



From the Temp Desk

Induction: A critical conversation

The importance of Induction

"Induction" is the process that most companies use to welcome new employees into the business and to prepare them for their new role. Temporary assignees should be treated no differently and it could be argued that induction for temps is even more critical given that they need to fully understand their working environment, the triangular employment relationship and their employment conditions.

An effective induction process should be handled at the outset of the employment relationship and ensure understanding between the employer and the employee. All relevant information should be disclosed and temps provided with an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any uncertainty.

Some of the areas usually covered during a temp induction process include:

- Nature of employment including management of expectation in respect to temporariness;
- Explanation of triangular employment relationship, i.e. TES is the employer, not the client;
- Explanation of the temp's rights as an employee in respect to applicable legislative frameworks, i.e. BCEA/LRA or the appropriate Bargaining Council Agreement or Sectoral Determination including notice periods, payment in respect to overtime, or shift allowances;
- Understanding of how the different types of leave are accrued and how these may be taken, e.g. annual and sick leave or public holidays, or forfeited, in the event of sick leave or family responsibility;
- Disclosure of full assignment details like rate, notice period, working hours, payment cycle, dress code etc;
- Detailed explanation of any deductions that will be made including statutory (PAYE, UIF, COIDA etc) and those that apply to that particular assignment, i.e. provident/uniform etc;
- Clear explanation of payment process including temp obligations in respect to completion of timesheets, sign off by client, submission deadlines, payment periods etc;
- Provide detailed training in respect to any health and safety requirements;
- Understanding of the disciplinary (code of conduct) and grievance procedures;
- Communication channels so that the temp clearly knows who to talk to about what

As part of this induction process, the temp should be given their contract of employment, with all specifics explained, and asked to sign the necessary paperwork. The temp employee is entitled to a copy of this contract for their records. It is suggested that the temp also signs a form that may include the company's disciplinary code of conduct, that confirms that they have understood their rights and responsibilities as an employee and accept the terms of employment as laid out in the contract.

An Employee Handbook can be an excellent reference tool

Given that the session could be lengthy and create "information overload" for the individual, especially if this is their first working

experience or they have not been communicated with in their first language, you should provide them with a reference document that provides all of the information laid out during the induction session.

An employee handbook can be an ideal vehicle to do this. Employee handbooks usually contain information about the company's policies and procedures and employee rights. It can be an excellent tool to bring together all employment and job-related information that employees need to know such as leave application processes, dress codes, disciplinary and grievance procedures and policies in respect to training etc.

The employee handbook needn't be a boring legal document. Why not be creative in its design remembering to make it easy to reference and understand for even the most junior employee?

Tips for an effective employee handbook:

1. Keep it as short & sweet as possible;
2. Use plain language that is easy to understand;
3. Make it easy to use with good reference system;
4. Group things logically, i.e. a section on leave that includes their rights as well as the process for applying for leave;
5. Use this opportunity to promote your company and the opportunities you offer in terms of skills development, employee benefits, wellness programmes and career growth

Create brand ambassadors for your business

An induction process not only helps to protect the temp assignee but also drives greater compliance and benefit for your business. All of your temp assignees are brand ambassadors for your business and if they don't operate within the acceptable parameters established by your company or your clients' business then you'll likely lose the client and face a potential CCMA hearing.

Empower your assignees by providing with all the information and tools they need to follow the rules, be effective in their assignment and to develop their career prospects as well as your TES reputation.

Temps clearly don't understand how we operate

Feedback from the dedicated temp call centre established in January 2011 as a joint venture between CAPES and FEDUSA, clearly indicates that temps are unsure of how TES operates. Many of them believe that the TES is deducting money from them unfairly or that the difference between the hourly rate paid to them and the one billed to the client is the "fee" that the TES puts in their pocket.

Although these misperceptions are just that, mis-perceptions, the uncertainty and lack of education of temps is creating the impression in the economy that TES are exploitative and taking money from workers. As an industry we need to be sure that not only are we compliant but that we effectively educate and empower our temp assignees to ensure that they are advocates of the industry and not contributing to the misperceptions that threaten to see the industry banned or overregulated.

By introducing a temp assignee induction programme and developing a reference guide you can ensure that all of your employees are aware of their rights, operate in accordance with the law and your company policies and procedures and are good ambassadors for your brand.