

## Leadership Essentials Case Study

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### **Why are we doing this?**

Within Bournemouth University (BU) every new employee has access to a formal university wide induction and a new starters guide that has been designed to provide information about life at BU and assist employees in their new job. However, following discussions with our leadership group there were very mixed feeling about the effectiveness on these and if both managers and new starters were getting the most out of the experience.

It was felt that inductions that were carried out on a local level were (or could be) much more effective. However, it became apparent that the depth and detail of these occurred on a much more ad-hoc basis and varied greatly between departments with no formal University wide policy or guidance in place.

By looking closer at this topic we wanted to develop some ideas around best practice and how both managers and new starters could get the most out of the induction process on a local and central basis. We felt that if managers invested more time into the inductions and got to know their new starters and their motivations and drivers that this would prove helpful when managing them, setting targets and writing future appraisals.

### **What did we do?**

In order to gather data to support our theory, we carried out some initial research. It was important to gather the opinions of both new starters and line managers, so we undertook two separate activities – a survey of line managers and a focus group of new starters.

#### Line Manager Survey

We surveyed a selection of BU line managers for their thoughts on local inductions and also the value of understanding their new staff member's drivers and motivations at this time. 15 line managers from 11 different departments completed the survey. The main topics explored were:

- Structure of local inductions
- Content of local inductions
- Value of understanding new starter's motivations and drivers
- Sharing best practice

Full details of the results can be found in Appendix 2.

#### Focus Group

To complement the opinions of the line managers we organised a focus group of new starters from IMSRT and SportBU. There were two main outcomes that we were looking for from the focus group. The first was to understand the following:

- How well are the local inductions working in each team?
- What was considered useful and important?
- What was missing?
- What good practice can we identify?
- How well do the local inductions join up with departmental and BU-wide inductions?
- Recommendations for future local inductions

The second component of the focus group was for the new starters to complete two exercises used to help us identify personal drivers and motivations.

The first exercise was based on Frederick Herzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Factors and we asked each person to write down three things that most excite them in the workplace and three things that most demotivate them. The second exercise explored personal motivations and priorities, with particular reference to work-life balance. New starters were asked to rank work priorities and lifestyle priorities from a pre-defined list (see appendix 1) and then discuss the results

## **What did we find out?**

### Line Manager Survey

Key findings from the Line Manager survey were:

- 80% of teams have some form of local induction.
- 60% of these are formally planned and scheduled.
- Only 40% of teams update their induction schedule regularly.
- Only 20% ask for feedback from the new starters post-induction.
- Inductions are 100% focussed on providing information for new starters, there is no provision for managers to find out about their new staff members' drivers. However, over 90% of managers said they would find this useful.
- 70% thought they should gather this information either at the induction or the 12 week appraisal
- 100% of managers said they would benefit from best practice guidance pack for local inductions.

### Focus Group

Whilst the actual answers given by the new starters were specific to the individual and as such not critical to this study, a number of interesting points were raised.

New starters were happy to share information about their personal drivers and motivations with their line managers providing:

- It was confidential
- They had the reasoning explained to them clearly beforehand
- Line managers were also prepared to share

Interestingly, all new starters agreed that they would be unlikely to answer the exercises completely truthfully if they were asked at the beginning of their employment (i.e. at induction). They felt that they were much more likely to give the answers that "they thought their manager would want to hear" at this stage.

Only once they were more established in their role, had job security and felt confident in their position would they answer entirely truthfully.

### **What would we recommend?**

Having spoken to both line managers and members of the focus group there were a few findings and recommendations that we would make for the future. These include:

- Further research to identify which departments run inductions and the content and structure that these take.
- Feedback gathered from new starters to better identify their thoughts on the induction process and the support they received.
- Produce best practice guidelines and ideas for managers to adopt from departments who deliver a good standard of induction
- Introduce an induction timeline that includes an initial induction, a three month meeting with manager, a 6 month induction for the wider professional service and an annual induction of BU and the wider remit

Chris Davis and Debbie Timberlake, September 2014.