

Research sheds light on new employees

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Starting a new job is never easy. However, research by Victoria University graduate Dr Sarah Burke shows that not only does an organisation need to help new employees assimilate into the environment, but newcomers can also proactively shape their own socialising experience.

Dr Burke, the co-owner of an HR consultancy, adopted a unique approach to exploring the process whereby a new [employee](#) moves from an organisational outsider to an insider.

"Traditionally a lot of research has focused exclusively on the role of the organisation in assisting an employee to adapt to a new role, team and culture. What I did was explore the ways in which a newcomer can proactively shape their own socialising experience and ultimately become more competitive," says Dr Burke.

As part of her PhD research, she tracked the experience of 526 graduates and more seasoned employees from a broad range of public and private sector organisations. Subjects were required to fill out multiple questionnaires that focused on prior [work experience](#), an interest in the job, and a proactive [personality](#), as well as the relationship they had with their team and manager.

"Results indicate that all these factors had an impact on how well new employees slotted into an organisation, how well they performed and, ultimately, their commitment to stay."

In particular, Dr Burke found that new employees who expected to be successful did indeed assimilate more effectively and expediently into the organisation than those who didn't. She also found that new employees could be trained to be more proactive and self-starting.

"Rather than passively waiting for opportunities or information, the proactive employee will gather information about their workgroup, tasks, and the organisation to help themselves succeed."

Dr Burke says this research flies in the face of previous studies that assume it is solely the organisation's responsibility to assimilate new staff.

It also presents a number of practical options to secure the performance and commitment of new employees at a time when there is a recognised 'war for talent' in the New Zealand marketplace, and Dr Burke says she is keen to further progress this field of study.

Provided by Victoria University

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