**NEW-EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION:**
**BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH A NEW COMPANY**

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**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

*About the Training Program*

Joining a new company is both an exciting and a nerve-wracking experience. New employees often feel overwhelmed by all of the information they need to acquire in a short period of time—information specific to their job requirements, information about policies and procedures, as well as information about their new company. Many times the only way that new employees obtain information about their companies is through informal conversations with other employees or by trial and error at their new jobs.

This program offers alternative ways to orient employees to new companies. The workshop allows participants to meet other new employees as well as to network with upper management and work peers. The group activities explain how to present information about the new companies to new employees. This program is best suited for twelve to fifteen employees, from any number of departments, who have been with their companies less than one week.

*Training Objectives*

Participants will have the following opportunities:

- To gather information about the companies they are joining;
- To meet and network with upper management and peers;
- To identify and overcome personal fears about their new jobs; and
- To identify ways of having productive new job experiences.

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Designed by Stephanie Juillerat, Karen Lawson, and Nancy Carlson Lewine.
### PROGRAM OUTLINE

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I. Opening Activities

A. Welcome! Welcome! (Presentation Speech by Notable Company Executive)

1. Welcome participants and briefly introduce yourself.
2. Introduce the company speaker, who will make the participants feel welcome and motivate them to become excited about their new positions within the company.
3. After the speech, briefly review the agenda and note the many opportunities employees will have to gain the necessary information they will need to know about the company and its people.

B. Finding Famous Fictional Friends and Families (Icebreaker; Materials: Index Cards with Fictional Names, Form A)

[Note: Prior to this exercise, create famous fictional family members or friends index cards. To prepare, choose the same number of fictional family members or friends as there are participants from Form A. Write their names on index cards, one on each card, to create a family group of cards. Each group of cards should contain a set of three or four cards that belong together. For example, one card in a set could have the name Peter Pan, another the name Tinkerbell, and a third the name Captain Hook to form the famous friends from the movie Peter Pan. The object of the exercise is for three or four group members to end up together in a “family” and to get to know each other better.]

1. Introduce the activity as an opportunity to get to know the people in the room from both a professional and personal perspective. Explain that each participant will receive a card with a famous name on it. Each participant’s job is to find the rest of his or her famous group. Once the famous group is complete, they are to find a spot to congregate. Then they should answer the following questions, which are posted on the newsprint in the front of the room:

- What will each person do in the company?
- Why did each person join the company?
- What things (both personally and professionally) do the group members have in common? List on a piece of newsprint. [These will be displayed at the end of the activity.]
2. Ask if there are any questions. Answer all questions and then begin the activity by shuffling and distributing the index cards.

3. As participants mingle about the room trying to find their groups, encourage them to help each other. Refrain from telling participants who their character is or to which group they belong. Allow them to help each other.

4. After fifteen minutes, notify the groups that they have five minutes in which to complete their questions.

5. When the five minutes are up, ask that each group share its list. Post the lists and discuss what the participants as a single group have in common.

6. Conclude the discussion by asking the following questions “How did it feel in the beginning of the exercise to be searching for a group to which to belong? Did you have to ask for help? Did you receive it?” Emphasize that the participants, like employees in a new company, need assistance when they become a part of a new group. Encourage them to use today’s workshop to help them ask the questions they need to have answered so as to become familiar with a new group within a new company.

II. Searching for Answers

A. Search Your Heart (Anonymous Cards; Materials: Index Cards)

1. Introduce this activity as an opportunity for participants to anonymously express any concerns they might have about a new job or about joining a new company. Note that they will also have the opportunity to read each other’s concerns.

2. Have participants sit in a large, single circle. Distribute blank index cards to participants and instruct them to write one concern they have about their jobs or anything else about their company. Make sure the participants do not write their names on the cards.

3. After the participants have filled out their cards, notify them that they will have a chance to read and to respond to each other’s cards. To ensure absolute anonymity, collect the cards and redistribute them to new participants. Ask each new participant to read his or her card and to put a tally mark on the card if he or she shares the card’s concern as well. If he or she does not share the concern that is written on the card, the participant is to hold onto the card until it is time to pass the card again.

4. Answer any questions and then begin the activity.

5. After thirty seconds have the participants pass the cards to the right. Continue until all of the cards have been read and responded to. Explain that the participants now
have an idea of the concerns shared by the entire group and that they will begin working toward eliminating some of these concerns today. Also reassure participants that these concerns will be addressed again at the end of the day. [Note: Sometime during the day, it will be necessary for you to list all of the concerns and the number of tally marks each received on a piece of newsprint so that the entire group can read and respond to them.]

■ **B. Search the Books** *(Information Search; Materials: Form B, Literature on the History of Your Company)*

1. Divide the participants into subgroups of three or four members each and distribute copies of Form B and the company literature to each subgroup member. Explain that the following activity will give each participant a chance to learn about the history or some important information about the company each has just joined.

2. Instruct the subgroup members to work together to fill out the work sheet by searching through the information provided. [Note: If you want to establish some competition, you may want to challenge the subgroups to see which subgroup can answer all of the questions first.]

3. After twenty minutes, quickly poll the subgroups, asking for answers to Form B. Provide answers to any unanswered questions.

■ **C. Seek Out the Experts** *(Roundtable Discussions)*

[Note: It will be necessary to have arranged for four speakers who represent important departments within the company (that is, human resources, marketing, production, billing, and so on) to agree to spend ninety minutes in the orientation session. Speakers will only be required to speak very briefly (five minutes) to four different subgroups about their department. They then should be prepared to answer any questions the subgroup members might have.

For this activity the room needs to be set up with four different stations where subgroups can sit and talk with an “expert.” The stations need to be spread far apart enough so as to ensure that the subgroups do not disturb one another.]

1. Inform the participants that the next exercise will give them the opportunity to gain information and to meet key people in important departments within their company. Explain to the participants that you have four speakers from four different departments and that they are here to answer questions. Explain further that participants will be divided into four subgroups. Each subgroup will visit each expert at his or her station. Each subgroup then will have the opportunity to learn about the department and to ask any questions of the expert.
2. Briefly introduce each roundtable expert and indicate at which table he or she will be sitting. At this time, direct the expert to his or her station.

3. Divide the participants into four subgroups that will travel together to the four stations. Assign each subgroup to a starting station and tell the subgroup members that, after twenty minutes at each station, they will be asked to rotate clockwise. Encourage the participants to ask questions and glean as much information as possible during this time.

4. Send the subgroups off. Every twenty minutes ask them to rotate. After eighty minutes call the subgroups back together, thank the experts for their willingness to participate, and end the activity.

D. Searching the Company [Game; Materials: Form C, Prizes for Winning Trio(Optional)]

[Note: Prior to this exercise, it is strongly recommended that a companywide memo be sent notifying the current personnel that after lunch (specify time) several groups of new employees will be exploring the company looking for items and obtaining information about the company as part of their new employee orientation. This will reduce resistance and forego any negative feelings from upper management as to the nature of this activity. A sample of a memo to be sent is attached as part of Form C.]

1. Inform the participants that, as a final means of obtaining information about the company, they will have the opportunity to travel throughout the company, gathering items and information from different departments. Explain that approval has already been given for this activity (and make sure it has), and that they are to feel free to go wherever necessary to find the items they need.

2. Separate the participants into trios with three different departments represented (if possible). Distribute copies of Form C to each trio and go over the following ground rules:
   • The trio must stay together at all times.
   • No running, loud talking, or unruly conduct.
   • No sharing of information between trios.

   [If you want to make this activity competitive, notify the trios that the first trio back with all of the items and answers will be declared the winner and will receive a prize.]

3. Inform the participants that they have forty minutes to find all of the items and answers and to return. If, at the end of forty minutes, they have not found all the items, ask them to return anyway.

4. Clarify any questions, synchronize watches, and send the trios off.
5. After forty minutes, note which trio came back first and which trio had the most items and answers. After they have all assembled, announce the trio with the most items and answers. [If you made it competitive, give out the prizes.] Keep the participants arranged in their trios for the next exercise.

6. Ask that the participants, while remaining in their trios, form a large circle.

7. Have the trios assign each member a number 1, 2, or 3 and tell the members to remember their numbers. Then have the participants discuss the following question in their trio: “How did it feel to do this exercise?” After seven minutes, poll the total group for a few responses. Briefly summarize the participants’ feelings.

8. Advise the group members that they will now form new trios by rotating in the following manner: participants assigned the number 1 will stay in their current seat, participants assigned the number 2 will rotate one trio clockwise, and participants assigned the number 3 will rotate two trios clockwise. After participants have formed their new trios, have them discuss the following question: “What was the most difficult item to find in this exercise and why?” After seven minutes, quickly whip around the room, getting a one- or two-word response from every member. Note any items that receive a lot of responses.

9. Have the participants form another new trio by following the same rotation schedule as before. Once new trios are formed, have them discuss the following question: “What was the most interesting thing you learned or found during this activity?” After seven minutes, have the participants share some responses. [You may or may not want to list these responses on newsprint.]

10. Summarize the responses given and have the group briefly discuss the value of this activity.

III. Sharing the Answers

A. Hearing the Real Story (Panel Discussion)

[Note: It will be necessary to have arranged for six employees (preferably from the departments represented by the new employees) who have been with the company less than two years to agree to spend forty-five minutes in the orientation session. Speakers will be asked to sit on a panel and to discuss very briefly three preassigned questions and then to answer any questions the group members might have. Each panel member will be asked to address the following issues in his or her five-minute talk: “What was the most helpful part of your orientation to this company? What do you wish you had been told as a new employee? Relate one funny/memorable experience you had as a new employee.” The room should be set up so that the visiting speakers are seated at a table at the front of the room and the new employees are sitting as if in an audience.]
1. Introduce this activity as an opportunity for new employees to get the “real scoop” from new employees. Explain that they will listen to the speakers as they share their experiences as new employees and that they then may ask any questions they have about the department or the company, especially questions they might not feel comfortable asking their bosses.

2. Introduce the first speaker and allow him or her five minutes to talk. Then introduce the second speaker, the third, and so on, until all six speakers have talked. Open up the floor for any questions the participants might have for any speaker.

3. After a total of forty-five minutes has passed, finish the activity by thanking the panel members for their time and excusing them.


[Note: This activity can be used to help employees learn companywide and department-specific jargon (that is, acronyms, project names, and so on); names and titles; or any type of information that has two parts to it, such as a name and its definition, and so on. A “sample” of a learning tournament sheet is provided as Form D. You will need to generate terms and names that are relevant to your company.]

1. Introduce this activity as an opportunity to learn more useful information about the company. Explain that this will be done in the form of a learning tournament.

2. Divide the participants into subgroups with the same number of participants in each subgroup. Distribute copies of Form D to each participant. Explain that Form D contains the information that will be learned in this activity. Explain the information on Form D to the participants.

3. Notify the participants that each subgroup is a team and that the members of each team will be competing against the members of all other teams in a short period of time. Tell them that they have several minutes to spend quizzing and coaching each other so that they learn as much of the material as they can.

4. After a reasonable study period (the length is up to you), notify the participants that each subgroup should choose one member who will represent its team. Each member will engage in mini-competitions with representatives from the other teams. For purposes of choosing even teams, ask that team members pick the person they feel knows the material best or is the most comfortable in competition. Have that representative be Member A. Ask that the person who knows the material second best be Member B, and so on, until every member has a letter.

5. Once the letters have been agreed on by each team, put the A’s in one subgroup, the B’s in another, and so on, until everyone has been assigned to a competitive sub-
group. Explain that each person represents his or her team in the competition. If a person answers a question correctly, he or she receives two points for his or her team; if a person gives an incorrect answer, he or she loses two points for his or her team. Explain that the same question will be asked in all of the subgroups and that the first person in each group to signal that he or she knows the answer will have the first opportunity to respond.

6. Each subgroup is to determine some kind of hand signal or “buzzing in” technique that can be used by the members in each subgroup to signal that an answer is known (that is, clapping hands, slapping the table, and so on). Explain that once the question is asked and the first person is determined, he or she will have five seconds to think about the response, and then you will call for answers to be given. Each person who buzzed in first will tell the rest of the subgroup members the answer; then you will reveal the correct answer. If the person was right, he or she receives two points for his or her team; if incorrect, he or she loses two points. Each member is responsible for remembering how many points he or she gets for his or her team.

7. Notify the subgroups that you will give half of the two-part information they learned and that subgroup members will be responsible for giving the other half. If names and titles are being used in the competition, for example, you might give the title, then the subgroup members must supply the name, or vice versa.

8. Spend ten minutes quizzing the subgroups. Reassemble the participants back into their original teams, and then ask each member how many points he or she got for his or her team and keep a tally on newsprint. Add up the totals and congratulate the winning team.

■ IV. Closing Activities

■ A. Heart Check (Subgroup Discussion; Materials: Newsprint with Previously Identified Concerns)

1. Retain the subgroups from the previous activity. Introduce this activity as a reconsideration of the concerns the participants identified at the beginning of the workshop. Display the complete list of concerns mentioned as well as how many tally marks each received.

2. Explain that some of these concerns might have been addressed during today’s workshop and that some of them might still exist. Ask if there are any concerns that anyone feels have been erased. If someone mentions a concern, then ask the following “Of the rest of you who also checked this concern as one you agree with, how many of you feel that this concern has been resolved for you?” If the number of hands in the room do not match the number of tally marks, the concern still exists for some
and should not be removed from the list! [Note: This method of gathering information keeps the environment safe for those whose concerns still exist, because they do not have to identify themselves as the ones still experiencing the fear. With this method, no one in the group will know who had the concern but did not raise his or her hand.] If some concerns can be eliminated from the list, fine; otherwise, leave them on.

3. Divide the remaining concerns among the subgroups and instruct each subgroup to brainstorm possible ways that an individual or a group of individuals might reduce the concern. Have the subgroups list possible solutions on newsprint.

4. After fifteen minutes, ask that the subgroups post their solutions on the walls. Encourage the participants to walk around and look at the solutions.

5. Reassemble the total group after about five minutes and invite the participants to ask questions about solutions they did not quite understand or would like more information about. Then invite someone from the appropriate group to respond. Note all the possibilities for positive action that can be taken by each person in the group to make his or her new job a positive experience. Encourage the group members to help each other as they progress during the next few weeks.

■ **B. Making a Difference (Writing Task; Materials: Form E)**

1. Explain that reading solutions and implementing them are two very different tasks, with one being much easier than the other. Tell participants that one way to ensure they take the necessary steps to make their job experience more positive is to create an action plan of the steps they need to take during the next week to accomplish this task. Explain that, by actually writing down things they are going to do, they are more likely to remember to do them.

2. Distribute copies of Form E and explain that this is an action plan for this group. Go over the elements of the action plan and encourage participants to take five minutes to complete the statements. Encourage participants to be optimistic yet realistic when they write down the actual steps they are going to take this week and not to expect too much of themselves. Once they have finished, if time allows, have them share their action plans with their partners seated next to them.

■ **C. Capture the Moment [Group Picture; Materials: Camera**

1. As a final event, have the participants form a group so that a picture of the orientation class can be taken. Explain that this has been a memorable experience for you
and you hope that it has also been the same for them; therefore, in honor of the occasion, the memory will be preserved on film.

2. Take the picture. If possible, have the picture posted on the employee bulletin board or somewhere prominent in the company.

3. Thank the participants for their attention and hard work and wish them good luck in their new jobs.
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FORM A

List of Possible Famous Fictional Friends and Families

Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Scotty, Dr. “Bones” McCoy
Peter Pan, Tinkerbell, Captain Hook, Wendy
Moe, Curly, Larry, Shemp
Archie Bunker, Edith Bunker, Gloria, Meathead
Harpo, Zeppo, Chico, Groucho
Lucy Ricardo, Ricky Ricardo, Ethel Mertz, Fred Mertz
Charlie Brown, Linus, Snoopy, Woodstock (the bird)
Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie, Gonzo
Robin Hood, Maid Marian, Friar Tuck, Little John
Mice, Cheshire Cat, Queen of Hearts, Mad Hatter
Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Pluto, Donald Duck
Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, Tweety Pie
Snow White, Grumpy, Sleepy, Dopey
Donner, Dasher, Dancer, Blitzen
Morticia, “Thin g“, Gomez, Pugsley Addams
Winnie the Pooh, Tigger, Piglet, Eeyore
Batman, Robin, The Joker, Cat Woman
Superman, Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, Clark Kent
Lone Ranger, Tonto, Silver, Scout
Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, R2D2, Darth Vader
Hawkeye, Hot Lips, Klinger, Radar

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Sample Questions for Information Search

1. In what year was the company founded?

2. How many branches (divisions, departments) does the company have?

3. Where is the company’s home office?

4. Who was the first president (CEO) of the company?

5. Who is the current president (CEO) of the company?

6. What was the company’s net profit last year?

7. How many employees work for the company?

8. What is (are) the company’s main product(s)?

9. Who is the parent company?

10. How many people started the company?
Sample Scavenger Hunt

Instructions: The following is a list of items that can be found somewhere in the company. Your team is responsible for finding the items or the pieces of information listed. You will have forty minutes to travel anywhere necessary in order to complete the list. Once you have found all of the items, return to this room. The following ground rules must be obeyed at all times!

- Team members must stay together at all times.
- No running, loud talking, or unruly conduct.
- No sharing of information between teams.

Find the following items (these items should be modified to suit your company):

1. Business card from the director of marketing.
2. The signature of the secretary to the vice president of sales.
3. An 1–9 form from personnel.
4. A sample of a product produced by the company.
5. The middle name of the operations manager.
6. The name of the individual on the poster in the reception area.
7. A fork from the kitchen.
8. The color of the shoes of the executive secretary.
9. The number of plants in the Finance Department.
10. The number of rest rooms (and their locations) in the company.
11. An organizational chart from each department represented on your team.
Sample Company-Wide Memo

TO: All Personnel

FROM: Joe Trainer

DATE: October 25

SUBJECT: Orientation Workshop

The company will be holding a new employee orientation workshop for the employees who have recently joined our company. During this workshop, participants will have an opportunity to “explore” the company, finding items that will provide fun and yet informative information about our company. This activity, involving all participants, will take place around 1:00 p.m. and will last approximately forty minutes. It is quite possible that participants will be approaching you for some piece of information about the company or the company’s personnel. Please be courteous and cooperative, as their first impression of the company is just as important as that of our customers.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Sample Learning Tournament Information

IS—Information Systems

Annual Review—Performance Appraisal

“TEAMS”—Name of employee newsletter

Joe Frank—VP, Production

AXG—Largest customer

“MAD”—Minutes A Day suggestion system

HR—Human Resources

EI—Employee Involvement

CSR—Customer Service Representative

Joan Pauley—VP, Operations

Job Grade—Range of pay for a particular position

PO—Purchase Order
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FORM E

Action Plan

Instructions: Complete the following statements.

1. One fear that I have about starting my new job is

2. Three ways of dealing with this fear that I learned today are

3. One step that I will take this week in order to make my new job pleasant and productive is

4. Some of the most helpful information I learned today is

5. Names, departments, and phone numbers of a few friends I made today that I might contact later