

WHAT NEW HIRES

Really Want from Onboarding



How long should onboarding last?

Each of your employees only gets to experience one first day on the job. Effective employee onboarding on day one (and through the weeks and months thereafter) can mean the difference between an employee who remains engaged for years to come or an empty desk after only a few months.

According to our employee onboarding survey of over 1000 employed US workers, 31 percent of people have left a job within the first six months, with 68 percent of those departing within three months.

For many new employees, it seems the first three months at an organization are the most precarious.

And for good reason—during that time, new hires are trying to learn how to do their jobs well, how the organization operates, how they fit within their teams and the company culture, and more.

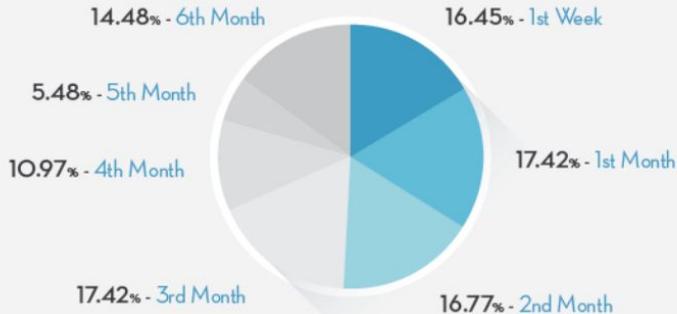
It's a lot to take in, and [without help through onboarding programs](#), they can easily drown in information.

To keep your new hires from feeling overwhelmed and lost, it's vital to continue the employee onboarding process [beyond their first few days and into their first several months](#) of employment. Doing so helps employees learn about job training, culture, policies, and benefits at their own pace, making it much easier for them to actually absorb the information.



Thirty-one percent of people have quit a job within the first six months.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT A JOB WITHIN:



Turnover stats

Even when HR teams try their best, new hire turnover is still a very real thing. And if your company hasn't experienced it up close yet, you certainly will at some point.

The statistics can truly be astonishing. A whopping thirty-one percent of people leave within the first six months of accepting a new position, and sixteen percent leave after only one week.

After all the time, money and hard work you've put in to finding and recruiting top talent and adding them to your team, it's important to put in equal effort to keep them.

So how can your onboarding make a difference in retention?

Why do new hires leave?

When new employees have a negative or difficult onboarding experience, they are much more likely to second-guess their decision to join an organization. They may even quit in the first few months, as mentioned.

According to a BambooHR survey, the top three reasons employees left in the first six months of a new job were:

- 28 percent decided they didn't like the work
- 26 percent felt the job differed from expectations
- 23 percent felt their boss was a jerk

Setting the [right expectations during the recruitment process](#) can help keep new employees from feeling like they have been the victims of a bait-and-switch, mitigating a lot of potential confusion and disappointment. Additionally, new hires who left a job shortly after their first day listed a few other onboarding elements that could have made a difference in their decision:

- 23 percent said they wanted to receive clear guidelines about responsibilities
- 21 percent wanted more effective training
- 17 percent said a friendly smile or helpful coworker would have made the difference

In short, employees coming into a new organization really want two things—the opportunity to do their best work and a solid sense of personal connection with their department and teammates.



So what do employees value?

The best employee onboarding programs are geared toward providing those elements of engagement to new hires from the get-go.

First, set your new employee up for success by defining responsibilities, processes, and expectations for their job. Showing them a clear path forward will give them a way to [channel their fresh excitement and enthusiasm](#) that you've generated during the hiring process.

A few things that employees value the most during their first week on the job to help them become effective and productive quickly are:

- On-the-job training (76 percent)
- Review of the company's policies - dress code, time-off policy, etc. (73 percent)
- Review of administrative procedures, such as a touring the facility and setting up work station (59 percent)
- Assignment of an employee "buddy" or mentor (56 percent)



How many of these are currently a part of your onboarding? Maybe it's time to rethink your process.



But what do HR pros think?

HR professionals also chimed in with their thoughts on what they believe to be the most important aspects of the onboarding process to update and improve:

- On-the-job training (41 percent)
- Mentor or buddy program (37 percent)
- Updated employee handbook (28 percent)

It seems, at the very least, that HR and new hires are on the same page when it comes to creating a great onboarding experience.

Better job and policy training can help employees feel comfortable in the company and effective in their roles much sooner, while a mentor or buddy program can provide the relationships and guidance that new hires need to feel fully committed to their organizations.

Refocusing your onboarding efforts on meeting new employees' most basic needs for job clarity and personal connection will not only reduce new-hire turnover—it will also increase employee engagement.

Through effective onboarding, you will be able to help new hires transition from excited recruits to engaged employees, and from their forward momentum, your entire organization will move ahead.

Lots of lost dollars

Organizations often are quick to identify areas where they're hemorrhaging capital, such as ineffective marketing, high customer churn, or frequent employee turnover. But poor onboarding practices could be costing you thousands as well.

In fact, according to a BambooHR survey, 45% of HR professionals estimate that over \$10,000 a year is wasted on ineffective onboarding. That's not just chump change.

If you feel like your onboarding could use a little jumpstart, a few areas that your team could audit right away are:

- On-the-job training
- Your mentor/buddy program
- The employee handbook



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HR BELIEVES THESE AREAS OF THE ONBOARDING PROCESS NEED TO BE UPDATED:



On-the-job training



Mentor/Buddy Program



Employee Handbook

Set up an effective on-the-job training

On-the-job training is one of the most critical parts of the onboarding experience for your new hire. According to a [study](#) performed by the Dale Carnegie Training Center, 40% of employees who receive poor (or no) on-the-job training leave within the first year of employment. On-the-job training is a program designed to help new hires gain specific skills and knowledge they need to perform a specific job in the workplace. On-the-job training programs can have many forms, from formal lectures to job shadowing, e-learning, “lunch and learn” programs, etc.

No matter the form, a stellar on-the-job training program needs to provide a breakdown of the new hire’s role and its responsibilities. New hires need to know which specific activities, projects, and tasks that they will be expected to participate in and be responsible for. By providing clear and specific instructions, you can set clear expectations for your new hires from the start.

Another crucial element of on-the-job training is setting goals. As reported by [Harvard Business Review](#), an astounding 60% of companies don’t set short-term goals and responsibilities for their new hires. Establishing clear goals provides transparency and helps new hires attain early wins, thus building their confidence.

Finally, an effective on-the-job training should also include an introduction to your company culture. Whether you have a formal corporate or a relaxed startup style company culture, you should help your new hires quickly learn your company’s values and preferred workplace behaviours.



Implement a mentor/buddy program

A well-run buddy program plays a crucial part in ensuring a successful onboarding experience for your new hires. According to a Human Capital Institute's research, 87% of businesses say that buddy programs boost a new hire's proficiency. Implementing a buddy program as a part of your onboarding process can help you dramatically reduce the ramp up time and lead to greater retention of your new hires.

The concept of a buddy program is fairly simple and straightforward: Assign a tenured employee to serve as a work buddy or mentor for your new hire. A buddy's role is to provide guidance and support to your new hires during their first few months on the job. A buddy serves as a friendly face available to answer any question a new hire might not initially be comfortable asking their team leaders or managers without feeling uncomfortable or like they're being a bother or distraction.

Another important task of a buddy is to help your new hire socially integrate with existing employees. A buddy should take the new hire around the office and introduce him/her to other employees, as well as invite new hire to all your company's social or informal activities, such as lunch, coffee, after work drinks etc.

Acting as a connector between a new hire and other, tenured employees, helps to create a sense of belonging and social connections for new hires, which pays huge dividends in terms of retention. According to a Globofrce study, people with workplace friendships are nearly two times less likely to be poached by another company.

Here are some proven tips for maximizing the effectiveness of your company's buddy program:

- Make it optional to ensure that your buddies are enthusiastic about their role
- Set clear expectations and provide training for buddies
- Schedule regular check in meetings for new hires and their buddies.

Update your employee handbook

An employee handbook is a very useful tool which helps companies successfully onboard new hires. An employee handbook is a document which provides new hires with an introduction to your company's policies, expected workplace behaviours and the way you work. An effective employee handbook clearly communicates your company's mission, values, policies (such as dress code, communication, time-off policy, etc.) and your other company culture rules to your new hires.

However, a truly great employee handbook does more than just state what your company expects from your new hires. It also highlights what's in it for your new hires if they comply with all your rules and policies. Thus, your employee handbook should also include detailed information about the perks and benefits you offer, as well as state clear and transparent guidelines for obtaining a promotion or a bonus.

Finally, your employee handbook should be easy to understand and fun to read. Most new hires don't read an employee handbook because it is full of technical and legal terms and thus hard to grasp. The [research](#) from GuideSpark found out that 43% of generation Y are not reading the majority of the employee handbook, while 11% haven't even opened it! The message here is clear - you need to update your employee handbook and make it more appealing to new generations.

So how can you turn your company's handbook into an interesting and captivating read? Avoid jargon and use common language everyone can understand. Add images to make it visually appealing. You can even turn your employee handbook into a [comic](#) like Zappos, pretty [booklet](#) like Facebook or even a video.

Don't be afraid to get creative and make your employee handbook unique. Finally, ask your new hires to tell what parts of your current employee handbook you should improve and how.

Go the extra mile

If you want your onboarding process to be truly memorable and unique, you need to go beyond the activities included in a standard employee onboarding checklist. You should invest some time and effort into implementing a few out of the box [employee onboarding ideas](#). To help you get started with brainstorming, we have gathered a bunch of creative, innovative employee onboarding ideas for you to choose from. Feel free to pick the ones that seem like the best fit your company culture!

If you work in a large company that has a formal, corporate culture, consider organizing an event for your new hires a few times a year. This could be a great opportunity for your new hires to come together and exchange their onboarding experience. You can also provide drinks and snacks and invite your executives to give a warm welcome to your new hires.

Here are some additional ideas:

- Organize a fun sporting event
- Take your new hire to a team lunch
- Provide a welcome gift package
- Conduct an entrance interview
- Throw a karaoke party
- Organize new hire trivia quiz
- Celebrate with champagne.

Finally, make sure to collect feedback from your new hires. Ask them what they liked about your onboarding process and try to find out if there are some things you can improve. You can set a face to face onboarding evaluation interview or simply invite your new hires to complete an anonymous online [onboarding survey](#).



Check in with your new hires regularly!

So, you've implemented all the best onboarding practices:

- You have set up an effective on-the-job training
- You have implemented a mentor/buddy program
- You have updated your employee handbook

You have even put in practice some of our creative employee onboarding ideas. Congrats! You've done everything you needed to set up your new hires for success. Or...have you?

This is where most companies fail. They put in a lot of effort to carefully prepare and execute their onboarding activities and programs. However, they forget about the one crucial thing - to check in with their new hires regularly. Don't make the same mistake! Avoid relying on your new hires to come to you if they have any concerns. Instead, schedule regular monthly meetings to ensure everything is going smoothly.

A successful employee onboarding is not an event that takes place on your new employee's first day at the office and continues for the next few days or weeks. It is a continuous process that should last up to a year.





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