New employees take time to adapt to a new workplace. ‘’Buddying’’ enables a new employee to have a reference point as they learn company requirements. This will enable the worker to adapt to their new role with the support of a work colleague.

**Who is this activity aimed at?**

This activity aims to enable a new worker to learn company policies and procedures by buddying them with a competent worker to guide their learning process and provide a reference point when uncertain. At the end of this activity, the ‘’buddy’’ and the worker will have developed an understanding of how the buddying process will work for them.

**Outcome:**

Workplaces are busy and often when a new worker commences there are work procedures and processes that take time to communicate and develop in the daily work of a new worker. This activity allows a worker to gain knowledge and support from a ‘’buddy’’ during their learning phase.

**Preparation:**

A ‘’buddy’’ should be selected who willing wants to support the new worker and who has the skills to clearly articulate and /or demonstrate processes and procedures in a positive manner. Consideration should be given to how and when this will occur in the early learning phase to ensure both workers feel productive and valued.

**What will you need?**

Time should be allocated to define the roles together and to have regular opportunities to induct the new employee into the operating environment.

## Buddying in the workplace

The workplace buddy’s purpose is to help the new employee settle into their workplace and become part of the team. The role of a workplace buddy is to:

* show the person around the workplace and introduce them to other staff
* help the person understand what behaviour is expected in the workplace
* be a point of contact for when the person is not sure who to ask for help
* recognise when the person may need assistance and take appropriate action.

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| --- | --- |
| **A buddy should ….** | **A buddy should not….** |
| * Explain your role as a workplace buddy * Be friendly and approachable * Be aware of cultural differences, particularly in regard to communication styles * Show the new employee where to find help * Encourage the new employee to come and see you * Set boundaries for disclosure of information * Set times for regular catch ups and stick to them | * Get over-involved in the new employee’s personal life * Encourage the new employee to become reliant on you * Encourage gossiping or pass on prejudices * Be commanding and patronising * Allow the new employee’s manager/supervisor to use you to perform disciplinary action * Feel unwanted when the new employee no longer needs you |

It is important to understand the difference between a workplace buddy, coach and mentor to ensure the right support is provided and roles are not confused.

* A **workplace buddy** is solely involved in providing one-point of access to necessary information, helping the individual to understand the organisational culture, and settle into the workplace.
* A **coach** is someone tasked with developing an individual's job-specific skills.
* A **mentor** seeks to assist the individual with their development, both personally and professionally.

Some useful examples of buddying policies in organisations:

<http://w2.vu.edu.au/induction/resources/Induction_Buddy_Criteria_and_Checklist_V2_March_2009.pdf>

<http://www.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu/hr/documents/managerguides/BuddyGuidelines.pdf>

<http://www.communitywest.com.au/training-a-workforce-development/workforce-development/retention-motivation-and-support/buddying-and-mentoring-programs>

## Activity

Develop your own process for buddying in your workplace. This may take the form of a timetable of activities both formal and informal. Discuss this with the new worker and come to an agreed process and timeframe. Review and update program as it progresses to ensure it reflects what need to be achieved.