# Preparing for Day One: Welcoming Your New Employee

Taking time to build a positive relationship between you, your new hire, and your team   
will for provide a foundation for success, productivity, and retention.

So get Day 1 off to a good start!

You can think of the suggestions in this resource as conversation starters, but in full disclosure, not all of these suggestions are literal conversation starters. These suggestions are intended to serve as ways you (the manager or direct supervisor) can help your new employee survive their first day on the new job and hopefully head home afterward with a smile on their face.

1. **Send a Warm Welcome Email to Your Team,   
   and Copy the New Person.**

**DON’T BLOW IT!**

**New hires typically decide within the first 30-days whether they want to stay in their new position. Invest time and effort now!**

**Things to Avoid on the First Day**

**Oh, That’s Today?** Not being prepared for a new employee’s arrival is a huge mistake. Be sure that their workplace is set up with everything they need. Don’t make them feel like they are an afterthought or a nuisance. Their arrival is a big deal. If you’re not prepared it sure won’t look or feel that way.

**Sink or Swim!** Plan for Day 1 and be sure the new employee is not left to fend for him or herself—for lunch, finding the breakroom, figuring out email, etc. Even if you cannot personally assist with all of Day 1, be sure you have a buddy to help make sure the new hire is not left wondering what they should be doing or, worse, wandering around the building in search of a restroom!

The day before the new person starts, send an email to your entire team, copying the new person. The email should be upbeat and welcoming. It should provide a brief introduction of the new person, their role, and a few resume highlights. During the new person’s first day, invite your team to stop by and introduce themselves. If you are able to plan a team breakfast (lunch, coffee, cookies or whatever makes the most sense for your unit), use the email as a reminder of where and when you’re having the welcome event. Your new employee will have a positive message waiting for them when they first check their email. Additionally, your team will be reminded of the new person’s arrival and will now have their name and email address.

1. **Meeting Before The Meeting**.

Prepare a team packet, binder, or collage of the key staff with whom your new employee will work. Don’t just use sterile organizations chart or list of names and titles. Provide photos and personal information about the team. Walk through the binder and offer a positive comment about each team member. You want to help the new employee remember team members and also have a positive first impression. Hearing you praise each team member sets a great tone and will help the new employee feel engaged and excited about meeting their colleagues.

1. **Culture Shock.**

**DON’T BLOW IT!** *(con’t)*

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**Things to Avoid on the First Day**

**Setting the tone as a “tough boss”.** Using scare tactics or taking an usually hard line with a new employee on the first day just doesn’t do any good. Plenty of employees need structure and guidance and sometimes even firmness, but not on the first day. Even though you are the new employee’s leader, you’re still on the same team. Instead of instilling fear in your new hire, you will be better served earning their trust and respect. You’ll have to earn that, you can’t demand it.

**That’s Offensive.** Don’t offend the new employee by forgetting their start date, their name, being late for your first meeting with them, blowing off any other obligations—like lunch or taking them on an office tour. You want to show appreciation and respect. If you set a negative tone on the first day (even if inadvertently), the new employee won’t forget.

*“Employee orientation centers around and exists to help the individual employee, but it is the company that ultimately reaps the benefits of this practice.”* Michael Watkins, author of *The First 90 Days*

Spend some time sharing your vision for the team. What are you attempting to accomplish and achieve as the leader?   
If your area has core values, a mission statement, strategic goals—share these items and explain how this is important to you, as the leader, and explain how the new person’s role and work will help realize these goals.

1. **Quick Wins**.

Identify a few short goals the new person should be able to quickly achieve. It is important for a new member to have some initial successes—even if some goals and projects may take substantially more time. Building a quick record of demonstrable progress and success will help the new employee feel both empowered and capable.

1. **Express Genuine Interest in the New Employee as a Person.**

If you are able to take the new employee to lunch on the first day (solo or with other members of the team), don’t spend the whole time strictly discussing business. Take some time   
to get to know the new employee. If they are new to Florida, find out what they like to do in their free time and offer suggestions for places to go and things to do in our area (a list of restaurants, museums, and parks is a good idea. Cross-reference places that provide [GatorPerks](http://hr.ufl.edu/benefits-rewards/gatorperks/discount-program/) discounts to UF employees!). Give them time to talk about themselves (a familiar topic) and not just their new role (something that may be feeling a bit overwhelming). Expressing interest and getting to know your new employee is good investment of time and energy.

1. **All’s Well, End’s Well.**

End the day with a friendly conversation. Check in with your new employee toward the end of the day. Ask them how everything went, whether any additional questions have come up. Thank them again for accepting the position and express your excitement for them being here. Acknowledge the first day, week, even first several months will require some adjusting. Express your optimism that they will settle in and do a great job. Make sure they head out at the end of the day feeling like they made the right choice and had a fine first day.