

# [Successful orientation programs](https://assignbuster.com/successful-orientation-programs/)

The old saying, “ Well begun is half done. ” When a new employee starts with clear idea of goals, values, and expectations in new firms, they can be a good employee for the successful performance of the firms. Many new employees have trouble in the beginning step of their work. Orientation programs help that new employees successfully fit into new positions. Therefore, when new employees clearly understand their jobs in good orientation programs, firms expect the success of their business to increase higher productivity and profits.

Firms spend much time, money, and efforts to hire the best matched employees in the position. Especially, firms spend about over 25 percent of the first year salary in recruiting process (i. g, advertising, interviewing, and selecting) (Lindo 2010). However, over 50 percent of new employees leave their firms within the first seven months after hiring. If new employees leave in a short time, firms waste hiring expense. To fill the vacant positions, firms have to repeat recruiting processes. The cost for turnover is pretty high (Schwarz & Wesolawski, 1995).

Firms can retain employees by using well designed orientation programs with inexpensive cost because they help new employees fit into the new organization. Therefore, more firms have recognized the importance of orientation for new employees in a successful business (Davis & Kleiner, 2001; Dunn & Jasinsk, 2009; Schwarz & Wesolawski, 1995). An orientation program can be defined in terms of (a) Who? (b) When? (c) What? (d) How? (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). “ Who” is the new employee that was transited into the organizations. “ When” is defined per researchers with different views.

Most researchers agree that orientation is conducted the first or close to first day the employee entered the organization. However, the duration of orientation is defined differently from one day to four weeks. “ What” is for the content of orientation such as health and safety issues, terms and conditions of employment, history of organization, a tour, and an introduction to co-workers. “ How” refers to teaching methods of how a new employee orientation is conducted. Orientation programs for new employees should answer these four components. The change of environment affects orientation programs.

Dunn and Jasinsk (2009) reviewed 50 articles published from 1989 to 2005 to understand the processes of new employee orientations. The beginning of the review period was related to the emergence of the knowledge economy, and the turnover rate was very high because companies needed employees who can handle new technologies and know new skills to respond rapidly changing global consumers’ demand. Firms were aware that high turnover is a high cost and receive competitive advantage in new employees’ work start time in the knowledge economy. This changing environment spawned perception and recognition for orientation programs.

The starting study for an orientation program was conducted by Texas Instruments Inc (TI) in the mid-1970s. TI assigned new employee randomly to a traditional orientation program or a socialization orientation program. In the traditional orientation program TI informed such subjects as working hours, pay periods, parking, and insurance, and so on for two hours. On the other hand, in the socialization orientation TI treated such topics as career management, the importance of politics, picking the right boss and the importance of being in the right place at the right time for seven hours.

After two years, the results showed that turnover for employees who attended the traditional orientation were 40 percent higher than employees who attended the socialization orientation. The research proved firms need to develop creative orientation programs (Zemke, 1989). In 1980, Corning Inc. organized a team to develop and research orientation programs. Corning hired 200 to 300 employees such as designers, opticians, engineers, technicians, sundry, and other professionals, and spent $30, 000 to $40, 000 per employee for hiring.

However, 30 percent to 40 percent of them left within three years. Corning was interested in long-term relationships with new employees and developed a new orientation program in 1981. For first six months after staring work, employees participated in nine two-hour seminars, and they continued to self-study and work on assignments by their15th or 18th month. The results showed that turnover of employees who participated in the new orientation was 69 percent lower than those who did not received the new orientation (Zemke, 1989). Disney’s orientation program is famous.

A two-day orientation seminar for all new employees was conducted in a special and comfortable room which was designed for orientation by Disney University. Two purposes of the orientation are to understand the firm as inculcate Disney’ lore, language, culture, and values and to learn essential skills related to their jobs. Many firms such as Citicorp, Autoshack, Jordan Marsh, University Hospitals Cleveland, Dayton-Hudson, and the Pittsburgh Pirates have learned Disney’s orientation program to apply to their own business (Zemke, 1989). An orientation program can increase new employees’ effectiveness and give new employees benefits.

In a new environment, new employees can’t learn easily and fast in a tense situation. When they feel comfortable, they can adapt new knowledge more rapidly and they can display their ability and skills. An orientation program creates a good first impression, relieves anxiety, sets expectation, encourages socialization, builds teamwork and identification with the employer, and prevents problems (Starkel, 1996). When orientation programs are conducted or designed, there are significant components. The first impression which was made within the first few seconds after they enter new firms, last a long time (Whipple, 2010).

Supervisors highly affect the first impression of the firm because they usually deal with new employees (Zemeke, 1989). If firms fail to implement an orientation program, they need more time and efforts to adapt the employees to their new positions (Loraine, 1999). New employees’ first day is a very important role for the future entire day. New employees start their first work day with high expectation, passion, excitement, and energy, but many new employees disappoint their first day of work. New employees feel that everything seems bigger than real and is like a challenge.

New employees feel uncomfortable when they are ignored when they showed up for work. They have a question why the firm hired them (Lindo, 2010). Several researchers insist that first week is also important time for new employees (Lindo, 2010; Starcke, 1996; Wipple, 2010). For a week new employees can understand and learn the culture of the firms, and they can adjust to the new culture. As soon as new employees put into the new firms, new employees can work hard and improve their productivity. It is very important to involve supervisors in the orientation program (Starcke, 1996).

Before the orientation day, supervisors should know correctly what they do for the first day and first week of new employees. First day, supervisors make new employees feel welcome. They introduce co-workers to new employees, and descript new employees’ positions, roles, and expectations. During the first week, supervisors help the new employees conduct their work. Orientations programs are inefficient if employees feel confused, frustrated, and overwhelmed (Whipple, 2010). Asking a lot of questions about facts, figures, names, and faces make employees uncomfortable. Employees don’t want to spend several hours sitting with oring orientation videos, lectures, and reading materials because their concentration and interest decrease. If the programs emphasize on rules and regulations, employees would be lost their interesting. Employees get a bad impression when they attend an orientation that is unprepared or unwelcoming situation. A negative trainer can’t inspire employees. When orientation programs are designed, these conditions are avoided. On the other hand, there are some tips for successful orientation programs. Senior employees should treat new employees like valuable customers (Zemke, 1989).

The orientation should be conducted with excellent trainers. Trainers and supervisors make a memorable first impression. They introduce to the new employees heritage and culture. They teach the principle of great guest (Whipple, 2010). According to Loranie (1999), the trainers or supervisors make efforts to find employees’ strengths rather than their weakness. In addition to the learning styles should be combined seeing, touching, hearing, and talking. A break time about once an hour is needed to improve learning effectiveness of the attendances.

A longer orientation period helps employees to assimilate to their jobs and to creative more productive (Starcke, 1996). Starcke (1996) showed developing process for orientation programs. First step is that efficient orientation programs can be developed by benchmarking and evaluating the current orient programs (Starcke, 1996). Through benchmarking, firms get fresh ideas and important information to develop an orientation program. However, there are no perfect orientation models. For example, Disney’s orientation program has been benchmarked by many firms, but they have also received negative feedback from the orientation attendances.

Through the benchmarking and evaluation, orientation programs should be revised and upgraded according to the firms’ current vision and strategy. The last step of orientation should be evaluated by written questions and discussion to find what the attendances like and don’t like for the orientation programs. Based on the results of evaluations, firms continue to revise and upgrade their orientation programs In conclusion, when firms create high productivity and high performance, the firms can be successful in their market.

Firms can expect their business success when employees adjust to their firms as soon as. High turnover is negative influence on their business performance because of the time, effort, and money for hiring. Successful orientation programs can reduce turnover and help employees be suitable in their firms. Specific job fits into the big picture of the firms. Regardless of the firms’ size, firms should develop an effective orientation programs based on these research results. The orientation programs can be developed by benchmarking and should be evaluated and revised.

The most important factors that lead orientation programs success are the first impression, the first day, the first week, and supervisors. ? References Davis, V. & Kleiner, B. H. (2001). How to orient employees into new positions successfully. Management Research News, 24, 43-49. Dunn, S. & Jasinsk, D. (2009). The role of new hire orientation programs. Journal of Employment Counseling, 46, 115-127. Lindo, D. K. (2010, September). New employee orientation is your job! Supervision, 71(9), 11-15. Loraine, K. (1999, July). How to cut the cost of job orientation. Supervision, 60(7), 11-13.

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