

you review what they've designed you'll understand how much they know about their role, and also where they have gaps. And, if you're lucky, a few of them will realize they can fix or streamline a process which will benefit the company immediately.

I suggest making this request on a one-on-one basis by calling each individual into your office and following this script: "I'd like you to make a training manual for someone who is new to your job/role. What do you do each day? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. Don't forget the things that might be done quarterly or annually as well.

- » What resources are needed to do those tasks (reports, forms, computer applications)?
- » Are there deadlines?
- » Are you dependent on a process or a person in the workflow ahead of you, before you can do your job? Identify those dependencies.
- » Create step 1, step 2, step 3 procedures if/then tables as appropriate.

"Let's meet back in two weeks so we can review what you've created and you can fill me in on any ah-ha moments you had during the creation process."

Now, be forewarned that some people might think you are asking them to do this so that they can be replaced, and in part that is true. If the person seems skeptical about the request simply say, "We are working to standardize operations around here and that starts with having replicable procedures. But in addition, I'd like to see you advance your career with us and that won't be possible if you are the only person who knows how to do your job."

Further into my radio job, I also instituted a cross training process – all on my own – in which I "borrowed" the sales department secretary for two hours a week to help me enter new contracts. Not only did this help to get me out the door earlier on Thursdays but it also meant there was a backup for me, because how else was I going to take a vacation? As a thank you, I learned the critical tasks of her job as well, so that I could cover for her, which worked out perfectly because she became pregnant that year and needed time off for doctor's appointments and such.

Too often, individuals leave a job and take their knowledge and processes with them. This leaves their replacement to figure things out on their own based on "evidence" left by the former employee, but often times there is no evidence because it is all on their computer and gets "wiped" when the employee leaves.

About the Author

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