

Designing a **Buddy Program**

*Your simple guide to designing and
launching a successful "Buddy Program"*

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What is the “Buddy Program”?

The Buddy Program is a great tool that helps you enhance the onboarding process of your new hires. By matching a new employee with a "buddy", you will be able to accelerate the onboarding process of your new hires while equipping them with the tools needed to deal with any issues that they may face early on in their jobs.



Who is the “Buddy”?

A “Buddy” is usually an existing employee who has been working at your company for a while and has a certain degree of knowledge about your company culture and orientation needs.

Characteristics of a Good Buddy:

- Is an **experienced employee** who has been at the company for a minimum of 1 year.
- Is **well regarded** and accepted by current employees.
- A Buddy can be from a **different department** of the new employee.
- Demonstrates a **strong performance** in their existing role, and has a basic understanding of the new hire’s role.
- Has **patience**, as well as strong **communication** and interpersonal skills.
- Has the willingness, the ability and the **passion to mentor** others.
- Has the willingness to involve the new employee in **social activities**, such as lunches, coffee breaks and informal outings.

Why Introduce a “Buddy Program”?

Building relationships is key to fostering a healthy and productive work environment, and by introducing the Buddy Program your company and employees will enjoy multiple *benefits*:

- The new employee will be able to add value more quickly, leading to increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Improved business performance, profit and staff morale.
- Orientation doesn’t cover everything. Through the Buddy Program, new hires will be able to learn more about the company’s unwritten rules.
- It has been proven that having friends at work increases engagement and retention.

What's the difference between a Buddy, Coach and Mentor?

- **A mentoring program** aims to help the employee with their development, on both the personal and professional levels.
- **A coaching program** aims to increase the employee's job-related skills.
- **A buddy program** is all about providing a one-point of contact to learn all about the operationally necessary information. In brief, the development of the individual is not the main expected output.

Suggested Buddy Program Implementation Plan:

① **Create a Simple - Yet Formal - Buddy Program Document**

As a first step you need to create a simple and formal document that outlines what the Buddy Program is and what the role of the buddy is all about.

② **Select your Potential "Buddies"**

Once you select the potential staff member to assume the buddy role, you need to share that document with him/ her to ensure that the program will be as smooth as possible. Your buddies need to be fully responsible for their role and they should treat it as a job-related responsibility.



3 Provide a checklist of the topics the buddy should cover with the new employee

Sample “Buddy Program” Checklist

Before the New Employee Starts:

- Prepare the workplace of the employees in terms of: desk, phone, employee ID, stationary...etc.
- Learn more about the new employee by reviewing his/ her CV.



Day 1

- Greet the new employee and introduce yourself as his/ her “Buddy”.
- Provide your contact information to the new employee.
- Conduct an introductory tour around the office so that the new employee can meet everyone.

First Few Weeks

- Introduce the employee to his/ her coworkers as this might take more than one day to cover everyone.
- Explain briefly each employee’s role to the new employee.
- Show him/ her around the office where the employee will be working as well any outdoor facilities such as employees’ parking, ATM, bathrooms, exits, kitchen...etc.
- Include the new hire in group lunches, coffee breaks and informal outings.
- Help the new hire with ordering equipment and any other office supplies.
- Highlight and explain your company benefits.

First 6 Months

- For 6 months, each month the Buddy along with the HR manager will be sitting with the employee to see how things are going and to hear out the new employee’s comments, ideas, and updates.
- If the new employee has certain concerns or issues that need to be addressed, the Buddy must inform the HR department to look into the matter and take the needed action if necessary.

4 **Encourage knowledge sharing**

The new employee comes with a wealth of information and previous work experiences. As the buddy explains company methods and style of work at your organization, he or she can make a point to ask the new hire how he/ she managed the same processes in their previous positions.

5 **Evaluate and debrief the buddy and the new employee**

At the end of the buddy relationship, the hiring manager should ask both the buddy and the new employee to complete a brief survey aimed at improving the Buddy Program. To evaluate the buddy role in the orientation, you can use a variety of methods, such as:

- **Interviewing both new employees and buddies who have gone through the process.**

Sample Evaluation Questions:

- How is your job going?
- Any issues? If yes, what?
- How has your buddy been helpful (or not)?
- Do you suggest any changes to the buddy program?
- Do you need any additional work tools?
- Is there anything you feel out of the loop about?
- Do you need anything that you don't have access to?

- **Sending a questionnaire to the new employees**

Sample "Buddy Program" Satisfaction Survey

My Buddy met with me regularly and/or communicated changes necessary that affected meetings scheduled.

1 2 3 4 5

My Buddy consistently assisted with identifying and setting goals for my growth.

1 2 3 4 5

Our meetings were relevant, focused, and meaningful.

1 2 3 4 5

My Buddy is conscientious about safeguarding confidentiality.

1 2 3 4 5

My Buddy provides adequate support in helping me learn and grow.

1 2 3 4 5

The buddy program had positive side effects on me.

1 2 3 4 5

Please enter any comments / suggestions to help us improve the Buddy Program:

It's good to talk!

The logo for ZenHR, featuring the word "Zen" in a white script font and "HR" in a teal sans-serif font, both enclosed within a teal circular brushstroke graphic.

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For any additional questions about creating your own Buddy Program, feel free to email us:

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www.zenhr.com

About ZenHR:

ZenHR is a cloud-based Human Resources Management System (HRMS) that is specifically designed to serve everyone from SME to Enterprise customers in the MENA market.

ZenHR is completely localized to the MENA market, including all labor laws, expat regulations, and social security & tax laws.