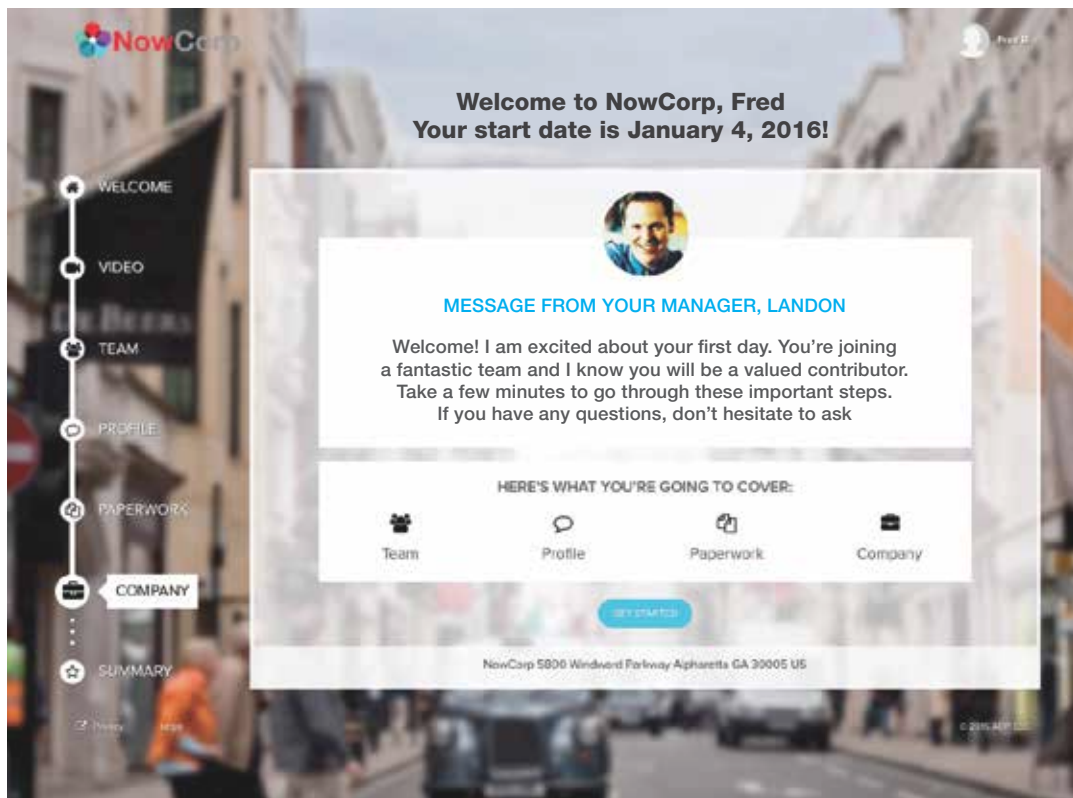# Onboarding Strategies
Have a Longer-Lasting Impact Than You Think

A solid onboarding process benefits the business in terms of increased productivity, better retention and higher engagement levels for new hires. However, structured onboarding is too often overlooked and underutilized by organizations.

The creation of a comprehensive onboarding process is integral to helping organizations retain and engage new employees long after the first few weeks on the job.

Many organizational leaders think they are doing enough to onboard new hires, when they are actually just running them through an unstructured orientation process. According to a Bersin by Deloitte study from 2014,[1] "79 percent of business leaders say (onboarding) is both an urgent and important priority." Additionally, they find that "more than 50 percent of organizations either have no structured onboarding solution or use a home-grown solution that has not been built for the competitive digital age."

[1] *Research: Strategic Onboarding Can Help New Hires "Get Off on the Right Foot,"* Bersin by Deloitte, 2014.

Onboarding Makes a Long-Lasting Impact

The first few weeks and months on a job are critical to a new hire and to his or her future at a job. Turnover among new employees in a workplace where there isn't a consistent onboarding process is an ongoing issue for many organizations. In fact, a survey by ADP® showed that only 9 percent of managers and 20 percent of HR professionals feel their organization executes onboarding extremely well today.[2] This indicates that employers often fall short in the early days of employee engagement, making it difficult to retain and inspire the workforce.

The SHRM Foundation found that, for one organization, "new employees who attended a well-structured onboarding program were 69 percent more likely to remain at the company up to three years."[3] Impact Instruction

Group, an Ohio-based corporate training and development firm, advises that the 30 percent of our respondents who continually update their onboarding programs are likely better positioned to uncover and act upon industry indicators and employee trends in the organization.[4] A smart onboarding program recognizes the importance of an employee's ability to ramp up key skills quickly, setting the employee up for success and enhancing the overall competitiveness of the business.

Guidelines for Creating Effective Onboarding Strategies

It's crucial to establish a consistent onboarding process for all new employees while ensuring that it's also customizable for the needs of a particular new hire.

Designing employee onboarding strategies begins with a look at the short- and long-term needs of the business and the employee. Consider the benefits of both informal and formal processes, understanding that these two elements happen simultaneously:

- An informal orientation occurs when employees learn about the corporate culture, processes and values of the organization through personal experience. This is mainly peer led, so there isn't always clearly identifiable structure.

- Formal orientation is a focused effort by the HR team to carry out a written set of step-by-step policies, procedures and goals that are introduced to help each employee adjust to their new role. In this case, management support is integral.

In essence, the best of both worlds is a comprehensive program that combines the formal with the informal in a structured and consistent way, to set employees up for long-term success on the job, greater engagement and increased retention.

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69% more likely to remain at the company up to 3 years.

3 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

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[2] ADP® Onboarding Study, 2015.
[3] Onboarding Trends Report," Impact Instruction Group, 2013.
[4] *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*, Talya Bauer, Ph.D, SHRM Foundation, 2010.

Onboarding Made Simple

Create a structured digital-onboarding process focused on human needs and outcomes using the "3 Cs."

Comfort.

Help new hires assimilate quickly to ensure satisfaction with their new organization and role.

The first impression made when starting a new job can greatly affect the sense of comfort and belonging an employee feels for months, and even years, to come. Make the onboarding process educational, fun and supportive to set the tone for success.

Connection.

Making a strong connection from day one with coworkers, managers, customers and the leaders of the organization can enable greater productivity.

Give all new hires access to the tools and resources they'll need to be successful right away. Assign new hires to a seasoned employee mentor so they have someone to lean on for ongoing questions and learning. Schedule regular touch-point meetings between new hires and managers to overcome obstacles and track progress.

Culture.

Educate new hires about cultural norms, including the enterprise-wide values and expectations of the organization. A video orientation or online training module can facilitate this part of the onboarding.

Make sure the work environment is focused on integrating new hires into the corporate culture.

The above guidelines give your organization a baseline to examine and improve onboarding strategies. These tenets directly address the increasing issues with new hire retention and can lead to improved productivity for recent hires as they work to establish themselves within the organization and understand their role. Developing a strong digital onboarding process can provide a better return on investment for your business, because of increased retention, productivity and employee engagement.

Starting a new job is a big milestone for your new employees. Instituting a structured and comprehensive approach to ensure they are ready to hit the ground running on day one will help solidify the success of your new talent and, ultimately, your business. ■