

2009 Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices

Example of a winning application

Business Category	Service Industries
How long have you been employing Australian Apprentices?	5 years

Does your business/organisation have a planned induction process?
formal and structured
<p>Details:</p> <p>The organisation's new starters attend a formal 5 day face-to-face Corporate Induction program before commencing in their role. This workshop is fully interactive covering topics such as the company's vision, goals, Values, service standards and robbery safety procedures. During this week, new starters also get to meet the CEO and Executive Team to ensure that they are given an insight into the purpose and key functions of each division as well as understanding the important role they play in the organisation's continuing success.</p> <p>Following the 5 day workshop, each new starter and their manager are given a comprehensive set of on-the-job checklists. These checklists, broken down into 12 individual weeks, outline the key functions that the new starter needs to perform to be deemed effective in their new role and pass their probation period (12 wks). The key purpose of the checklists is to ensure that each new starter receives a high quality on-the-job development program that is consistent no matter who their manager is or where they are located.</p>

Does your business/organisation have a training program?
formal and structured
<p>Details:</p> <p>At the beginning of each financial year, all managers sit down with their staff members to review their performance, set objectives and agree the individual's development requirements for the coming financial year. To make the development planning process as simple as possible for the manager, there are three core development paths for staff – lending, sales and service and operations and management. Within each path, learning stages are outlined from entry level roles to more advanced roles. For example, the lending path starts with frontline staff gaining an understanding of lending basics i.e. how interest rates are calculated and what loan products are on offer. This continues right through to the advanced lending stage which is targeted at very experienced lenders who want to be able to do commercial lending or more complex home loan deals.</p>

For each learning stage, entry requirements are outlined and need to be achieved before formal development can commence.

Formal development can occur via many different delivery options such as workshops, on-the-job coaching or self-paced development. The best method is determined for each individual. Once the formal development is complete there are a number of on-the-job activities that must be achieved before the employee can move onto the next learning stage.

Does your business/organisation provide your Australian Apprentice with learning resources?

Resources provided: staff manual, online access, procedure guides, policy guides, study time and other

Details:

The organisation's trainees are provided with numerous learning resources. All staff have access to the company intranet site which provides access to various operational policies, procedures and forms and provides information such as sales tools, competitor analysis, performance against targets, OH&S manual, IT hints & tips, training course information, etc.

In addition to online access, all trainees are educated in the policies and procedures of their workplace via on the job training.

All staff have access to the internet and the company's learning management system (which contains various training manuals and resources).

Each trainee is provided with 7.5 hours of study time during their working week to complete their traineeship studies. This study time is conducted on the job in a quiet location to allow the trainees to take full advantage of the workplace learning resources available to them. The allocation of study time is negotiated between the manager and the trainee to maximise the effectiveness of this time without impacting on business requirements.



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Does each Australian Apprentice have a designated support person?

Supervisor, colleague, mentor and other

Details:

Each trainee has a dedicated mentor or buddy to assist them during their traineeship. This mentor or buddy is typically a colleague who is assigned to assist the trainee with their on the job training. This buddy can assist by answering any questions that the trainee has or by referring them to people or resources that can assist with their enquiries. These questions range from technical work related questions, to study related questions or even simple directions to other departments, toilets, lunchrooms, etc. Each trainee also has a manager who is available to assist them with their work or study related enquiries. Their manager has a responsibility to meet regularly with the trainee to discuss performance issues and is also required to sign off on certain traineeship assessment tasks (including skills assessments).

The trainee works closely with and is in regular contact with the traineeship co-ordinator and the training manager from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The traineeship co-ordinator provides advice and assistance with traineeship and work related enquiries. Due to the ongoing nature of the traineeship program, many of the dedicated mentors or buddies have been trainees from previous year's programs.

What is in place for each Australian Apprentice to have an opportunity to provide input to and feedback on their training?

Regular formal meetings and informal arrangements

Details:

Each trainee is in regular contact with the training manager from the RTO. This provides an opportunity to provide input to and feedback on their training. The training manager also schedules monthly contact visits with each trainee either over the phone or face-to-face to follow up with them on the progress of their traineeship studies.

In addition to their traineeship study requirements, trainees are in regular contact with their manager and buddy which provides additional opportunities to provide input to and feedback on their on the job training.

Trainees are also surveyed to gather their feedback and suggestions for improvement on the traineeship program. Feedback is gathered in the areas of recruitment, induction, on the job training, RTO and assessment requirements.

The organisation also schedules quarterly feedback sessions between the trainee, their manager, the traineeship co-ordinator and the training manager from the RTO to gather regular feedback on the trainee's progress.



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What is in place to assist your Australian Apprentice complete their training?

Formal and informal arrangements

Details:

All trainees receive 7.5 hours of dedicated on the job study time during their working week to complete their training requirements. They also receive constant on-the-job support and advice via their buddy and manager.

The organisation also provides resources in the form of additional study time and increased support to trainees that are struggling to meet their traineeship requirements or to meet their on the job learning requirements.

Study time and support to trainees who have completed their traineeship requirements and wish to commence additional tertiary studies before the completion of their traineeship term is also provided.

Trainees are brought together for a one day presentation skills workshop. This serves as a great team building exercise but also allows the trainee to prepare for a short presentation they are required to deliver as part of their Trainee Graduation ceremony. As part of the program there are assessment activities that are very practical and specific to helping the trainees to be more effective in their role and to prepare them for the State Training Awards processes.



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How does your business/organisation demonstrate EXCELLENCE as an employer of Australian Apprentices?

Organisational Strategy

The organisation's Traineeship program is a key business strategy for developing internal talent. The program forms an integral part of our entry level recruitment and training strategy and also provides tertiary level qualifications and practical business skills to increase the employability of young people in the communities in which the organisation operates.

Recruitment

The organisation recruits its trainees as part of an annual intake. This has the benefit of taking advantage of a large number of school leavers as a potential recruitment pool and by commencing our trainees as a group we see the benefit of study/peer support and experience low drop-out rates. The recruitment and selection of new trainees can be an arduous task. In 2008, the organisation received 317 applications, manually short listed then phone screened 105 of those and interviewed 68 potential applicants to narrow the field down to 15 high calibre trainees.

In addition to the annual traineeship intake, from time to time trainees for specific entry-level roles (e.g. Information Technology support desk positions) are recruited. As a result of the ongoing success of our traineeship program, the majority of entry-level vacancies are filled by new trainees.

Induction

All trainees complete a comprehensive 5 day formal induction training program upon commencement. This program is tailored specifically for trainees and includes an introduction to key personnel (including the CEO and Executive Team), comprehensive training on products and services, customer service training, sales centre procedures training and completion of traineeship paperwork with the Australian Apprenticeships Centre and the RTO. This formal induction program allows the trainees to meet and develop a strong support network which assist them both with their study and work. Following the formal induction program many of our trainees are in regular contact via phone or email.

Probation

All trainees have their on the job performance assessed during their first month of employment and their managers are required to complete a probation report. Trainees receive a letter congratulating them on the successful completion of their probation period.

On The Job Training

All trainees complete a period of comprehensive on the job training conducted by their relevant sales centre or department. For the trainees, the training is supported by a 12-week induction toolkit which provides a structured workbook for the manager and/or buddy to work through with their new trainee to ensure a level of consistency in on the job training.



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Work

All trainees complete their traineeship work requirements with the support of the traineeship co-ordinator and their manager/buddy. With this support, many of the trainees apply for and successfully obtain permanent roles in the organisation from as early as 3 months from the commencement of their traineeship.

Study

Each trainee is given 7.5 hours of dedicated study time per week to complete their traineeship study requirements. The timing of their study time is negotiated with their manager to take account of business volumes and to ensure that the trainee meets their learning requirements. This study time is completed on-the-job in a quiet location to allow the trainee to access the learning resources and support available to them in their workplace.

Support

The traineeship co-ordinator and the training manager from the RTO conduct quarterly review meetings with each trainee and their Manager. These meetings are conducted separately to allow the trainee and their manager to openly discuss any work or study related issues. The trainees are also in regular contact with the traineeship co-ordinator with any work related issues or concerns and with the training manager from the RTO for any study or assessment related issues or concerns.

Flexibility

All trainees are given flexibility with their study time and with their assessment requirements to allow them to meet their traineeship requirements with minimal impact on business volumes. Trainees who are struggling to meet their study or assessment requirements are allocated additional study time and increased support from their manager/buddy. Also, if the trainee completes their qualification earlier than expected and chooses to undertake further tertiary study (i.e. University), the organisation allows them to continue to use their 7.5 hours of study time in negotiation with their manager to attend lectures, tutorials, etc.



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Success/Completion Rate

The traineeship program is now entering its 5th year:

2005 - 16 trainees were recruited, all successfully completed the 12 month program with 14 obtaining permanent roles.

2006 - 10 trainees were recruited, all successfully completed the 12 month program and all were offered permanent roles.

2007 - 14 trainees were recruited, all successfully completed the 12 month program and all were offered permanent roles.

2008 – 15 trainees were recruited, all successfully completed the 12 month program and 14 were offered permanent roles.

Of the 55 trainees we have recruited so far, all 55 have successfully completed (i.e. 100%) and 41 continue to be permanently employed (i.e. 75%).

The organisation is very proud of the efforts and achievements of all of our trainees. So far we have had:

- 2 finalists for the NSW Trainee of the Year Award (2006 and 2007)
- 6 winners of Regional Trainee of the Year Awards for various business categories (2006, 2007, 2008).
- Of the 55 trainees that have successfully completed, 17 of those have gone on to complete a Certificate IV qualification immediately following their traineeship.

Graduation Ceremony

Each year following the completion of the annual traineeship program, the company organises a Graduation ceremony to celebrate the successes of its trainees. This event is attended by the CEO and Executive Team, representatives from the AAC, the RTO, the managers/supervisors of each trainee and the trainees and their family/friends.

At this ceremony, each trainee delivers a three-minute presentation on the highlights of their traineeship experience. This is followed by the presentation of the Trainee of the Year Award and the Special Recognition Award. The Trainee of the Year receives a trophy, flowers and a cheque to the value of \$1000 (sponsored by the AAC) and the Special Recognition Award Winner receives a trophy, flowers and a cheque to the value of \$500 (sponsored by the ACC). From this internal awards process many of the trainees go on to be nominated for both Regional and State Training Awards.



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Existing Worker Traineeships

In addition to the annual intake of trainees, from time to time the organisation registers its employees as existing worker trainees. These employees complete studies which support their area of work and provide them with a nationally accredited qualification.

In the period from November 2005 until September 2007, 67 existing Sales centre manager/supervisors and section supervisors/team leaders from other parts of the business commenced a Certificate IV in Business (Frontline Manager) to provide them with a formal qualification as part of their ongoing development. Of these staff, 64 successfully completed the program with 38 registered as existing worker trainees.

Continuing Success

The organisation is so proud of the success of its traineeship program that even in the tough economic times it is preparing for another annual intake of trainees. Although this year's traineeship numbers have been reduced the organisation remains active in the recruitment of trainees to fill entry level position across the business.

Since the commencement of the traineeship program in 2005, the organisation has received a positive media response to the traineeship program including a feature article in the Career One section of the Sunday Telegraph in June 2008.