



HOW TO PROPERLY MANAGE YOUR APPRENTICE(S)

Being an entrepreneur, it is most likely that you may not plan to hire more than a handful of employees at the beginning of your journey. However, especially if you are in the fashion design, beauty or craft industry, chances are you may soon be taking on apprentices, even as the demand for your services or products rises.

Take for example, if you started up a hair stylist service in a major city like Ibadan in Nigeria and you render home services as your major service. You are bound to have a limit to the number of appointments you alone can make in a day, hence the need for other people i.e apprentices who can replicate what you do.

Most times, apprentices are young, and lacking much/any experience. Knowing this, it is important to bear that in mind and ensure you provide them with enough guidance and support.

Here are some things which can help you manage your apprentices.

1. Have a Thorough Induction Process.

You should have an induction programme, even if a very informal one, for all new staff. The programme can run based on:

- a checklist of information they will need.
- key things they need to know about procedures and processes
- important people new starters should meet.

For apprentices, a good induction is quite important. They may have absolutely no understanding of how things work generally in the work environment and may feel very unsure about things. Make sure they get a clear understanding of how their role fits into their team, but also lots of practical guidance.

Ensure they know how breaks and working time operate in the business, what they should wear and what happens about pay, timesheets, timing of pay and other practical details. Give them lots of information and guidance about health and safety as well, and perhaps above anything, make sure they know who they can ask if they have a question or a problem.

2. Clear expectations

Clear expectations are important for any employee in any business, but new apprentices coming in will have less of an idea about what's generally expected than a typical experienced new hire.

As a business owner, it is expected you communicate a clear understanding of exactly what tasks they are expected to carry out, at what kind of rate and what kind of standard is expected.

3. Mentorship

Consider handpicking mentors for new apprentices. This can provide additional guidance and support outside the traditional line management set up and can provide your apprentices with someone to go for those questions they might feel are a bit silly, or don't feel comfortable asking their line manager.

Employees who have been apprentices themselves can be ideal for this role.

4. Take an interest

Take an interest in your apprentice, their current qualifications and what their aspirations are for the future. Think of how you as an employer can support his or her journey. You may be able to offer guidance for the next level of his or her apprenticeship. Investing in your apprentice will result in a loyal, committed and motivated member of the team.

5. Encouragement

Give them an opportunity to show what they can do and encourage them to take on the responsibility of a small project. They will appreciate the opportunity to shine and may come up with a way of doing things that you'd not considered before.

6. Correct When Wrong

If your apprentice has a bad work attitude then you need to try and work with them to improve it. Provide examples of what they have done wrong and try and find out why they are acting that way. If you have spoken to your apprentice, tried to establish why they have a bad work attitude and given them help, then you should expect their attitude to improve. If it doesn't, then you need to show them that it is unacceptable.

Be prepared to give them a formal warning and make sure they know that eventually they will lose their job if their behaviour doesn't improve. They need to put effort and commitment into their work, otherwise they are not fulfilling their role as an apprentice.

In all, implementing and being consistent with these steps will go a long way in ensuring your apprentice and you have a mutually beneficial apprenticeship period.

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