

Improving Your Employee Induction

Our guide to creating the best
experiences for your new people –
including award-winning examples





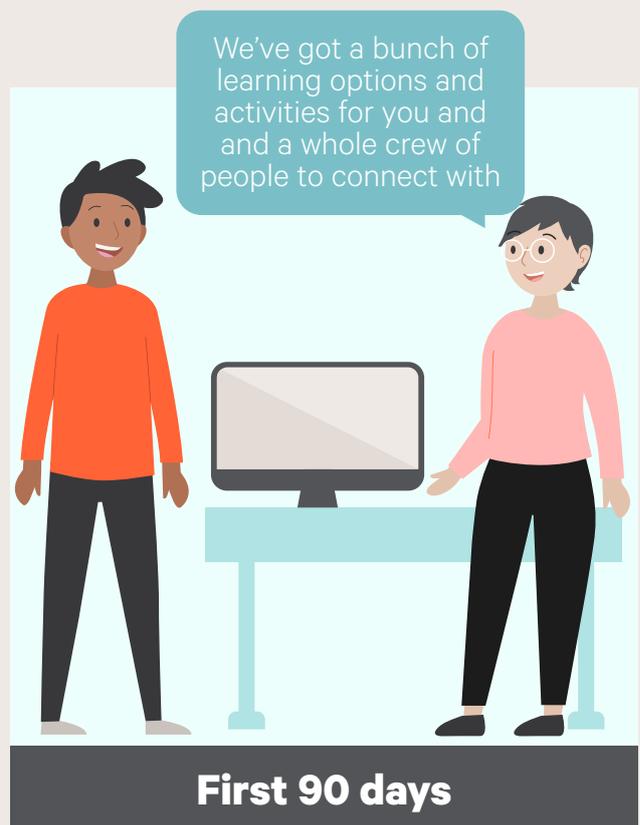
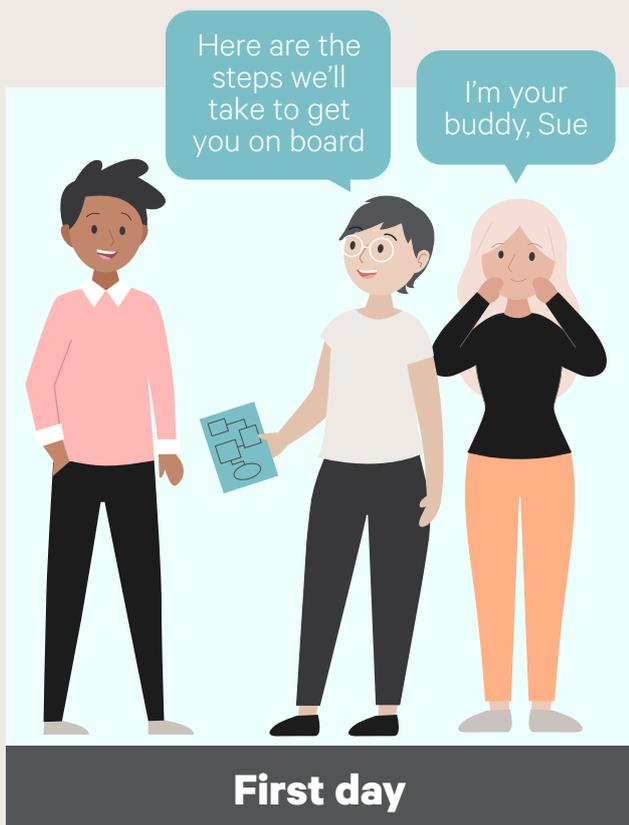
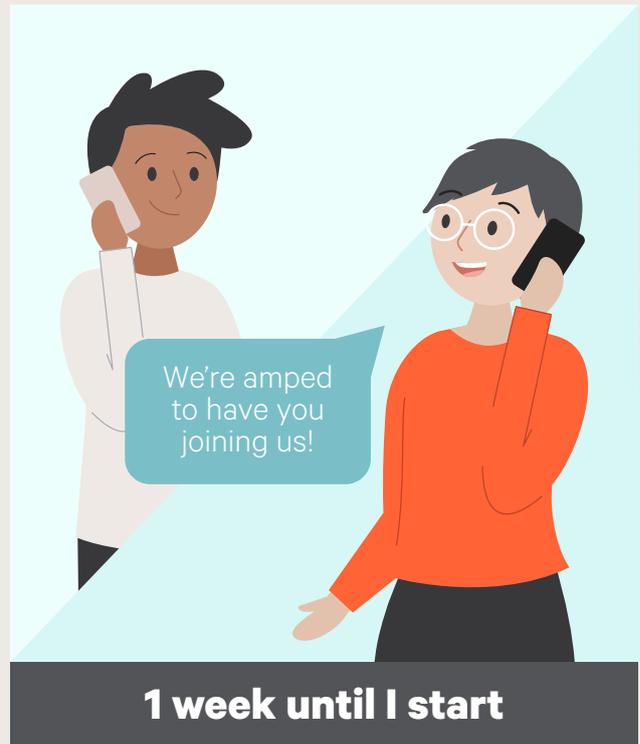
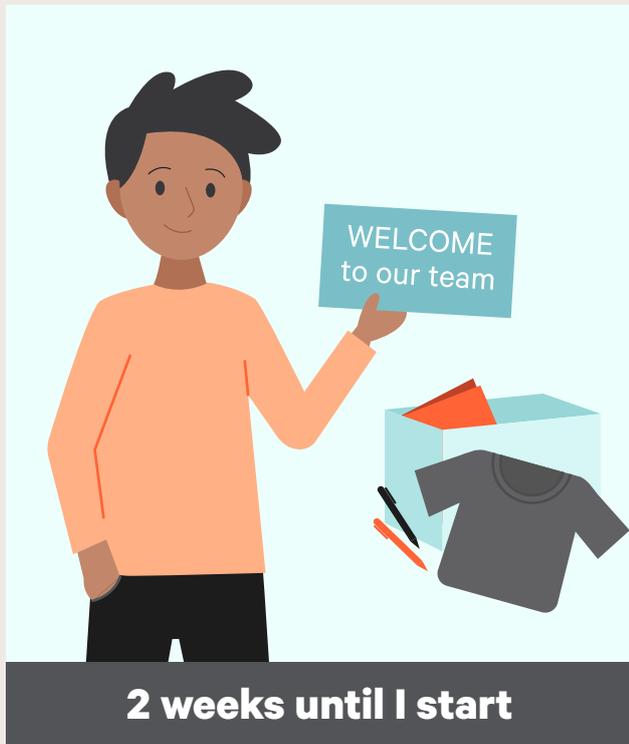
At Inspire we've created award-winning induction programmes for a wide variety of organisations. We've also had the privilege of talking to thousands of learners about their induction experiences and learnt a lot about **what works** and **what doesn't**.

While no two inductions are the same, there are some essential elements that are important to every programme. That's what this eBook shines a light on – how to create the best induction experiences.

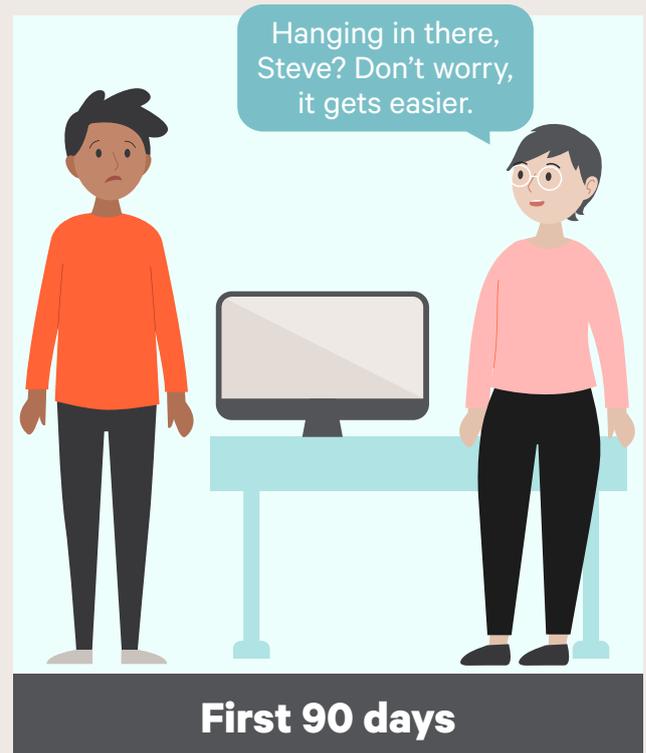
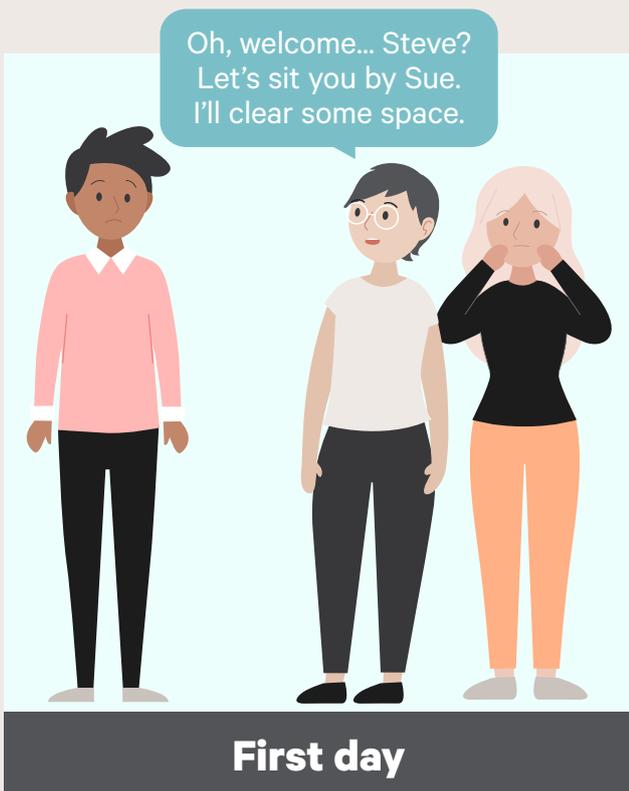
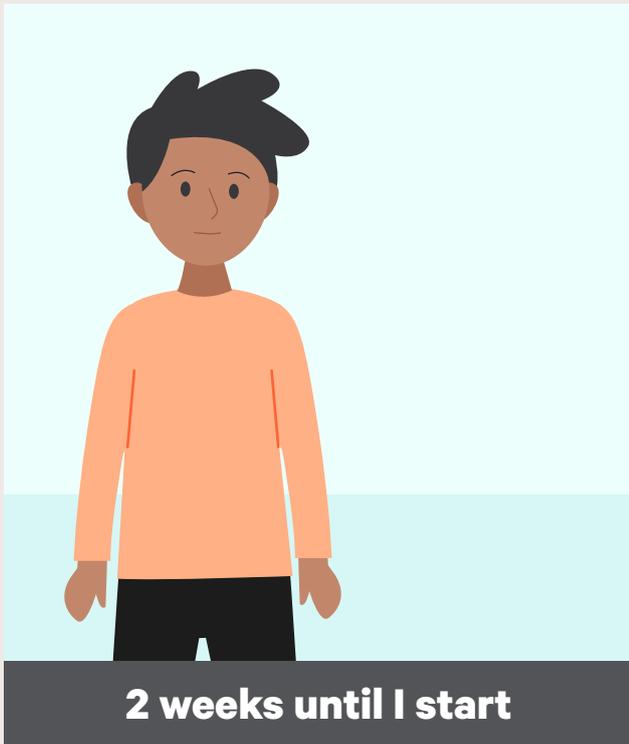
First impressions count

Your new employee's (from here on we'll call them newbies) induction gives them an initial insight into how your business ticks. This first impression is super critical.

When you nail it, you're very likely to produce a happy and productive team member.

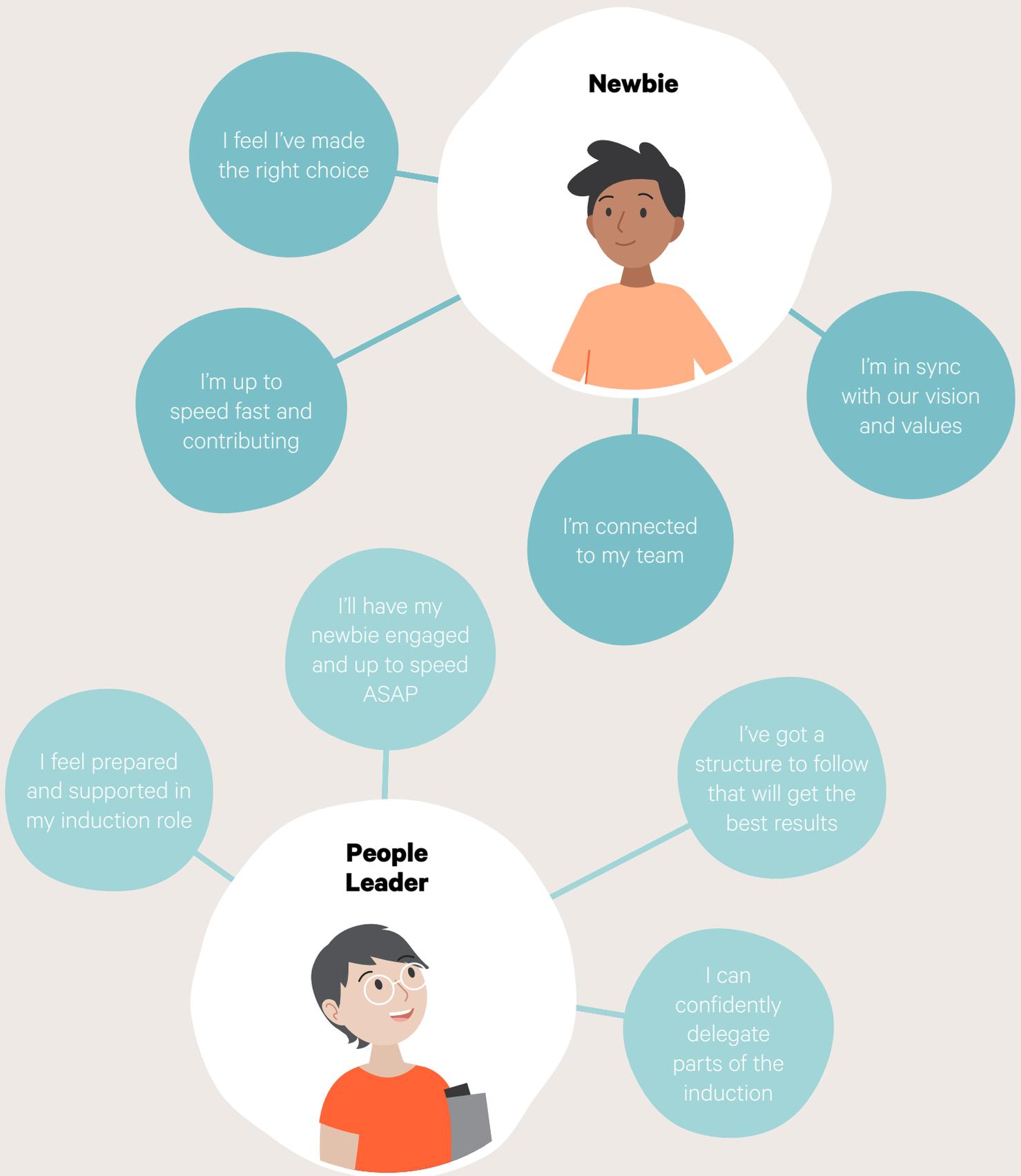


When you don't, it's really tough to get them back on track – in truth most newbies who go through a lousy induction never become fully productive and often leave.



Everybody wins

There are big benefits in getting induction right – for everyone involved.



**Buddy/
Mentor**



I grow my coaching skills

I play a key role in growing my team

I share my know-how and embed my learning

I learn from what the newbie brings to the team

We lift employee commitment and engagement

We lift productivity and drop turnover

We drop recruitment time and costs

**Our
Business**



We're an employer of choice

Five themes

There are five key themes that appear in every world-class induction we create.

Empower me



Share the journey

Check my progress

Make it self-directed and self-paced

Connect me



Support me

Build my world

Exceed expectations at every stage

Make it practical



Focus on critical

Get me doing

Show me what great looks like

Make it meaningful



Keep it real

Put the customer at the centre

Align me to our purpose

Keep us honest

Exceed expectations

This is the standard we hold ourselves to throughout the design of an induction – how can we surprise the newbie (ideally positively!) at every key stage. Imagine the engagement and momentum this will create across the programme.

Exceeding expectations doesn't have to be expensive, often it's the little things that make the biggest difference.

Five little things you can do before your newbie's even started...

1

Send them a card sharing the ways they'll make your team even better.



2

Invite them in for a coffee with their team.



3

Sort out all the 'hygiene factors' – desk, computer, building access, and an aligned support team.



4

Give them an induction journal and pathway that show how they'll be supported.



5

Make their first day a Friday – it's proven to provide a better first experience than starting on a Monday.



Deliberate and thoughtful action during the pre-start period will help your newbie engage with your organisation and feel good about their employment decision.



Empower me

We often hear newbies say that their induction was done to them (or worse, didn't happen at all) – meaning they felt they had little control. We flip this by empowering the newbie to take a lead role in their induction within a supportive structure – that's how adults like to learn. There are a bunch of ways to do this, here are a few...



Share the journey

Newbies can spend a lot of their induction worrying about how they're doing and what's coming next. This has a big impact on retention and stress levels. Here's what a typical induction emotional roller-coaster looks like.



- 1 Boom! I've got the job** and feel a million bucks because I don't know what I don't know. I'm confident but it's here that I need the most direction.
- 2 #%&*, now I know what I don't know...** and it's a lot. My confidence has taken a serious hit. My teammates are nailing it and I feel a long way from that. I need support and a reminder that it's normal to feel uneasy.
- 3 Ah, now I'm starting to feel better.** I've got a pretty good grip on my organisation and the basics of my job. Plus, I know who to go to for help. I'm working through my induction pathway and feel like I'm contributing. I'll still have some ups and downs but it's more manageable.
- 4 I rule.** I'm through my first 90 days and feel like a fully fledged member of the crew. I'm connected to my team and organisation, and while I still have heaps to learn, I'm getting there. I really appreciate all the support I've had.

We prepare the newbie by walking them through their induction pathway and the likely emotions they'll feel. It's important for them to understand that this is ok and normal – they'll have all the support they need along the way.

A clearly defined and well-communicated induction pathway, that maps out their first 90 days, shows your newbie that they're important to you and will be looked after. Following through on this will help them become quality contributors to your business sooner, and quickly become less dependent on the time of others.



AA Insurance's induction pathway is just the right mix of guidance and fun.



Make it self-directed and self-paced

Put the newbie in the driver's seat for their induction. They will be the least busy of all people, especially their managers.

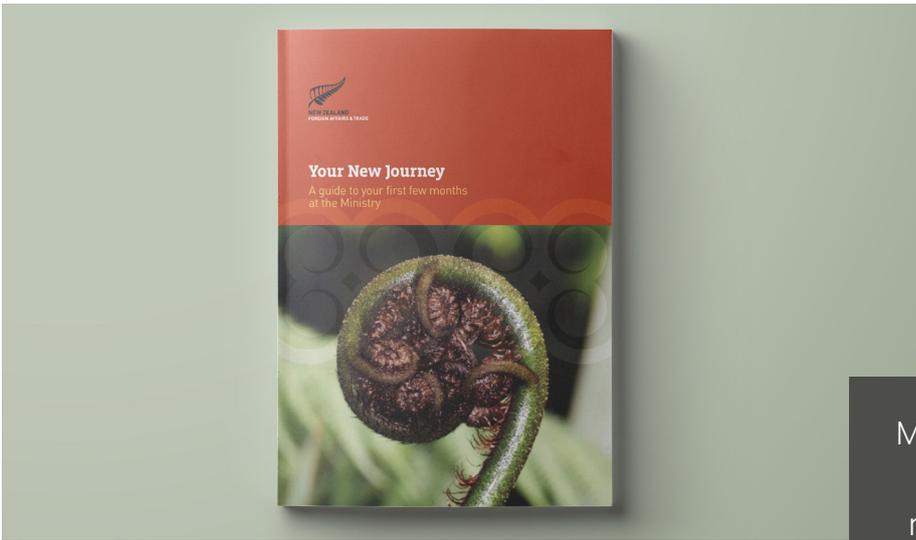
When you deliver learning at one speed there's always going to be those who find it too slow (and get bored) or too fast (and get left behind). A blended induction with a variety of group and self-paced learning is the better option. Online, and other self-paced activities, gives the learner more control – they can learn when they need it and return to the learning as many times as they like. Teach them how to fish (not literally), by giving them direction and letting them try things out.



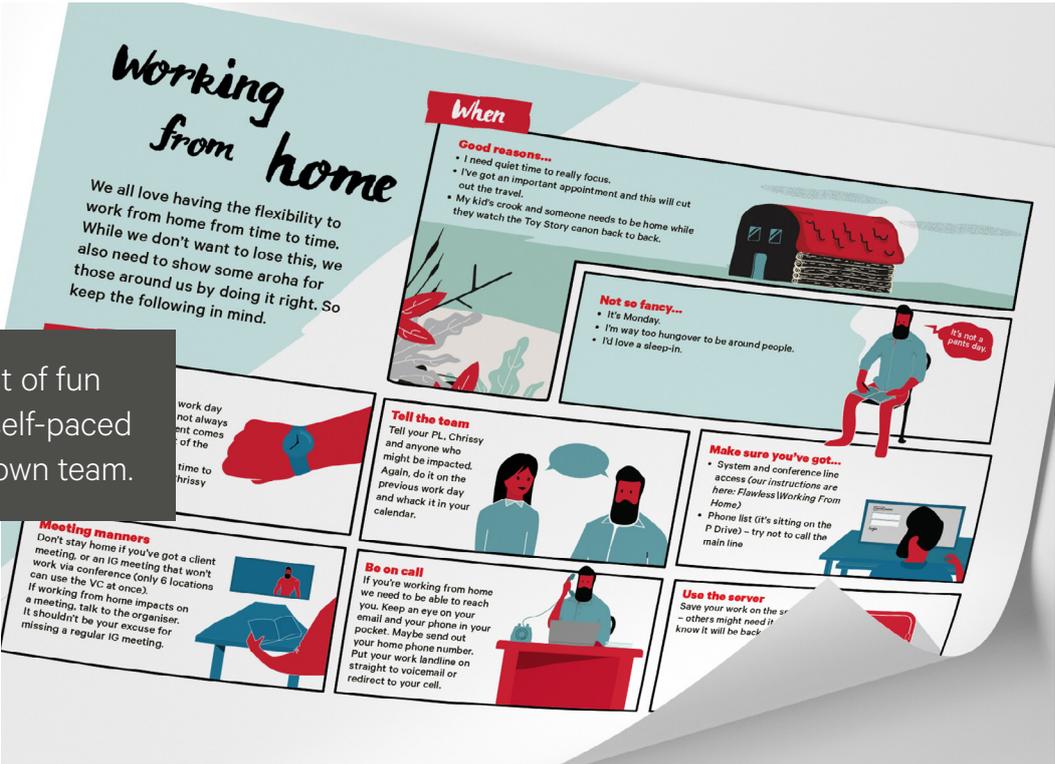
Transdev's induction module lets you choose how you want to travel. As you learn about their business, you also hear stories from their customers and staff.



The State Services Commission induction immerses new staff in their community using gaming.



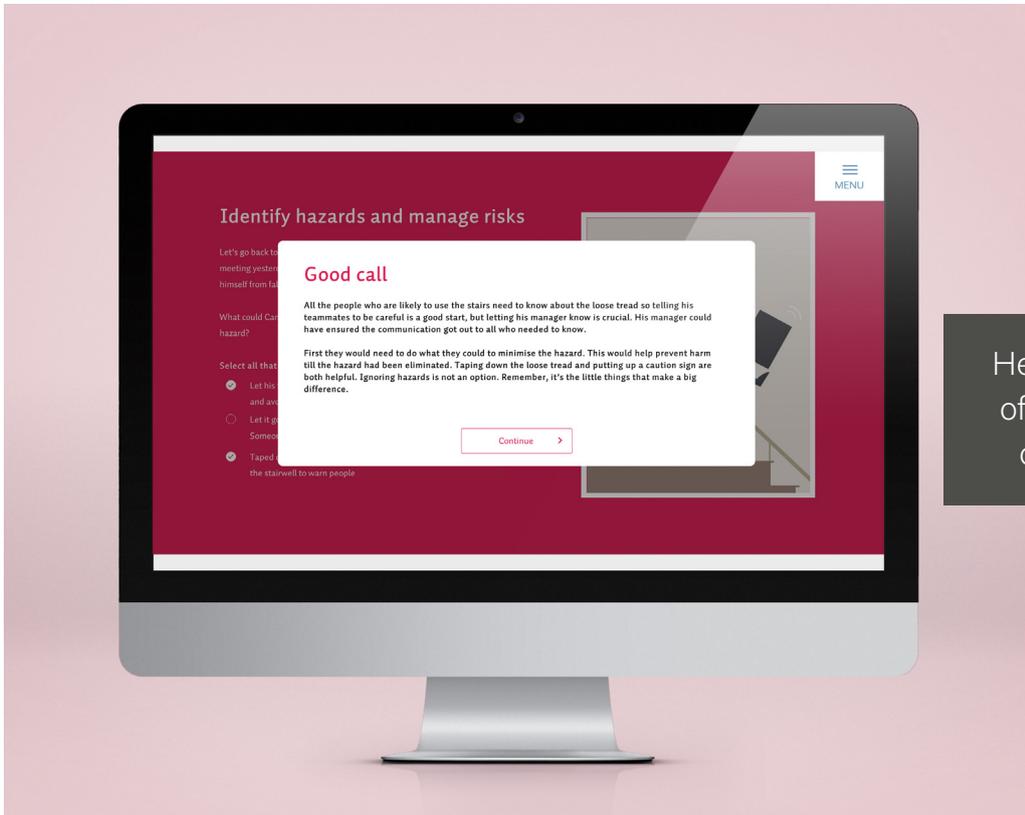
MFAT's induction journey for new people uses a rich blend of group and self-paced learning.



We had a bit of fun creating this self-paced guide for our own team.

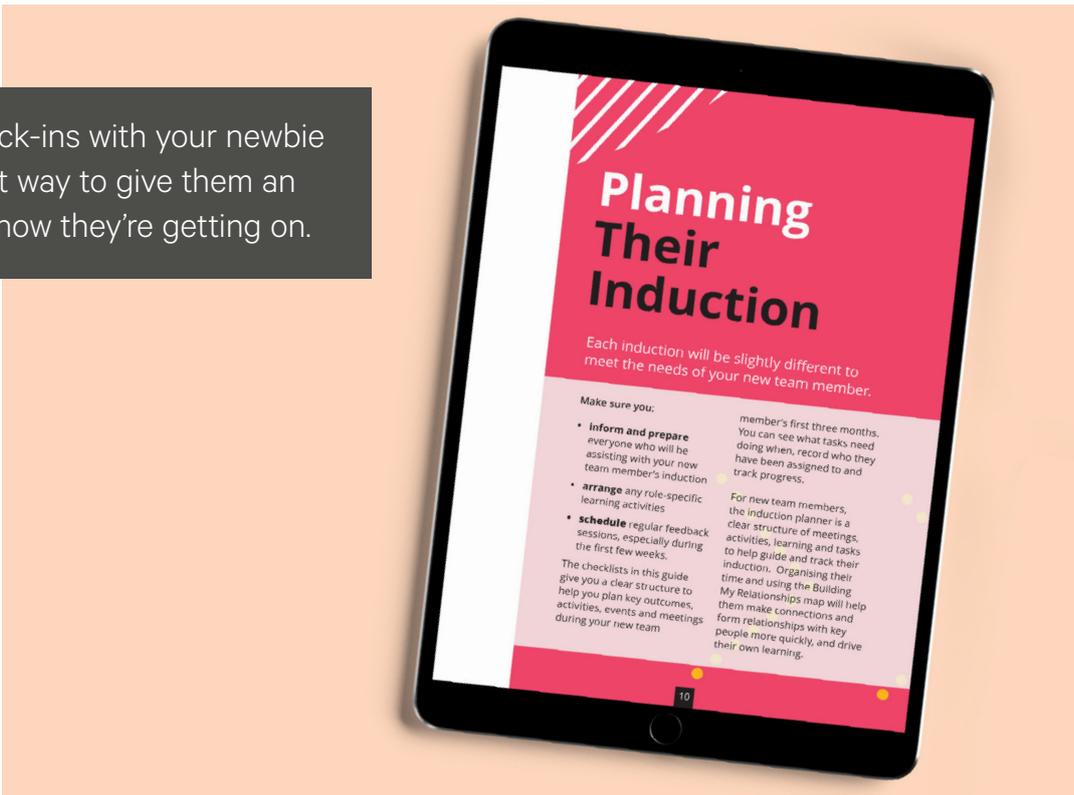
Check my progress

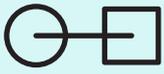
Adult learners love feedback, especially when they're new and unsure of how they're doing. We place this deliberately and regularly within the programme to give the learner important feedback on how they're going. We're also careful to connect them with their support team when they need help.



Here's an example of feedback in an online module.

Regular check-ins with your newbie are a great way to give them an update on how they're getting on.





Connect me

Whenever we ask a newbie about their favourite induction experiences they invariably talk about the friends they've made and the support they've received. Studies show that knowing and liking your co-workers is the biggest predictor of workplace happiness.

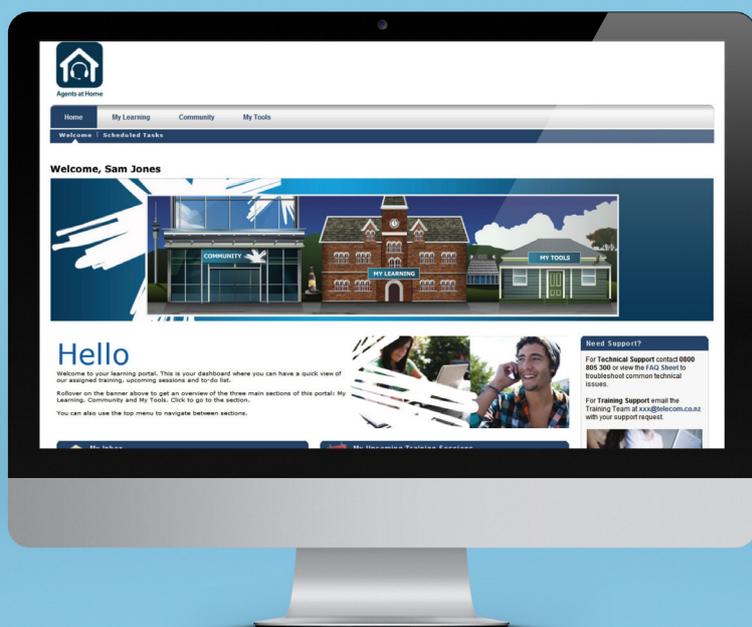
We know that it takes a community to induct a newbie so we make this an integral part of their pathway. This can include...



Build my community

One terrific way to connect newbies with their peers, particularly when they're spread across locations or work remotely, is to create an online community that promotes social learning.

In a nutshell, social learning is people learning from others. By creating an online community (commonly on your LMS – but it doesn't have to be), newbies will have multiple opportunities to interact with their peers and benefit from learning opportunities outside of the standard programme.



Spark's home of learning – with its 'My Learning', 'My Community' and 'My Tools' sections became an integral part of their award-winning Agents@Home induction programme.



The interconnected, interactive nature of social learning accelerates the rate at which critical content can be shared, digested and applied. Most importantly it's learner centric and allows learners to be expressive and interact with others in ways that are meaningful to them. They can connect and learn from collective experiences.

The social learning elements on the online community can include forums, blogs, news boards, leaders messaging, top tips, gamification leader boards, badges and webinars.

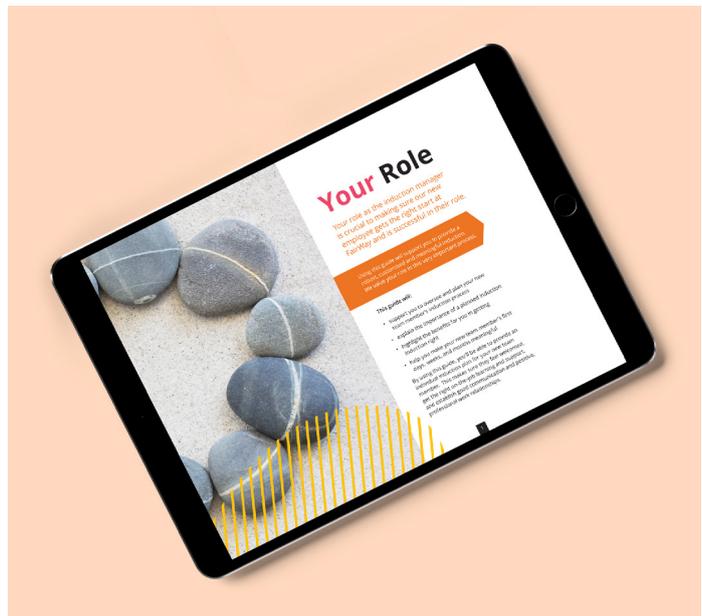
A simple 'Building My World' map is another great way to encourage your newbie to make connections.



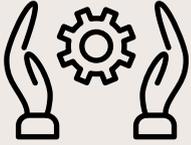
Support me

The most important people for a newbie will always be their immediate support team – especially their people leader and buddy. It's important to super charge this relationship with...

- **clear selection requirements** for these support roles – you want the right people in the job
- **role clarity and advice** – to make sure the support team understands their job and has been shown how to do it well
- **support huddles** – the support team should check in regularly to stay aligned, deliberate and consistent
- **a link from being a support person to career progression** – this is a role to aspire to and should be part of their development pathway.



Super charge your support roles with guidance and tips.



Make it practical

We often hear stories of newbies going through intensive induction programmes, some as long as 12 weeks, and then breaking down in tears the first time they're asked to help a customer. This is a pretty clear sign that their induction has not been practical enough. We aim to get newbies doing their job ASAP – with the right level of support.

Here are some ways to make it practical...



Focus on the critical

Newbies need context to embed and retain their learning, and make sense of their role. Through clever design, learning is given just in time with just the right amount in bite-sized chunks so it's easy to manage. You don't need to cover everything they're ever likely to experience in the job straightaway.

We use a reference-based approach, where the newbie learns how to find the information when they need it, because we know it's impossible to remember everything.

Show me what great looks like

It's important to make sure the learner knows what great looks like and has plenty of opportunities to see it. There are many ways to build this exposure to mastery into the programme e.g. buddy/team session, top tips and role model panels.

Get me doing

Most of what we learn about a job is done...on the job. Place the learner in the real work ASAP and enable them to add value early. Give them plenty of opportunity to practise and embed before moving onto the next piece of learning. The more you replicate the real world within an induction, the more likely it is that the newbie will succeed.

The self-directed element of an induction is a great way to stay practical, help the newbie feel in control and support them as needed.





Make it meaningful

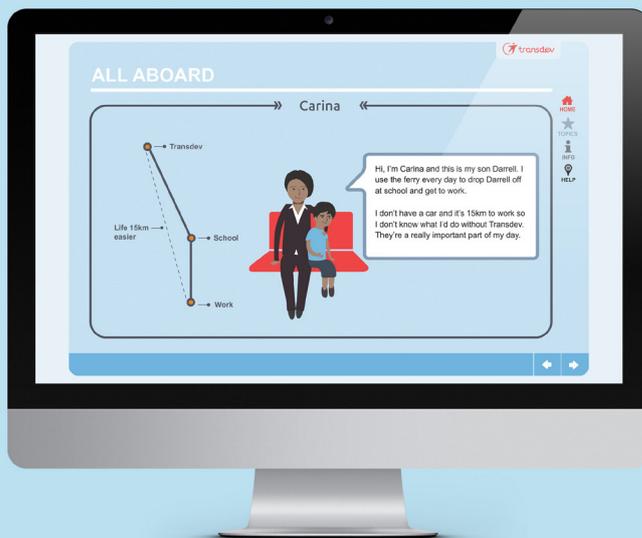
When an adult truly cares about what they're learning, they're much more likely to retain and apply it. Here are some ways to make it meaningful...



Put the customer at the centre

Your newbie will care about your customers...if they don't, you might want to look at your hiring practices. Great learning takes advantage of this using customer stories and scenarios that are rich with emotion and show the positive impact that your business has on their lives.

Pepper your learning with these real-world customer examples and constantly link the learning to meaningful experiences.



Use storytelling to help it stick – it makes information more elaborate and encoded and therefore better learned.



Keep it real

Relevancy is very important too – when a learner thinks ‘That could happen to me’ – it helps them to care. What we pay attention to is influenced by our memory; we use our experiences to predict whether we should pay attention. The more we keep it realistic and relevant, the more likely the learner is to link it to their own experiences, pay attention and remember.

Align with my purpose

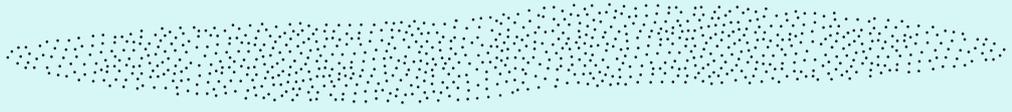
Give the learner opportunities to link your organisational purpose, values and strategy to their own beliefs and aspirations. When a newbie has a personal connection to their new workplace, and what they’re learning, it increases the likelihood that it will be effectively demonstrated.

Here’s a practical activity that allows newbies to reflect on how they’ll live their organisation’s values.



Keep us honest

When the induction period comes to an end, this is the perfect time to get feedback on how the newbie, buddy and manager found the process. Their feedback will help you identify gaps or where you could possibly do things differently.



Keen for some help to enhance the induction experience
for your newbies? Or just have some questions for us?
Get in touch at **info@inspiregroup.co.nz**.



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