

Dow Corning Buddy Program

Why A Buddy Program?

The intention of a buddy program is to ease the new employee's transition into the new work environment. The program is only involved with providing a single point of access to operationally necessary information. This makes it different from a mentoring program which seeks to aid employees in their personal and professional development. A buddy program is intended to shorten the period of time it takes for a new employee to feel more at home with the company by helping them understand the organizational culture and politics. A buddy helps to decrease the stress of "fitting in" by providing access to someone who is both familiar and comfortable with the culture, attitude, and expectations. Armed with this resource a new employee can navigate in a new work environment and can begin to build a professional network.

Who Does A Buddy Program Benefit?

A buddy program requires participation from the hiring manager, the designated buddy, and the new employee. A buddy program benefits all participants. For the hiring Manager, their interaction with the new employee is freed up to deal with added-value, work-related issues not low-level, operational issues. For the buddy, they become actively involved in making the company a better place to work, making the new employee more productive, gain additional recognition by the organization, and add more dimension to their leadership skills. For the new employee, the initial confusion and uncertainty is greatly reduced; gaining insight about the inner workings of the company is expedited; they begin to add value more quickly, leading to increased confidence, self-esteem, and greater productivity. For the company, in the short-term the workforce is happy and productive, in the long-term turnover is lower and there is less need for recruitment, therefore building a stronger team. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

How Long Does A Buddy Program Typically Last?

Typically a buddy program lasts from three to six months depending on the relationship. The program operates under a 'no-fault' termination system. If either the buddy or the new employee request, the buddy program immediately ends. No reasons necessary, no discussion, or blame assigned.

The Buddy Program At Dow Corning

Dow Corning is recommending a voluntary Buddy Program to aid new employees during their first three months of their employment. The Buddy Program is part of Dow Corning's new orientation program for new professional employees. The objective is to shorten the period of time it takes for a new employee to feel more at home with Dow Corning by helping them understand the organizational culture and politics. This will enable new employees to fully integrate into the Dow Corning culture and grow their professional network. The three key participants in the Buddy Program are the hiring manager, the buddy, and the new employee; each participant playing a part in building a stronger Dow Corning team.

Process

1. New employee reviews buddy program guidelines, discusses with manager, and decides to participate in the buddy program.
2. Manager selects appropriate buddy on the basis of similarity and the needs of the new employee.
3. New employee schedules initial introduction meeting with buddy to decide on the frequency of meeting and the topics to be covered.
4. Manager meets with buddy and new employee to follow up on the effectiveness of the buddy program once a month and performs an evaluation of the program at the end or after six months.

Manager Responsibilities

- Assign an appropriate employee within the department to act as a buddy for the new employee AFTER the new employee decides to participate in the buddy program.
- Assign the buddy on the basis of similarity or affinity with the new employee. Considerations for assignment include:
 - College or university attended,
 - Home town,
 - Gender,
 - Age,
 - Type of degree/discipline, and/or
 - Race/ethnicity/nationality.
- Meet with the buddy, review responsibilities, answer any questions about expectations, and document the additional buddy responsibilities on their PIP.

- Follow up on the effectiveness of the buddy program by periodically checking in with the new employee to assess how well they are adjusting to the environment.
- Assign appropriate tasks from on-boarding checklist to the buddy.
- Ensure open lines of communication with both the new employee and the buddy to support the buddy program's effectiveness.

Buddy Responsibilities

- E-mail new employee before first day to begin networking.
- Complete assigned onboarding checklist tasks to prepare new employee's tools and resources and to assist the new employee in integrating into Dow Corning culture.
- Introduce new employee to co-workers to assist in establishing networks.
- Show new employee where to get equipment and supplies.
- Take new employee to lunch and make sure that they do not eat alone the first few weeks.
- Explain unwritten rules to educate the new employee about Dow Corning's business structure and company strategy.
- Check with new employee daily to see if they need support or have questions.
- Ensure open lines of communication with new employees while respecting confidentiality.
- Answer questions on an as-needed basis.

New Employee Responsibilities

- Review buddy program guidelines, discuss with manager, and decide to participate in the buddy program.
- Ensure open lines of communication with buddy and manager to support the buddy program's effectiveness.
- Schedule regular meetings with buddy to ask questions that may have come up since last meeting but were not urgent.
- Follow up on the effectiveness of the buddy program by periodically checking in with manager to assess adjustment to the environment.

Buddy Program Evaluation Survey

Thank you for participating in our buddy program. This brief questionnaire is intended to help us in our efforts to have the most effective buddy program that will best meet everyone's needs. The contents of the questionnaire are confidential, and are not used for any other purpose.

Please return this questionnaire to _____ by _____ (date)

Please indicate which of the following apply, by circling the relevant number:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

I was satisfactorily briefed regarding my role in the buddy program.

1 2 3 4 5

I was happy with the support provided by each participant.

1 2 3 4 5

The frequency of meetings was adequate.

1 2 3 4 5

The content of our discussions was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5

The goals and objectives of the buddy program were met.

1 2 3 4 5