



“This Is the Right Place for Me.” (Helping New Hires Feel This Way Quickly)

## Description

Getting and keeping good people has always been one of the biggest challenges for business owners. Finding the right person to join the team has been especially tricky these past few years. The shortage of candidates and the growing competition for those staffing resources has created a sense of urgency. Business owners need to find the right person for the job, and it needs to happen quickly.

The interview process may feel a lot like speed dating. You meet this candidate, then that one, trying to learn as much as possible about each other in a short period of time. The candidate and the hiring manager are both on their best behavior. They’re saying and doing all the right things to impress the other, both trying to find the perfect match for a longer-term commitment.

Yet building the foundation for a relationship doesn’t end after the proposal—the job offer. During a conference call with team members this past week, we discussed how quickly and unintentionally we can become complacent in keeping the love alive in our work relationships after the proposal. We joked about how easy it is to get comfortable “wearing the sweatpants.”

Even after the job has been accepted, we still need to “court” the candidate. This needs to happen via PREBOARDING (intentionally engaging the client during that window between accepting the job and officially starting work) and ONBOARDING (getting people integrated into the organization and quickly connecting them to mission, vision, and values).

People have lots of options now and may still be looking elsewhere after they’ve said yes—even after they’ve started working. The goal is to get them to think “this is the right place for me” as early as possible.

I find it interesting that there’s a lot of hoopla when an employee leaves, with cakes and parties and cards, but not so much when one first comes onboard. It’s not that people are intentionally callous. They may not always remember what it’s like to be the new employee. Also, everyone is so busy with their own work that they don’t have a lot of time to think about the new hire. We need to change the way we think about arrivals and departures. Welcoming someone onto the team is a very big deal, and we need to celebrate it.

Here are some tips:

1. **Send a welcome video from the team.**We recently did this with new employees at Studer Family of Companies (SFOC). We received such wonderful feedback about how this had made such a huge impact. Employees often question whether they have made the right decision when selecting an employer. Let them know they have indeed made the right decision and they are in the right place.
  - o Make it personal. Recount a point or story from the interview, highlight a specific talent that person has, or share how your values are aligned.
  - o Make it fun. We all like to see the humanness in the people we will be working with. Laughter really is the best medicine.
  - o Make it matter. Tell the individual how much you are looking forward to working with them and what a difference they will be making. Bring it back to purpose.
2. **Send a thank-you note.**When an employee accepts the offer to join the organization, send a note of appreciation for choosing ABC Organization as their employer of choice and tell them how excited you are they will be part of the family. Employees will feel the relationship is bidirectional.
3. **Do a check-in call before the start date.**Make it a point to call the new employee to ask what questions they have that you can answer for them before their first day. Give them virtual love by telling them how much you are looking forward to their first day.
4. **Make the second day and the third as good as the first.**And so on and so on. The new team member wants to continue to feel valued and appreciated.
5. **Celebrate with a welcome party.**Going-away parties with cake, balloons, dinners, and speeches are a nice way to say goodbye and thank you for being a valued member of our team, but what if we said hello with a party instead?
6. **Ask some "getting to know you" questions.** This helps with the bonding process. Get creative with some unexpected icebreaker questions like:

"If you were going on stage, what would be your walk-on song?"

"What is a movie you watch over and over?"

"What's your most embarrassing workplace story?"

"Tell me about your best vacation ever."

"If you could take a year off work, how would you use that year?"

"If someone gave you a million dollars to donate to a charity, which one would you choose?"

7. **Do a deep dive into your organization's mission, vision, and values.** It's vital that the new hire gets a feel for your culture early on. This will help them "fit in" 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.
8. **Get creative with bonding activities.**For instance, you might do a scavenger hunt to get new people working with others in teams on something fun. Or you could set up a team volunteer day for a cause chosen by the new employee.

9. **Make sure they understand what training and development will look like.** New hires (and especially young people) want to be assured they'll 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.
10. **Help the person understand any early unease they may be feeling.** Tell them you know they might be worrying: "Will I make it? Will I fit in? Was taking this job the right decision?" Assure them that all of these are normal feelings. It takes time to settle into a new position. Let them know you and their coworkers will do everything possible to support them during this time of transition.

Relationships are made and broken quickly. A lot can happen in those first few weeks. Make the most of the preboarding and onboarding periods, and it will set everyone up for a long-term, productive, rewarding relationship.

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