

smart supervision™

strategies, ideas and tips for managing yourself and others

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Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World's Most Engaged, Loyal and Customer-Centric Employees

By Doug Lipp, author

The Disney Store is a unique environment, a friendly environment, a Disney environment. And it wasn't always so.

Just days after the grand opening of the very first Disney Store, Michael Eisner, CEO of The Walt Disney Company, and Frank Wells, COO, visited the store, and they weren't happy. They noticed that the guest service experience wasn't at the levels expected of Disney. The cast wasn't as friendly or engaging as they could be, so aside from the product line, there wasn't anything differentiating the Disney Store from all of the other stores in the mall.

The training staff of the Disney Store, not the Disney University, had created their own training program, and it wasn't working. Seeking a solution, Eisner called the Disney University. "We'd like the Disney University team to come up with a program to fix this problem and bring guest service up to Disney standards," said Eisner.

Disney Guest Service – Simplify the Complex, Have Fun, Beat the Competition

Immediately following the call, the Disney University training staff embarked on a lightning-fast series of activities to create a brand new orientation program. Relying upon their years of theme park experience, each knew the path to success for the Disney Store and its cast members; the design of the new orientation program, *The Disney Shopping Experience*, had to simplify the complex. Cast members needed basic, sustainable and memorable operations standards.

Confident the Disneyland guest service and park operations strategy would work equally

well at the Disney Store, the training team simply followed their time-tested recipe:

- Ensure training is experiential and engaging
- Create a fun and memorable learning environment
- Keep the message simple

"Relying upon their years of theme park experience, each knew the path to success for the Disney Store and its cast members; the design of the new orientation program, *The Disney Shopping Experience*, had to simplify the complex."

The Disney Shopping Experience

The Disney University trainers first designed a strategy to assess the quality of customer service at the Disney Store. The needs assessment involved Disney University staff posing as customers ("secret-shoppers") visiting the Disney Store and paying particular attention to cast member interaction with customers. They would then compare their Disney Store experience to the levels of service they received as secret shoppers at other stores in the same shopping mall.

Within days of the phone call from Eisner, Disney Store cast members found themselves participating in a completely revamped, "Disney University style" training program. Using the Disney Store as the classroom, the Disney University staff wasted no time getting cast members' full attention and participation. They kicked off the day sending all cast members into the mall, as secret shoppers, to assess competitors' customer service.

Each cast member received a checklist of things to look for and questions to ask at

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the other stores during their secret shopper experience:

- Were they and other customers greeted upon entering the store?
- Was the store clean?
- Did employees engage them and other customers, or just chat among themselves?
- Were employees visible and available for questions, or too busy (folding clothes, re-stocking shelves)?
- Did employees lead customers to merchandise, or merely point at the location?

For the majority of cast members, the answer to each of these checklist questions was a resounding, “No.”

This mini field-trip opened cast members' eyes to the many ideas for improving guest service at the Disney Store. Reporting their findings, Disney Store cast members shared a number of bad first impressions gathered during their secret-shopping experience:

“The clerk was on a personal telephone call.”

“There were only two employees working. They were chatting with each other and completely ignored me.”

“In our case, the person ringing us up at the register never looked at us or smiled. He acted like a robot.”

Leveraging this learning opportunity, the Disney University training staff then divulged vital information to the cast members; their recent experience as secret shoppers at the Disney Store had been painfully similar. Their experience as “customers” at the Disney Store was equally devoid of service and mediocre at best:

- Cast members in the role of greeters didn't engage guests in conversation.
- In some cases, guests were never acknowledged.
- Eye contact, smiles and friendly tones disappeared as the store got crowded.

Good Show, Bad Show: The 'Living' Classroom

Throughout *The Disney Shopping Experience*, the Disney University training staff employed multiple opportunities to reinforce service priorities; the connection between incessant attention to detail and outstanding guest service was constantly reinforced.

The training staff introduced to the cast the simple, yet memorable concept of good show versus bad show.

For example, during one of the breaks the staff purposely rearranged the environment in the Disney Store, creating bad show. They threw used napkins on the ground, moved chairs out of place and didn't refresh the coffee. They even tilted some of the pictures on the wall. Pulling boxes and product off of stock room shelves, then randomly spreading it around the backstage area, they completed the scene.

In essence, the training team recreated the same disheveled atmosphere the cast members observed in other stores during their secret shopping exercise. Once everyone returned to the Disney Store after break, the training staff encouraged trainees to assess the condition of the room. After the training staff initially pointed out some of the aspects of bad show, the trainees quickly caught on. In no time at all, the trainees began pointing out things in the store that had to be refreshed, cleaned or simply straightened up.

On the flip side, after a later break, the training staff went to great lengths to reinforce the Disney style of providing good show. For example, during another break, the training staff would straighten things up; they made sure notepads and pens were aligned on the desks, refilled ice and water in pitchers and put chairs back in rows. They even put sugar and sweetener packets in the same order at the coffee station. It might seem a bit over the top, but they wanted to reinforce Walt Disney's timeless message of “keep the place clean, fresh and presentable.”

Ultimately, the cast members, not the training staff, came up with a plan to maximize good show opportunities in their store.

Don't Blame the Budget

Through the real-life activities designed by the Disney University training team, cast members started to see the value of eliminating bad show and increasing good show in the Disney Store. More important, the cast members learned specific strategies — that they supported — for improving the guest experience. Within weeks, *The Disney Shopping Experience* transformed the environment in the Disney Store into a unique environment, a friendly environment, a Disney environment. The cost was minimal, yet the benefit to the bottom line and employee morale was significant.

Transforming a work environment into a living classroom, then engaging trainees with memorable and applicable learning activities is an achievable goal for any training team, regardless of budget or staff size. Van France, the founder of the Disney University, firmly believed in employment development activities and to never let a slim budget get in the way. He was quick to challenge those who complained about a lack of resources as an excuse for not improving with the comment, “Money might be tight, but creativity is free.”

What is the state of your team's creativity? ■

about the author

Doug Lipp is an expert on customer service, leadership, change management and global competitiveness. He helped create the first international version of the Disney University at Tokyo Disneyland, and then lead the Disney University training team at Disney's corporate headquarters, The Walt Disney Studios. For more information, visit www.douglipp.com. ■

Tips on Managing Your Time Effectively

Question: I'm always behind on my work. How can I manage my time more effectively?

Answer: Take Control. Many times, supervisors don't believe they have any control over external events. But they do — at least over some things. The trick is to know what you have control over and what you don't. Then, you can anticipate what demands will be made and plan how to accomplish tasks within certain time frames.

Realize You Can't Make Everyone Happy. Some supervisors are guilty of trying to please everyone all the time. That's just not possible. You need to choose what must be done and realize that you can't always meet all expectations. There are limits, and sometimes supervisors have to learn to say "no." For example, if your boss is asking for an unreasonable amount of work to be done, it may be because he or she doesn't realize what is entailed. Instead of trying to get everything done, go to your boss and explain the problem. You may be surprised at how understanding he or she is.

Set Aside Some Blocks of Time. You need to make sure you have specific times when you simply can't be interrupted. For example, if you need to answer an email correspondence, set aside a half hour and do it — no excuses. It should be noted that sometimes supervisors interrupt themselves — they set aside the time to answer emails and, instead, finding themselves with a quiet moment, they make phone calls. Both need to be done, but you already decided that the emails came first. Stick with your decision.

Set Priorities. You can begin by making a list of everything you need to do. Then decide on a time frame for each. Next, set your goals according to what needs to get done first. Accept the fact that not everything will get done. If your list looks like most supervisors' lists, and you accomplish the most important tasks within the required time frame, you will be doing well.

Delegate. If there are things that can be better done by others or things that are not so important, consider delegating. This takes a load off of you, and you can focus on the important tasks.

Use an Organizer. The organizer helps you to be on top of everything in your life. It's your central tool to organize information, to-do lists and projects. ■

Getting Results: How to Write a Better Letter

Question: Could you provide advice on how to write a letter that will get results?

Answer: Even in this electronic age, sometimes nothing will do but a good old-fashioned letter. Here is a strategy for writing a letter that works — one that reads well, makes the reader respect you and gets you what you want:

Think First. This can't be stressed often enough. When people start to write before they know what to say, they fill in the blanks with needless verbiage. If you know what you want to say, you can get to the point right away, sparing your reader the burdensome process of looking for meaning in your sentences.

Say It and Get Out. Don't go on and on; this is the main fault of letter writers who don't have confidence in their own statements. Anything you have to say should be able to be said in one or two paragraphs, with perhaps brief introductory and closing paragraphs for balance.

Show Your Style. Let your personality come through. Don't feel like you need to stick to someone else's style or you will sound stilted and the words won't come freely. Write the way you talk and then clean it up a bit.

Use the Power of the "Carbon Copy." Every supervisor knows that sometimes the most effective part of a letter is the indication of who else is reading it. Let's say you are writing to a vendor because you are in the process of negotiating a lower price and you are afraid the vendor might renege. You want to get the promise on paper, but you also want to show the vendor that you are not kidding around when you say you will go elsewhere if the bid doesn't come down. So you say as much in the letter (politely, of course), and then you "cc" your boss. The vendor knows that you aren't making an idle threat, your boss knows that you are working hard to lower costs and you make your point with one line at the bottom of the letter.

Always Maintain a Polite Tone. No matter how angry you are, always use a respectful tone. When you have finished the first draft, read the letter to see how you would feel if you received it. You want to achieve your goal and insulting the reader won't work. Words that work well are "miscommunication" or "accidental." Remember, your goal isn't to place blame, but to solve the problem. ■



Recognize and Prevent Employee Burnout

“Burnout” is a word used by psychologists and mental health practitioners to describe the condition of people who endure too much negative stress in their lives.

In the workplace, the term is more loosely verbalized among employees who feel their jobs have become redundant or are no longer challenging. In some cases, the reason may be that employees are working beyond their capacity, with too many deadlines that eventually overwhelm them or drain them of their energy.

Whatever the reason, job counselors warn that “burn-out” is a troubling matter that frontline supervisors must pay close attention to because it often strikes the best employees.

Burnout is a relatively easy problem to resolve at the supervisory level, since it usually doesn’t require formal counseling or disciplinary action. However, supervisors should be aware that burnout can mimic symptoms of clinical depression.

Recycle Stress

While stress in the workplace is rarely inescapable, supervisors can help create a lively atmosphere that helps recycle some of that stress into constructive pathways for employees.

One thing you can do is add more aesthetics to the workplace. Brighten up the work area by repainting a room or wall in bright colors, adding some inexpensive framed prints and allowing workers to listen to a radio.

Job Rotation

Another way to reduce stress is to rotate workers into different job functions to alleviate repetition. For instance, you can cross-train drivers and warehouse workers so that employees bound to the shop all day can get out — and drivers who want a break from their delivery routes can experience different work. This can completely recharge enthusiasm.

Five Quick Tips

Other tips for reducing burnout include:

- 1. Allow workers to chat about non-work issues — provided it does not impair their performance.**
- 2. Present small choices to your employees.** By giving them an ounce of control, you can greatly improve their self-esteem.
- 3. Periodically examine your workers’ daily tasks and help them map out ways in which they can accomplish their goals faster or differently.**
- 4. Allow extra break time, when possible, to employees who give you 100 percent or more.**
- 5. As a good communication gesture, pass along articles or other literature that pertains to your employees’ job duties or special interests. ■**

Cutting Down on Employee Absenteeism

It’s very difficult to run a department when workers are late or don’t show up. Yes, employees get sick, cars break down and other unavoidable catastrophes occur. Here are some tips to keep it from getting out of hand:

Avert ‘I’ll Be Late Today’ Calls

We know one supervisor who follows the weather reports to determine how to handle absenteeism. “Jean will be late if it’s supposed to snow,” he says. “So I have to head her off at the pass the day before. I say, ‘I heard it might snow tomorrow, Jean. Do you have a plan for getting here on time?’ She looks at me and I can see it clicking in her head: ‘I better not be late.’ And she isn’t.” Unfortunately, it took this supervisor an entire winter to figure out this strategy. But the fact is, if the weather is bad, it’s the employee’s responsibility to leave home early.

Require Call-Ins at a Certain Time

If someone is going to be late or absent, you must require that he or she call in by the scheduled starting time. You should request that, when leaving a message, employees give the reason for the lateness or absence, as well as a number where they can be reached and when they will be back.

Publicize the Importance of Good Attendance

Sometimes, supervisors take it for granted that their workers will know that they are expected to be at work on time every day. Don’t assume this. You need to let workers know that attendance is essential to getting the work done and that transgressions will result in discipline — up to and including discharge.

Nip Problems in the Bud

Don’t let “lateness creep” infect your department. This happens when one worker is late, the supervisor says nothing and other workers start thinking they can do it too. The very first time someone is late, even if it’s just five minutes, comment on it. This will put everyone on the alert that you do not take tardiness lightly.

Set a Good Example

One way you can encourage workers to be on time — or even early — is to be there early yourself. We know one supervisor who makes a habit of getting to work half an hour early on a regular basis. This way, when workers do arrive early, they know it will be appreciated — because someone will be there to see it happen.

Reward Good Attendance

One of the best ways to control absenteeism is to create an atmosphere where good attendance is valued and poor attendance is dealt with accordingly. This can be done through reward and discipline programs. Make sure employees know that attendance is important, valued and rewarded. ■

'New Manager Myths' Revealed: Six Common Misconceptions

"New managers often begin in their new position with views that sound reasonable, but don't prove workable in the real world," observes Morey Stettner, author of *Skills for New Managers* (McGraw-Hill). In his book, Stettner, a Portsmouth, N.H.-based communications-skills consultant, offers six common misconceptions that people have about managing:

Myth 1: You Must Call All the Shots

Just because you're a manager does not mean that you're in charge of everything. In fact, on average, each employee makes 100 unsupervised decisions each day.

"A danger of trying to call all of the shots is that you may suffocate your employees," says Stettner. "They'll begin to think like gophers and you'll end up carrying all the problems on your shoulders.

"As boss, you have the right to delegate. By pulling back and putting employees in the driver's seat, you can lead quietly and spread the authority. That's how you build loyalty and teamwork."

Myth 2: You Can't Trust Anyone

Managers who operate by the traditional "command-and-control" model believe that they must always protect themselves and assume that all employees are up to no good. By putting themselves first, these managers sacrifice the organization's needs and their employees' best interests.

"I've found a surprising number of distrustful new managers who buy into this myth," reveals Stettner. "Refusing to trust won't help you manage more effectively, but it will certainly make you lonely. However, blind trust is also dangerous.

"Let relationships with employees evolve naturally, realizing that some stumbles will occur along the way. Not everyone can be trusted to the same extent, and remember, trust flows both ways — your employees have to learn to trust you, as well."

Myth 3: You Must Remain Objective

While you may want to act like a calm and collected

leader, acting like a robot can strip away your personality. You'll lose opportunities to connect with your team. Instead of appearing strong and resilient, you'll appear heartless and detached.

"Your workplace personality should generally be consistent with how you sound all the time," says Stettner. "There is a time and place for remaining objective, but don't overdo it. For example, if you're gathering data, collect the information dispassionately without judging it."

Myth 4: You Must Defend Your Staff

A manager does not have to stand up for his or her employees' poor performance. "You can tell you're clinging to this myth if you start to take the criticism of your staff personally," cautions Stettner. "Learn to separate your own performance from theirs.

"If your employees are unfairly accused, defend your staff. Otherwise, listen patiently to the speaker's concerns or criticisms about them."

Myth 5: You Cannot Back Down

Many supervisors believe they must prove they're right at all costs, or refuse to admit an error. Here are five situations where a manager has more to gain by disregarding this dangerous myth and backing down:

You state the wrong facts. When you base a decision on incorrect information, your staff won't lose respect for you if you openly acknowledge the truth.

You're fighting for peanuts. If a conflict is trivial, you will look bad if you try to "win" a minor skirmish.

Circumstances change. As a new manager, stand your ground when you want to prove a point. However, if the battle becomes too much, you can back down.

Precedent saves you. If other managers in your company have successfully backed down when faced with a similar situation, you're safe following their lead.

Your boss disapproves. A refusal to back down might impress your boss. But if you have a boss whose style is conciliatory, this strategy can work against you.

Myth 6: You're the Best Teacher

"You're only one of many sources of insight for your employees," says Stettner. "By letting them find their own way, you wind up with a more motivated, intelligent team." Get to know your employees, bond with them and find out what makes them happy in life. It's the small things that really make a big difference. ■



How to fire a worker with dignity and respect

Employee Termination

Firing a worker is never easy. For a supervisor, it can be a source of emotional conflict; after all, it's hard to give bad news to someone with whom you have worked closely. No matter why you must fire an employee — the loss of a contract, a merger or even when firing for cause — it's a difficult process for both supervisors and employees. Here are some tips to make this task a little easier:

1. Prepare for it. A termination should never come as a surprise to a worker being fired for cause. The performance problems that have brought about the firing should have been well documented long before the firing became imminent. The worker must be well aware that there are shortcomings in his or her performance, and that he or she has consistently been deficient. The best way to accomplish this is to have a series of meetings, known as graduated discipline, in which the ante is continually raised. Finally, you meet with the worker and clearly say: "This is your last chance. If you don't improve within two weeks, we can't keep you in the company any longer. If you do improve, your improvement must be consistent." This way, the worker will not be shocked when he or she is fired. And, if you're lucky, you may even get results that make the termination unnecessary.

2. Fire early in the week and never on a Friday. Assuming the employee doesn't turn things around for the better, fire him or her early in the work week. Never fire someone on a Friday, because then he or she can "stew about it" over the weekend and come into work the following Monday ready for a fight, or even worse.

3. Avoid getting entangled in an argument. Once you get to the point of firing a worker, there is no backing out. Avoid any discussion about whose idea it was, how unfair it is or why it has to happen. It is a fact to be accepted; the sooner you can help the worker accept it, the better off you both will be.

4. Present a unified front. Never try to eschew responsibility by saying, "If I had my way, I wouldn't be doing this." It won't make the worker feel any better to know that you would rather not fire him or her, and may make the worker think you can reverse the decision. Instead, you must support the decision to fire the worker.

5. Give the worker hope for the future. One of the best things you can do is use the termination meeting to help the worker get a sense of hope. "One door closes, but another opens" is what most fired workers find out eventually. They may learn something from their firing (if it was for cause) that makes them better workers at their next job. For workers who are being

downsized, there is the possibility of a new career, one that has more promise than their former one. Discuss the worker's plans for the future. Recommend places where he or she can get help: a community center, a job outplacement program, a local association — and remember, there is nothing wrong with providing a recommendation for a worker who has been downsized.

6. Ensure your safety. Supervisors always need to think of their own safety when conducting a termination meeting — and afterward. Although it's relatively rare, some workers have violent tendencies that can get out of control when they feel helpless and trapped, a common feeling for anyone who is losing a job. Make sure that you have adequate protection — another supervisor or, in extreme situations, a security guard — present during the meeting.

7. Ease into acceptance. An employee who hears that he or she is losing a job, even if it's not a surprise, will go through a period of grief. You need to help the worker understand what is happening and accept it. This process won't take place in your office — it will take several days or, for some workers, weeks. If the worker calls

you on the phone the day after the firing and wants to talk, allow it, but keep it brief. "You can call me anytime," is a good thing to say — it keeps the worker from feeling abandoned — but keep the conversation as short as possible each time the worker calls.

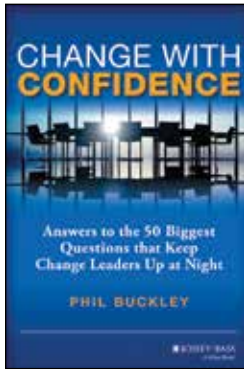
8. Ask for a release, and give the employee an incentive to sign it.

If the employee is a minority, a female or is over the age of 40, ask him or her to sign a release of liability. Do not draft this yourself. There is very specific language a release form must contain in order to hold up in court, especially if the employee is likely to claim "age discrimination." Have your employment law attorney draft the necessary release before the "exit interview." It should only take about an hour of the attorney's time.

Offer the employee something in exchange for signing the release, i.e., extended severance. You cannot force an employee to sign a release, but you can give him or her a strong incentive to do so. Also, giving the employee the chance to talk to an attorney demonstrates that you're not worried about being sued.

9. Reassign the terminated employee's job duties promptly. As soon as the employee leaves the premises, call your other employees together, tell them that the employee is no longer working for the company (but avoid giving details) and reassign his or her duties to other employees. That will prevent a "rumor mill" from starting and will inoculate the employees against any negative phone calls or emails they may receive from the terminated employee. ■

"Recommend places where he or she can get help: a community center, a job outplacement program, a local association — and remember, there is nothing wrong with providing a recommendation for a worker who has been downsized."



Identifying and Planning Change Management Initiatives

Change is inevitable, and it's our one constant in life. Because of recent technological advances, change is happening at a more rapid pace.

Phil Buckley, author of the book, *Change With Confidence: Answers to the 50 Biggest*

Questions that Keep Change Leaders Up at Night, says, "constant change is a business reality, and the people who make the wheels turn must constantly change what they do and how they do it." Buckley not only believes in this concept, but he also teaches it. CEOs, presidents of companies, project managers, business consultants and even students and teachers will benefit from this very informative book.

Buckley's book educates readers on the 50 most important questions they need to answer to successfully manage a change project. The reader will learn why certain actions move a project forward and what causes it to fail. In addition, not only will he or she gain knowledge on how to set up and execute change tactics, this book will help managers to be able to identify and gather information on their change projects that will ultimately lead to making the best decisions for their business.

The book is organized into a coherent structure around

the 50 questions that Buckley was asked over and over again when he was involved in change projects. They fall under four main sections:

1. Figuring It Out
2. Planning For Change
3. Managing Change
4. Making It Stick

Buckley provides real business world examples of how some of the largest companies in the world faced change projects and whether or not they succeeded. He notes proven techniques for information gathering, delivering the desired business benefits and managing the people side of change.

The book is written in a quick-reference Q&A format and every chapter features war stories from change projects that went right and wrong, along with full-length case studies from top organizations across various industries.

Change with Confidence demonstrates the best way, through change, to move your organization and staff to the next level and ultimately into the future.

Change with Confidence: Answers to the 50 Biggest Questions that Keep Change Leaders Up at Night by Phil Buckley, Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint, 2013. ■

Do You Really Know Your Employees?

Are you feeling estranged from your work staff, or having trouble understanding their level of loyalty? According to Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordon-Evans, co-authors of *Love 'em or Lose 'em: Getting Good People to Stay* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers), today's supervisors can adopt subtle techniques for making strong, productive connections with their employees and for gaining honest input from them. The authors say supervisors should think of themselves as archaeologists on a dig to learn more about the talents of workers that will contribute to the department's productivity and social dynamic. Here is a brief list of ways you can get to know your employees better:

- Invite employees you do not know well to have lunch with you. Ask about their interests. Practice listening to them.
- Visit your employees' work spaces and ask about their family pictures or trophies that they have on display.
- Clear your desk so you can talk openly to employees when they are in your office.
- Open your door so that employees feel welcome to talk with you. Then, be willing to close the door if the employee needs to talk in confidence.
- Praise employees in the presence of others and then follow up with personal acknowledgements.
- Share your favorable experiences and knowledge about the company.
- Clearly link each employee's work to the goals of the operation. Explain how employees' jobs contribute to the workflow. ■

Welcoming New Employees

“The tremendous human resource costs related to losing and rehiring people is leading American companies to rethink the way they treat people,” says Leigh Branham, author of *Keeping the People Who Keep You in Business* (AMACOM).

“Part of this rethinking involves the impact of the first days and months of new employment. How people are treated during this period can be the determining factor on whether they stay with a company long term or not,” says Branham. He offers a number of guidelines that, if followed, can give new employees a positive outlook and will likely motivate them to stay longer with a company.

Prior to the New Employee’s First Day

“See that the employee receives an employee handbook and other relevant documents,” says Branham. “Also, arrange for office furnishings and supplies ahead of time.”

Set an agenda of how you want the new hire to spend his or her first day, and arrange for person-to-person guidance from one or more of your team members. Make sure to inform the staff when the new hire is arriving and ask everyone to make him or her feel welcome. “These things send new hires the message that they are valued,” says Branham. “They also affirm to them that they made the right decision to come to work for your company.”

On the First Day

Discuss mutual expectations. Meet with the new hire early on his or her first day to reaffirm the importance of his or her job. Set up a performance agreement, and discuss your mutual expectations and the results you expect of the employee. “You can change it as you go along, but giving the employee an idea of what is expected gives the person a sense of comfort,” explains Branham. Also, explain your own responsibilities and current priorities and how the employee’s job supports them. Finally, send a gift or card to the new employee’s home soon after their first day so his or her significant other feels connected to your organization. This could be as simple as pictures taken on the first day or a dinner certificate to a local restaurant.

Introductions and Facility Orientation

“Introduce the new employee to as many team members as you can and make sure someone takes him or her to lunch,” says Branham. In addition, have someone show the new hire around the facility. See that he or she is shown the location of supplies, copy and fax machines,

restrooms, the cafeteria and phone directory. Also, explain the company’s phone system, expense account procedures and so on. Talk to the employee about confidentiality in the workplace, what can be shared, what can’t and how confidential documents are stored.

Cultural orientation

“When there are several new hires, you might schedule a group orientation in the afternoon,” says Branham. “You might also produce a video that covers the company history and culture, or place orientation information on an internal website to be viewed at new hires’ convenience.”

Obtain a promise

Ask the employee to promise that he or she will meet with you before deciding to leave the organization. This sends the message that the employer cares and will try to resolve any situations that are making the employee unhappy, says Branham.

During the First Week

Introduce the new hire with enthusiasm during a group meeting. Also, encourage the employee to schedule one-on-one meetings with co-workers to get their various perspectives on things.

Give Appropriate and Challenging Assignments

An assignment that has a short-term outcome will give you the opportunity to acknowledge and reward something. “This is a great way to give feedback and steer the working relationship in the right direction,” says Branham.

Provide an Encouraging Presence

“Pair up the new employee with a respected peer or senior co-worker who will be coach, re-recruiter, caretaker and encouraging presence during the first six months,” says Branham. “Ask the ‘caretaker’ to meet with the new person weekly for the first month and periodically for the first six months to ask how things are going, if the new hire has the resources he or she needs to do the job, if the employee needs any help in dealing with anyone in the company and if the job is what the new hire expected.”

Through the Third Month

Meet regularly to discuss the employee’s performance and development and to clarify expectations. “Have your first quarterly progress review of the performance agreement and set new goals. In addition, allow the employee to rewrite his or her job description if it is outdated and no longer matches the current and ongoing activities of the job,” says Branham. ■