



ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES

How to do it well and why it matters



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INTRODUCTION

Onboarding a new employee is like a first impression. While an employee's opinion and feelings about an organization start to take shape through interviews and subsequent interactions, how the employee feels on their first day when onboarding begins can truly set the stage for how they feel about the organization, their manager, and their team. Organizations don't get the luxury of a "redo" at onboarding if their first attempt falls short, leaving the new employee feeling unseen or confused about their role.

Even though many employers know the importance of onboarding and how critical it is to employee success, loyalty and engagement, there is still a significant gap between knowledge and execution of a successful onboarding process for new employees.



Only

12%

of employees in the U.S. say their company does a good job of onboarding new employees.¹



Nearly

1 in 5

employees report that their most recent onboarding was a poor experience or that they literally did not receive any onboarding.¹



DOES ONBOARDING MATTER THAT MUCH?

Onboarding is not only important; it's crucial to employees' success and engagement within your organization. Without a proper onboarding experience, new employees can start to wonder things like:

- "Does my employer care about me succeeding in this role?"
- "Is it always going to be like this?"
- "Is this the right role for me?"
- "If I ask for more instructions, will they think I'm dumb?"
- "Where's the bathroom, the breakroom and the coffee maker?"

With no structured onboarding, organizations set new employees up to doubt their role and the organization from day one.

On the other hand, employees who go through a structured onboarding process have a higher likelihood of feeling good about their role and their organization.

Employees who go through a thorough and exceptional onboarding process have the most confidence in their role, with **70 percent** saying they have "the best possible job." Those same employees are **2.6 times more likely** to be extremely satisfied with their workplace and, as a result, are more loyal.¹

With a positive onboarding experience as a backdrop to employee success, employers can take their onboarding up a notch with a fresh and strategic approach — one that encourages connection, offers guidance and embraces available technologies to make it easy and seamless for new employees to join your organization.



THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ONBOARDING

Along with the human touch, onboarding also needs a capable technological solution to succeed. For example, onboarding software could include text and video to allow introductions from a manager and team before the new employee's first day at work. Not only can this build loyalty and assure the new employee that they've picked the right organization, but it can also alleviate some of the nervousness that typically affects new employees. It is also a great idea to consider completing standard protocols prior to the employee's start date via integrated onboarding technology. For example, HR leaders and managers could complete critical administrative functions, such as direct deposit, benefits documents, corporate policies or a federally required form that records a person's eligibility to work in the U.S.

For employees, integrated onboarding technology could help them learn more about the company and location. It might even coordinate with a mobile map application, so the new employee can access specific directions to work on their first day and can learn about the surrounding area and choose a place to go to lunch. The concept here is the value of data integration, where onboarding data flows to the rest of the HR system, saving time and hassle for managers, employees and HR leaders. With effective onboarding software, the moment the new employee gets to work, they will know their team and their environment. They have met their manager, learned about the organization in depth and have completed their paperwork. They're ready to hit the ground running.



ONBOARDING IN THE AGE OF REMOTE WORK

For a long time, onboarding was done in the manager's office, in a cubicle, on paper, and in a very ad-hoc way. In-person onboarding can be done well, but when it's done in an unstructured and non-systematic way, it introduces inefficiencies and confusion for the manager and new hire alike. What's more, in the age of remote work, people don't always have the luxury of meeting face-to-face to take down information or gather personal data. Now, it's more important than ever that onboarding be a smooth process for everyone involved. Employers must push beyond what they've always done in the past and look for onboarding technologies that work now for on-site employees as well as remote and hybrid employees.

So, what does a solid onboarding process look like? What are the crucial factors that make an onboarding "good" or "thorough"? And how can employers ensure that their new employees get an onboarding experience that sets them up for success?



Knowing the principles and strategies that make an onboarding experience a good one is crucial to building a structure that will help new employees succeed.



THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF ONBOARDING

CONNECTION

Forming connections with a new employee in their first few days and weeks is crucial for success.

Employees who feel strongly connected at work are 75 times more likely to be fully engaged than those who are not. There's also a correlation between strong employee connections and lower intent to leave.²

With that in mind, employers and teams should strive to form genuine and authentic connections with new employees early on.

COMFORT

Comfort is essential for employees to feel they can show up to work as their authentic selves.

Creating comfort is directly connected with the psychological safety employees feel in their new workplace, e.g., whether they feel seen, heard and valued.²

Employers should ensure their workplace culture is one where inclusion and psychological safety are fostered well before bringing new hires onto the team.

CULTURE

A welcoming and inclusive culture is an environment where new employees can thrive.

There's no question that an inclusive workplace culture is better for employees and businesses,² so approaching diversity and equity with an inclusion-first lens is vital for leaders desiring a welcoming workplace environment where differences are appreciated and celebrated.

When new employees enter a welcoming and inclusive culture, they are often more willing to ask questions, take risks and bring innovative ideas.

HOW TO DESIGN AN ONBOARDING STRUCTURE THAT SETS NEW EMPLOYEES UP FOR SUCCESS

With the pillars of connection, comfort and culture in mind, building out a structured onboarding experience is the best way for employers to create a positive experience for their new hires and set them up for success.

Building an onboarding experience doesn't have to be complicated or tedious. Depending on the industry and the work, onboarding could be as simple as outlining the steps new hires must go through in their first week at your organization, or it can entail more complex processes and learning modules to help new employees with various aspects of their new role. What matters is developing a standardized onboarding process to set you and your new employees on a path to success.

A structured onboarding experience

Connection

Comfort

Culture

=

A positive experience for new hires



THE THREE FUNDAMENTALS OF BUILDING AN ONBOARDING STRUCTURE

Design digital onboarding for a mobile workforce

With remote and hybrid work opportunities abounding, there's no question that a smooth onboarding experience should be possible without entering an office and without physical paperwork passing hands. Digital onboarding empowers new employees to input and review their information — like personally identifiable information, direct deposit and emergency contacts — in a way that is private, secure and stored directly in the organization's software. This keeps new employees from having to write down information on paper that may be passed from desk to desk before being scanned or manually keyed into the system, which could leave room for error and a lack of security with personal information.

Onboarding software integrated with the organization's HR and payroll system is ideal. That way, tax withholding setups, direct deposit information and benefit and dependent information can be entered once by the employee and then flow automatically into the benefits and payroll system. This removes room for error and takes the administrative load off the hiring manager, who can now spend more time connecting with the new employee and less time shuffling, scanning, and uploading paperwork.

Digital onboarding means your new employees can onboard from anywhere without entering an office, making remote and hybrid work opportunities begin more seamlessly.

Design onboarding for employees and managers

Designing onboarding for employees and managers means creating a structure that allows information to flow seamlessly from the employee to the system and the manager, all without creating tedious data re-entry for the manager or employee. Managers spend, on average, less than a third of their time managing people,³ that is why it makes sense to create an onboarding structure and system that works to their advantage and gives them more bandwidth to connect with their new employees.

Designing onboarding for employees is just as important. Making the process simple and not requiring them to re-enter data in multiple places helps save time and frustration. When learning a new job, focusing on people and connection is essential so employees can easily ask questions as they learn their new role.

Design onboarding to be adaptable to employee feedback

Onboarding structures should be adaptable so that when managers and employees find something that isn't working, it can be easily changed, adapted, or replaced. Building an adaptable structure is important because, in most cases, processes can always be improved.

Finding a specific time and place to gather employee feedback is a necessary step toward improvement. This could be a detailed survey a few weeks after onboarding or some quick yes or no questions after their initial onboarding is completed. Once the feedback is gathered, it needs to be taken seriously by managers and HR leaders so that action can be taken to improve the process and provide a better onboarding experience for future employees.

WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ONBOARDING ROAD

Using the three fundamentals of good onboarding to design your own onboarding structure is a great way to create an onboarding experience that your new employees and managers will not only enjoy but that will serve to prepare the new hires for their roles, connect them with their team and set them up for long term success at your organization. Remember to keep connection, comfort and culture as guiding principles as you design your own onboarding structure or evaluate using one from a third party.

Need help finding the right onboarding strategies and structure for your organization?
Visit adp.com/onboarding



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1. Gallup. *8 Practical Tips for Leaders for a Better Onboarding Process*. 2021
2. ADPRI. *Measuring the "I" in DEI*. 2021
3. McKinsey. *Stop wasting your most precious resource: Middle managers*. 202

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ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

Goals

- Build employee connection with new employee
- Begin employee paperwork

Employer to do's

Set up employee profile in the organization's system of record

Send a welcome note from the manager

Introduce the new employee to the team via email

Provide an overview of the company

Provide local neighborhood and driving directions if the role is in the office

Order employee's equipment or custom items (uniform, laptop, printer, etc.)

Employee to do's

Review company policies and complete acknowledgments

Complete section one of Form I-9

Set up a direct deposit and complete Form W-4

DURING THE FIRST TWO DAYS

Goals

- Create a comfortable atmosphere for the employee to learn
- Complete remaining administrative work (filing forms or e-forms)
- Introduce the new hire to the team in person or via video call
- Designate a "work buddy" or mentor to help guide the new employee

Employer to do's

Tour the office with the new employee if the role is in an office or physical location (restrooms, breakrooms, cafe, coffee, etc.)

Enjoy lunch with the team, or provide a meal delivery gift card for remote employees

Meet employee one-on-one (via video call or in-person, depending on the nature of the role) to talk about expectations

Employee to do's

Complete section two of Form I-9

Complete benefits enrollment (if applicable)

AFTER THE FIRST TWO DAYS

Goals

- Assimilate the employee into company culture
- Get going

Employer to do's

Set attainable goals and measurements of success

Review all onboarding steps and ensure completion of forms

Identify and assign required learning and training

Capture employee feedback about the onboarding process



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