2016

Federal Employee Orientation Programs Best Practices Research Project

Research conducted by the U.S. Department of State, Foreign Service Institute - Orientation Division

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Using previous 2015 research from the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Orientation Division combined with results from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Training and Development Listserve respondents as well as direct contact responses to this survey; FSI Virtual Fellow Dr. Diane Blankenship, Frostburg State University DBlankenship@Frostburg.edu and Gaia Hart, FSI Civil Service Orientation Coordinator HartGZ@State.gov conducted a survey across 30 Federal agencies of all sizes to capture best practices and actual practices in Federal employee orientation programs, their curriculum content, and evaluation methodologies.

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Executive Summary:

New employee orientation is rapidly becoming a focus of organizational success within the literature as noted by LinkedIn efforts, a noted leader in employee engagement, and recommendations for training processes in various industries from Federal government, private industry, and the medical community.

The evaluation and revision process is an ongoing dynamic process which continues to gather Level 1, 2, and 3 data from participants, analysis and interpretation of data, examination and trend analysis, and research to identify instructional techniques and resources to enhance the learning experience. The FSI Civil Service Orientation Coordinator collaborated with FSI's first-ever Virtual Fellow as part of the Department's new program incorporating citizen involvement to conduct research within the Federal government to identify the best practices and industry standards of orientation programs. The research efforts of this project synthesized previous 2015 research in workforce training and this 2016 orientation study, current research, literature review, trends, and the Kirkpatrick Model principles of training and evaluation.

This report presents the information in a standard format for each section: literature information, survey results, best practices, and industry standards, after reviewing 30 Federal agencies' survey responses and many course curriculum agendas. Attempts at gaining insight from Federal leaders cited in the *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* survey went unanswered, thus the Federal agencies cited in *Best Places* survey were not necessarily represented in this report. Responses were from Federal agencies that were members of the OPM *Training and Development ListServe*.

In general, Federal government agencies seem to be lagging behind leading commercial entities and other literature citing best practices and standards in the field of curriculum design and evaluation of workforce orientation training programs. Benchmarking against enlightened leaders in the commercial arena such as Zappos, LinkedIn, and Google would yield more extensive learning to gain expanded insights into designing creative, engaging, cutting-edge, new employee orientation programs.

Orientation Program Formation:

The literature related to the Kirkpatrick Model recommends beginning the development process of training program with gathering data from stakeholders and participants to answer the following questions:

- What is to be accomplished in the training?

- What knowledge, attitudes and behaviors are needed to achieve the desired results?

- How should the training be conducted?

- Who should conduct the training?

- When should the training be conducted in relation to hiring dates?

These primary questions solicit support and create an inclusive community for the orientation program which guides the development of goals, objectives, success, and evaluation criteria. The information assists in defining resources needed for instructors, timing of training, and instructional techniques.

In contrast to the literature, the 2016 Federal Orientation Program research project indicated:

- Most agencies lack written missions, goals, and objectives of new orientation programs

- Orientation program are required by most agencies shortly after being hired

- Orientation programs primarily focused on completing OPM-mandated training and filling out forms/benefits (organizationally-centered rather than learner-centered)

- New employee orientation programs were split between centralized and decentralized

The challenge of directly applying the Kirkpatrick Model to the orientation program is associated with the main focus on participants' knowledge and ability to access necessary resources rather than on their job-specific skills, thus a disproportionate weighting toward two of the three measurement elements. The literature associated with the Kirkpatrick Model focuses on cost-benefit ratios and return on investment (ROI) related to organizational profit, customer service, and personnel matters (grievances, production, customer service) as the primary focus of the overall training program evaluation. This focus is not within the mission and purpose of Federal government orientation programs.

The knowledge, resources, and leadership focus of the orientation program serves as the foundation for retention of employees and empowering employees to define and manage their careers. Along with knowledge and resources, attitudinal and behavior changes occur for individuals. The Department of State FSI focus is different from other organizations involved within the two studies. The FSI orientation program is employee-centered rather than organization-centered as it includes skill training in basic leadership skills. The Department of State recognizes the importance of leadership at all levels of the organization and the associated knowledge of one's leadership preferences, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, resilience, and how to manage change and conflict, thus these topics have been incorporated into the orientation program to ensure new employees at all levels receive basic leadership skills training within 90 days of their hire date. Each knowledge area serves as the foundation for excellence in leadership and followership, as well as building blocks for a successful career.

A second challenge of the employee orientation program is the composition of the course class members. Each class has a defined composition with vast diversity in work experience, job series, positions, grade levels, education, occupation, and age. A class can have a GS-15 retired military or 30-year civil servant to a GS-4 new college graduate who has no previous work experience with the Federal government. These variances place unique demands on instructors and present opportunities for instructors to meet the diverse needs of attendees while engaging veteran Federal employees and new employees alike.

The FSI orientation program conducts a pre-course survey to gather information related to the key characteristics of the participants which is shared with the instructors. This permits the instructors to modify content, delivery, and process as needed to meet the unique characteristics of each class. Hosting a post-course ceremony to honor and swear-in new employees with agency principles, families, friends, and colleagues in attendance also reinforces the learner-centric nature of the program and creates a community amongst the class members. Professional photographers take candid shots throughout the ceremony as well as class photos which are hosted on a SharePoint site for all to download as .jpg files.

Best Practices for Orientation Program Development:

- Obtain stakeholders' recommendations for content and needs assessment.

- Develop goals, objectives, and curriculum to guide the content and process of orientation programs which meet student and organizational needs.

- Expand content of new employee orientation programs beyond the OPM legal and personnel requirements to incorporate employee-centered knowledge to empower employees to manage their careers and become successful contributors to the organization.

- Develop success measures during the development and revision of the orientation programs. What are the measures of success?

- People that plan, deliver, and revise training programs need to possess facilitation and training skills, coaching and educational experience are expected to be professional trainers who engage learners and maintain the interest of participants.

Evaluation Overview:

The literature and the Kirkpatrick Model note evaluation as the constant element throughout the development, implementation, and revision process for training programs. The general evaluation questions asked during the development and delivery process of training are:

- To what extent does the content meet the needs of the participants in developing their Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSA's)?

- What are the success measures to infer that the goals and objectives are being met with the training program?

- Is the instructor the best person to deliver the content?

- Is the instructor using the most effective method to maintain interest and achieve the objectives?

- Are the instructional aids effective in improving communication, learning, and interests?

These guiding questions are further explored at each level of evaluation with specific questions which guide the focus of the evaluation.

The Federal new employee orientation programs research indicated:

- Most agencies conduct some form of evaluation.

- A limited number of agencies currently use Level 1 and 2 evaluations.

- Most agencies use the evaluation data to improve the orientation program.

The data gathered did not investigate evaluation at any level beyond whether evaluations were conducted, how they were distributed/collected, and how the results were used within the agencies.

FSI currently has a comprehensive evaluation program that gathers Level 1, 2, and 3 data to review and revise the orientation program content and delivery. The evaluations at each level have two components (1) standardized questions that are used with all FSI classes and (2) questions that are course specific relating to each segment of the course. This combination of standardization and customization provide consistent data to broadly evaluate the orientation program and specific topics covered within the class. This combination and a 6-12-month evaluation cycle provide rich data to critically evaluation the orientation program and associated objectives.

Best Practices for Evaluation of Overview:

- The training program develops a comprehensive evaluation plan while the program is being developed.

- The evaluation plan links with the goals and objectives of the training program to determine if the objectives are being met.

- The data from the evaluation plan is both comprehensive and specific to aid in decision making for future trainings

- The data in Level 3 survey responses is summarized between 3-12 months post-course and comprehensively analyzed to make changes for course improvement. Level 1 data is reviewed after each course and adjustments made to the course for improvement.

Level 1: Reaction Evaluation

The literature related to Kirkpatrick's Level 1 Reaction evaluation examines the learning experience, instructor, and aids used in the training. It is the immediate reaction to the experience and is a critical element in the evaluation process. For learning to occur, the experience should be enjoyable, relevant, and engaging; otherwise the instruction itself is a barrier to learning. The Level I evaluation provides several benefits to the agency, instructor, and participant, such as:

- Identifying barriers to learning (instructor, content, delivery, learning aids).

- Providing data to establish a standard of acceptable performance for future trainings and decisions related to the course.

- Communicating to students that the instructor is there to help them do a better job.

- Providing data to educate and communicate with those who have concerns about the training program.

These benefits of Level 1 evaluation focus on enhancing reaction by attendees, the learning associated with the course, and conducting training in the most efficient and cost effective manner while creating a sense of community.

Best Practices for Level 1 Reaction Evaluation:

- The training program uses a standardized Level 1 evaluation to examine the training program as a whole and the individual elements.

- The trends in the participant comments from the Level 1 evaluations are shared with individual instructors and used as the foundation for decisions making and instructor development or changes to the curriculum or instructors.

- The benchmark data from Level 1 evaluation is used to establish the standard of acceptance for the training program.

- Level 1 data is shared with instructors and is also used to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the program. If instructors are weak, then coaching occurs and assistance is provided to help sub-standard presenters develop teaching skills and techniques. Time and effort is dedicated to the development of subject-matter-expert presenters since most are not trained trainers.

- The benchmarking data also permits the Coordinator to determine the standard of acceptable performance and the threshold of identifying issues that don't meet the strict standards of excellence and best practices of the organization.

Level 2: Learning Evaluation

The literature related to Kirkpatrick's training model notes Level 2 evaluation to occur during the training process to measure learning. The student needs to learn the information before behaviors can occur. Level 2 evaluations focus on:

- What knowledge was learned?

- What skills were developed or used?

- What attitudes were changed?

Level 2 evaluations can range from traditional testing to creative activities which allow the student to demonstrate acquisition of the knowledge and is important because:

- Learning must occur before behaviors and attitudes are changed or demonstrated.

- Level 2 evaluation measures the effectiveness of the instruction (instructor, aids, and techniques).

- Level 2 evaluation identifies what was learned and what was not learned along with potential barriers to learning.

The challenge of evaluating learning is assessing actual learning rather than what is remembered in short-term memory. Activities that bridge the transfer of learning encourage the student to apply the information and to connect the information at a personal level to enhance retention.   Professional training provides an opportunity to evaluate learning using techniques which are reliable and appealing to the students, such as, case studies, interactive games, and group tasks with multi-directional discussions. The research conducted did not specifically ask what Level 2 evaluation techniques were used to during their new employee training program. Only in the Best Practices section did examples of Level 2 evaluations appear.

The FSI program focused more on knowledge, where to find the information and resources for career management, future training, and somewhat less on fundamental leadership skills. Other Federal new employee programs in the survey focused mostly on knowledge with little to no focus on skill building. This is a very different focus compared to other training programs which have a focus of knowledge and performance of specific job skills. The Level 2 evaluation tools used in the program are creative games, challenges, review activities, and discussions.

Best Practices of Level 2: Learning Evaluation:

- Level 2 evaluations are conducted to determine learning.

- Mixed methods of evaluation techniques are used that provide learners to use and apply the knowledge.

Level 3: Evaluation of Behavior

The literature notes that Level 3 evaluation must occur between 3-12 months following the training to permit the learner to apply the knowledge and demonstrate the desired behavior as an integrated professional competency. A critical element to support behavior is the support from supervisors, peers, and managers to provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate the skill, attitude, or behavior. This highlights the need to engage stakeholders and educate them concerning their role in achieving the desired results associated with the training programs goals and objectives. The guiding questions for Level 3 evaluations:

- When to evaluate the behavior?

- How to evaluate behavior?

- How to analyze data?

The literature consistently highlights both interviews and surveys with participants, and there are benefits and disadvantages to both interviews and surveys as data collection options. The challenge of self-reporting is truthfulness of the information. This research project did not ask specifically about Level 3 evaluations, only evaluations in general and none of the respondents mentioned performing Level 3 assessments. In this research project, only the Department of State was identified as conducting Level 3 evaluations.

The FSI program was one of the only agencies cited in the survey as gathering Level 3 data semi-annually between 6-12 months following training. The attendees have continued access to SharePoint sites, and on-line resources. In addition, the instructors and Course Coordinator serve as resources and Situational Mentors to the participants after the course is completed. The Level 3 assessments combine a mixed method of evaluation of quantitative data (numeric) and qualitative data (comments) and assists in the decision making process related to the course content, program objectives, and delivery methods. Soft indicators for Level 3 results are, for example, if the person is using the resources provided during training to obtain information, he or she is not consuming peer or manager time for assistance, but is becoming more independent in locating the information needed to perform their job duties.

Best Practices of Level 3: Evaluation of Behavior:

- Level 3 behaviors are defined in relation to the objectives.

- Level 3 evaluations are conducted to gather data on the identified behavior using a mixed method of quantitative (numeric) data and qualitative data (comments).

- A limited number of interviews are conducted annually to aid in evaluating the training program to assist with decision making.

Level 4 Evaluating the Results

The literature notes that Level 4 evaluation is evaluating the results of the training or more formally conducting a cost-benefit or ROI calculation at the larger organization level. The focus is evaluating the impact of the training on the bottom line or other key indicators such as retention of employees, employee grievances, improved profits, less customer complaints, or higher production rates of work. The calculations of the traditional Level 4 evaluations examine a ratio of the cost of the training versus cost savings or profit increases.

This type of evaluation is feasible with profit-centered commercial businesses, but is not necessarily trackable to relate some of the employee behavior data points back to a Federal new employee orientation program with participants spread across the agency. Level 4 evaluations are done at an organizational level and not at a division or office level, thus the

training unit would not be the driver for hosting a Level 4 assessment. The research conducted did not ask any questions related to Level 4 evaluation specifically.

Best Practices of Level 4 Organizational Results:

- Conduct Level 4 evaluation in relation to educational process and product at the organizational level.

- Define the measures of success and which results will be measured and are in alignment with the mission, goals, and objectives of the training program.

- Synthesize data to determine if the goals and objectives have been met.

- Create a report to educate stakeholders concerning the value of the training.

Conclusions

The focus of this research was to obtain information from different sources (literature, research, and other Federal agencies) to determine the foundational best practices and standards for employee orientation program curriculum, delivery, and evaluation. The integration of Level 1, 2, and 3 evaluation techniques provide the necessary data to make critical decisions related to the content, delivery, instructor pool, and time involved for employee orientation programs. The data provides valid and reliable information for the on-going decision making process that occurs with refining and improving training.

The term orientation is used to describe a variety of human capital activities such as in-processing, orientation, and on-boarding. The OPM requirements for mandatory orientation training focus on payroll, benefits, records management, security, ethics, and EEO. These required trainings in orientation are agency-focused, not employee-focused. They are in-processing activities rather than learner-centric professional development and enculturation to the organization. The content of most orientation programs in the research study generally focused on agency issues and mandates rather than engaging the employee in their career from the beginning. The programs were more organization-centric rather than learner-centered.

Orientation programs cited by respondents are offered in two formats of either centralized or decentralized at unit or department level. The decentralized process appears to lack guidelines with each unit doing what they determine is important. Without proper data it is impossible to determine if the unit level orientation is actually orientation or HR in-processing. Of the programs reviewed; some followed the OPM guidelines of topic areas and some did not while others extended beyond orientation into career success foundational skills, enculturation, and basic leadership topics.

The orientation programs generally did not demonstrate their guidance of desired outcomes anchored by purpose, goals, objectives, and stated knowledge, skills, and attitudes addressed in the program. There was not much evidence of specific guidelines used to design curriculum or shared evidence of best practices for innovative course design.

The learning environment tended to be a traditional classroom method which was supplemented by blended and on-line learning.

Agencies generally conducted some type of Level 1 evaluation for continuous improvement in their programs, though assessments beyond Level 1 were not addressed by most agencies responding to the survey.

The success of the training and evaluation process relies upon staff that can concurrently think analytically and creatively. This is a rare combination of skills within any training setting. The creative process and research conducted guides in the critical thinking process which is necessary to correct weaknesses in the program.

The key to a successful training program is ensuring the correct staff members are in the proper job who possesses the unique ability to think creatively and critically combined with trained instructors who can deliver the appropriate content in an engaging method of delivery which is in alignment with the mission, goals, and objectives set forth for the training based on a strategic needs assessment and integration with stakeholders and their insights. (Stakeholders also include participants.)

This research project highlighted the need for more focused research on the application of the various evaluation levels and techniques for evaluation and curriculum delivery. Currently, among the agencies involved in the study, this information is not available since only a limited number of agencies conduct Level 1 and 2 evaluations and there was no evidence of Level 3 outside of the State Department. To further advance the evaluation process and continuous improvement of curriculum and delivery methods; trend-setting commercial organizations may need to be contacted (i.e. LinkedIn, Zappos, Microsoft, and Google) to learn how top companies design, deliver, and evaluate employee orientation programs, and how they engage their extended workforce in the training and beyond the orientation program during the expanded on-boarding and leadership development process.

Recommendations:

- Literature suggests that the training function be separated from the in-processing function of Human Resources and that professional trainers/facilitators are used in the process.

- Industry best practices cite developing a foundational purpose/mission in collaboration with stakeholders. Overall goals and specific objectives need to align with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that go beyond the mandated training for new employees to provide the most critical knowledge and resources to the workforce with the end goals being:
  - Reducing turnover and associated costs of replacement, and aiding in retention by building a community of new-hires and a relationship with the organization through enculturation in the program.
  - Decreasing time for training at the worksite on foundational information.
  - Enhancing professional development and opportunities for career success by offering job and leadership skills early in their career.
  - Happier workers, higher morale, and more efficient and effective employees with decreased stress with the tools they need to find resources and enhance their performance and advance their careers.
  - Reducing employees feeling overwhelmed, bored, isolated or disengaged.
  - Reducing grievances, complaints, and misuse of time at the worksite.

- The reasons many orientation programs fail:
  - Not planned nor thought-out, missing critical topic elements, or delivery methods not engaging to attendees.
  - New employee does not feel welcome or connected to the organization, its people, the mission, or values.
  - New employee does not see where they fit into the organization.
  - New employee does not feel valued or see the value of the program or the organization and its mission.
  - New employee is unaware of their job requirements.

- Guiding questions for developing new employee orientation programs:
  - What do the stakeholders identify as the most important information to be addressed during new employee orientation?
  - What do new employees need to know to feel comfortable in their new position?
  - What do new employees need to know to be successful early on in their new position?
  - What positive experience can the training provide early in the on-boarding process to make the person feel valued by the organization?
  - How should the training be delivered? What methods are most engaging and memorable, and where can new employees find the answers if they forget?
  - When is a good timeline for the new-hire to attend the orientation following in-processing?

- o Where is the best place for orientation to be conducted? (centralized or decentralized)

- o By whom? HR Specialists or professional trainers?

- o What are the evaluation elements that will be used at each Level 1,2, and 3 of the Kirkpatrick New World Evaluation Model?

- o How will the evaluation information be collected, analyzed, and used to improve the process and product of the orientation program? By what methodologies and what timelines will the evaluations be distributed/collected? How quickly can changes be addressed and implemented in response to attendee assessments?

- o What resources will be provided prior to, during, and after orientation for new employees to consult in aiding them in the transition into the agency?

- o Is there continued connection with the new employee after orientation?

- o Are new employees paired with a sponsor/mentor/coach once they return to their work site and is there a mentorship program in place as an option?

- The goals, objectives, and delivery methods determine the time needed for the learning process with associated evaluation.

- Trainers and program developers need to examine:

  - o Teaching processes and techniques to improve retention and engagement in order to move learning from short-term memory to long-term memory

  - o Techniques that accommodate various learning styles

  - o Techniques and timing that appeal to each generational group

  - o Technology and delivery methods with the Millennials and Generation Z gaining a larger representation of new employees – consider micro-learning, short bursts of information dissemination, online learning, just-in-time learning, shorter sessions, interactive and experiential methodologies, and other learner-centered engagement activities in the classroom.

  - o Curriculum that is in alignment with agency mission and needs, program purpose, goals, and objectives

- Consideration for implementing the Kirkpatrick New World Evaluation Model as a systematic method for capturing data:
  - o Level 1: Reaction
    - ▪ to training sessions with a reaction survey or 'smile sheet' of immediate feedback

  - o Level 2: Learning
    - ▪ Use methodologies and measures to assess learning and retention during the program – games, review, case studies, jeopardy, formative assessments, rubrics, crossword puzzles, bingo games, online voting games, and quiz bowl.

Review and revisit material often to move information from short-term memory to long-term memory.

- Pre-test and post-test/ formative and normative assessments measure memorization somewhat more than learning or comprehension

o Level 3: Behavior
  - Evaluating behavioral change due to orientation training or resources several months following training
  - Items to be evaluated specified in goals and objectives
  - Can use self-evaluation of topic areas addressed in training

o Level 4: Results (usually done at the organization level and not at the program level)
  - This is the return on investment of training and is linked to goals and objectives, such as reduction or turn over, improved career management, promotions, reduced grievances, productivity or other realistic indicators done at the organizational level.
  - Results are defined at the beginning of the planning process and can be linked to soft indicators not directly measured by budget line items, but of high importance to the agency's mission and associated employee performance, attitudes or motivations.

- Research indicated that organizations who use focused mentoring or coaching during on-boarding to create connections and further develop the new employees' efficiency, effectiveness, motivation, personal and professional development, and dedication had improved retention, readiness, and morale, particularly with Millennials. Creating such connections early on in their career through a multi-month on-boarding process can minimize the obstacles to transferring learning which can be:
  o Employee lacks support and trust of mangers to develop skills, knowledge, and abilities for the job.
  o Employee lacks time to practice new skills needed to be efficient and effective at work.
  o Employee may experience pressure from co-workers against change of new practices.
  o Employee forgets what they have learned without aids and resources to locate answers.
  o Employee feels a disconnection and/or distrust of the organization.
  o Employee feels overwhelm with new information and cannot incorporate it all.

Appendix A

Foreign Service Institute Query of Best Practices in Federal Orientation Programs

"A successful training program is a work in progress and the training cycle isn't complete without an evaluation of training effectiveness…..and planning for the future" - *Training Today*

Consolidated Survey Results:

The survey results combined the information from two surveys covering 30 Federal organizations administered by two collaborating agencies to increase the data available for analysis. Though not identical in nature, both surveys did overlap in foundational questions which were rolled into this final report. Initial attempts at contacting agencies directly were not effective. The survey questions were then posted on the OPM Training and Development Listserve, which garnered a majority of the responses.

1. **Which Division provides employee orientation? (i.e. Human Resources, Training)**

    - 67% of the agencies reported that orientation was conducted by Human Resources
    - 33% agencies reported that orientation was conducted by the Training Department

     There was no indication if the Training Department fell within or outside of HR.

2. **Do you have a required orientation program for new-hires?**

    - 92% agencies reported the orientation program was mandatory
    - 8% agencies reported it is was not mandatory

3.   **How do new-hires learn about orientation training and other required courses?**

    The results of this were contingent upon how the agency defined orientation (HR in-processing to formal orientation to expanded on-boarding programs).

    - 72% learned about the orientation and it was conducted the first day of work (most of these responses were HR-conducted in-processing)
    - 8% invite new employees to attend (these agencies do not require orientation)
    - 20% provided training after the first day in-processing from a few weeks to a few months after the hire date. Attendees learn about the course by a variety of resources: supervisors, colleagues, HR in-processing, Training Coordinators, Department Notices

4. **Are third-party contractors eligible for the same orientation?**

    - 70% of the agencies do not provide orientation to their contractors
    - 16.5% did not know either way

- 13.5% of organizations provide orientations for their contracted employees
- For those organizations that do not provide orientation to contractors, some organizations provided online resources in a decentralized manor at the worksite or a general overview of the agency at in-processing, while others shifted the responsibility to the contracting agency. On-the-job training is the most common.

5. What is the delivery method for the orientation program?

- 55% used only classroom instruction
- 45% used a blended method (classroom, flipped, and on-line)

6. How long is your orientation program? (number of days, hours per day)

The information was reported in two ways; hours per day and days.

- Orientation training ranged from two - eight hours in one day.
- These agency's topic areas generally focused on in-processing paperwork (payroll and benefits) and mandatory training required by the organization or OPM.
- The number of days ranged from one to ten.
- The ten-day orientation was a combined orientation and specialized certification training.

The tables below represent the responses and frequency.

Number of Days	Frequency
1	4
1.5	2
2	6
3	3
4	2
5	1
10	1

Number of hours	Frequency
3	3
3.5	1
4	2
5	2
5.5	1
6	2

7. Is the program purely orientation or does it also involve skills training, leadership, etc?

The results to this question were summarized by themes which encompassed broad topic areas by frequency. The topics below were the most common items and were combined based on type. Several agencies submitted their course agendas and others answered the question with topic areas.

- Human Resources (in-processing): 100% of agencies noted payroll, benefits, retirement, personnel resources (mandated by OPM)
- Agency Orientation: 100% of agencies noted this, which included mission
- Safety and security: 100% of agencies noted something in this area ranging from physical security, emergency preparedness, active shooter, and IT security (mandated by OPM)
- EEO and related items: 100% of agencies cover this topic (mandated by OPM)
- Ethics: 50% of agencies cover this topic (mandated by OPM)
- Professional Development: 33% noted this, which included mentor programs or training resources
- Labor Relations: 20% union representation was noted
- Employee Assistance Programs: 14% noted drug/alcohol awareness and mental health resources
- These topics were mentioned by Department of State and one other agency:
    - *Leadership Skills Development*
    - *Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Communication, Managing Up*
    - *Conflict Management (Ombudsman)*
    - *Team Dynamics and Stages of Teams*
    - *Budgeting and Performance Management*
    - *Interagency Insight: Working with Other Agencies to Support the Mission*
    - *Career Development Resources – Career Counselors and Life Cycle of a Job*
    - *Organizational Awareness and Protocol Practices*
    - *Presentation Skills*
    - *SharePointers: Website Walk-through of the e-Homeroom for new employee resources*
    - *Office of the Inspector General*
    - *Digital and Online Tools to Enhance Performance and Communication*
    - *Resources for Managing Your Career and Training Toolkits/Courses for Career Success*
    - *Keys to Success presented by Senior HR Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Department*
    - *Resilience Resources and Change Management*
    - *Understanding Workforce Generations*

8. Do you have a mentoring or coaching program for new-hires?

- 93% of agencies have some type of mentoring or coaching program available to new-hires, as either a formal program or ad-hoc situational mentor program.

9. What methods do you use and how often do you evaluate your orientation program?

- 86% conduct some type of evaluation immediately after the course (Survey Monkey, ENGAGE, online LMS, or paper survey)

- 28% conduct level 1 and 2 (Kirkpatrick New World Evaluation Model, Level 1 post-course and Level 2 during the course to measure learning)

- 8% conduct level 3 every six months (Kirkpatrick New World Evaluation Model)

- 100% use the information to improve the orientation program

10. How are new employees held accountable for completing required training?

- The consequence for not completing required training is removal of one or more privileges, such as access to technology and network needed to perform job duties.

- The decentralized process of training has a tracking procedure or dashboard matrix of each employee and a list of required training and completion. Individual units also manage compliance along with consequences and follow-up reminders.

- Divisions hold office Directors accountable for their employee attendance based on a dashboard of required courses and new employees held at the Bureau Executive HR Office. Trainers and Orientation Coordinator are not part of the compliance process, only the instructional design and delivery.

Shared Best Practices:

- Provide an orientation manual during the orientation session with FACT sheets covering many administrative and HR subjects. These are for the employees to use in their offices for reference. These are brief FACT sheets with contact names and numbers provided for more information.

- Offer OPM Required Training for all employees and additional Leadership training for pre-supervisory and supervisors as stated on their website: ***opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/leadership-development#url=Supervisory***

    - *No FEAR Act*
    - *Code of Ethics*
    - *Constitution*
    - *Benefits: to include Health and Life insurance, leave, and pay*
    - *Employee Job / Performance Management/ Promotion/ Incentives*
    - *Equal Employment Opportunity: related to constitution and Rights and benefits, Occupational Safety and Health*
    - *Information Technology awareness and/or security*
    - *Plain Language and Writing Act*
    - *Contractors who use government computers must complete agency sponsored IT/cyber security awareness*

"Leadership development should begin well before an individual transitions into a supervisory or managerial position. To ensure these individuals are well prepared to fill supervisory and managerial positions, agencies may provide training for those who are interested in becoming a supervisor or manager. The head of each agency is responsible for establishing a succession management program which includes training to develop employees to become managers (5 U.S.C. 4121 and 5 CFR 412.201). A catalogue of Federal leadership development programs can be found on OPM's website under FedLDP".

- Facility tour, orientation folder with all materials, supervisor checklist, interview with supervisors and new hires on outcomes of orientation, participant guide.

- Large geographic area covered necessitated a mix of online and classroom-based program. Videos are available on YouTube. Supervisors take a lead role in helping new hires with all required documents.

- Digital sign in front of facility welcomes new employees on orientation day, supervisors come to the end of the course to pick up employees and show them around the facility and back to their offices.

- Field trip to other facilities, assign a sponsor for new-hires to continue the connection.

- Teleconference capability for out-of-area new hires and pre-course webinar to answer questions using Adobe Connect.

- There is a training requirement including a pass/fail testing metric (i.e. If you fail/wash-out of orientation; you cannot work here.)

- Integrate leadership skill development sessions into the orientation program so all employees at every level gain insight and skills into leadership competencies so they are better prepared for leadership positions and future leadership courses as well as better prepared for general career success and interpersonal communication.

- Survey stakeholders for a needs assessment to identify the main areas of concern where they want the new-hires trained. Ensure the foundational course purpose, goals, objectives, knowledge, skills and attitudes are identified to tie in presentation topics and ensure alignment with the main purpose of the course. Doing so also eliminates the possibility of "pet rock" topic areas or alternate agendas of other offices, presenters or principles that may not align with the central vision and objectives.

- Send out a welcome email and attach information documents regarding the structure of the agency, an organization chart, pre-course assignments, pre-course survey link, emergency cell phone numbers, and other employee resources a few weeks prior to the course. Send a logistics email with more resource documents, local area info, swearing-in ceremony info and guest list directions, and maps one week prior to the course.

- Keep resource materials including all the presentations, handouts, additional resource documents, and links to pertinent websites on an Orientation SharePoint site or other eHomerooms type of site attendees can access throughout their career so they have a one-stop shop for references and resources after the course.

- Use Survey Monkey to do pre-course survey to learn more about the audience. Send data to presenters for better understanding about the demographics, psychographics, and interesting facts of the audience to better customize the presentations. Use a different Survey Monkey level 1 evaluation after the class as well as for level 3 evaluations 6-12 months later post course to understand any behavior changes stemming from the course. Make course adjustments based upon level 1 and 3 evaluations to improve the curriculum and delivery methods of the course.

- Host an official 30-minute Swearing-in ceremony as a closing ceremony for the course with agency principals giving a brief welcome and words of wisdom, and citing the Oath of Office. Distinguished guests include Division Directors, HR Deputy Assistant Secretary with a guest speaker from the higher ranks such as the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of the Agency to welcome the new employees to the family of employees. Family, friends, and colleagues are invited to attend the ceremony. Class photos and a class roster are uploaded to the orientation SharePoint site so they can get in touch with classmates in the future and download the ceremony and class photos. Ceremony programs are printed with the names and titles of speakers, distinguished guests and the names of all the new employees for all employees and guests.

- A link to the orientation SharePoint reference site is posted on the Agency digital wiki, digital bulletin boards, intranet social media pages, and given to other course Coordinators to post on their SharePoint sites to ensure the widest dissemination possible of the references for new employees and contractors.

- Set up the classroom in pods of six people per two-table pod for easy networking and small group discussion. Change a few seats at the end of each day of class to encourage networking with others throughout the agency.

- Glossy pocket folders with gold-foil embossed logo and Civil Service Orientation on the front. Include handouts, organization chart, corridor and grounds maps of the agency along with a pen and notebook for each attendee. The Government Printing Office charges approximately $2200 for 800 folders. Name tents with office name printed on card-stock and stapled on the top corner to avoid pancaking.

- Level 2 evaluations throughout the course include gamification of review questions such as Networking Bingo, Jeopardy, www.pollanywhere.com, www.create.Kahoot.it, and www.quizizz.com online gaming questions, formative questions in an "open table" quiz for HR basic policies, Rolling for Review with over-sized fuzzy dice matching to numbered review questions – whichever number the student rolls, it relates to the number of the review question. For the online gaming/voting review/quiz questions; use one device/cell phone per table so students must discuss the answer before selecting their answer. Give them one minute to discuss and select their answer.

- Incorporating curiosity as a form of engagement; play a trivia slide show before class starts and during breaks to extend the learning. The slide deck is interspersed with friends' funny pet photos to entertain the audience and act as a review and revisit activity to help move the information they learned from short-term to long-term memory. Participants can submit their own funny pet photos for future classes.

- Play an "administrivia" slide show on the first day of class with answers to common administrative questions such as location of the bathrooms, fridge, cafeteria, microwaves, bus schedules, computers etc. During the slide show that plays automatically before class and during breaks; play instrumental jazz music in the background from Youtube channels to set a relaxed mood. Copy the slide deck several times and automate the deck so it plays through the core slides several times during breaks or before the class starts.

- Send the following list of PowerPoint/Prezi guidelines to all SME presenters in the hopes they will deliver professional slide decks, though we often need to do additional coaching on professional slide deck graphic design.

Note: the links below are not live to help ensure the delivery of this document through various agency systems. Copy and paste the URLs into your browser.

- Seth Godin's rules for PowerPoint Presentations from a world-class marketing guru:

  1. No more than 6 words per slide. EVER
  2. No cheesy images – use professional images and not clipart – powerful images have a powerful impact.

     Free and copyright-free images:

     - Pixabay.com – this one is the best of the 6 listed – many thousands of copyright-free images by category
     - Pexels.com – next best site with thousands of free photos without copyright or attribution
     - wylio.com
     - https://unsplash.com/collections
     - https://www.dreamstime.com/free-photos
     - designerspics.com

  3. Bullets Kill
  4. No dissolves, spins or other transitions without a specific purpose
  5. Never use sound effects built into the program
  6. Don't treat your slides like handouts or a teleprompter – use emotion to capture attention and improve retention – logic doesn't do it

7. The audience came to hear you and not read your slides – they can't do both at once

8. Pick a font and stick to it – use interesting fonts (not Comic Sans, Ariel, Times New Roman)

9. Create a color theme throughout: colorlovers.com or design-seeds.com have samples of color themes

10. Absolutely nothing smaller than 30 point type (NOTE: Orientation slides, 32 point font as a general rule, 28 if absolutely necessary with headers at 45 or 54 point due to the smaller screens in the room)

11. slideshare.net/jessedee/you-suck-at-powerpoint

12. slideshare.net/jessedee/steal-this-presentation-5038209

13. slideshare.net/alexrister1/introduction-to-slide-design

14. Slideshare.net

15. Canva.com

16. haikudeck.com

Bibliography and Resources for Curriculum Development and Evaluation of Training

Note: the links below are not live to help ensure the delivery through various agency systems.

Books:

- Kirkpatrick, Donald & Kirkpatrick, James (2006)."Evaluating Training Programs." (3rd ed.) Berrett-Koehler.
- Phillips, Jack & Stone, Ron (2000) "How to Measure Training Results." McGraw-Hill.
- Kirkpatrick, Donald & Kirkpatrick, James (2007) "Implementing the Four Levels: A Practical Guide for Effective Evaluation of Training Programs." Berrett-Koehler.

Millennials:

- hermanmiller.com/research/research-summaries/generations-at-work.html
- apps.americanbar.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt08044.html
- www.huffingtonpost.com/zach-cutler/how-millennials-impact-education_b_5604865.html

Orientation Programs:

- www.thebalance.com/employee-orientation-keeping-new-employees-on-board1919035?utm_term=new+employee+orientation+ideas&utm_content=p1-main-1-title&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=msn_s&utm_campaign=adid-304af569-3d92-

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0ab_msb_ocode31638&ad=semD&an=msn_s&am=broad&q=new+employee+orientatio
n+ideas&o=31638&qsrc=999&l=sem&askid=304af569-3d92-4331-ac32-5dea6569c1d9-
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- www.thebalance.com/new-employee-training-is-it-worth-the-investment-
  2275305?utm_term=new+employee+orientation+ideas&utm_content=p2-main-5-
  title&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=msn_s&utm_campaign=adid-304af569-3d92-
  4331-ac32-5dea6569c1d9-0-ab_msb_ocode-
  31638&ad=semD&an=msn_s&am=broad&q=new+employee+orientation+ideas&o=316
  38&qsrc=998&l=sem&askid=304af569-3d92-4331-ac32-5dea6569c1d9-0-ab_msb

- business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2015/03/7-elements-of-a-good-new-hire-
  orientation

- www.forbes.com/sites/hbsworkingknowledge/2013/04/01/first-minutes-of-new-
  employee-orientation-are-critical/#3125bd6e1b19

- www.experthronline.com/forms/NewHireChecklist1.06.pdf

- facilitiesnet.com/facilitiesmanagement/article/New-Employee-Orientation-Eight-
  Elements-of-Success-Facility-Management-Facilities-Management-Feature--11866

- www.hcpro.com/NRS-64929-868/The-five-key-elements-of-a-good-orientation-
  program.html

- ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/hiring-and-training/staff-orientation/main

- toolkit.ahpnet.com/Orientation-Onboarding-Intervention-Strategies/Employee-
  Orientation-and-Onboarding.aspx

Kirkpatrick Model Summary:

- http:// trainingtoday.blr.com/employee-training-resources/Ensure-Your-Training-
  Effective

Best Places to Works:

- http:// bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings/governmentwide

- www.fedview.opm.gov/2015FILES/2015_FEVS_Gwide_Final_Report.PDF