

7.5: Complete Employee Onboarding Guide



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Employee Onboarding Guide

Onboarding Definition & Overview

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Quality onboarding is crucial for new employees' long-term success and organizational productivity. Learn why a solid employee onboarding process can make a significant impact on employee experience and retention, plus innovative ideas to approaching welcoming new staff.

What Is Onboarding?

Onboarding is the process of integrating new employees into an organization. It includes the [orientation process](#) and opportunities for new hires to learn about the organization's structure, culture, vision, mission and values. Onboarding can span one or two days of activities at some companies; others offer a more extensive series of activities spanning months.

Onboarding is often confused with orientation. While orientation is necessary for completing paperwork and other routine tasks, onboarding is a comprehensive process involving management and other employees and can last up to 12 months.

Why Is It Important to Get Onboarding Right?

All new employees are onboarded—but the quality of the onboarding makes a difference. Too often, onboarding consists of handing a new employee a pile of forms and having a supervisor or HR professional walk the employee around the premises, making introductions on an ad hoc basis. When onboarding is done well, however, it lays a foundation for long-term success for the employee and the employer. It can improve productivity, build loyalty and engagement, and help employees become successful early in their careers with the new organization.

A study by [Gallup](#)([opens in new window](#)) showed that while only 12 percent of employees felt their company did a great job with onboarding, those employees were nearly three times as likely to say they have the best possible job. Overall, only 29 percent of new hires felt they were prepared and supported to excel in their new role. This leaves a lot of room for improvement.

Other studies consistently show a positive correlation between engaged employees and a company's profitability, turnover rate, safety record, absenteeism, product quality and customer ratings. An effective onboarding plan offers an ideal opportunity to boost employee engagement by, for example, fostering a supportive relationship between new hires and management, reinforcing the company's commitment to helping employees' professional growth and proving that management recognizes the employees' talent. For further reading learn [how to optimize the onboarding process](#) and [the importance of good onboarding](#).

Relatedly, an [employee value proposition](#) (EVP) defines the value employees will get from working for a particular organization. It embodies the promises made during recruitment and is lived out every day through company culture. Onboarding gives employees their first look at how an organization's EVP may or may not be realized.

Onboarding Process Summary

While there are many ways to design an onboarding program, some components are integral to the process:

1. Preboarding

Consider inviting new employees to tour the facility, sending informational material, providing care packages, and assigning a buddy to help them integrate before their official start date.

2. Orientation

Introduce employees to the organization's structure, vision, mission, and values; review employee handbook and major policies; complete paperwork; cover administrative procedures; and provide other mandatory training.

3. Foundation Building

Ensure the onboarding process consistently embodies an organization's culture, mission, employee value proposition, brand, and other foundational elements, recognizing that assimilating these values takes time.

4. Mentoring and Buddy Systems

In partnership with hiring managers, enlist mentors or buddies to provide new employees with guidance, assistance, and insights into organizational nuances.

Innovative Approaches to Onboarding

Various components of an onboarding program can be delivered using different approaches and methodologies combined to suit the organization and available resources.

Some employers are using innovative practices, such as games, video, and team-building exercises, to get new hires excited about joining the company. They're also working to make sure people can hit the ground running with functional workstations and equipment. Some examples of this include:

- Facebook has its "45-minute rule," which means all new employees can begin to work within 45 minutes of arriving because all of their systems and devices have been set up before they report for their first day.
- Leaders at Suffolk Construction, a national construction firm based in Boston, invite entry-level hires to participate in a variety of team-building exercises, including rowing the Charles River.
- New employees at Bedgear, a Farmingdale, N.Y.-based manufacturer of performance bedding, take a walking tour of downtown Manhattan to visit other retailers that sell customized products, including Warby Parker and Samsung.

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