

## Induction - the start of a beautiful relationship

**Ok. We're not walking off into the future at a wet and windy Casablanca airport! But let's talk about the relationship between an employer and their employees. A successful relationship often depends on how a new employee settles into their job to start with.**

- Before starting
- First days in the job
- Weeks and months into the job
- Conclusion

"Most labour turnover is among new employees, and work efficiency is reached only after a period of learning and adjusting to the new environment." (source: ACAS)

So what contribution can the online dimension make to achieving successful induction and, crucially, as the job progresses? Here are some ideas based on what Brightwave has achieved for a variety of clients including West Sussex County Council, Bulldog Broadband, Hays Recruitment, BT, Sky and SwissRe.

### Before starting

A fantastic opportunity! The employee to be is arguably as motivated as they'll ever be - hungry for information and a feel for their new organisation – and for reassurance and endorsement of the decision they've made to join.

#### *Online communications trailer/promo*

In the first instance – how about some positive messages about your organisation – even before the interview? The broadband provider Bulldog is the furthest ahead of the game to date. The email with which they reply to recruitment enquiries has a link/attachment to a groovy online communications piece! This vibrant 45 second animated trailer endorses the individual's interest in Bulldog and positions the company as an exciting career option.

Online 'comms pieces', as we call them, are excellent for informing, forewarning, promoting and creating interest, whether at the point of induction or further into

the job. For example, AOL needed to prepare the ground for the introduction of a new performance management system. They commissioned us to develop a lively animated 30 seconds online trailer that was sent by email to every employee, promoting the upcoming e-learning module that would support this change.

#### *Pre-starter e-learning module*

Instead of the usual 'information' or 'starter' pack sent out with the invitation to interview or the job offer, a short interactive module can communicate key facts, give a flavour of your organisation and paint the bigger picture – as well as providing links to supporting information etc.

Hearing from future colleagues through video or audio interviews can be really effective. West Sussex County Council took a rich multimedia approach with 'First things first' - a pre-starter module mailed out as a 15 minute CD-ROM. This features video and audio interviews with council employees across the board. The assumption here (which is proving to be correct) is that most people can access a computer able to play this. But it's also designed to run on computers in all the county libraries so that all the bases are covered.

### **First days in the job**

Let's dip back into ACAS' thoughts on induction: "A good reception, with the line or personnel manager spending time with the new employee, is important on the first day....and of course enough information to give the new starter a good grasp of the working practices of the organisation. Any particular health and safety requirements should be made known."

#### *New starter module*

For SwissRe, the international reinsurance company, we developed an online package to provide a consistently high quality induction to their people all around the world. As with many induction courses, content development took place against a background of constant and rapid change.

The answer was a 45 minute version one with 80% of the content. A version two to follow incorporates a new module with the latest changes, and a third is planned as a final version. And no doubt by then, there will be fresh dust raised, for example, by some new faces and changes in the organisational chart, changes to the structure etc.

Perhaps the point here is, in content terms, online induction courses should not be thought of as one-offs, but as ongoing online materials. And there are other considerations of a more holistic nature.

#### *Managers guide*

e-Learning does not have to be the whole story. The new starter's line manager is likely to be essential. Not only in terms of their input – especially the local support - but also their buy-in to, what for some, may be a new way of training. West Sussex County Council recognised this and we produced a short 15 minute CD-ROM introducing e-learning and a checklist of their main duties for induction.

#### *Online support for a 'buddy system'*

You might want to consider developing e-learning to support the 'buddy' who may be assigned – say a short 10-15 minute module. Being a buddy can, in itself, represent a developmental activity, and can be supported by a coaching and mentoring programme.

#### *Health and safety*

Compliance is inextricably linked with induction. BT, Sky and West Sussex County Council have all recently gone the e-learning route with Brightwave with health and safety modules. e-Learning is ideal because the content is compulsory, stable, factual and well served by the visual dimension (graphics, photographs, animations, video etc) that e-learning offers.

#### *Diversity and equality*

An emotive and an important subject, and one where organisation policy in paper form or on the intranet is not enough. It's a state of mind as much anything else.

Several professional services organisations have recognised this in developing 20 minute e-learning modules with hard hitting dramatised video sequences to get the message across, reinforce values and change attitudes if necessary. They don't have to be video, but it helps.

#### *Data protection and IT security*

There are often critical and vital compliances issues in these areas. The e-learning module needn't be long – the generic Brightwave IT security module takes 10 minutes – but it is important to have learning in these sorts of areas.

And only fair to new starters to ensure they're aware of such key areas of compliance.

### *Sustainability*

This is coming to the fore and will continue to do so as companies move to become carbon neutral, to save energy, become more environmentally friendly etc. On a practical level much can be achieved simply by adopting good habits. So why not train them? And, if the company has a sustainability policy, shouldn't people be aware of it so they can spread the word to customers, colleagues and friends?

## **Weeks and months into the job**

### *IT systems training*

New employees may need some immediate IT training such as how to use a key computer system, or concerning business procedures related to systems. Brightwave's 'show me/try it' approach is a proven process that doesn't need to be delivered as a big course. Bupa has over a hundred 5-15 minute tutorials in how to use key parts of their company wide system. And as part of an ongoing learning strategy, you can continue to commission more of these bite-sized tutorials as you need them. They can also double up as ongoing performance support.

As well as training on systems, we mentioned procedures, processes. How can we support individuals with these – as and when they need the help?

### *Just in time performance support*

Again bite-sized online 'tools' – easily available on the computer desktop - can be very useful just a click or two away. For example, interactive process flows you can click on for more information about each stage.

## **Conclusion**

So what is the moral of the story? I suppose what we're saying is that when it comes to using e-learning as way of delivering induction, there are more opportunities than at first glance.

Online learning can be used more holistically to train a wider range of key subjects needed to be covered before, during and after the immediate induction.

- To start with consider communication – animated online trailers, teasers – to convey key messages before, during and after.
- Tap into the new starter's motivation before they start with a pre-start module.
- Support the main e-learning induction with a manager's module.
- Develop complimentary mini modules on key compliance issues such as health and safety, diversity, age discrimination, accessibility, IT security, data protection etc.
- Support performance with online tools such as process flows, top tips and learning wizards.

As we have shown by using real examples, all the ideas and applications above have benefited our clients. So why not pull all these great things together in your own organisation and deliver the ultimate, visionary, induction programme?

Call us on 01273 827676 or email us at [enquiries@brightwave.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@brightwave.co.uk) to find out how our employee induction training will help you improve speed to full competency and staff retention.