

Preparing the company to welcome a refugee

Whether for an internship or a job, the reception of a refugee must be prepared at the different levels of the company, according to its size : management, human resources, all employees. A good integration requires to anticipate the consequences of such a recruitment on daily life (difficulty with the language, lack of knowledge of the etiquette, difficulties in finding accommodation, in using transports, need to plan internal or external training...). The implication of various levels is needed.

1. Responsibilities of management and human resources¹

1.1 Preparation

- Check with the candidate the practical aspects : distance, mobility, schedules, constraints to be taken into account (administrative appointments, family...) and possible arrangements.
- Analyse the training needs of the recruited person : in language, adaptation to the workplace, upgrading of the basic skills (calculation, use of digital tools...). If necessary, indicate self-assessment tools or ask for an external assessment.
- See how the company can contribute to training and consider the different modalities : internally or with a service provider, individually or in groups, within or outside the company, during working hours or not. Mixed options, including cooperation with NGOs are possible depending on local opportunities.
- If necessary, plan to adapt the schedule without disorganising the activity of the company.
- Appoint the future mentor and prepare him/her for his/her role.
- Inform and prepare all employees. Depending on the size of the company, different actions can be implemented :
 - Information meeting on the condition of refugees and the difficulties that need to be overcome for their professional integration.
 - Promote equity and inclusion, make these values visible with posters.
 - Write and display a charter for welcoming migrants.
 - Training to take into account cultural differences (cf. Intercultural training) – that may be organised in a later phase, in order to enable the refugee to benefit from it. While it is not always easy to devote time to this type of training, an exchange with a mediator will

¹ We consider that the hiring decision, traditional, on a supported contract or through internship, has been made and validated on an administrative level. The candidate has got the prerequisites in terms of skills and qualities.

make it possible to become aware of own prejudices in order to avoid them interfering with the migrant's professional integration.

- Establish processes to be followed in the event of misunderstandings or conflicts to minimise personal interpretations. Train and give tools to managers for conflict resolution.
- Possibly identify experienced employees of the same origin.
- Encourage sponsorship actions (see below) by making resources available (information, meeting place, etc.).

1.2. During the employment phase

- Allocate time to the tutor so that s/he can perform his or her role.
- Conduct regular reviews to ensure that the objectives are achieved (adaptation and development of the refugee's skills, added value for the company) and prevent possible problems.
- Intervene in case of comments based on prejudice against a migrant employee.
- Check that employees mix together, organize or facilitate activities that allow different employees to meet and exchange ideas.
- Plan an intercultural training. It will allow all staff to exchange about the impact of culture on professional behaviour (vision of time, hierarchy, collective dimension, communication, feelings, etc.). It will also be an opportunity to prepare new employees for the expected rules and behaviours.

2. Responsibilities of the line manager

2.1 Prepare the arrival to show that the migrant is expected

- Confirm by phone the date and time of the first working day as well as the name of the person who will welcome him/her.
- Inform staff and in particular the person in charge of reception of the name, position and date of entry so that no one confuses her or him with a supplier or customer.
- Prepare any badges or access cards.
- Prepare up-to-date company documentation and a job description.
- Prepare the first day : Who will welcome him ? What tasks ? Who will take his breaks with him or her ?
- Plan the internal technical training with the tutor.

2.2 Prepare the workstation

- Prepare documents, tools and security elements.
- Prepare computer access codes, email address and phone.

- Prepare a lexicon of words specific to the company or profession with a short definition, and if possible an illustration.
- Prepare visual aids with pictograms, diagrams, mind maps... without hesitating to present the same information in different ways.

2.3 Reception on the first day

- Describe the company, its objectives, products and services, working conditions, the communication flows (formal and informal).
- Explain the company's expectations regarding his/her work and specify the rules to be respected and the desired behaviours.
- Hand over the various documents (about the company, job description, etc.), keys, clothing if needed, etc.
- Make a tour of the company and introduce the members of his team and his tutor.
- Show where the convivial spaces are and how they work, take advantage of this to discuss the lunch issue (if possible, propose a lunch with the team).
- Present the workspace and the available tools (computer, office supplies, etc.) with the necessary codes.
- Present and explain safety procedures, the organisation of first aid (location of the kit, identification of first aiders) and emergency measures (emergency exits, fire extinguishers, etc.).
- Show the protective equipment and its use.
- Common reading of the lexicon (with the tutor).
- Present with the tutor the first tasks to be performed : this is the beginning of the learning phase.

3. Role of employees

Some employees play a more important role, that needs to be formalised :

- the line manager (see above);
- the mentor who will tutor the newcomer in the acquisition of technical skills and know-how;
- the person at the reception desk.

But all employees will contribute formally and informally to the newcomer's integration. Their preparation aims to :

- inform them and make them responsible;
- limit the tensions that may arise as a result of misunderstanding in particular situations;
- facilitate communication with a person who is unfamiliar with the language and culture and who is also unfamiliar with the company's codes.

Finally, on a voluntary basis, other employees can play the more informal role of sponsor or buddy, outside any hierarchical or tutoring relationship. It is about informing the migrant, being a point of reference, spending time outside working hours to introduce him to life in the host country, giving the opportunity to improve the language and meet other people.



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