

Report on Employee Orientation

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Attended - Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010

Perceived problem: (From Aug. meeting summary)

Members questioned the effectiveness of new employee orientation. Drawing on their own experiences, and what they see happening with their new employees, members mentioned that they were concerned about the disconnect between group orientation and the orientation that managers should give their employees. They were also concerned with the lack of additional information given during group orientation and the material covered in orientation. Members suggested some items to add to orientation, such as filling out the forms necessary to get computer accounts set up.

Orientation structure:

8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Meet and greet – introductions of who you are and where you work/will work

9 a.m.

Collect new employee orientation checklist (attached)

Explanation of IDs, Medical visit and E-verify procedures (I-9 forms and documents)

9:30-10 a.m.

Employees visit medical for check-in, Key & ID office to get their IDs and then Users' Office to submit their identification and work authorization documents

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Watch video "We are Fermilab" – video explaining a little about Fermilab and its diverse community

Explanation of sexual harassment policies at Fermilab

Watch sexual harassment video

Watch time card training

Interactive game reinforcing policies learned (checklist) and presented information

Tour of Recreation Facilities

12:30-1 p.m. break for lunch

1 p.m.

Safety training (see attachment)

2 or 3 p.m. (they had technical difficulties during this training, so employees have to come back for safety training on Monday, Sept. 20)

Released

What is provided in orientation:

Literature:

Payroll form for charity deduction

Welcome card from Pier

FermiLink mentoring card

EAP information

FMLA information

Recognizing/preventing sexual harassment

literature (generic, badly copied brochure with

no information on who to report sexual harassment to)

Argonne Credit Union information

Fermilab Recreation Office information

Payroll tax status determination

Technical publications policy

Training:

Safety and GERT
Sexual harassment
Time card training
Diversity video
- an interactive game to reinforce training

Tours:

Received a tour of Recreation facilities
Could sign up for a tour of the laboratory – new employee tours take place the first Tuesday of the month

Other:

Key&ID
E-verify
Medical
Benefits help – a benefits representative came to provide guidance on forms and selection

Perceptions and suggestions:

A lot more is offered than what was originally thought. Orientation has changed greatly from even a few years ago. While most of us remember the majority of a day spent doing paper work, employee orientation now lasts less than a full day and covers more. Employees are released in the early afternoon following safety training.

Note: The day we attended, training personnel were experiencing technical difficulties with the computing equipment and network. This resulted in the sound and visuals not matching in the videos and lack of presentation of safety training

Materials provided

Perception: Employees do seem to get more information than thought about the laboratory.

Suggestion: Some of the content provided should be of a much higher quality. While the materials provided in the employee information packet are all good resources, they do not give information that will help the employee navigate their daily job/life at the laboratory. We suggest that orientation staff add the following to each packet:

- a map of the site
- a fact sheet or sheets about the laboratory (what we do, etc.)
- a handout about the Service Desk/how to get computing services
- a handout about how to do timecards
- a guide to frequently used acronyms around the laboratory and context
- a list of important phone numbers (security, emergency, Service Desk, Employee Relations, Visa Office, Housing)
- reminder/information about tours
- the "Who does what in HR" brochure
- web information: how to find out what you need to know (WDRS pages, Fermilab at Work page, Fermilab Today)

Also, all materials should be of good physical quality. The sexual harassment brochure provided was badly copied (faded, words on different pages don't line up, etc.)

Videos

Perception: On both DVDs ("We are Fermilab" and sexual harassment) the sound and visuals or video are not in sync. Not having the sound and visuals line up looks really unprofessional. It does not send a good message when the world's second-highest-energy particle physics laboratory cannot provide working technology or material for training. Time card training video was 25 minutes long and painful. Video had math errors, told the viewer to disregard error messages that popped up and walked through worst-case time card scenarios for hourly employees who might have separate task codes and those who might be called in for emergencies. It did not explain how to handle salaried employee time cards. Video also neglected to tell watchers how to get to Fermilab's timecard webpage/time card system. Video also neglected to tell viewer how to get help. The orientation staff member present recognized the video offered no valuable information and gave employees his contact information in case they needed additional help figuring out how to enter the time cards.

Suggestion: Get computing issues fixed/order new DVDs. Also, replace time card training (suggestion made to both Orientation staff and FTL personnel). Video should be about three minutes long and should include how to find time card site, how to log in, how to enter information, how to save and who to call for help.

Personnel

Perception: The complaint has been voiced by some that the orientation staff member does not dress professionally enough to represent the laboratory. Employee was wearing Fermilab polo shirt, jeans and sneakers. Shirt was not tucked in, but clothes were not oversized. Employee has previously worn "stylish" oversized clothes. While the employee does talk a little fast at times, he has a welcoming manner, is friendly and willing to help employees with whatever they needed.

Suggestions: In terms of attire worn at the laboratory, jeans and a polo shirt seemed very middle of the road and we had no problem with it. It certainly was not offensive. However, if putting our best face forward was the goal, then tucking in the shirt could be recommended.

Time

Perception: While the information covered in orientation was largely good, there were a few things that might not be the best use of employees' time.

Suggestions: Remove the interactive game from the agenda. None of the employees present at the agenda wanted to play and most didn't. Also, the game did show that employees do not remember what they learned or did not read policies before arriving. Use the time to go over policies that employees were supposed to have read or on how they can get more information. It would be a good use of time to give Fermilab's mission statement and an overview of what we do here. It would also be very useful for new employees to fill out computing forms for their accounts during the morning, so that accounts might be created by that afternoon and employees might get computer access earlier. To save time, recruiters in their correspondence could request preferred usernames so managers could request computing accounts before the new employees even get to the laboratory.

Good managers/supervisors

Perception: Managers/supervisors who are experienced at hiring people and who hire a lot of people, set good examples. Of the close to 15 employees in the orientation, only one manager (of two employees present) came to orientation to meet their employees. This small gesture – stopping by to introduce themselves and give information, including a card, made a big impression. When orientation ended, employees were released to report to their workstations, although many might not know where that is.

Suggestions: Managers/supervisors or a designated representative should stop by to meet new employees, either at specified break time, lunch or when orientation ends. Supervisors or department or group representatives should walk employees back to their work stations and give employees a tour of work area. Even if new employees have interviewed in that department that doesn't mean they know where it is or how to get there. Someone should show them where it is so that they can report to work that afternoon or the next day.

Additional information

Perception: Once employees leave group orientation, they are on their own. WDRS personnel feel that their orientation work is done, but there is a hole that exists between group orientation and getting to their workstation. See example of [manager above] Employees do not leave knowing where to go for more information or what resources are available on the Fermilab webpages.

Suggestion: Again, employees need to be escorted. Also, a brief web introduction should be part of orientation. Along with explaining what a services account password is and how to get it, show employees how to find the WDRS website, and the different websites they should know (Fermilab home page, Fermilab at Work, timecard).

Follow up

Perceptions: Once employees leave group orientation, the orientation responsibilities lie with the individual supervisors. If supervisors and managers don't continue to orient that employee, that employee is on his or her own and has no idea where to turn.

Suggestions: Orientation personnel should follow up with both employees and supervisors at each stage of the checklist, or make sure there is an orientation checklist completion mechanism in existence in order to make sure that the employee is getting the information he or she needs.

What we learned about orientation and "HR":

Orientation is a two-part process. The first part is the group training; the second is the orientation the manager/supervisor is supposed to give the employee. Managers/supervisors get a **four week** checklist (attached) of orientation activities/information that they should provide to new employees. They get this from their client engagement meeting, the meeting they have with HR at the beginning of the recruitment process to identify the skills and qualities they are looking for in a candidate.

We learned that many managers do not look at or complete this checklist and there is nothing in place to encourage them to do so.

We learned that there is a two body problem that can happen when managers attend client engagement meetings and then don't pass that information, or that checklist, on to the new employee's supervisor.

The WDRS website is a wealth of information. A few clicks down the information can be outdated, but the information is there. The problem is that no one knows that it exists or where to look for it. WDRS does not seem to be communicating that they have such a resource or how people can get to it.