



NEW HIRE ONBOARDING

Why Effective Is Better Than Flashy

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To effectively onboard new hires, you must be disciplined, not innovative. Sure, you can build some clever bells and whistles, unique to your corporate culture and industry, into your new employee orientation and first days on the job. I have done this successfully with numerous companies, embedding fun and meaningful events and touch points into the process to acculturate new hires and amplify their enthusiasm. The real success, however, comes from a disciplined and practical approach to onboarding newcomers that accelerates their time to productivity and keeps them engaged in your organization for the long haul.

What Really Matters When Onboarding Employees

The term "onboarding" refers to the process of integrating new employees into the company, preparing them to succeed at their job, and to become fully engaged, productive members of the organization. It includes the initial orientation process and the ensuing three to nine months (or however long it takes to get an employee "up to speed" in a particular company or discipline). This is a crucial time in an employee's career, when they are both eager to succeed and highly impressionable to their experiences and surroundings. What really matters during this critical phase is that employees receive the right resources, knowledge and networks to perform in their new jobs and the proper career counseling to know what future opportunities are possible.

Getting this right takes a disciplined, coordinated effort from HR and line managers. To ensure a successful outcome during this phase, you must map out the new hire's experience during their first months to ensure it aligns with your onboarding goals. The following questions are an excellent framework to begin assessing the effectiveness your new hire onboarding:

- Does your process make it easy or difficult for new hires to get the information they need?
- Does your process increase or reduce a new hire's time to productivity?
- Does your process ensure or sabotage the new hire's success?
- Under what conditions have new hires excelled?
- Why have new hires failed? What were they lacking? What were the conditions?

Get the Basics Right First

Many employers make a great first impression through their recruitment process and orientation session but neglect to think about what happens to the employee once they show up ready to work. Often times the most basic needs are overlooked and employees are left to fend for themselves resulting in low engagement, retention and productivity. Get the basics right and you will have a much higher return on your investment than investing in flashy orientation sessions and company swag. As a starting point, make sure you do the following:

- Provide employees with a clean and ready workstation on Day One
- Start new hires when their supervisor is present and accessible
- Walk newcomers through organizational charts to explain formal and informal lines of communication and hierarchy
- Help new employees establish a network by introducing them to people recognized as valuable resources in the company
- Educate new hires on career paths within the company and what the career development process looks like

To successfully onboard employees for long-term results, adopt a functional, not flashy approach. Your employees will thank you and reward you with productivity, engagement and longevity.