changes within the Customer Relationship team, it was essential that the company retained these new staff and so introduced a new approach to training and assessing them in the early stages.

### ▲ The Action

We created a completely new model called 'Pathfinder', designed for use for new members of staff in any department, and any area of the business, irrespective of their level. It focused quite specifically on the first three months following engagement.

Recruits were given a programme which listed a series of tasks they had to complete on a week by week basis. The key to it was to involve them in their own integration into the company. It detailed checklists of things to identify, organise and achieve. Tasks included meeting key people from each department, learning the processes and systems, completing work activities, spending time with experienced staff to understand their responsibilities and building a picture of how they fitted into the overall structure of the company.

The onus on learning how the organisation functioned was therefore placed on them, and it also provided a focus for managing performance and progress in the first 3 months. After the first 3 months they were able to draw up and agree a list of their own performance objectives for the next year with their manager.

The 'Pathfinder' model was trialled with a selection of new recruits. They were told it was a new approach and asked to give feedback. The reaction from all of them was very positive and they were able to add new elements to the process which were extremely useful. The comment from one very senior new recruit was very positive, '..... I had focus and clarity from day one and learned more in the first few weeks than I would have ever managed to find out in 6 months of working elsewhere. Knowing what I was supposed to do from the very outset was excellent.....'

## ▲ The Outcome

This new approach meant that the drawbacks of the classic induction programme simply did not happen. No time was wasted waiting for meetings to take place and for programmes to be drawn up. New recruits were not allowed to 'drift' and they did not have to work their way through reams of information without practical help. HR were relieved of much of the pressure of managing the induction, which in turn freed up their time considerably. Moreover, the involvement of the other staff was a very positive thing in creating good team bonding and morale, and the clients were pleased that new recruits were up to speed and knowledgeable as soon as they took up their new responsibilities.

The key people from each team within the company who were chosen to help were able to get involved at a much deeper level than they would ever have had before, and the very act of helping to decide what information and tasks needed to be covered by new recruits helped them clarify their own roles and work methods.

Long term the Pathfinder model created a blueprint for the Induction of new staff right across the business, and it will continue to evolve and be developed into an even more comprehensive programme.

The most dramatic results of the 'Pathfinder' programme were;

- Time for new recruits to become productive was significantly reduced
- Less management time involved in inducting new people
- Performance of new staff could be measured and managed from day one.