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Onboarding Best Practices - Ongoing

After Day One – Once the new employee has made it beyond day one, the onboarding process continues as they adapt to their new role in a new organization. The structure laid out on day one will be what they strive towards and the reviews with their supervisor will allow them to gauge their success and progress. In addition to these follow-ups, there are other best practices that can accelerate the learning curve.

Some of the issues to address include:

- ✔ **Organizational Lingo** – Nearly every business has its own set of jargon, slang and abbreviations that are alien to the outside world. Having a glossary of definitions on a handout or your intranet will be a helpful reference and minimize confusion for the new team member.

- ✔ **Organizational Hierarchy** – Even if you introduce the new employee to every member of your organization on day one, there is so much going on that it's unlikely that names, faces and roles will stick. Keep a flowchart of your organizational hierarchy on your internal network that the new employee can access. Knowing who to go to for a request will empower them to start making those decisions and engage with the team. If you don't have an intranet, consider pictures with names and job titles posted on a break room wall, a bulletin board, a handout or an internal social network where they can explore their peer network.

- ✔ **Attention to detail** – Keeping paperwork organized and setting up the new desk and phone are big parts of the onboarding process, but fine details can often be overlooked. The key to productive and engaged employees is that they feel happy and confident in their position and within the organization. Make a list of small things and frequently asked questions, the ones you wouldn't normally have in a welcome packet. Consider a map of your premises. Not knowing where the restrooms are, what the coffee pot etiquette is or the code to use at the copier could cause unnecessary stress in your new hire's first few days. Eliminate that stress by giving them the small details to improve the onboarding process.



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- ✓ **Team Building** – Having a new person in the work place can also be discordant to your established employees. One way to minimize problems and foster engagement early is to involve the team in the onboarding process. Solicit their input on how to get ready for and welcome the new employee. Assign roles in advance. Once the new hire starts, foster projects that will build team rapport. Take the team along with the new hire out for lunch, have a trivia contest or scavenger hunt that drives interaction between the new member and the veterans. Encourage interaction and don't worry about a small amount of social distraction. Most Gallup survey respondents said they feel more committed to an organization if they have a friend working there. Be creative and have fun with team building. Something as simple as an ice cream social will strengthen your team and encourage your employees to bond.

- ✓ **Health & safety.** It's important to set expectations about your organization's commitment to fostering a safe and healthy workplace early. Be sure to include any job-related safety training in onboarding. It's important for people to know that the organization cares about their health and welfare and takes these responsibilities seriously. Make sure that your employee is familiar with any health and safety benefits, such as your EAP and your wellness initiatives.

- ✓ **Watch for red flags** – Some new hires may not acclimatize well. Be alert for potential problem indicators. The new hire may not interact well with co-workers may be unable to get to work on time, may be error-prone or may fail to deliver on pre-established goals. Any one of these problems do not necessarily indicate that the new employee is failing; red flags may simply indicate areas where expectations must be clarified, or where additional training is required. Follow up and talk about areas for improvement, set short term goals, and simply touch base with the new person. Ask for feedback.

- ✓ **Recognize success** – Being recognized for hard work and determination both by peers and superiors contributes to employee happiness. Not every achievement will require applause or heaped accolades. A simple “good job” or email to the team recognizing the person for their hard work can go a long way to building satisfaction and confidence in the new position.