

Case study 1

One large plant has a policy of signing every new permanent employee to a traineeship. Trainees are provided with three ten-hour induction sessions, which provides a mix of class room and on-the-job training. Trainees learn about OH&S, food safety, hygiene and communication and also use this time to fill in paperwork such as training plans.

Trainees are initially given bright yellow hard hats instead of the white hats worn by most other employees. Because the facility is so large this helps supervisors and other employees to identify trainees and make sure they are monitored more closely. The trainees wear the yellow hats for about three months, which is the duration of their probationary period.

Management at the plant make it a point to become familiar with every new trainee. On a roster basis, one of several senior managers will address each new induction group providing them with an overview of the Company's business plan and future direction.

The trainees are familiar with each other as they bond during induction, and wearing the same colour hat also brings them together. Trainees also develop good relationships with other workers, particularly those in their own work area. One trainee at the plant commented that other workers who are quite familiar with a job will notice that someone wearing a yellow hat is struggling and will help them out, and provide them with encouragement.

One small but important way in which the company supports trainees, as part of its Ergonomic Program, is by giving trainees a 'stress ball' and showing them exercises on how to use it to relieve aches and strains. Many new trainees who have not worked in the industry before can develop strained and aching muscles, particularly in their hands and wrists. Manipulating a stress ball can help to relieve this pain. Trainees at this particular company found that the technique did in fact work.

In an industry that experiences high rates of turnover and absenteeism, this company is one of the companies that experiences improving levels of turnover. Employees and trainees are more engaged within the company and have a greater awareness of opportunities and career paths in the industry.