

Induction Materials Give EPSA New Starters a Warm Welcome

Challenge

The first day at a new job always comes with challenges. For new staff at the Ethiopian Pharmaceuticals Supply Agency (EPSA), these typical challenges were made even more difficult by the lack of induction and onboarding materials. Beyond not knowing what to expect on their first days, new staff did not know where to go, whom they could approach with questions or even when to start and finish their work.

Without formal onboarding, staff struggled to integrate into EPSA’s systems and culture. In fact, a cultural diagnostic report in August 2019 found that 17 out of 24 respondents did not believe that EPSA’s staff internalised and implemented core values. In addition, a group discussion with 25 participants identified the lack of guidance regarding job descriptions, onboarding and induction as a significant problem in the workplace. Lacking standard onboarding processes, employees felt they did not belong in the wider culture and formed sub-groups to create a sense of belonging for themselves. Thus, new starters did not know the basics about their jobs, but moreover, EPSA’s entire culture suffered from the lack of induction procedures.

Activity

[Pamela Steele Associates \(PSA\)](#) has supported EPSA through its workforce transformation in an effort to improve the health supply chain in Ethiopia by investing in EPSA’s human resources.

A 2019 cultural diagnostic provided a starting point for this transformation, and it recommended implementing an onboarding and induction process to strengthen staff’s shared values and, therefore, their sense of belonging.

Based on these results, PSA supported the Human Resources (HR) Directorate to produce, print and implement comprehensive

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induction materials that are available in Amharic and English, including an induction policy, plan, schedule and pack. The pack consists of essential information for new staff about EPSA’s history, guiding principles and HR policies.



New, comprehensive induction packs are printed in Amharic and English.

PSA assisted the HR Directorate with the production and dissemination of these materials to EPSA’s Headquarters and Hub Offices. Moreover, PSA ensured that the HR Directorate can implement and update these materials independently by training EPSA’s HR teams in the onboarding conceptual framework and how to use the induction pack.

Result

In the first 3 months of implementation, HR teams at the EPSA Headquarters and the Hub Offices used the induction pack and policies to train 8 new staff and welcome them into their roles at EPSA.

This more thorough induction process helped employees understand what they can expect and what is expected of them. It also set a strong foundation from the very beginning of an employee’s time with EPSA, enabling employees to feel more supported as they grow and achieve their potential.

The EPSA HR Education and Training Coordinator, Zelalem Ayalew, said, ‘The induction pack contains comprehensive information all new staff should know. It serves

as a guide for the EPSA HR team to properly induct new staff. It is a significant step forward in improving the onboarding process, and we thank PSA and the Admas Programme for this.’

“ ‘The induction pack is extremely well-organised and informative. I have already used it to orient new staff, and it has helped me to pass necessary information to new staff in a structured and consistent way,’ said Mekibeb W/senbet, the HR Coordinator at the Addis Ababa hub.

In addition to supporting EPSA’s new employees, the improved induction process contributes to building a company ethos and sense of community at EPSA. This new process provides fertile ground for employees to feel a sense of belonging in their workplace, which will in turn improve staff’s commitment to their work. Stronger induction policies clarify how staff’s daily tasks align with EPSA’s central objective: to ensure every patient throughout Ethiopia has access to affordable, quality-assured medicines.



EPSA HR staff from the Hubs and Head Office are trained in how to use the new induction packs.