



Community Business Development Corporation
Corporation au bénéfice du développement communautaire

Business financing, support and advice • Financement, aide et conseils aux entreprises

CBDC Onboarding Course

Part 3 Lesson 1



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
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Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada 

Part 3/4

Lesson 1/2

Learning outcome 4: Managers are able to layout employee orientation.

Learning outcome 4A: Explain what employee orientation is.

Learning outcome 4B: Identify the importance of employee orientation.

Learning outcome 4C: Create an employee orientation plan.

Learning outcome 4D: Arrange pre-orientation activities to prepare for employee orientation.

Designing employee orientation – this section covers *why orientation* is sometimes mistaken for *onboarding*, why a good first impression matters, why it's important to address safety and governance policies on the first day, and how to make a great first impression.

- a. What is employee orientation?
- b. How does orientation set the tone for the employee?
- c. How should I structure my employee orientation?
- d. What can I do to prepare for the first day orientation?

What is employee orientation?

Employee orientation is familiarizing an employee with a new workplace, workspace, course, event or process. It involves providing basic information and guidance that can act as the foundation of understanding the environment the employee will be working in.

The first day, or days, at a new workplace should be dedicated to employee orientation, or familiarizing them with their surroundings, their colleagues, and the job they will be performing. This could look like providing a campus map, an office tour and introducing someone new to the other members of the team. It could also look like providing login information to the computer network.

How does orientation set the tone for the employee?

First impressions can be lasting ones and employees can remember whether they started on their first day of work to an organized and thoughtful workplace, or if their start day was seen as more of an afterthought with a disorganized and haphazard introduction to the workplace and the team.

How you structure your orientation, your approach to it, and what value you place on it, will guide your new employee's attitude toward your business and will influence their perception of your organizational culture. Do you want to convey a message that you're sloppy, rushed, lax, or indifferent? If that's the attitude you demonstrate toward your employees that's the attitude they'll adopt toward your business.

Alternatively, a well-done orientation can set the tone immediately, instilling in new employees that you value workplace safety, client confidentiality, continuous improvement, or whatever you consider to be the driving forces of your business and business success. Employees will make note of things considered important enough to be covered on the first day of their employment and will feel valued and

appreciated if time is taken to facilitate their integration into your business. Orientation can also act as the first step in team building, by placing importance on introducing a new team member to the team.

How should I structure my employee orientation?

Each employee orientation will be different depending on your business, and even depending on your employee. Use the [Employee Orientation Checklist](#) in this course as a guiding document and customize it to create your own orientation.

Begin by starting the personnel file for your employee. This should include their employment contract, and other documents related to their hiring. You can also put the initial documents such as the [Employee Interview Record](#) and [Training Plan](#) in the file to remind yourself to complete them. You'll also notice what items such as banking information for payroll and licenses and records of qualifications you might need to have on file depending on the role. Another, often overlooked, document you may want to have on hand is a next of kin contact form and notification protocol, especially if you work in an industry with a higher risk of injury.

A good place to start for your physical orientation is by visualizing your average day, are there any idiosyncrasies to accessing your workplace you should make your employee aware of? What is the parking situation and what's needed for building access? Do you have a safety meeting every morning? Do you get coffee from the breakroom? Is the coffee free, provided by the workplace, or do the employees chip in monthly to cover the cost? What are your break times, lunch hour and quitting time? This is also a place where having an employee handbook helps because it should cover topics of concern for employees and can help you remember what to cover in your orientation. If you have an employee handbook, you should provide it to the employee during orientation.

A very important topic to cover on your first day of orientation is safety. This could include building fire and evacuation protocols; key or keycard and building access security; password and technology safety; and equipment or protocol safety. Depending on the complexity, sensitivity, or danger associated with your operations, safety briefings and an introduction to safety protocol immediately when welcoming a new employee, is not only a best practice, but not doing so could be a liability.

Depending on your business and the type of workspace you may also provide uniforms, equipment, and other supplies to be used by the employee. Keep track of that. Technology might also fall under equipment or may be captured separately when tracking an employee's digital access to your computer network, if you have one, social media, printer, phone, or other technology they will have to be set up on or given a password to use.

A good approach is to assign a new employee a mentor, someone tasked with showing them around on their first day and someone who has been designated as their point of contact to ask questions they may have throughout the onboarding process. This can be done by conducting an initial interview immediately on the first day, or you could leave the intake interview until later in the orientation to allow the employee some time to acclimate and form some first impressions they may have questions about that could be answered in the interview.

Finally, it's important to recognize that an orientation may take a morning or a full day, or a few days. You may also have to repeat the process for various worksites.

What can I do to prepare for the first day of orientation?

Some important things you can do to prepare for an orientation are below:

- a. The first is to review your orientation checklist, making any additions or adjustments and reminding yourself of the process if it's been a while since you've onboarded a new employee. Even if you don't put together your employee file at that time, at least you now have it on your radar.
- b. The second is to assign a mentor or guide. This will provide the human touch to the orientation and allow questions to be answered in real time. There will be someone to act as the "go-to" throughout the orientation process, giving both you and the new employee piece of mind.
- c. Reach out before the first day, make sure the new employee knows how to get to the workplace or make arrangements so they can access the building. Demonstrating you've taken time to make a plan, and that your new employee isn't an afterthought.
- d. Likewise, send out an email if there's any documentation, you'd like them to bring on their first day, this will save everyone's time.
- e. Review your onboarding plan so you can be prepared to explain what the entire onboarding process will look like, the change of starting a new job can cause stress, and knowing more about how the onboarding process will work can lessen that.

Summary

In this section of the CBDC Onboarding Course we've covered employee orientation or *familiarizing an employee with a new workplace*. We touched on how your orientation will guide your new employee's attitude toward your business and will influence their perception of your organizational culture, and that while each employee orientation will be different the [Employee Orientation Checklist](#) in this course can be used as a guiding document for designing an employee orientation.