

Engage new hires by telling your organization's story



While employee onboarding certainly involves attending to numerous legal and procedural matters, smart leaders use the time for more than completing W-4s. Instead, they create long-term engagement .by building on the energy eager new hires possess.

This captive audience craves information about their new workplace, so give it to them! Present what makes your company unique – its history, mission, operations, people, and aspirations. Help new hires understand how they will contribute to this legacy. When they recount their onboarding experience in the future, employees will look back on it as the time when they truly began feeling connected to the company rather than as a dreaded ritual that they survived.

Make your story part of the onboarding process

Employers interested in boosting retention should pay particular attention to new hires during their first 90 days on the job. Within this time period, employees formulate hard-to-alter opinions about their new company. This includes whether or they feel confident in their decision to work there. Getting individuals to understand the organization's "big picture" and their role in it promotes a sense of belonging.

Your story helps new hires connect to the organization

"Telling your company's story from infancy to where it is right now is an excellent way for new hires to understand the company's culture and traditions," says Jeremy Harrison, founder of [Hustle Life](#), a media company that helps people find side hustles. "Although they're new, this somehow makes them relate to what the company has been through and appreciate the opportunity they have been given. Not everybody can work in our company, and only the people who fit the culture can have that opportunity. Understanding the 'why' at the onset will instill that in their minds."

Daniel Cooper, managing director of the digital transformation company [Lolly Co](#), agrees. "It is important to tell your story during onboarding because it allows the new hire to identify with you or certain aspects of your goals and motivations, which inspires loyalty," he said. "If you tell your new hire that one of the reasons you started your digital transformation company is to lessen the carbon footprint by encouraging automation, they might identify with your motivation to reduce climate change. It makes them feel that they are truly in the right place."

While all new hires benefit from hearing your story, research shows the action particularly affects Millennials. Twenty-eight percent of people in this age group report having quit a job because they did not feel connected to the organization. Thus, attending to their emotional engagement from the start can result in a huge payoff in terms of satisfaction and retention.

How to tell your story to new hires

Companies differ in what they want to share with new employees and how they choose to deliver that information. No one-size-fits-all way exists to convey your past, present, and future. The key, however, is to truly think about the material and its presentation. Intentional onboarding – as opposed to "winging it" – provides an organized, consistent experience that reflects well on your organization.

Areas employers often focus on when telling their story include:

- **Origin:** How the business got started and who created it.
- **Growth:** What has occurred over the years and what great things are to come.
- **Mission:** Why the organization does what it does and how that plays into the world at large.
- **Brand:** What the company stands for and how it wants the public to perceive it.
- **Workplace Culture:** Why working here differs from other places and how individual team members contribute to the big picture.

How you choose to get your message across also offers a glimpse into your modus operandi. Some leaders may opt for traditional presentations, such as speaking directly to a group of new hires and showing PowerPoints. Others may recruit veteran workers to share their individual accounts. Games, videos, and other creative methods can be wonderful for sustaining interest. In-person or virtual tours of the company provide a great portrait of the entire operation.

Dedicate time and resources

Armando Lopez, executive director of human resources at [Ramsey Solutions](#), states that his company devotes about 75 percent of their two-day onboarding to storytelling. One highlight is Ramsey's Amazing Culture Race, a "fun and interactive way for new hires to learn our company's history." Participants ask trivia questions of tenured team members, find key artifacts throughout the building, and discover company milestones through pictures and plaques. Another important activity for new hires is watching a 30-minute company documentary. The video includes stories from actual consumers whose lives have been changed by the organization's financial counseling and educational services.

The sky's the limit for how to tell your story during new employee orientation, just remain genuine. What works well at one company may come off as corny or trying too hard at another. Take the time to develop what feels "right."

Let new hires tell their story

Finally, recognize the value of encouraging your new hires to share their own background, strengths, and long-term objectives during onboarding. Demonstrating interest in their individual stories and how they align with the company empowers your newest team members to start contributing to your shared future.

"We love to hear our new team members' life stories!" Lopez says. "Every time, we're amazed at how quickly connections are made among the new hires because of the time we set aside for each person to share their story (and it often connects with why they chose to work at Ramsey). It seems we have more in common than we know."

Where individual and company intersect is the space called "us." When onboarding promotes discovering that area of mutual interest, great things happen from the get-go – as well as in the years to come.

Additional Resource: See why you should [spend more time onboarding](#) new hires.

Additional Resource: [4 critical onboarding steps](#) you don't want to skip.