

**TITLE: EFFECTS OF ORIENTATION PROGRAMS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE, A
CASE OF KENOL/KOBIL PETROL STATIONS IN NAIROBI**

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Orienting employees to their workplace and their jobs is one of the most neglected functions in many organizations. An employee handbook and piles of paperwork are not sufficient anymore when it comes to welcoming a new employee to your organization. The most frequent complaints about new employee orientation are that it is overwhelming, boring or that the new employee is left to sink or swim. The result is often confused new employee who is not productive and is more likely to leave the organization within a year. Supervisors sometimes find themselves too busy to devote the necessary time to orienting the new employee properly. Yet neglecting the details of orientation can have dire consequences in the long run. Employees who are inadequately oriented are more likely to be less productive than expected. For example, there are many cases of employees failing to obey work rules, claiming the rules were never explained to them in the first place (Crane 1982) . A poor orientation program can quickly sour a new employee's attitude towards the job and the organization. Most people come to a new job with a positive attitude. However, if a new employee is made to feel unimportant by the lack of an orientation program, this attitude can quickly change. Good well-planned orientation programs reduce job learning time, improve attendance, and lead to better performance (Rue, 1993).The new employee naturally has personal anxieties about the new or changed work setting. Hence, the need to reduce unknowns by helping the new employee learn about his/her job, supervisors, and co-workers (Crane, 1982). According to David (2004), it is indeed strange that some organizations fail to see the value of proper orientation procedures. Poor orientation can lead to people leaving quickly, extra recruitment costs, constant misunderstandings and unnecessary queries and grievances as well as a decrease in productivity generally. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of orientation programs on employee's performance. The study was guided by four specific objectives that sought: to investigate how introduction of new employees to co-workers affect employee's performance, to examine the effect of assigning a mentor to new employees on employee's performance, to investigate how employee tour of the workplace affects employee's performance and to examine how use of employee handbook affect employee's performance. This research covered Kenol/Kobil petrol stations in Nairobi county. The study adopted a descriptive

research design. The target population of this study was 420 employees of Kenol/Kobil petrol stations in Nairobi county. The study drew a sample of 201 employees from the target population. The sample was proportionately stratified. Data was collected using interview schedules and Semi-structured questionnaire served on respondents through drop and pick methods. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis and quantitative data was analyzed using ANOVA test with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results were presented using charts and statistical test tables. The report concludes that provision of at least one or more orientation programmes namely introduction of new employees to co-workers, offering tour facilities for new employees, provision of employee handbook and assigning of mentors to new employees contributes to significant increases in employee performance. It recommends design of orientation programmes as a whole package that contains tour of work place, introduction of new employees to co-workers, provision of employee handbook, assigning of mentors and any other not looked at in this study. This is against the backdrop that any single but important orientation program left out may undermine the gains made in offering other orientation programs considered to be important.