

New Employee Onboarding: Buddy Program

What is a buddy?

A buddy is someone who partners with a new employee during his/her first 2 months of employment. While primarily responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working at NYU, the buddy may also offer encouragement and knowledge resources, as they help introduce the new employee to the NYU culture.

Key characteristics of a buddy include:

- **Communicator:** A buddy should encourage open communication. The buddy should provide relevant information to the new employee and encourage a process of continued, self-directed learning.
- **Role Model:** The buddy should be a model employee and exemplify NYU values.
- **Motivated:** The buddy should have a positive outlook on his/her work and use that perspective to help build self-confidence and loyalty in the new employee. The buddy should lead by example.
- **Strong Performer:** The buddy can help guide the new employee in many situations based on his/her experience and knowledge obtained in the work environment.

Why have a buddy?

The purpose of new employees being assigned a buddy is to help welcome employees and reaffirm their decision to join NYU. It provides new employees with a reliable, motivated, single point-of-contact for their basic questions regarding their work experience at NYU. It also helps establish orientation as a process, rather than a single learning event. Other advantages of having a buddy include:

- Build on the knowledge obtained in the New Employee Orientation and department orientation
- Enable new employees to become knowledgeable about department practices and organizational culture in a shorter period
- Ensure that routine queries regarding basic operational issues are dealt with expeditiously
- Reduce the initial confusion and uncertainty faced by all new employees.
- Maximize the productivity of manager/new employee meetings by allowing them to focus on job-specific issues
- Increase the new employee's self-confidence allowing him/her to focus

on adding value to the organization

What the Buddy Expects From their New Employee:

- The new employee will receive constructive criticism in good spirit
- The new employee will display a “coachable” attitude
- The new employee will display an eagerness to learn

Buddy Selection Criteria

Hiring managers are responsible for selecting a buddy for their new employee. Selections should be based on the following characteristics:

- Demonstrates strong performance
- Is given time to be accessible to the new employee
- Is skilled in/has knowledge of the new employee’s job
- Is proud of NYU and his/ her contributions
- Is a peer of the new employee
- Has patience and good communication and interpersonal skills
- Wants to be a buddy
- Is well regarded and accepted by current employees

What A Buddy Is Not

A buddy shall not be required to assume any of the following roles:

- **Mentor:** Someone, typically more experienced, who is involved with the all-round development of an individual (personal and professional).
- **Manager:** Someone responsible for the new employee's job performance. If queries arise regarding performance, disciplinary or policy matters, the buddy is free to give his/her opinion and advice on how to approach the situation. However, he/she is not in a position to resolve the matter. The new employee must be directed to their manager for resolution of the relevant issue(s).

Buddy Responsibilities

- Contact and meet with the new employee on Day 1
- Establish a rapport with the new employee
- Have lunch with the new employee at least once a month
- Act as an informational resource on policies and procedures
- Help socialize the new employee to NYU's guidelines, norms and culture
- Answer general/routine questions
- Make introductions
- Ensure an open communication between the new employee and the buddy, respecting confidentiality
- Follow up with the new employee on a weekly basis
- Suggested meeting guidelines are as follows:

Formal Relationship – 2 month

- Day One- meet new employee for lunch at Kimmel Marketplace on 1st day during new hire orientation
- Weekly meetings 5-15 minutes in duration
- Call/ email questions, as needed. Buddy to set acceptable perimeters.

Informal Relationship – Open

- The buddy can provide continued support beyond the 2-month expiration of the formal relationship if such support is warranted and welcomed by the new employee.

Tips for Buddies:

- Don't worry about being perceived as the expert. Focus your attention on the new employee
- Be patient: It takes time to develop a relationship. Don't try to cover everything right away
- Be positive: New employees will grow into their roles if given proper reinforcement
- Don't try to force a relationship
- Try to identify the new employee's personality and communication style and adapt accordingly
- Don't be judgmental. Simply offer feedback
- Maintain a good attitude and a teaching spirit

Having a Buddy is a Win/Win/Win Scenario

This offers significant benefits to the new employee, the buddy, and NYU:

Buddy Benefits	New Employee	NYU Benefits
Recognition as strong performer	One-on-one assistance	Increased employee motivation
Expanded network	Jump start on networking	Increased employee
Opportunity to motivate	Single point-of-contact	Enhanced employee
A fresh perspective	Knowledge of "how things really get done."	Shared quality work
Enhanced leadership and	A smoother acclimation	Increased employee

We encourage you to share this information with your managers. This information is also available in the Manager's Toolkit on the HR website. Contact your Employment Specialist if you have any questions!