Iwan Thomas Associates
Business Coaching and Management Consultancy

Law Matters Newsletter

November 2011 Vol. 3 No. 4

Defend Your Practice

Last month's Law Matters promised a follow up this month on defending your practice, but that is turning into something longer than a newsletter. Watch this space.

Induction

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Law Matters of May 2010 discussed some of the issues surrounding the first 90 days in a new job, with particular reference to Mr Cameron. This edition deals with more basic issues.

Why Bother with Induction?

It generally takes time and effort, and therefore no little expense, to make an appointment. Having done so, it is best to make it work. If nothing else, it reduces the risk of having to go through the same process again within a few months.

Not losing a member of staff is not enough. One of the worst positions to have is someone who is not performing very well, but not badly enough to do something about it. It is worth spending some time and trouble to enable the new employee to settle in quickly and learn how to do the job properly (and not some approximation of it). Understanding the culture of the firm, and what it is trying to achieve also facilitates success.

Having a proper induction process also helps with compliance. This applies particularly to health and safety policy, but also to ensuring that the law on terms and conditions is complied with, and to money laundering. Often efficient and timely collection of information also smoothes making the first payment of salary.

Since employment is a two sided relationship, the induction process also gives an employer the opportunity to demonstrate the wisdom of the employee taking the job.

How to do it

"Sit by Nellie" is no longer enough. Yet Nellie still has an important part to play in acting as a mentor, whether formal or informal. The medical profession has traditionally followed the principle of "see one, do one, teach one" with some success. Whatever induction system you use will never cover all the issues.

1. Prepare a formal induction process for all staff, but tailor it to the status and needs of the individual. First jobbers, returners and the unemployed all have particular needs. Those of a lateral hire partner will be different (though they may still require the basics).

2. On Day 1 include the mandatory health and safety training, and do not forget the basics of where the toilets are, and how to get a cup of coffee. Include a welcome from the Boss – if

the new employee is not important, why are they employed? A brief introduction to the way the firm works, and what it is trying to achieve is useful.

3. Do the formal training on the IT system early, covering the basics on day 1 or 2. Stop the new worker picking up bad habits. Spread the rest over the next week or two, so that there is no risk of the worker being overwhelmed. Being able to use the training shortly after it is give helps to consolidate it.

4. Let them know what is expected of them in doing the job. There is nothing worse than uncertainty, particularly in the first days.

5. For fee earners, build in an introduction to major clients (and a chance to get to grips with handed over files). The client hand over needs to be carefully managed in any event: this a prime time to for clients to move elsewhere.

6. If you have several offices, arrange visits to the others, unless you are an international firm.

7. The fact that the induction process needs to be planned and recorded does not mean that it needs to be delivered in a formal and boring way. Variety can be built in. H&S can be face to face, money laundering training online, IT system training hands on, shadowing informal. And at some levels “find out for yourself” works, with appropriate follow up.

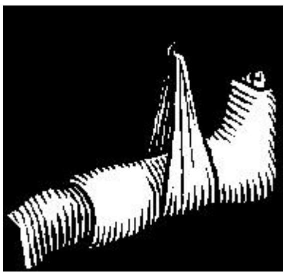
8. Induction should not be seen as a one-way street. It is also an opportunity for the firm to get to know the new staff member.

For a useful checklist, and for further information, see here http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/induction.aspx

Group Coaching

We will be launching a coaching group early in the New Year, as an additional means of supporting clients. Part of the benefit of group coaching is being able to share experience with others in a similar situation. Please email us at enquiries@iwanthomasassociates.co.uk for further details, and for a chance to shape the group.

Personal News – Broken Ankle Progress



Having been in plaster for 6 weeks, my ankle is healing, and I have reached the hobbling stage. Face to face coaching is still limited, I’m afraid, but telephone and even email coaching continues.

I am still not likely to be seen “out and about” very much for a week or two yet.

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You are unlikely to find a description of a breakfast menu!

This note is written as a general guide only, and is not applicable to every firm or circumstance. It should not be relied upon as a substitute for specific business, medical, political or legal advice.

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