Transcription - First Corporate Position

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we're going to explore what it's like on both sides of the selection process for a first position in a corporate role.

Right, so we've been for an interview, we wanted to hire someone, so I'll start with a corporate hat. We've spent a lot of time effort and money sourcing the right person, we've got the right person. They're coming through the door next week. So, what's our responsibility? How is that experience important? How should we make them feel when they get here? What preparation should we do?

Firstly, I think that will start before they come, communicating the fantastic news, but also what is going to happen when you arrive, what time to arrive, where to go, who to see you etc. That is only a part of it. You've all been involved in either something called onboarding, orientation, and induction and all of that. Processes, some organisations have them, some organisations don't. Some do them, but it's a tick the box and some really really put a lot of effort in. Why is it important for an organisation to take absolute care of this?

Firstly, it costs too much to hire and replace. Two, it's about retention and your reputation again, so you don't want to ruin that. Thirdly, you think about when you started working and how that felt, and how would it feel better? How would you make it easier?

Having said that, now we'll look at the individual. It might be your very first corporate role or it might be your first role in this corporation or small team, whatever it is, do not come expecting that everything is going to just fall in place and you're the recipient of this because you are the chosen one. You prepare how you go in to, engage and work to a plan. In other words, do your own planning of onboarding and induction whether they have it or not, prepare it in your mind. These days, I can reflect on at least 10 different programmes that I experienced over the years and they all have very, very strong points and can be done better. However, the terms have changed and you can even have an app. You can download an app that tells you about onboarding to self-manage or as an organisation to use. I don't want to go into that. I want to go into the purpose and how to use the once-off opportunity.

It's one off because this is your start in the organisation. You're not going to start twice. You're starting in the workforce and that's always once. So what do you do? And the thing is, forgetting the technical you can learn so much from, you already know about the organisation because you've got the job, you went for interview. So there's a lot to consider. But once you look at the mechanical things, if you like, structural things like have you got access, computer access? What's the compliance you have to learn beforehand? All the internet stuff that is available to teach you. And they are really important and must haves. But the key success factor is going to be people. And going to be people that you are in an immediate area working with, whether it is the management team, if you manage yourself or you have these, even if you don't have people working for you, you have these. And the department you're working in or that part of the organisation you're working in, how does it interact with other areas and how you go and meet those people. You just seek what's best for creating a time table and meeting those people to get to know them. They are going to be your success

factor because they're your network. They're going to be the people that you get to know, how they like to work.

So if you either receive services from them or you're providing services to them, or they might be that point of contact with an external customer, then you get to know the people.
And you take the trouble of tailoring your approach to make that an understanding for you, how it affects them and what are the key success factors for them. That can be within country, it could be out of country as well.Just think people in the broadest sense.

What occurs to me in all of that is, that from both sides of the table, you need to ensure that that first contact, that first impression that is made, is the one that you want to be the lasting one. Because there will be a judgement made in the first 90 seconds. Both sides, on the first day, you need to ensure, you know, if you're the one going in for the job, that you start the way you want to continue. So don't go in there, all dressed up if you're not going to do that every day. And if it's not you, you've been chosen for a particular reason. And if you were dressed appropriately at the interview, which we talked about in a different podcast, then the organisation is not expecting anything different of you. So don't be different on the first day. Be the way that you are going to continue to be and be genuine because that's what you'll need to get you through this first few weeks of activity.

From the organisation's point of view, the organisation needs to be the way it is going to be. When the new person comes in, they have someone who meets them at the front door, that they don't go, after going to the front desk and saying, "Oh, I'm here to start work today. I'm supposed to see x." Now, I know that it's daunting the first time you do it. And certainly after a few years of experience, you'll know that you can just walk up and you'll have the self confidence and the knowledge and the experience to be able to do those things. But first time around it is hard. You're moving from, in a lot of cases, you're moving from the protective environment of university or school or wherever it is and you're coming into a whole new culture, a whole new way of being.
So you need someone to hold your hand to go through that. You don't need someone, but it is better for the organisation and for you, if there's someone there. So as an organisation, I would encourage you to have the person who is going to have the most interaction with the new person, be the one who meets them. They need to have that contact. They need to have, initially it's their first mentor, you need to start. Some call it the Buddy System. Whatever it is, whatever works for your organisation, put that in place because it's going to pay you back in ways that you couldn't possibly imagine.

A lot of organisations put a lot of effort in doing this and also help to understand the area you're working in. There's different programmes and some of them are accelerated, graduates and all of that, the ones that you're going to make the future executives very quickly. There's so many good things about it, but one that I love is the fact that they get to work in all parts of the organisation, regardless of what their wish is where they want to end up, say, finance, human resources, sales, whatever.
But they work and there's a programme that gets them through that. I get that's a special programme and it's a big investment.
I think if I was starting again and already recruiting, I would do that at a much smaller scale for myself or for anybody I'm hiring.
Is it doable? Yes it is.Providing that you're willing to put the effort in and time and work with

your managers on the newbie. So I go and make myself take advantage of whatever the organisation has and then say, "I've done all of this, this is great." Now would it be all right if I put a programme together that allows me to work in different areas or observe the end user in different areas

if I manage that myself, without it interfering in my hours? So for example, you might say as a self-learning exercise, we spend a lot of time doing degrees, masters, etc.and that takes a lot longer, so if I said, "Oh, I'm going to spend an extra three hours a week across the week to do it," then work with different areas of the organisation. This is what my managers approval. This is what I'd like to do. Who would be the best person in your area for me to buddy with or observe or whatever. So I really think that would be something is doable and it doesn't take much time.

The other bit that I always like is a bit harder to do now because it's call centre exposure. When we got new staff, we got them to spend some time at the call centre and at the call centre they were just listening in. They didn't do anything, they just learnt directly what the customers are saying and how we handle it. In some cases, the compliments and in some cases, the complaints. Now a lot of those call centres are offshore but having said that, it doesn't mean you can't do it. Before we used to sit next to someone and put an ear-piece in. Now nearly everything is reported. See if you can get the sample of the recording, obviously with some sort of approval on the compliance side, and listen to it to get closer to that customer. So try to understand the organisation end to end, the purpose of the organisation, what each part of it's importance is, what effect or benefit it has on each other. This way, not only will it make your work more meaningful and you know exactly how it fits in, but it also for the future, it gives you ideas of what you have, the network you made in preparing and then saying, "You know what, I really would like to apply for a job after I've done this and done it and did it well for whatever, for months to years, whatever is right for that job. I do want to apply for a job in the area."

That's a lot on the actual work side of things. When I think back to when I first started, the first couple of jobs that I had,
the thing that I found the most reassuring and did me the most favours in a very personal sense, in a very immediate sense,
was that I had a little kit that I took with me that was my, "I will be productive from day one kit". That was basic stuff so I didn't have to ask people where the stapler's were, where the coffee mugs were, the scissors, all the things that you might need that you don't want to have to ask someone for as the first interaction that you have with people. So if there's an opportunity for you to do that, put a little kit together for yourself so that you've always got something and the other benefit of that is that you have things that are yours, so it settles you, it puts you in to place better.

The other thing that you can do along those lines, of course, if you're in the organisation, from the organisational point of view, is you have a pack that is the starter kit. Here's your starter kit, it's something that you can give them, it's a nice thing to be able to do on someone's first day, it's good for the person giving, it's good for the person receiving it. In that you have the basics that sets up their desk, so that if they need the access to their system, then their password, and their log ins and all of those sort of things,
there are little cards in there, the details of where the toilets are, where the, you know, just the mud map of the organisation,

so that you might have people who've never been in this geographic environment before, and now they know things about where stuff is. Those sorts of things can work on both sides of the table.

The other thing is, we start a new job, and we're very excited because we've done a lot of thinking beforehand, we've got through the interview, we have ideas, and we know that at the interview and in preparation, what's the critical things that are happening in the organisation where I'm going to be working. I'll give you the top three, and you think, wow, I can do this and this and this. That's fantastic, I've never ever lost that, don't try to do it all day one, and I think a lot of people are, at your first meeting, you know, trying to impress and then you sort of got nothing, but at the end of the week you'll get all your ideas and now they either made it or didn't make it, it doesn't matter. Why I'm saying that, is not to just keep things up, it's that, because once you get to know the organisation from the inside, you can tolerate it better. And it's combined with what you learn about the organisation, what they've tried and what you've brought with you, because you've got something to give and offer the organisation and vice versa. So take your time, so that you can even give more and more innovative ideas than you would if you just came in, say here's my bag of tricks and I've got 20 solutions and here they are.

So an extension of that, is thinking about, you know, we've asked you as starting the job to be positive, we've asked the person that you're going to be working with most often to be positive and represent the organisation well. What do we do for the team that you're joining, who has another new person, and in some case it'll be unknown, someone new, and you know, you're going to go through all this again, and can they just come in and do their job and not disturb me? So what do we do for the team to ensure that they are as positive about a new person and a new starting person, not just a new person, who might come with all sorts of other experience, but someone who's starting out. It's like, we've got the new kid in the class again. What do we do?

I think definitely rotate the buddy system and it's not a job, it's an honor. So you've got to say that the benefit of that is, how you can nurture your own experience in managing others and manage, loosely speaking, in saying, how do I help others? This is where you get to demonstrate teamwork, this is where you can demonstrate that you're doing this because it is a team thing to do and it's not always the same person, even if some people love to do it all the time and some don't want to do it, I would definitely rotate it, because you will get as much out of it. It also tests your commitment to an organisation because, I can talk about it in terms of the not-for-profit groups that I work with, we are finding that the retention rate of members is far stronger if they are teamed up with someone from the start, whether it's the person that introduced them to the organisation or not, but if we can align them with someone, skill levels for one group is a thing that works well, less skill with more skill, the synergy that happens and the ongoing positive response and then that spreads and the enthusiasm spreads and then they bring in someone new and so we get this sort of three or four tier structure of introducing people. And if you manage it well enough you don't get cliques, you just get groups of people who are enthused and who know others a little better than they know the rest of the group. The other big benefit, of course, is keep seeing things from fresh eyes. You've been there a while, whether it's four months or four years, and then you now talk to someone who has just walked in. That makes you think about new things and it makes you think about things that you took for granted and things that are falling by the

wayside, things that they might notice that you haven't noticed.

That's right. But also, nowadays, everybody's got a solution for this, but I remember when I first worked in one organisation I had to hit the ground running and I was going from meeting to meeting to meeting. I wrote nearly three pages, list-wise, of acronyms that I didn't know what they meant. I'm in the company and I thought it's okay, I don't get the context of it, but I need to understand it. At the time, somebody said, "Oh, we already started the document and you'll find it somewhere.But if you've got some more, we'll add it on and then we just keep building on it." Things like that are important so everybody knows what they're talking about. You're sitting there and you don't want to keep interrupting going, "What does that mean?" So you just note it and then you need someone to either ask or be directed where to go to find it.

I think we did talk in a separate podcast about your business language and not using your short hand, not using your business speak necessarily, that it wasn't always the case that people would, everyone, even in the organisation might understand it.
So that's another thing to be wary of, particularly if someone's starting out new. And it's not a thing to be waved at them saying, "Oh, don't you understand it yet?" It's not a right of passage. And I guess that's probably the one thing that we haven't talked about, haven't touched on, is that there is still, I know, in many organisations, a feeling that new people have to have their right of passage. They have to have their experience, they have to have these things go wrong, they have to be sent out to buy the spotted paint, whatever it is. And that just doesn't give you any return. It doesn't. And that's why, as a manager, a team member, whatever it is, if you make it, you're bound to make that first day, week, month, a good experience for a new starter, that would be a great thing. And then as a new starter, you're coming with lots of resilience and saying, "No matter what, I'm going to turn it into a great experience because I really want to work here. I want this job because I went for it. I'm going to make it a happy environment for me as well. So if everybody comes in with that attitude, you'll find a way.

Alright, we might leave you on a positive note. That's our spin on starting your first corporate job from both sides of the table.
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