

# SOLUTION: Onboarding Excellence

The Society of Human Resources Management tells us that even though hiring the right person for an open position is key to the success of your leadership role and your department overall, even more important than hiring is onboarding.



What is the definition of onboarding?

Let's begin with the very definition of onboarding.

## on·board·ing

*noun*

1. the action or process of integrating a new employee into an organization or familiarizing a new customer or client with one's products or services.
2. "after the initial onboarding is complete, continue to offer new hires relevant training and development opportunities".

## WHY IS ONBOARDING SO RELEVANT IN TODAY'S HIRING AND ONBOARDING PROCESSES?

You are going to up your game and practices during a cultural transformation to hire the very best people for their behaviors, not just their skill. When you do that, you need to remember that if you and your team have done a great job of hiring the next rockstar to join your team, they will have left another workplace two weeks prior where people were begging them not to go.

Too often, we forget that our new employees are watching us just as closely as we are watching them. High performing people are not worried about staying in one place for 30 years to collect a gold watch. They want to know they have come to a great work environment and first impressions are everything.

Here are the 5 key objectives to Onboarding a new employee, or group of employees to your organization. Your Steering Team and HR professionals are responsible for creating a great onboarding experience. For the purposes of this Solution, the employee experience team is responsible for one that they are uniquely positioned to create.

## Five Key Objectives of Effective Onboarding

- Engaging the new employee in the vision and strategies of the organization.
- Connecting to the culture of the organization.
- Facilitating the establishment of interpersonal relationships and information networks.
- Increasing clarity, competence, and confidence.
- Teaching the necessary regulatory, legal, accreditation, and policy requirements.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

We task the employee experience team with creating an amazing first impression for the new people to your organization.

### What are the best practices where this is concerned?

- Arm your team with data. Make time with your HR Leader and professionals to learn what they know about turnover rates of new employees within 1 year of hire. What departments need your focus and attention first? What current plans are in place to create a smooth transition and impressive hiring process for all new hires?
- Interview/Round on a portion of the new hires. Delegate this to the entire team. Ask them specifically to give you details of the hiring and onboarding process. If there are leaders in your organization that are already creating a magical and impressive welcome experience for their new hires, incorporate what they are doing for the entire organization!
- Have a brainstorming session with your team to see how you can create a welcoming experience for these newest employees.



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An Excerpt from our book “The Employee Experience: A Capstone Guide to Peak Performance”. Sue tells a great true story in our book that illustrates the importance of creating an amazing welcome for your newest employees.

### Make Day One a Special Day

My cousin recently accomplished a lifelong dream. A mother of seven beautiful children, she has spent the last years being a dutiful and caring parent. After all this time, and wonderful experience, she decided it was time to pursue her dream career...nursing. She passed the boards with flying colors and eagerly made her first steps into the world of healthcare.

I had the opportunity to speak to her about her first day on the job and found myself a bit perplexed by the experience. She dove right into explaining how she had attempted IVs and found success after a few missed opportunities. She talked about the mysterious complexity of the electronic health record system. She also spoke about how the staff on this unit had no idea that she was coming.

They had no idea.

This was a monumental day for my cousin. A day when she was able to fulfill a childhood dream, to become one of those she had thought heroes. Yet, here she was, meant to feel special, but left alone in the cold.

I've heard far too many stories of those reporting to work on day one, only to find nothing prepared at all. No desk, no chair, no badge of employment, no signifier at all that anyone was paying attention to their existence.

This abandonment and alienation can seed itself in the mind of a new employee. We challenge leaders, and their staff, to find ways to delight new employees on their first day.

Our partner hospitals, with ever-increasing employee engagement and decreasing turnover, came up with the following to make every day one special:

- The members of the Employee Experience Team personally greet the new employee when they arrive for their first day. They present them with a welcome card that has been signed by the team.
- They present the new employee with a welcome candy bar wrapped in customized paper that reads: “Serving size: One Happy Employee” and the ingredients are the organization’s behavioral standards of excellence.
- They send a welcome package to the home of the employee that is addressed to the entire family. This package invites them to be a part of the hospital family and lists events in which they are able to do so.

*Make Day One special is a solution designed for the first day in the new employee's department. Oftentimes, the EE team mistakes this tactic in their Journey Plan to make the employee's first day of New Hire Orientation, or their very first day entering the building special. We are working under the assumption your HR team already has this covered. If they do not, by all means help them out! However, as Sue's story tells us, the employee's first day in their department needs work, and it has been assigned to our employee experience teams to make this happen!*

## SOCIALIZATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING.

Here is what Gallup (a leader in employee engagement surveying) has to say about creating a sense of belonging in your organization, and among employees. They measure the statement “I have a best friend at work”.

Gallup also found a strong link to overall engagement activities: “Those who [have a best friend at work] are seven times as likely to be engaged in their jobs, are better at engaging customers, produce higher quality work, have higher well-being, and are less likely to get injured on the job.”

The work you will do to create a sense of belonging, and to expand ways that employees can find a “best friend at work” will have the ripple effect across your organization to elevate BOTH the patient and employee experience!

In the best workplaces, employers recognize that people want to forge quality relationships with their coworkers, and that company allegiance can be built from such relationships.

Our recommendations for expanding the opportunities for socialization and relationship building:

- **Who are your party people?** Who can you trust to make sure this key tactic in onboarding is truly happening? Wise leaders will recognize that onboarding is crucial and ensure that all aspects of effective onboarding is being met in their individual departments. There are just THOSE employees that excel at relationships and putting themselves “out there” in social situations. They organize potlucks, celebrate birthdays, invite everyone to a happy hour after work, and make sure a new grad who passed their boards gets celebrated their next day at work. Every department needs a Chief Party Officer. Find that person, recognize them, and rely on them to create socialization at work.
- **Family Events.** Family social events are a great way for employees from other departments to get to know one another, and also for employees who may work together daily, but never really “see” each other as humans with family responsibilities. Everyone has a different concept of family. Make sure you acknowledge that furry family members (pets!) may need to be invited to the Summer Family

event. Family events are a great way for employees to see each other as spouses, parents, grandparents, etc. Social groups will naturally form, and your newest employees may find others with like interests.

- **Community Events** are another way of a multitude of employees to see each other outside of their work environment. What I mean by “seeing” is to realize something about a peer employee they have never seen before. Volunteering is a great way to break down barriers and reduce stress. Remember, people who play together stay together! We have seen our community teams grow stronger through the positive shared experience of creating a community event that has great purpose for their organization!
- **Your Team Structure** is one way to build relationships! Cross-functional or matrixed teams are the norm in an increasing number of organizations. Not only are you getting great work done to improve the work environment, you are building relationships you can rely on.

Creating a sense of belonging and inclusiveness in your organization takes everyone. Building relationships through family and social events, through an intentional welcoming on Day One, and welcoming others to your team will take some time for you to realize how valuable your work is.

No employee may ever say the words to you “I feel like I belong here because of the work of your team”.

**JUST START.** Your results, and the joy you create will be worth it.

*“Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are.”*

--Brené Brown



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