

Project & Structured Finance Debt – Americas (PS AM)

Buddy System Outline

What is a “buddy?”

The buddy concept contributes to a quick and successful integration of new employees. Each new employee gets assigned a “buddy”, who volunteered to partner with him/her during the first months of their employment. Next to the manager, the buddy is the new employee’s point of contact for general questions regarding day-to-day aspects of work, but his/her role is related more to informal topics (i.e. – workplace culture, etc.). A buddy engages the new employee during his/her initial time by supporting, encouraging and providing guidance when needed. It is important for the buddy to build a confidential relationship, allowing the new hire and buddy to communicate openly about their experiences.

What it means for a Manager

The most important part of this process for the manager is selecting the right buddy. Assigning the correct buddy increases the chances that the new employee will overcome uncertainties quickly and get up to speed fast. Additionally, this will help the new hire feel welcome, confident and motivated. It’s proven that an effective buddy can help play an integral role in influencing a new hire’s ability to reach optimal productivity in the shortest amount of time.

Identifying the right buddy: is an experienced employee who demonstrates strong performance; works in the same team, department or has a familiar role; is not directly involved in the employee’s development or management; wants to be a buddy and has time to be accessible to the new employee; has strong communication and social skills; and is well regarded by other employees.

Buddies should:

- introduce the new employee
- go to lunch or have breakfast within the first week; if employee is remote, arrange for a virtual coffee break (*preferably video on*)
- keep lines of communication open while respecting confidentiality and offering encouragement

Buddies should not:

- be asked to opine on work performance, or train the new employee

What it means for a “buddy”

A buddy is responsible for supporting a new employee’s quick and successful integration and acts as a role model by exhibiting desired employee behavior and mindset, rather than being perceived as an expert. The goal is for the new hire to feel comfortable within the team, and the buddy facilitates this by supporting the new employee’s social integration – making sure they feel welcome and are making the right connections within the organization. All of this requires ensuring that the buddy allocates enough time to provide the integration support. Regular meetings could be one way to ensure that a new employee’s questions and concerns are addressed or an informal approach reinforcing open communication works just as well, as long as the new hire does not hesitate to address the topics most important to them.

A successful buddy should be informed about the new employee and his/her role makes sure to align his/her actions with the new employee’s manager; is patient, positive and encouraging while helping the new employee grow into his/her role and is interested in strengthening their own communication, social and management skills by striving to be the best buddy possible.

Suggested Structure & Timeframe

Ideally, there is a six month relationship between the buddy and the new employee. Each experienced professional should be a buddy for no more than one new hire at a time. Toward the end of the first three months, the buddy and new hire can discuss how to continue their relationship for the balance of the six months. On the employee's first or second day, introduce the buddy and employee. This introduction can be facilitated by the hiring manager. Discuss the buddy's role and responsibilities as well as the employee's needs, and answer any questions. Ensure that the buddy and employee meet during the first week (ideally for breakfast or lunch, if possible). Suggest and then allow the buddy and employee to decide on the frequency, length, topics, and method of interaction between the two of them. The structure will vary. It is important that the arrangement is clearly defined and works for both the employee and the buddy. Sample timeframe:

Week 1:

- Arrange a Teams Meeting call
- Learn about each other's background, experience, interests, etc.
- Decide on the most important and relevant things to cover
- Respond to any immediate questions the new employee may have
- Agree on frequency, length and method of communication

Months 1 and 2:

- Meet weekly for a half hour
- Be available for phone conversations and email
- Introduce employee to other colleagues

Months 3 and 4:

- Meet bi-weekly for a half hour
- Be available for phone conversations and email
- Have a check-in with employee
- Invite employee to relevant business events, and introduce him/her to others

Months 5 and 6:

- Meet monthly for an hour (can be done over a meal or coffee)
- Continue introducing employee to colleagues and inviting employee to relevant business events
- Decide if it's necessary to continue the formal buddy relationship.
- Have a wrap-up with employee and hiring manager

Helpful Tips to the Buddy

- Don't worry about being perceived as the "expert" or think you need to have all the answers. Your experience at Siemens is what's most important to the employee
- In some situations, listening is more valuable than giving advice. Ask questions like "What do you need?" or "How can I help?"
- We all have a preferred communication style. Talk about each other's preferences as the new employee may have a different style from yours
- Recognize that it takes time to develop a relationship
- Be patient, positive, and supportive. Don't try or expect to cover everything over a short period of time
- Stay open minded, and avoid being judgmental
- Maintain confidentiality
- Keep the relationship professional.