

your essential
guide to



virtual
onboarding.

top tips to help onboard
your new starter.

contents.

Due to Covid19 many non-key workers are working from home and hiring managers are needing to onboard staff who may not be in the office for some time. This guide takes a look at how you can onboard your new starter from their own home.

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Onboarding is a prime opportunity for employers to win the hearts and minds of new employees. Don't waste it!

the importance of onboarding in a time of uncertainty.

Did you know that according to The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 69 percent of employees are more likely to stay with a company for three years if they experience great onboarding?

As a busy manager who is working from home it's easy to skip a comprehensive onboarding process for a new hire, especially when it is likely that work has been piling up while the position has been vacant. It can be all too easy to send your new starter outdated company collateral and a standard checklist, but this can tarnish impressions and set new starters up for an early exit.

While ensuring cultural fit and a clear understanding of job roles are an essential part of the recruitment process, effective onboarding has a huge role to play. Candidate search and selection is only the first part of the recruitment journey. Employers need to give thought and attention to how they convert good job candidates into successful long term employees. A failure to do so means businesses are wasting their time and money on recruitment and selection in a challenging time.

While some elements of good onboarding fall to HR departments, hiring managers more so than ever before can make a difference. This guide gives hints and tips on how to successfully onboard your new starters. So whether you have a temp, permanent hire, work experience, placement student, or even a colleague who has transferred from another department, this guide is your key to keeping your new team member occupied and engaged in a remote working environment.

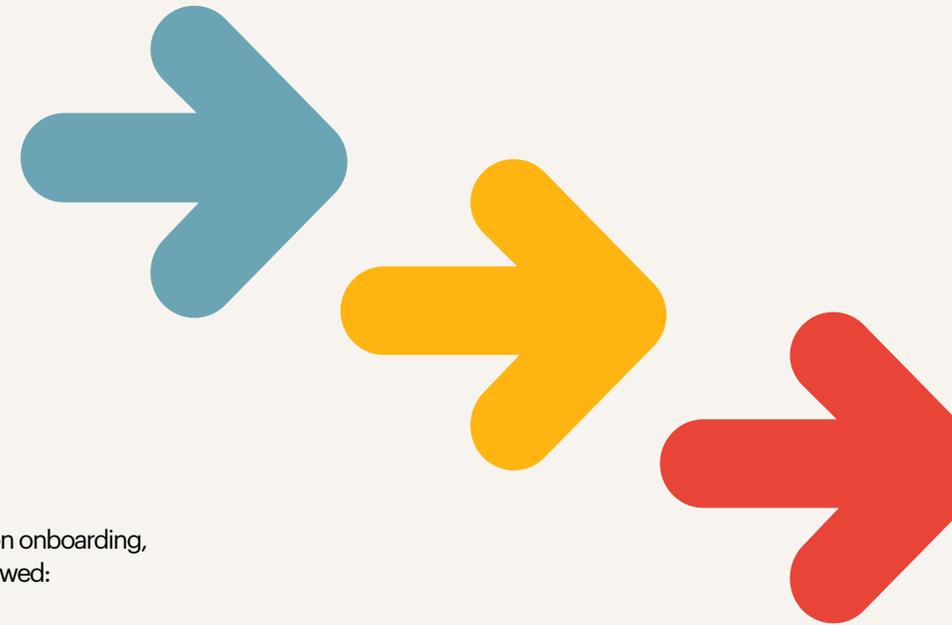
Build workplace relationships

Research by Glassdoor has found that organisations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82 percent and productivity by over 70 percent.

The best employee onboarding programmes are structured and strategic, rather than administrative, with a focus on people, not just paperwork.

Studies show that effective onboarding reduces the time it takes a new employee to effectively contribute to the business.

why new employees leave.



The HCI (Human Capital Institute) states that most businesses have stopped their onboarding process after the first week, leaving new hires feeling confused, discouraged, and lacking resources. A week is not enough time for a permanent new hire to become acclimated to their company, culture, and the job.

Rather than setting new employees up for success, businesses with poor onboarding processes could see their new employee leaving before the end of their probation. New starters who experience badly planned and executed introductions sometimes get the impression that the business is poorly managed and may reconsider their choice to develop in the role.

What new starters want

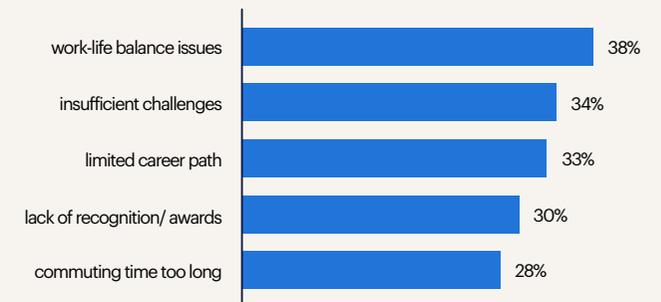
A survey conducted by Cezanne HR on onboarding, with 1,000 full-time office workers showed:

 **32%** of new starters said they would have got up to speed faster if they'd had clearer goals and knew what was expected of them.

 **24%** would have appreciated more regular check-ins with their managers.

 **38%** were looking for more training.

According to our 2019 employer brand data, one third of employees are likely to leave if they feel there is a limited career path open to them.



the generation game.

Gen Z (workers aged between 18 and 24) and millennials, or Gen Y, (those aged between 25 and 34) are likely to make up a significant number of new hires.

Millennials are no longer the new kids on the block as many of these generations of workers are now in their mid-30s, and have successfully integrated into the workforce. It is likely you may be onboarding Gen Z who are often new to the workforce and can be unclear about what to expect.

While Gen Z sometimes get a bad name for job hunting, or looking for a quick promotion, managers should consider that in these early stages of their careers, younger workers and recent graduates tend to be focused on learning and growth.

Investing in career development for this workforce is key. Employers can build career development into the orientation process by showing newbies how they can contribute to the company while also advancing their own career goals.

This generation wants to see a structured way forward. They want to know what's expected of them and what they need to do to progress.

According to Randstad employer brand research 2019:

38%

of millennials seek career opportunities. Other generations are less interested in this offering from their employer.

36%

of millennials leave organisations if they lack career opportunities. Older generations are less interested in this offering from their employer.

Top tips for onboarding Gen Z

Weekly check-ins allow for corrections and keeps them updated. It sends the message that the business cares and is invested in their growth. Give new hires opportunities for growth in the form of rotational assignments, cross-training and platforms to showcase their ideas. All of which can be done remotely.

25%

of companies admitted that their onboarding programme does not include any form of training.

(ClearCompany, 2019)



If you want to communicate important information to Gen Z use visual modes of communication.

before your new starter starts.

If companies can engage and enthuse employees after they've accepted an offer, but before they start, they are much more likely to fit in faster and a lot less likely to be tempted by a higher offer elsewhere. As a hiring manager what can you do to make your new employee welcome?



Why not contact your new employee before they start and share important information to help them feel prepared and excited for their first day?

Information could include:



what their working hours are.



mobile numbers and emails of core team members.



intro to working from home. A re-cap of the online systems the business uses, and how often people run video calls.



Key diary dates

If they have online training courses, it can be good to mention them in an email or on a call. This can be useful for the employee to know before starting in order to sort out childcare if they are home schooling.



Ensure they have computer passwords and an ID pass

Contact HR and IT to set up the new email account, and deliver computer equipment. Have all the login information, company ID and security key cards ready so your new employee can start working from home easily. A new starter sitting at home waiting around for log-ins and equipment does not create a welcoming impression.



if your office is open

If your office is open to staff, a comprehensive run through of your H&S protocol is must before they enter the office. You might consider providing some extra sanitary items such as hand gels, wipes or other ways to ensure high levels of hygiene. Consider providing further advice around social distancing, and how employees are expected to interact with each other in terms of meetings, eating/drinking and other social interactions.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression and this doesn't only appertain to the new starter, but also to the hiring manager. Onboarding doesn't start on day one.

See our onboarding checklist at the end of this guide for more tips.

top tips for week one.

day one Provide essential documents.

Although a new starter shouldn't be bombarded with lots of reading materials, in an office based role there will be some important reading necessary. This could be anything from an employee handbook to a number of company policies. Follow any large reading tasks by a mini quiz to aid comprehension. Where possible, see if there is any useful online content such as a video the new starter could watch. Everyone learns differently and visual and interactive elements can be more engaging, particularly to the younger workforce starting out in the workplace.

Office tour.

While it might not be possible to show new employees around, give an overview of the departments and introduce new employees to department heads. Could some key individuals record welcome messages?

Keep communicating.

Share their induction timetable. Zoom, Google hangouts and Trello can work well for online delivery so business inductions, company orientation and team onboarding are all possible with the use of online tools and video conferencing.

Give a business induction.

Your business may have a formal induction but if not, create one. Provide an overview of the company's vision and mission, values, products and services, organisational chart and functions of various departments.

Give the new hire an in-depth orientation to the company history.

It's a missed opportunity when new hires leave on the first day with more knowledge about their annual leave allowance than on the company itself. You'll have time during the rest of the onboarding process to provide in depth instruction in these areas, but an overview will help the new hire get acclimated and feel inspired.

Team onboarding.

Have colleagues from the new employee's department or team give overviews of their fields, tasks and responsibilities. This will ensure you have some time to do your daily tasks.



Onboarding is the perfect time to tell stories about your company history, values, people and big-picture vision for the future.



Top tips for the first few days:

- day two** Meet the wider team and other departments. Set up an online team meeting where the team can discuss current or upcoming projects. Have a separate catch up with the new starter to ask about previous experience and what they are most looking forward to.
- day three** Start introducing duties, shadowing and setting small tasks, don't disengage them with an overload of work and to-do lists.
- day four** Send a company, or department email with a picture (if they agree to it) with their hobbies, position and department. This also encourages others to interact with the new starter and reinforce the welcome.
- day five** Check in, arrange a 1-2-1 for them to give feedback. Remember every new employee is an opportunity to improve your management style, so encourage feedback and act on it.

See our onboarding checklist at the end of this guide for more tips.

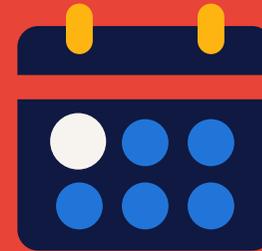
tech and touch - don't just rely on tech.

Remember technology is vital in today's working world but it cannot replace the one-on-one interactions between new hires and various members of the organisation that elevate the onboarding experience. Arrange a series of catch-ups with key internal stakeholders over the first few weeks. This could be a key person for each major department: finance, HR, marketing, IT.

Technology can streamline the administrative process. Rather than giving new hires lots of information to remember, ask a team member to remotely show them how to use systems such as the benefits portal to find the information they need. It's easy to focus on programmes and systems only related to the core day job but knowing where to book holiday, claim expenses, view benefits are important for a new starter to feel part of the organisation.



onboarding ideas for month one.



The general consensus among HR professionals is that onboarding should take at least three months. However, research suggests companies can increase employee retention by extending onboarding throughout an employee's entire first year.

Assign an online mentor

New employees need an insider's view and help navigating the ins and outs of a company. The bigger the company, the more complex the processes. A mentor can speed new hires through the adjustment and help them fit in socially as well. A mentor can work well for Gen Z employees if they are new to the workplace.

Have your new starter teach a new skill

New people have credibility issues when they walk in. Older employees think of them as inexperienced, while recent hires see them as competition. Sometimes a person within the team may have applied for the role the new hire has secured. All this can cast new starters as outsiders. You hired your new starter based on their abilities. Break the ice and elevate their status in the first couple of weeks by having them showcase a skill to the team or contribute to an online learning session. This will help show their value to other employees and open the door to trust and camaraderie.

A fresh pair of eyes

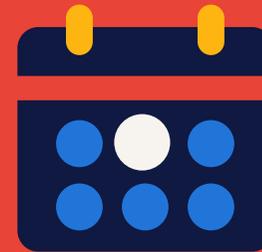
Ask your employee for feedback on processes and ways of working. Could the website be improved? Acknowledge suggestions they have for how to improve issues and processes. Do they have any impressions that have improved or worsened since they joined? Utilising a fresh pair of eyes can help identify issues that may have been overlooked before and bridge the gap between you and a competitor.



recognition

keep the employee motivated and engaged by celebrating success. It could be as simple as noting the new employee's achievements in a team meeting.

onboarding ideas for months two and three.



Survey your new starter in months one and three

One-on-one conversations are important during onboarding, but if you can't find the time, consider sending out a survey instead.

Schedule training

As part of the onboarding process, engage with your new employee to establish what skills they feel they need training on. Explore and book in relevant internal training, conferences and webinars that are likely to happen later in the year. Identifying employee training as a priority for the business can increase employee engagement and loyalty.

Team event

Organise a team event to further integrate the new employee and promote their emotional loyalty three months into the role. This could take the form of an online team lunch or virtual team after work drinks.

It's not all about the new starter...

The first few months are a good time to assess the best way you and your new employee will interact on a day-to-day level. The relationship that you develop with your new employee in the early stages can set the expectations on the type of management input they require to feel supported and how you might need to adjust your management style.



Don't forget to revisit goals and responsibilities.

You will have touched on this during the hiring process, but now is the opportunity to go into more detail about key projects and expectations. Take time to discuss the evaluation process and have a performance review.

onboarding ideas for month three and beyond.



Successfully onboarding a new employee takes several months and has additional challenges when you are unable to meet face to face. The best employee onboarding programmes extend throughout the employee's first 90 days and may even extend out for a full year to ensure new hires are fully supported as they reach full productivity.

Remember to...

Check in often, and schedule regular catch-ups to give new hires the opportunity to air any concerns. Take the time to ask questions. Facilitate any additional training on systems or processes, and be prepared to give extra feedback.

Remember everyday in the onboarding process is your chance to solidify their decision to join and STAY in your team!

Conclusion

Given that a strong onboarding process can result in higher retention, productivity and savings, there's a huge opportunity for most organisations to do more. If you are part of a large organisation, HR may well have a comprehensive onboarding programme although it may have been designed for face to face contact. However, with or without a formal onboarding programme, hiring managers have a vital role to play in the successful onboarding of new employees.

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top tip

A congratulations on passing your probation note or welcome to the team gift (such as wine, chocolates, or flowers) can also be a nice touch.



employee onboarding checklist.

The employee onboarding checklist below will help with your management of onboarding new staff, however this shouldn't be relied on as the only steps required. This will only form a starting point for you to work from:

before the new employee starts the prep work.

Contact HR and IT to set up the new email account, voicemail and computer equipment. Have all the login information, company ID and security key cards ready for your new employee.

A selection of corporate goodies, stationery, drink or snack could be sent in the post to create a good impression.

when the new employee starts day one.

Make introductions: ensure the wider team knows to welcome the new employee.

Send out a welcome email to the team, key stakeholders and/or the business in the morning. In this email, provide some background about the new employee and potentially some interesting facts that could prompt conversations with colleagues over the coming weeks.

Make personal introductions to key departments and colleagues via email. Organise a virtual team lunch or coffee for bonding in a social setting.

employee week one and beyond.

Arrange a series of online catch-ups with key internal stakeholders over the first few weeks.

Arrange a series of weekly catch-ups with your new starter to find out where they are with projects, how they feel about the work and to discuss any training or development leads.

Check in throughout the week to ensure the new starter is ok. Working from home indefinitely can be a challenging time.

Ask internal stakeholders for any feedback in the early weeks.



Why not print this check-list out or pass it on to a colleague who might also be onboarding a new starter?

onboarding - not just for new starters.

When we think of onboarding, the tendency is to think of new starters as graduates straight from university or the experienced professional joining from a competitor. Onboarding can help set people up for success at any time of change in their career. Large organisations might invest in an online portal with bespoke content and learning to achieve this but there are still areas that as a manager you can develop.

Returners to work

This area of the workforce can be easily overlooked and takes many forms. These include parents who've spent months away from work, someone returning from long term sick leave, or those who have taken time out to travel, a lot can change in a company and a team. An onboarding tool that they can access from outside the office can play a key role in getting them up to speed for their return. It can include everything from information on developments in their team and industry, to practical tips from other employees. If this isn't provided by HR, a simple email update from the hiring manager can help fill in this gap.

Building an agile workforce

With the onset of agile working, more employees are experiencing project-based career paths. A flexible onboarding tool can assist in creating cohesion and a clear sense of purpose in these shifting teams – allowing you to maximise your workforce's skill-set whilst retaining high levels of performance and clear lines of communication.

Moving into management

People are often promoted into management because of their strong performance in their current role. But how prepared are they to lead, inspire, organise, and discipline others? From online training and resources, an onboarding programme can help first-time managers get off to a flying start.

Mergers and acquisitions

Developing strong links with new employees during a merger or acquisition is vital at a time of uncertainty and preventing the best talent from walking out the door. Bespoke onboarding content, delivered through an online portal that's mobile friendly and accessible anywhere, is invaluable as is ensuring there are multiple lines of communication, should people have questions. It can help dispel rumours in the first days of a merger, drive new initiatives, and cement together the two halves of your new company.



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