



# Best Practices for **Onboarding New Staff**

# It's no secret that the employee turnover rate in the association space and nonprofit industry is quite high.

And though there are a number of reasons for that (particularly for-profit competition — the salaries, the benefits, etc.), one of the biggest factors affecting nonprofit turnover is a poor (or nonexistent) onboarding process. See, when employees don't know how to do their job or what they're working towards to begin with, they get frustrated and contemplate leaving.

That's why onboarding is SO important. In fact, according to UrbanBound, organizations with a standard onboarding process experience 50 percent greater new hire retention. And not only that, but those same organizations also experience 54 percent greater new hire productivity.

## Greater retention AND productivity? Yes, please!

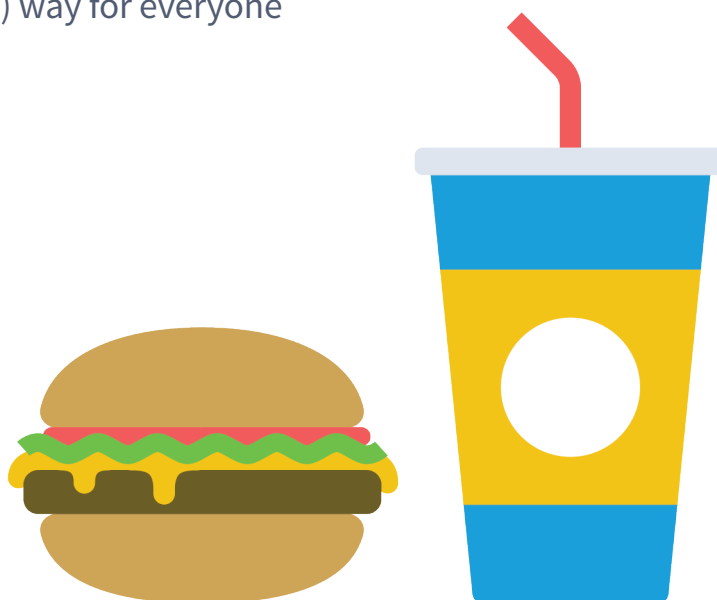
Need help creating an effective new hire onboarding process at your association? Here are a few tips.

# Make them feel welcome

**First and foremost, when a new hire joins your staff, you need to make them feel as comfortable and as welcome as possible. They need to feel like a part of your team. That said, start by sending an introductory email to your staff. Let everyone know there's a new hire on board and encourage people to stop by and say hi.**

That said, don't rely on other people to come by and say hi. Take it upon yourself to guide those face-to-face introductions. Your staff members are busy and might forget to come by, and understandably, your new hire might be too intimidated to approach others. Make it easier on everyone by initiating those interactions.

Last but not least, take your new hire out to lunch! And don't forget to invite others! In this case, more really is merrier, and lunch is a great (and casual) way for everyone to get to know each other.



# Discuss your organization and the job itself in depth

**You may have discussed your organization and the job itself during the interview process, but it's crucial that you go back and explain those items in depth.**

Start by explaining your organization's mission, values, and culture. It's from these things that everything else — your processes, your projects, your overall strategy — flows. Then, talk about your organization in more detail. Discuss who your members are, what benefits they receive, what your biggest challenges are, etc. The more your new hire knows about your organization, the more they can contribute to your organization.

Once you've discussed your organization in detail, you'll then want to discuss the job in detail. Talk about the new hire's job tasks and performance expectations. What will a typical day look like for them? What will success look like? It's important that they know these things so that they can then emulate them.

Now you may want (and need) to bring other staff members into this process as well. That way, the new hire can get a well-rounded understanding of how your organization works — what other people do, what their specialties are, what key insights they might have, etc. If you decide you'd like to bring in more people, go ahead and schedule those meetings and/or trainings.



# Provide ongoing software training

**Ok, now this is a big one. If your organization is using an association management system (AMS) or any other type of software, you'll need to get the new hire up to speed ASAP.**

This may require a bit of time, but if your new hire doesn't understand the software they're expected to use day-in and day-out, they'll get frustrated and be more inclined to leave. To prevent that from happening, your training needs to come fast and it needs to be thorough.

Who should do that training? Either you can or your AMS provider can — if they offer that service. For example, here at MemberClicks, we welcome and work closely with new hires. We have an onboarding guide specifically for new hires and software administrators and a Help Team available for ongoing troubleshooting support. And not only that, but our software features in-app guides, meaning when someone new logs in, our system will detect that and provide them with step-by-step guides for how to complete certain tasks. This detailed training ensures your new hires get up to speed quickly and are able to do their job effectively.

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# Pair them with a mentor

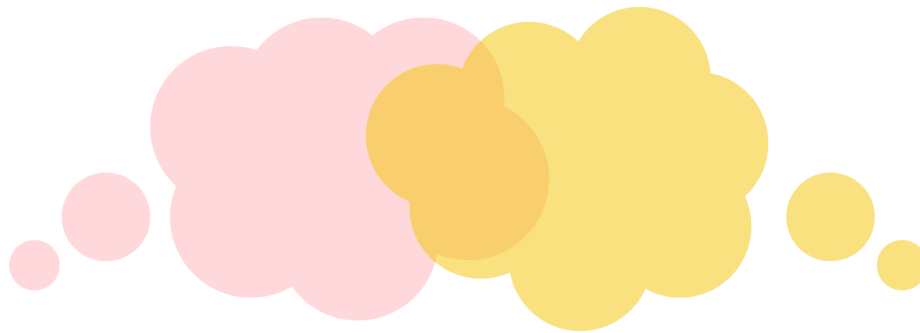
Employee mentoring programs are a great way to strengthen your organization's onboarding process. Even if you work at a small-staff association, if you can pair your new hire with an older, more seasoned professional, they'll have someone they can comfortably go to when times get tough or questions arise (which is bound to happen at any job). And not only that, but they'll have someone to look up to and be inspired by — which is exactly what you want at your growing organization.



# Schedule periodic check-ins

**Even if your new hire is getting up to speed quickly, you'll still want to check in with them from time to time. During those meetings, you'll want to discuss current and upcoming projects, as well as any questions, comments or concerns they might have.**

It's also important that you provide your new hire with feedback during this time. Praise them for what they're doing right and help them in areas where they may be struggling. Your new hire can't change what they're doing — or grow — unless you guide them.



# Ask for feedback

Just as it's important to provide your new hire with feedback, it's also important to ask your new hire for feedback. Ask them how the onboarding process is going — what they like, what they don't like, and what could be improved upon. That way, as you continue to bring people on, you can steadily improve your onboarding process. And remember, the better your onboarding process, the better your new hire productivity and retention rates will be.

Collectively, these steps might seem like a lot of work, but trust us, they're worth it. It takes a lot of time and money to replace an employee, so if you're able to onboard them well in the beginning — to make them feel welcome, to provide them with the tools and training they need to succeed, to pair them with a mentor — you'll be saving yourself a lot of trouble (and time and money) down the road.





**At the end of the day, finding the right staff is all about finding the right team to help manage your association.**

## **Still need help managing your association?**

Check out our **Ultimate Guide to Membership Management!**



**Click here to check it out!**

## **More about MemberClicks**

MemberClicks offers all the tools that membership organizations need to make the most of the web. From online databases and event registrations to custom-designed websites and member communities, our products are tailor-made for small-staff organizations.

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