Onboarding: Integrating International Skilled Workers into the Workplace

A good onboarding process makes it easier for international skilled workers to get started in your company. Find out how to support new employees from day one, strengthen teamwork and promote long-term integration.

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The first few days at a company shape future collaboration. A structured onboarding process helps international skilled workers to take on their tasks independently, get to know German workplace and company culture, and build good relationships in the team.

Start onboarding when the contract is signed, and support the **skilled worker** at least until the end of the probationary period. Standardised processes, checklists and guides make induction easier and save time when you hire new staff. Training in intercultural cooperation can also improve understanding among your workforce.

Learn from the experience of other companies: for example, with the brochure "**From the First Conversation to the 100th Working Day**" (only available in German) from the "Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung" project. It contains an onboarding guide, practical tips and experiences from different companies.

You can find more tips on helping skilled workers to settle in successfully on "Make it in Germany" in the "**Preparation & Support upon Arrival**" section. You can also find inspiring practical examples in the "**Finding Skilled Workers**" section.

Successful integration: retaining trainees in the hotel and catering sector in the long term

Organising welcome days

In practice, welcome days are a key part of onboarding. They help new employees to get to know their work environment and their future tasks. The first working day could look like this, for example:

- **Welcome new employees:** Greet them and introduce the team. Also name dedicated contact persons for the new skilled worker.
- **Introduce the company:** If you did not introduce the company in your first conversation with the skilled worker, now is a good time for a tour of the relevant areas and departments.
- **Discuss tasks and introduce the workplace:** Show the new employees their workplace and work equipment. Together, discuss the upcoming tasks and the next steps for the first few days. If necessary, clarify any open HR matters, such as core working hours, holiday arrangements and other company rules.
- **Hand over the welcome folder:** Use the free **welcome folder** from "Make it in Germany". New employees can use the welcome folder for orientation and as a reference guide.

Plan integration beyond the first few days. An integration plan helps you to cover professional, language, cultural and social aspects in a systematic way. Regularly check with the skilled worker how their professional and personal integration is going. If needed, also involve their direct colleagues. This way, you can spot any need for support early on and improve your chances of keeping skilled workers in your company in the long

term. Prepare for onboarding in a targeted way with the "**Onboarding foreign skilled workers**" checklist (only available in German) to prepare for the onboarding process in a targeted manner.

New employees can find important information for their first days in Germany on the "Make it in Germany" web page for skilled workers in the "**Arriving & Living"** section.

Offering mentoring and everyday support

Mentoring programmes make it easier for international skilled workers to settle into the company. Dedicated contact persons help with questions about everyday work, teamwork and practical challenges in Germany.

Experienced employees are good mentors if they know the company and the region well or have immigrated themselves. Prepare your mentors for their role, for example, with training in intercultural communication. Also make clear early on which topics the mentor will cover and where they can direct the skilled worker for further questions.

Alternatively, an integration officer can support the skilled worker and the HR managers. This person can help the skilled worker with questions about everyday life in Germany and encourage their professional development.

You can find more information on "Make it in Germany" in the "**Preparation & Support upon Arrival**" section.

Using regional support services

Use regional advice centres to support the long-term integration of your international skilled workers. Welcome Centres, chambers, business development agencies and other contact points advise companies and skilled workers on topics such as arriving in the region, recognition of foreign qualifications, integration and a welcoming culture. They can also help you find suitable regional services and contacts.

Use the **advice centre database** (only available in German) on "Make it in Germany" to find contact points near you.

Diversity management in the workplace

Diversity management means a deliberate, strategic approach to diversity in the workplace – such as gender, age, origin or beliefs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for diversity management: choose measures that suit your company and your workforce.

Tip: The **Diversity Charter** is a nationwide employer initiative that promotes diversity and appreciation in the world of work. Signing the charter makes you part of a nationwide network and gives you practical ideas for your own diversity work.

Strengthen the intercultural skills of your employees, for example through information sessions or **further training**. Language exchange partnerships and German courses can help to break down language barriers and make everyday teamwork easier. You can find more information about **German courses** at work on "Make it in Germany".

Consider the different cultural and religious backgrounds of your workforce. Cultural or religious calendars can help you to give important holidays due consideration. Shared activities such as cooking, celebrating or sport encourage intercultural exchange and strengthen team spirit. This way, international skilled workers get to know their German colleagues better and can use their language skills in everyday situations.

The free INQA self-test "**Diversity-Aware Company**" (only available in German) helps you to assess how well your company already uses the different perspectives and strengths of its employees.

Creating opportunities for further training

Further training helps you to qualify skilled workers to meet your company's requirements and to retain them in the long term. It strengthens professional skills, shows appreciation for your employees' abilities and can boost motivation and a sense of belonging.

Support the professional development of your international skilled workers beyond the induction period, too. Regular further training and transparent development opportunities encourage long-term cooperation and help you to secure the skilled workers you need.

Information on further training in companies is provided by the **Competence Centre for Securing Skilled Labour (KOFA)**. The **Federal Employment Agency** can advise companies on further training projects and provide funding for them.

Information on the web

Goethe-Institut

List of available German courses

KOFA (Centre of Excellence for securing qualified professionals)

Recommended action for introducing diversity management in businesses

International Society for Diversity Management

Diversity management missions and services

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