

## TIPS FOR TRAINING STUDENT EMPLOYEES

The training process can be a rewarding experience for both the supervisor and the students. Supervisors play a key role in students' future employment success and should make every effort to encourage student employees to develop characteristics of good judgment, dependability, initiative, and responsibility.

The immediate supervisor should set up a training session with the student. This training session will normally occur on the first day of work. The supervisor and the student worker will review the student's responsibilities and the student will be introduced to the people she/he will be working with. The supervisor should not assume that the student knows what is to be done, but should go through the work procedure and explain everything in detail to the new worker.

Asking for feedback is the best way to make sure that instructions are being understood.

It may be useful to have a short manual available to the students explaining duties and responsibilities, or at least a check-list of the duties to be performed.

Supervisors should supply students with the names and positions of the department's staff, and explain to them the working conditions such as breaks, meal times, and how and to whom to report absences or tardiness.

Additional things to cover are:

- Health and safety practices
- An orientation to the other offices and facilities in your building.
- Office dress code (if applicable)
- Time card due dates (and changes in these dates during holidays, end of school term, etc.)
- How students should monitor their total hours worked so they do not overwork their award.
- How to coordinate hours if the student is working for more than one department on campus.
- Procedure for recording hours worked (daily, on time card, before leaving work site is recommended)
- Performance standards (the supervisors expectations)
- The need for confidentiality when dealing with student and staff records and information.
- Who is the alternate supervisor if the main supervisor is not available.
- To whom should the student address problems or questions.
- Be prepared in advance for the new employee, have the work-station ready for them.
- Be sure all Human Resources paperwork is in order prior to starting the student to work.
- Make introductions to key staff and provide a tour of your department (don't assume that they know where the bathrooms are)
- Give the individual a good general breakdown of their position, it's role and responsibilities, point out the good features of the job and why their job is important to your department.
- Encourage the employee to ask questions and make suggestions right from the start.

Remember, adjusting to a new workplace is difficult enough even if you have had some work experience. For many students, their student job is their first work experience. What seems obvious to you, may not be obvious to the student.

Emphasize that this is a REAL job, and can give them skills and recommendations toward their future employment endeavors.

# THE FOUR STEP SKILLS TRAINING METHOD

## STEP 1: Preparing to train

Before beginning the training, the trainer must:

- 1) Identify the best procedure for performing the job - one that minimizes costs, learning difficulty, errors, and safety hazards.
- 2) Analyze the Job
  - Identify the tasks involved
  - Determine the key points and any potential areas of difficulty
  - Define the performance standards for each step, so that both the trainer and the learned will know when the job has been done right.
- 3) Prepare the workspace. Be sure that all necessary equipment, materials and supplies are available in the training area, and that the area is properly arranged.

## Once you have prepared to train the employee, here's how to implement the Four Step Skills Training Method

Put the employee at ease. Use an informal approach, it can put employees at ease and in a mood to learn.

Describe the job

Find out what the employee already knows about the job

Familiarize the employee with the work area

Position the employee so that they can see or do the operation effectively

Build enthusiasm for the work to be performed

## STEP 2 Demonstrate and explain the job

Use the proper names to describe and materials, forms, tools or equipment necessary to perform the work. Be brief and concise where possible.

Give a general overview of the task - its purpose(s) and steps involved.

Demonstrate the procedure in order, step by step, describing it as you go, and explaining how you want the job done.

Connect new ideas to old ones. Point out relationships to familiar things.

Go slowly, instruct at a rate that allows the learner to comprehend the task.

Be sure you are being understood, pause between steps, ask employees to describe how they see the whole job fitting together

Explain simple things first. Stress the positive. Stress key points.

Demonstrate the task second time, summarizing as you go.

Ask questions of the learner.

## STEP 3 Let the employee do (or practice) the job

### Have the employee do the job.

Note where the employee needs more instruction

Give frequent, specific, and accurate feed back on the employees performance

Give corrections in a calm and friendly way.

Praise specific successes

Ask questions that test understanding - e.g. "Why did you...?" or "What would happen if ...?" or "What you do if...?"

Have the employee continue to do the job or task several times, until you are comfortable that they can do it according to the standards you discussed at the beginning or without supervision

## STEP 4 Give them the responsibility for the job

Encourage further questions and follow-up promptly

Listen and accept what is said in a non-judgmental manner

Make constructive suggestions how they can improve job performance

Designate someone to give the employee further assistance if needed

Put the employee on their own

Check the employee's procedure and results periodically, tapering off over time

Give praise when they do the job well

## How to Follow-up

Walk around. Go to where people are working. Observe the progress of the job. Ask if there are any questions, or if they need any help.

Make a note of what you ask someone to do for you in the future. Make a note in your calendar to remind you to check back with them on their progress

Keep a list of all jobs to be done. Refer to this list to determine priorities.

Issue progress reports regularly.

### How to tell if more training is needed

#### **New methods are introduced or work procedures being started.**

Assignments are not being completed on time (are expectations realistic?)

Employees don't see the importance or purpose of what they are doing. There is a lack of pride in work performed.

Accidents are increasing.

Complaints and or grievances are increasing

Workers are asking numerous questions about the job

High turnover and absenteeism are prevalent

## RECOGNIZING GOOD PERFORMANCE

There are three main situations in which it is appropriate to recognize and commend good performance:

- 1) The employee has done something "above and beyond the call of duty."
- 2) The employee has performed competently and diligently over a time period.
- 3) The employee has improved his or her job performance.

## Characteristics of good recognition

**Timely:** Give recognition as soon as possible after the performance takes place. Immediate recognition is best. The closer the recognition to the good performance, the easier it will be for the employee to remember what he or she did, thus making it easier to duplicate in the future. The passing of time tends to reduce the effectiveness of recognition.

**Specific:** Recognition should be directed at specific behavior(s). What specifically did the staff member do that you are recognizing? To merely say "good job" doesn't say much. Being specific lets the staff member know what behaviors they should repeat in the future.

**Sincere:** Insincere recognition is meaningless and will usually do more harm than good. Your employees probably know you better than you think, and they will sense insincerity.

**Individual:** Recognition should be directed toward individual rather than groups. Not everyone makes the same contribution. If all share the same glory, the hardest working staff members may resent the fact that everyone was treated the same, and that you didn't notice the difference in their performances. If you give group recognition, it should be followed by individual recognition for specific achievements.

**Personal:** All people are different. Adjust the style and method of your recognition to the individuals being recognized. For example, some individuals may like public praise, while others would appreciate a private discussion.

**Proportional:** Match the amount and intensity of recognition to the behavior being recognized. Overdoing recognition for "small stuff" will make people question your motives. All good performance should be recognized, but in varying degrees.