



Whitepaper

The Right Way to Onboard

Bye-bye fragmentation, hello team effort

We all know how important it is to hire the right person. Cultural fit helps ensure success, resulting in greater retention, better performance and more committed and engaged employees. But choosing the right candidate is only the first step. What you do after they accept the offer can play just as big a role in determining how soon you have to go through the process all over again.

Thoughtful onboarding – from offer through integration – is key to ensuring your new employee feels like they’re part of the team, and that they’re empowered to contribute right away and add value. With six easy steps and a little thoughtful planning, onboarding can become a retention tool. It becomes a tangible way for new employees to feel invested in their new company while drawing your tenured employees into the process

1. Get ‘em while they’re waiting

Onboarding needn’t wait until a new employee has begun work. It can start as soon as they’re hired. You can use that notice period to share information they’ll need, or key articles or thought leadership pieces that can help lay the groundwork for their first few weeks. Your employee is arguably never going to be as excited to consume any and all information about your company as they are right now. Start integrating them into your culture and build on that excitement!

2. Make the first day a team effort

Nothing feels worse than showing up to your first day at a new company and being without a desk, having equipment that isn’t set up or meeting folks who aren’t expecting you. Don’t let this be your employee’s first experience! Instead, ensure everyone knows

what successful onboarding looks like – and that it’s a team effort. Collaborate with all the necessary parties ahead of time – HR, facilities, IT, their manager (of course!), as well as a new hire mentor – and then develop an onboarding plan. Who’s going to greet them? Set up their desk? Ensure they know where to park/where to lock up their bike? How to work the coffee maker? You know, the important stuff. And again, this is a team effort. There’s no reason for HR to do all the work. By using a broader group of co-workers, your new hire will be ready to jump in and see exactly what’s expected of them and what they can expect over their first few weeks – and see greater success.

3. Show them you are prepared and eager

You just put in time, resources and energy to find this unicorn. Don’t lose them by falling into the business-as-usual doldrums!

- Announce your new employee to the company ahead of time.
- Plan to celebrate them with a team lunch, a happy hour – or get the team together for something unique, like bowling or pizza making.
- Ensure the “need to know” resources are available and laid out in an accessible way. Consider creating a New Hires Resource Group where they can find everything they need.
- Include other team members and employees across the company in planning. This drives morale and integrates the new employee into the culture of your company.

As a bonus, these “ramp plans” can be turned into templates for repeatable onboarding. By creating a ramp plan for managers to follow when onboarding new employees – and by

making these resources easily accessible – you can take a massive workload off the HR team.

4. Give them a buddy

Let's face it: we all want to impress our boss, and sometimes that scares us away from asking too many questions. Take some pressure off your newest hire by giving them a buddy; that is, someone to whom they pose those "dumb questions" to. (Where's the bathroom again? What was the office manager's name? Where can I store my lunch?) Using a buddy as a training resource can also take a lot off HR's plate. During the first few days, your employee may shadow this person and learn best practices. Your new employee will learn how your organization communicates and how to get support. As a bonus, this gets your more tenured folks involved, and engagement builds retention. This is a great opportunity to look at talent development and new growth opportunities for senior members of your team.

5. Make the connections

No one likes having to figure out who they need to talk to in another department when they're still learning their own team members' names. Provide your new hire with an overview of who works with who on what, including contact info for those key relationships (and head shots so they know who they're talking to). Not only does this help them understand your company's internal network, it also breaks the ice for them. In addition, transparency is your friend. Give your existing employees and key stakeholders this thoughtful ramp plan, too, so everyone's on the same page to begin with.

6. Give new hires the opportunity to work out loud

If your company has a collaborative work space, encourage your employee to join a group, post a status, follow the executive team, write a "first week" blog post introducing themselves, and more. Again, this can all be included in your ramp plan. Besides easing them into their position within your company, all these activities allow them to act on the things they've learned. It also helps them practice working out loud.

Following these steps helps new employees find the resources, information and assistance they need to become engaged, connected and productive employees. By kick-starting the relationship with not just "a plan" but real excitement and encouragement, you can drive belonging and communication across the company, breaking down silos and building cultural cohesion. New employees will remember it, too, and eagerly help onboard your next hire.

Are you an HR professional struggling to unite and inspire your workforce? Learn how you can go beyond fragmented onboarding and top-down communications with a single HR hub that connects and engages everyone.

[Get the eBook](#) – *From Fragmentation to Connection, How IT, Corp Comms and HR Professionals Can Unite People, Information and Systems for Better Company Performance*
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