

Convince The New Hire to Stay-Even Before Their First Day (Pre-Boarding & Onboarding Tips)

Description

When times are hard or things are busy, companies tend to stop onboarding. Yet these are the times itâ??s *most* important to get new hires engaged and immersed in the culture quickly.

It used to be standard to wait 30 days to check in on a new employee. We canâ??t afford to do that anymore. Employees have tons of options right now. People can already be looking for a new job in their first week. In some cases, they might even accept a job and not show up for their first day (a phenomenon known as ghosting).

Itâ??s not just a matter of the talent shortage. Even in the best of times, getting people connected with the culture early is crucial. And with so many jobs being remote now, onboarding is even more important. Companies need to get intentional and creative to establish that sense of belonging that makes people want to stay, even if they arenâ??t getting the â??traditionalâ?• employee experience.

The bottom line is, we need to get people connected to our mission, vision, and values (MVV) and start the bonding process right away. Relationships are made or broken quickly.

In fact, ONBOARDING may not be enough. Many employers have started PRE-BOARDING. That means engaging a new hire from the moment they accept a position to the day they start working. This helps stave off second thoughts and builds excitement about the job while also reducing anxiety and setting the person up to thrive.

A few tips for both:

PRE-BOARDING

Make a welcome call the day the new hire accepts the offer. Itâ??s best if this call comes from someone who will â??dazzleâ?• them. Typically, this is the CEO, president, or head of the reporting chain into which the individual is hired. The new hire is wowed that someone that high up cares enough to call.

Create bonding experiences with coworkers right away. Invite new hires to attend staff meetings and celebrations (retirements, baby showers, Hospital Week events) even though the start date has not yet come. Let them meet their new team. This lets them see their new team at their happiest and experience how employees celebrate one another.

Also, let current employees know how important it is to welcome the new person. Tell them, â??Our new people are very important to us. Please make sure they feel welcome and included.â?•

Put the welcome in writing. Send a card signed by members of the team who will work with them. You might also send a â??thank-youâ?• note to the new employeeâ??s familyâ??this will ensure the family is excited about your organization too and is fully supportive of the employeeâ??s new job.

If thereâ??s a long time between acceptance of the offer and day one, space out several mailings to the new hireâ??s home. This will help build excitement and anticipation. After initial welcome cards, mailings might include copies of the last several employee newsletters and a small item or two of company swag (mug, water bottle, pen, badge holder, etc.).

Make preparations to set the person up for success. For example, send a map of the campus or area so they donâ??t get lost on their first day. Make sure that everything the person needs to be successful in their role is ready: IT login, computer, clean and ready workspace, ID badge, parking tag, new employee packet, etc.

ONBOARDING

Of course, you will do standard orientation things like reviewing company policies, going over educational charts, and so forth. These are givens. But the more you can do to make orientation engaging and fun, the better. The idea is to ensure a positive first-day experience and relieve anxiety. Young workers, especially, will be uncomfortable entering a new workplace.

Give a robust tour of your organization. All too often, the leader meets new hires in the lobby, walks them to their workspace, and leaves the rest to chance. Go beyond the basics and cover everything: all the â??bestâ?• routes from parking to the campus (including tunnels or bridges that keep folks out of inclement weather), employee stairwells and elevators, rest rooms, break rooms, locker rooms, cafeteria, coffee shop, HR, and so forth. Supplementing this with a map or â??cheat sheetâ?• of key locations is even better.

One nurse leader not only provides a tour but also conducts a fun scavenger hunt for every new hire to help them find things on the unit on their own (after the tour). The last spot on the hunt includes a little welcome gift from the leader.

Help them stand out as â??newâ?• so others will know to be helpful. One organization had a special lanyard color they had new hires use for the first 90 days. The idea was to signal to everyone else that this person was new. The team knew to help them find their way, be aggressively welcoming, etc. (This is similar to the way cruise lines give first-time and experienced cruisers different lanyard colors.)

Assign a first-day or first-week buddy. This person walks with and eats lunch with the new hire on day one, walks them to meetings, introduces them to key people. In one organization, this person was

the lunch buddy on the first day of orientation too to serve as a bit of a bridge from the group of all newcomers at the mass orientation to the unit.

You might even consider assigning new hires a longer-term â??mentor.â?• This will go a long way toward helping them both learn job skills and get integrated into the social life of the company.

Do a deep dive into your organizationâ??s mission, vision, and values. Itâ??s vital that the new hire gets a feel for your culture early on. This will help them â??fit inâ?• more quickly so they can experience that crucial sense of belonging that makes them want to stay and sets them up to succeed long term.

Zero in on your EAP and other wellness program specifics and benefits. This is important with so many people struggling with mental health issues after COVID-19. Make sure the new hire understands what is offered, how to access it, and so forth. Make it very clear that you care about your teamâ??s well-being and want people to speak up when they need help. (This goes a long way toward breaking the stigma around mental health issues from day one.)

Provide a road map for success during the first 90 days. The clearer you are on what will happen in the first 12 weeks, and what is expected of the new person during that time frame, the better. Spell it all out and give the new person a chance to ask questions. Clarity goes a long way toward relieving anxiety.

Include discussions about ongoing skill building and professional development. New hires (and especially young people) want to know they will have a chance to grow and progress in your company. Let them know up front that you take this seriously. Then, create an individualized development plan for each employee and review it no less than monthly.

Meet weekly over the first few months to check in and get feedback from the new person. Be sure to ask probing questions like:

- What did you like about today?
- Can you tell me about the positive impact you have been making?
- Who helped answer your questions?
- Any surprises (clarity of expectations)?
- How have we made you feel welcome, included, and valued?
- What are you struggling with that we can provide resources for?
- What can I do to support you/ensure your success?
- On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable do you feel in your new role?

Just like you, your new hire wants to develop a long-term, productive, rewarding relationship with the right company. With a great pre-boarding and onboarding program, you can prove to them early on that *yours* is the right companyâ??one where they can grow, succeed, and thrive for many years to come.

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