HR Cloud

The Ultimate Guide to Onboarding Software

A good onboarding program gets the employer-employee relationship started on the right foot and contributes to increased morale, productivity, and engagement.

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Why is Onboarding Important?

In today's competitive job market, companies need to do all they can to find, attract, and hire the right employees. Fair enough, yet surprisingly, even this isn't enough to guarantee success.

To make sure employees are really able to make a difference and help the company become more competitive, new hires must be able to hit the ground running on day one.

Onboarding new employees is arguably the most important part of your business operations. This process sets the stage by introducing new hires to the company and brand vision while arming them with the tools necessary to be successful in their new roles. Yet many companies (especially smaller businesses) lack a streamlined digital onboarding process. This is a shame considering onboarding is your first (and could very well be your last) impression on new employees. Contrary to what many believe, onboarding doesn't start on day one.

Onboarding starts at the first application (or even an invite to apply), and it should continue seamlessly through the employee's entire career. **The 2019 Jobvite Job Seeker Nation Survey** found 24% of candidates give up on an application process because of system issues while 29% of workers left a job within the first 90 days.

Recent studies also show that investing in your new hires from day one, until they reach full productivity (typically 8-12 months) will significantly increase retention AND maximize your employee lifetime value. Disparity between the candidate's expectations, formed during recruitment and the reality of working at a company, can cause them to become disengaged and may significantly shorten their tenure.

First Impressions Matter ✦˖

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Automate New Hire Onboarding Processes

Thankfully, there are technology tools available to automate the new employees' onboarding process. Streamlining this process prioritizes the time of both existing employees and new hires to ensure full-time equivalent headcount requirements are met for the business units while saving HR time in tracking down progress.

Automating everything from job postings and responses all the way through the onboarding pipeline gives HR a clear vision of every stage of the employee onboarding program. Technology provides a personalized experience to new employees while making it easier for HR to schedule follow-ups with recruiters, department managers, and training staff. With an automated HR platform, businesses not only save time and money on new hire onboarding, but they also reduce employee turnover. A recent **Gallup poll** found six out of ten millennials are open to new job opportunities, and no business can afford that large portion of young professionals dropping out due to key steps missed during the employee onboarding training program.

Onboarding can be defined as the period between your new hire's first day on the job and the end of their induction period into the company. The importance of this well-prepared and smooth induction period might be even more crucial as the world continues to accelerate, and employee preferences change rapidly. Increasing job-hopping, freelancing, taking shorter-term contracts and even mini-careers are signs of the times.

It should come as no surprise that **Gallup** found that only 12% of employees think their company did a good job onboarding. 76% of human resources executives claimed that their organizations underutilize employee onboarding practices. At the same time, 68% of employees consider training and development to be the most important workplace policy. That is why the enhancement of new hire onboarding and putting it online to be a good fit in this digital era is a wise investment for employers. Paying attention to this can increase employee retention and loyalty to the company.

Luckily, companies are becoming increasingly aware of this trend: 84% of global executives assessed employee training as being 'important' or 'very important.' Add to this the recent studies showing that every dollar invested in eLearning results in $30 in terms of productivity gains. Let's take a deep dive into the advantages of online onboarding.

How to Onboard New Employees Online

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Onboarding program

What are the key factors that determine a successful onboarding program? The Four C's by Dr. Talya Bauer, of SHRM, are the criteria that you can probably follow when aligning your new employee onboarding.

The Four C's stand for:

1. Compliance implies teaching new hires the basic company policies.

2. Clarification refers to ensuring that employees are aware of their responsibilities and their role in the process.

3. Culture involves providing employees with the formal and informal norms of the organization.

4. Connection means relationships with colleagues and feeling like a part of the team.

Taking the Four C's into account, you might want to divide an onboarding program into three functional parts: welcome, compliance, and job-specific training.

In the Welcome part, you can include modules about your company and its culture, its mission, vision and values, corporate policies, organizational structure and leadership team, products/services and their main benefits, and key clients and partners.

In the Compliance portion, you can include a formal program with safe workplace regulations, as well as policies, procedures, and actions to prevent violations of the law.

In the Job-specific part designed for a specific role training, you can place the basics of core processes and systems for a specific position – fundamentals of customer relationship management for client service, for instance.

After each training module and at the end of the course, tests can be used to check how well your new hires retained the information.
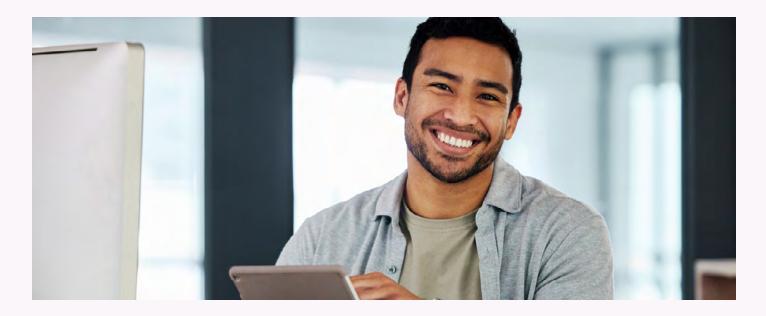
Video

You can record a video as a virtual introduction to the workplace to make new employees comfortable and familiar with their new working environment. You can also create a video with a welcome message from the CEO including their greeting and encouraging words.

Slide-based course

We're sure you're familiar with PowerPoint presentations that consist of slides. Slide-based courses are similar to PPT, but you can deliver and watch them online. Slides are the eLearning standard for a reason – they're quick and easy to create and familiar to the learner. You can make slide-based courses with the help of authoring tools (we'll elaborate on these later on).

Quizzes

When onboarding new employees, it's especially important to check that the information you're providing is sticking. The best way to track your employees' knowledge and be certain of its retention is via online quizzes and knowledge checks. This is especially important for compliance types of information that may be subject to federal or state laws. You can also create quizzes in authoring tools.

Tips for Better Onboarding

Let's take a more detailed look at how to ease the onboarding process for you and your new employees.

Create an onboarding checklist for yourself

Of course, the onboarding process is not only about training per se. It also includes a range of tasks and procedures surrounding it, like setting up a workplace and signing documents. Before you begin to create your program, it is a good idea to create an onboarding checklist to see what tasks you need to complete to get your program up and running.

This is what you may want to include in your onboarding checklist:

- Provide all the forms needed to collect employee data
- Request all needed access accounts for new hires
- Present work policies and procedures
- Assign a welcome course to a new recruit
- Set up a new hire's desk and equipment
- Send a welcome email to your new employee
- Announce the arrival of a new team member via email.

Arrange meetings

Plan 'meet and greets' with important contacts. Communication with people who will be key to the new employee's work opens a gateway for future successful collaboration between them. This can include managers, team members, and colleagues from other departments.

Provide an FAQ

Putting together a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) is a really good idea. Provide answers for them to new hires before their start date. This will show them that you care about their well-being and will help reduce their anxiety. You can build it in a PDF or with the help of an authoring tool.

Here are some examples of these questions:

- Is there a dress code?
- What is your internal communication style?
- How do you regulate vacations?
- Are there training courses for sales assistants?
- What corporate events do you celebrate?
- Are there any bonuses?

Assign a contact person or a mentor

Buddy up your new hire with someone in the company or nominate a senior member of the team to mentor them in their daily tasks. Introduce them to a person they can reach out to, and make sure a communication channel like a chat function is available for the new hire.

Send a company-wide introduction

To announce the arrival of a new team member, send an introductory email to your staff. In the message, you can briefly mention the new hire's work history and share their social profile so the team can connect with them.

For example, a new hire introduction may go something like this:

1. Follow up at the end of the first week

After giving the new hire time to get used to the office, workspace, and their mentor, follow up with them. It's important to make sure they're comfortable and are picking up on things at an appropriate pace.

2. Encourage independence

You've created a great onboarding program, filled it with some great training courses and an evaluation. Now it's time to encourage the new hire to take that preparation and run with it. They should be given a clear outline of what is required of them and how they should go about achieving those objectives.

3. Gain feedback

Ask the new hire and the teammates who work closely with them how the process is going. Adjust the onboarding program if needed.

The Must-Have Onboarding Checklist

In this hyper-competitive day and age where the war for talent is raging on, now more than ever companies need to seamlessly bridge the gap between candidate experience and employee experience. Onboarding is critical to the successful integration of a new employee into your organization, and a smooth onboarding process can help set your company apart from the competition.

Sloppy, poorly planned onboarding can result in decreased productivity, disengagement, and wasted resources. Smooth, robust onboarding procedures are an obligation for an effective employee experience that elbows out recruiting competition.

In a study by Bersin & Deloitte, researchers found that a sizable amount of turnover happens within the first year. Can you guess the average amount of employees who leave after one year? A whopping 25%. Furthermore, the study showed that the cost to the company to replace new hires turning over in less than 1 year was 3x the salary of said employee.

It Takes A Village

What can you do to set yourself and your company up for success when onboarding new employees to your organization? Plan, Plan, Plan! An onboarding checklist is a document used in the new hire process that lists every single action item needed to successfully integrate a new employee into your organization.

Contrary to popular best practices, HR is not the sole party responsible for onboarding. Your new hire checklist should include action items that span across departments. Companies could enlist the help of functions such as Recruiting, IT, Finance/Payroll, and Facilities, for example. The key to having a successful onboarding plan from start to finish is mapping out your new hire checklist in detail. Then make sure that the stakeholders involved in your onboarding plan are held accountable to complete the needed actions. As the old saying goes,"it takes a village" and some good ole' cross departmental collaboration.

What to Include in a New Hire Checklist

An effective onboarding checklist includes critical tasks that no new hire can function without. Such essential tasks might include hosting a new hire orientation, organizing a "Week One" agenda for your new hire and completing new hire paperwork like the federal I-9 and W-4 forms. In addition, your new hire checklist should also include items that make your company special and welcome your new hire in with open arms into the company culture.

✓ You should strive to weave your company brand and culture into your onboarding process. Items that might be unique to your company's new hire checklist might include: 'Meet the New Hires' company-wide happy hour where team members are invited for happy hour to celebrate the newest hires to the team,

✓ A workshop about getting to know the company's core values,

✓ A monthly group coffee with the CEO.

Choose items that make your new hires feel welcomed, celebrated and part of your unique culture. Contrary to popular belief, the onboarding process starts well before your new hire's first day. (That's why new hires can access the HR Cloud Onboard Portal prior to start date.) The period of time to plan for when developing an onboarding checklist begins right after a candidate accepts their offer. Depending on the needs of your organization, your new employee and your industry as a whole, onboarding timelines can range anywhere from less than a week to nearly a year. The key to having a solid onboarding plan is to develop a sturdy, well-tested structure that's just malleable enough that you can personalize the process for each hire.

Onboarding Themes to Remember

There are three main themes to successfully onboarding a new employee, and you want to make sure that any of the action items on the onboarding checklist can refer back to one of these three themes:

1. Tactical Onboarding

Any onboarding task that allows a new hire to gain tactical or operational information necessary to function as an employee. (i.e. Is my equipment set up on day one? Do I know the WiFi password? Is my parking pass ready? Did I receive instructions with my schedule for my first day?)

2. Job Knowledge & Organizational Context

Any onboarding task that allows a new hire to gain knowledge and understanding about their role in their new company and/or industry. (i.e. Do I understand my role on my team and in the greater organization? Have I been offered the training necessary on X to perform my role successfully? Do I understand my goals or the contributions required of me?)

3. Cultural Embrace & Branding

Any onboarding task that allows a new hire to gain an understanding of the company's voice and values. (i.e. Do I feel a sense of belonging to my new company? Have I gotten to know my coworkers? Do I understand the cultural values?)

Building on these themes within a timeline for HR, IT, Managers and Payroll can be complex and HR Cloud's flagship product Onboard helps make it simple for you and of course, your new hires. To receive a FREE Onboarding Checklist **click here** so you can have a specific itemized Onboarding Checklist for reference when building your new onboarding process. We look forward to hearing from you!

Onboarding can Improve Company Culture

Employee onboarding is one of the most effective ways to welcome new employees into your company and to ensure the employee experiences as well as their long term success. However, onboarding new employees the right way is far better than rushing through the process incorrectly and risking losing valuable additions to your company.

The Right and Wrong Ways to Onboard

Many new employees generally describe the onboarding process as "drinking out of a fire hose." This can overwhelm a new employee with extraneous information.

As a human resources professional or hiring manager, you should aim to improve the employee onboarding process so that it enables a new hire to feel welcomed, valued, and ready to succeed in their new role.

How do you avoid overwhelming your new hires? How do you best prepare the new additions to your team so they can achieve their goals in record time? We have narrowed down the list of tips and tricks to the 5 best onboarding practices. These 5 onboarding tips will help to improve your company's culture over time

Why Onboarding Creates Productive Employees

There are so many benefits to improving the employee onboarding processes at your company that will help improve the company's culture over the long term.

The main benefit is that effective onboarding helps to create productive employees. When new hires learn about the company's culture, mission, workflows, and relevant processes — and they feel connected to their co-workers — they are better positioned for long term success.

Effective onboarding limits attrition for this very reason. It is much more expensive overall to spend the time looking for a new hire to fill a position than it is to retain the current employee.

Another benefit of onboarding successfully is that it allows for employees to thrive from the very beginning, rather than taking extra time to learn basic tasks and responsibilities. Improving onboarding processes helps to improve company culture, which in turn increases employee satisfaction.
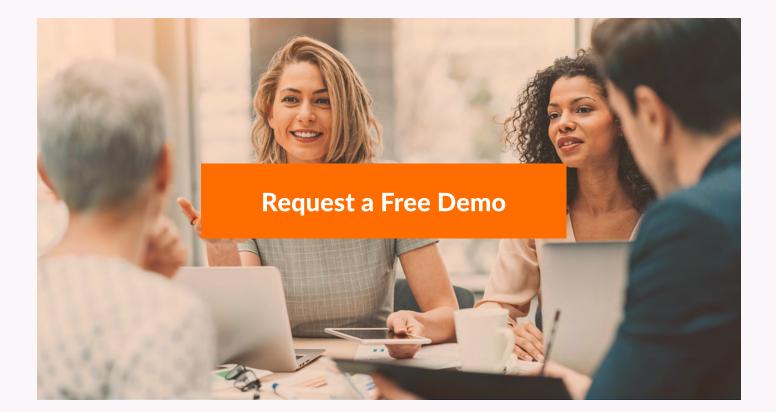
Elevate Your Onboarding Process Today!

Employee onboarding is one of the most effective ways to improve your company's culture and to create productive employees and retain top talent.

When was the last time you examined your company's onboarding procedure? Is it ready to be revamped and improved?

If you are interested in learning how to successfully onboard new hires within their first 30 days, we have the perfect solutions you need here at HR Cloud.

Reach out to our dedicated team of HR teams and experts to learn how your company can improve your onboarding process through the latest technology.

Request a Free Demo

Why Customers Love HR Cloud

Don't just take our word for it. See what some of our customers have said about HR Cloud.

"Our hiring managers now have a reliable system that is easy to navigate. Our HR team can actively monitor the process, and assist if needed, but Onboard has helped them save so much valuable time and effort while increasing data accuracy. All of this has helped us improve compliance and gives us a powerful tool to achieve even more results in the future."

Osmose.

Kaylee Collins | HR Analyst

"With Onboard, as soon as a new hire completes our detailed onboarding checklist, which includes federal, state, and industry forms, I am fully confident that I can put them in the field right away, without any compliance concerns."

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Michael Hawkins | Franchise Owner