

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Congratulations! You have interviewed applicants for the job, conducted the required pre-employment checks and are ready to make an offer of employment. Typically, a verbal offer is presented to the successful applicant first (especially in a competitive job market) and then followed up with a written letter of offer, also known as an employment contract or employment agreement.

Verbal Offer

A verbal offer is conducted over the phone or in person by the hiring manager or a member of the human resources department.

For a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, the verbal offer can be in the form of an email, text or Teletype (TTY) to let them know you would like to make an employment offer and the written offer will be sent soon.

For a person who is blind or has a visual impairment, ensure the written offer is available in an accessible format including large print or as an electronic document (technology makes it easier for a document to be read aloud). Alternatively, the hiring manager could read aloud the offer and guide the person to sign in the appropriate space.

If an accommodation or workplace adjustment has been identified during the recruitment process, you can include this in the letter of offer. In this case, you can state it as part of your commitment to workforce inclusion of people with diverse abilities. For example, “Our business is committed to accommodating the needs of employees with diverse needs. To ensure that appropriate accommodations are in place before you begin work, the following has been identified: the ability to use a noise-cancelling headset while at work and to be assigned a workstation that is in a quieter area in the office. Please advise your manager of anything else we can adjust to help you do your best at work.”



ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES

A strong onboarding experience continues to build positive relationships that set people up for success. Support from supervisors - effective training, clear expectations, creating a sense of community - all helps employees to grow confidence. Being clear on the workplace culture is an important element of success. This leaves employees feeling welcomed, included and informed.

When employing people who live with multiple barriers, there is a high value placed on building relationships. Some people can be more challenging to support at first and may take more time from a supervisor. Much of the challenge comes from a lack of confidence or a lack of positive supportive role models. It's important to understand in advance if extra feedback and coaching is required and be prepared to work that into your approach.



Supportive Employer Top Tip

“Employees who experience barriers to employment such as addiction or mental health issues can be challenging to support because they may have needs that are different from those without barriers. I have learned that working with a community partner that is an expert in employment services for marginalized groups is really helpful.”

Post Offer / Pre-Start Date

Before your new employee starts, you have an opportunity to create a welcoming first impression and continue to build a positive relationship. Take this time to prepare all employees by doing the following:

- Send a welcome email to the new employee, confirm start date and time, who they report to on their first day and an orientation schedule for the first day or week
- Determine what if anything, needs to be adjusted to bring out their best and if required, have this in place in advance of the start date
- Provide all employment forms and required reading about the company
- Arrange for the things that your new employee will need on their first day (computer and access to systems and files, uniform if required, business cards, cell phone, etc.)
- Create an employee file
- Send an email to existing employees to advise that a new employee has been hired
Include information such as their start date, previous experience and, with the new employee's permission, any additional information that the employees should know



Inclusion Tip

Workplace Adjustments

Ask the new employee if they require any workplace adjustments in order to help them do their best work. Examples of an adjustment or accommodation might be a stand-up desk if the person has back pain, a quiet workspace to enable concentration, checklists for people who have diverse cognitive abilities, or an earlier/later start time to attend to any regular medical appointments. For a listing of accommodations that have worked for businesses, visit <https://askjan.org/>.



If the new employee requires a workplace adjustment or accommodation and has authorized the manager to share some information prior to their start date, arrange a time to share this information with other employees. Provide an opportunity for employees to ask questions, but only answer questions that won't violate the new employee's confidentiality and privacy unless you have the individual's permission. Including a subject matter expert, such as the job coach of a new employee who is neuro-diverse, for example, can help to ensure the information is shared appropriately.

First Day

The first day of a new job can be an exciting, but also an intimidating, experience. Make a positive first impression and help your new employee ease into the role by taking these steps:

- Make introductions to the other employees
- Assign a "buddy" for the first week to provide a tour of the workplace and answer questions about the job
- Review the job description and duties together, explaining more about your workplace culture and how things are done
- Highlight your inclusive culture and commitment to it as a manager

- Explain your expectations regarding job performance and how it is measured
- Be clear and specific about attendance and required procedures if unable to attend
- Check in at the end of the day – how did it go?

On the first day, plan to have a team coffee break or lunch to welcome the new employee. This provides an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other. If you are bringing in lunch, be sure to check for any dietary restrictions.





Supportive Employer Top Tip

“People who are entering the workforce after being unemployed and homeless are often shifting from a survival mentality to a professional mentality. Be clear right from the start about what is acceptable in the workplace and what is not. For example, in orientation review your requested notice period if an employee decides to resign, “If you give us adequate notice as you agreed to when you were hired, we can better prepare the team for your departure and support you in your search for a new job by acting as a reference”.

First Three Months The first three months of employment are often the most important. Here are some things to do during this time period to ensure the employee is set up for success:

Provide training and support

Assess progress and ask what more you can do to support learning

Document any challenges and the measures that have been taken to support them

The format of training may need to be adjusted to meet the learning needs of a person with a cognitive or physical disability, learning disorders like dyslexia or a person for whom English is a second language. This also provides an opportunity to take an innovative approach to learning which can often better meet the needs of many.





Inclusion Tip *Training*

Ensure training is inclusive. With diversity of people in your company comes a diversity of learning styles. Some people learn from performing a task, while others learn by picking up a manual and studying it. Maintaining an effective learning environment involves knowing the different types of learning styles and the best approach for each person.

Benefits of Job Coaches

Job coaches not only help and support individuals who encounter barriers to employment, they also support managers who have questions on what inclusive hiring might look like.

One of the most important aspects of any employment is the way that training is done, and this is especially true for people re-entering the workforce after a long period of absence, people with diverse cognitive abilities or other barriers to employment.

An effective practice is to use a job coach, either an internal employee who is supporting the person for a successful return to the workplace, or an external expert who is a specialized coach, trained on the unique needs of the individual (e.g. someone with expertise in coaching people with Down Syndrome).

Job coaches can help you and your employees by:

- Identifying clear strengths the person brings to the role, as well as areas where they may need additional support
- Communicating what adjustments are needed to bring out the person's best at work
- Working with the person to help them learn a new job quickly and well
- Developing task checklists or clear instructions to build a strong understanding for the role in a straight-forward way, and assist with onsite training
- Helping the manager, individual and coworkers navigate social interactions and encourage wider social inclusion
- Supporting the individual to get them started at work in a positive way

Some people require a job coach as they begin to learn the job and then again, if changes occur during employment. Ideally coaching lessons over a period of time. Building cohesion, communication and collaboration leads to successful and sustained employment.

