

# FactSheet: All Settled?

## Executive Summary

- According to recent research, there is a significant link between staff retention and induction procedures.
- Research also demonstrates that a number of new employees leave as a direct result of an employer failing to help them settle in.
- Organisations like the BBC, Tesco, the NHS and Asda have invested significant time and money revising induction procedures in the last 2 to 3 years.
- In addition to being a vehicle for basic information, induction can be used to communicate key organisational messages.
- Innovative companies use multiple information sources and interactive means of delivering induction facts.



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## Induction—for Retention?

### *Induction and Orientation Programmes*

According to research by the Centre for Labour Market Studies and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, retention is currently the most important issue worrying HR leaders in all regions and countries in the UK. When asked what action these leaders are taking to address retention worries, the most popular measure was reviewing and implementing new induction procedures.

Induction procedures? This isn't typically the first idea which comes to mind to reduce employee defection. Reviewing pay levels, improving promotion prospects and other forms of reward are the traditional answers. Is induction that important? While it is obviously not a panacea, induction can play a surprisingly positive part in retaining new staff as they join your organisation.

A recent survey of 5,700 employees across the UK by jobs website Reed.co.uk found that one in 25 workers walk out of a new job after weeks, or days, because their new employer failed to help them settle in. On average, it took more than 7 weeks for an employee to feel at ease in a new job when they had been subjected to a bad induction. Can you afford to lose lead time before a new staff member is up, running and productive? Further research by the Cranfield University showed that 1 in 3 employers (37%) have problems retaining staff who have been employed for less than 1 year. Can you afford to keep replacing staff who do not feel they fit in during their 1st year of employment?



A number of large organisations have come to appreciate the importance of a good induction experience. In July 2004, the NHS adopted a consistent, nation-wide approach for the 1st time. Sir Nigel Crisp, Chief Executive of the NHS, endorsed the programme as a way to bring the core principles of the NHS to life and to help staff to understand how they can play a part in continuous improvement (*Personnel Today*, March and June 2004). Retailing giant Asda also implemented a new induction programme during 2003. Shortly after rollout across 265 Asda stores nation-wide, Head of Development Debbie Carnell said, "within three months we have reduced turnover by 50 to 60 per cent" (*Training Magazine*, February 2004). Also in 2003, Scottish and Newcastle implemented new induction procedures in 1,450 pubs, the BBC rolled out a new induction programme at a cost of £4m per year and Tesco revamped its induction procedures with an aim to make new recruits feel comfortable in their roles and to support them through the emotional challenge of starting a new job (*Personnel Today*, April 2002 and February 2003).

If you are considering reviewing your induction process, here are some ideas to consider:

- Think about what you want to achieve in specific terms. **Like other "people" initiatives, results are difficult to measure, but don't let that stop you thinking about what you want to achieve.**
- Make your induction programme more than just a first week "sheep dip". **Induction doesn't have to be limited to the first week. It is better to give limited information in the first few days or weeks and to follow up with further details in the second or third month.**
- Use induction as more than just a vehicle for key information (eg location of toilets and the kettle!). **Induction can be used to communicate key organisational changes or other important messages. Make it "what you are about" and "what you stand for".**
- Involve a range of staff in the delivery, not just HR. **HR can obviously play a key role, but cannot always be as effective as, for example, a manager, in explaining how departments operate.**
- Steer clear of pure "chalk and talk". **Induction can be fun, interactive and can involve puzzles, games and exercises to keep participants interested.**

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