

Onboarding 101: How to ensure that new hires will thrive



Finding qualified candidates requires an investment of time, energy and money from all involved in your organization's recruitment, hiring and training functions—but your role as a manager doesn't really begin until after employees have completed their new-hire paperwork.

In fact, the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) cites statistics that most employees don't decide to fully commit to a job until they've been on staff at least six months.

Their decision to stay on board through those first few critical months is deeply intertwined with the amount of energy managers put into helping them through the transition from new hire, to engaged and accountable team member.

Here are four ways all managers can help their new hires settle into their new roles.

1. Introduce employees to the culture

Your human resources department may take the lead on giving employees an introduction to company policies, procedures and mission statements—but managers must help newly hired employees assimilate into the company culture so they can feel confident navigating this new world.

Invite newly hired employees to sit in on a variety of meetings with you and other members of the team, which will relate to their job in some way.

Brief them in advance to help them understand who they're meeting with, and why. They won't understand the content of every meeting they attend, but over time, they'll learn how the team interacts, and what types of language and behaviors are the norm in your company.

2. Schedule introductions for several months

Most managers take new hires out for a team lunch their first day on the job—but far fewer provide that level of attention several months after their date of hire.

Assign new hires with a few mentors who can provide them with guidance and help when you aren't available. SHRM cites data indicating that nearly 60% of employees say having a mentor during their first few weeks on the job was very important to them.

3. Establish goals and responsibilities

Newly hired employees and the other team members whose jobs intersect with theirs should understand the new employee's primary job duties and responsibilities starting on "day one." When everyone on the team has clarity around what a new hire's job will entail, existing employees are better equipped to share pertinent information—and less likely to fear that the new hire will pose a threat to their job security.

In turn, newly hired employees who understand exactly what tasks they will handle are empowered to home in on the most important details of their training, and better equipped to ask questions that will prepare them to jump into their job duties.

4. Provide feedback at the 30-day mark

Your newly hired employee will have been exposed to plenty of information, people and experiences once they complete their first month on the job; schedule a formal meeting to discuss their impression and feelings when they reach this milestone.

Provide meaningful insights about any contributions they've made on the job up to this point to recognize that you see the work they've done, and to give them a sense as to how they've performed, based on expectations.

The 6-month rule

Consider them "new" for the first six months. The SHRM reports that just 15% of companies continue formal onboarding through the first six months on the job. Yet, the majority of employees who stay in a job for at least three years attribute continued onboarding as part of the reason they stuck with their employer.

Commit to giving newly hired employees the same level of coaching and guidance you'd give them the first week on the job until they hit their six-month anniversary—regardless of how senior or independent they may seem. Your attention and support could be the tipping point to whether an employee ultimately decides to stay, or seeks new opportunities.