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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Your Guide To
**CREATING
A MEMORABLE
ONBOARDING
EXPERIENCE**

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ONBOARDING 101

What Is Onboarding?

Onboarding is a process that a company creates to welcome new employees and set them up for success. It includes *sharing information, relationship building, and access to training*. At scale, this influences talent acquisition, company culture, and employee retention. A high-quality onboarding program has lasting results for both the new employee and your company.

Dane Hurtubise, entrepreneur and founder of JobSpice and Vice President of Greenhouse, compares onboarding to the YouTube phenomenon of unboxing videos. Unboxing is the very first encounter with a product, so more and more companies are giving the packaging the same look and feel as the product.

In the same way, you want to create an onboarding experience that delights and prepares the new employee to step into their new role. It's imperative to get these early moments right in an era when employees are feeling empowered to choose their employer. Onboarding reassures new employees that they've made a great choice to work at your company.

According to Flexjobs, 28% of workers have declined a job offer after accepting but before the first day.

Onboarding occurs within minutes of reaching the agreement on employment and lasts well into the new employee's tenure. Immediate collection of needed administrative information and quick introductions to the team welcome and reassure the candidate about their decision to join.

Onboarding also takes a continual role through the first months or even years to ensure that items that may have been missed, or not fully absorbed during orientation overload, are still addressed and to ensure that the new member feels like they belong and have the tools and trainings they need to show up with excellence in their new role.

Onboarding, then, can be thought of as everything a business does to help new employees establish themselves in their roles. From administrative setup, orientation to the work, and an overview (physical or virtual) of the workspace, to providing access to necessary hardware and software, discussion of

support, resources, and enrollment in a mentorship program. The thread connecting these activities is the intention that a new employee will be autonomous and productive more quickly with a structured welcome to the organization.

TALENT ACQUISITION

First impressions have been known to last for months, so when an employee has a great onboarding experience they're more likely to spread the word about what a great organization you have. They'll be more likely to post to sites like Glassdoor and enhance the brand's reputation. Positive workspaces are also more likely to appear in lists of great places to work, either regionally or within an industry.

Better onboarding is likely to boost the employee referral program. This lowers the cost of talent acquisition and further strengthens relationships within the workforce. Large companies like Airbnb, Uber, and Dropbox have long lauded the benefits their robust employee referral programs offer.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

With the shift to hybrid and remote workforces, a surge in quiet quitting, and the increase in required return to office, employee engagement numbers are meaningful. Onboarding is one of the earliest opportunities an organization has to foster engagement and it builds a strong foundation for other efforts to engage employees.

A BambooHR study in 2023 showed that employees who felt their onboarding was effective were 33% more likely to also feel engaged.

A LinkedIn study found that employee performance improves by 11.5% as a direct result of effective onboarding management.

Also, when the onboarding experience leaves the new hire feeling excited to start and passionate about the work it serves to motivate and inspire the team they're joining. Their enthusiasm and engagement can be contagious.

EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Onboarding sets the tone for the early days and has the ability to make or break the transition into the new workplace.

A survey from the Human Capital Institute in 2019 showed up to 20% of a company's turnover happens in the first 45 days.

A Wynhurst group study concluded that employees who experience structured onboarding programs are 58% more likely to stay with the company for 3 or more years.

And Glassdoor says well-executed onboarding improves employee retention by 82%.

Onboarding also provides an opportunity to expose new employees to other roles and departments within the organization based on relationships established during onboarding. They're more likely to work through bottlenecks caused by siloed departments and avoid frustrations that might otherwise shorten tenure. It's clear that onboarding has a significant impact on employee retention.

CONNECT AND COMMUNICATE

Early interactions reveal the culture of your organization. Often, these interactions begin before the first day of work. Pre-boarding activities, and emails from supervisors, team members and HR support and convey company values. Additionally, the tone with which you communicate and the messages you send have an opportunity to excitedly welcome the new employee to the team, and demonstrate from day one how much the new staff member is valued.

Onboarding also shares the existing processes and tools that you use, so that the new employee knows which type of communication to use in different situations, what resources are available, which recurring meetings to attend, understand different discussion forums, and is aware of how to utilize and navigate IT. All this helps to set the tone regarding how the work is accomplished.

IMPACT ON ENTIRE TENURE

A great onboarding program allows new hires to quickly become comfortable in their new environment and engaged with their work. This increases the output and quality of the work being performed.

After an effective onboarding program has been implemented for several years more and more of your workforce will have entered the organization in an engaging and standardized way. If onboarding is effective and responsive to new employee needs, employee culture surveys might start to reflect a more

engaged and empathetic workforce. Similarly, an organization with an established reputation for a better employee experience might benefit from a better talent pipeline through employee recommendations and public reputation.

How To Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed to provide you with a step-by-step guide to designing a high-quality onboarding program. We have included exercises, reflections, examples, and a case study to inspire you as you consider the right approach for your organization.

We suggest sharing this workbook with other leaders and stakeholders to examine your current practices as well as the design of your future onboarding program. The participation and support of other leaders and stakeholders can be the key to creating a successful outcome for your onboarding program and the new hires who participate.

We'll be here for help along the way so please do reach out to us with any questions.



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