Transformational Onboarding: How to radically reshape the way people join your organisation, create and deliver a wow brand promise and build incredible engagement from day one and beyond.

What’s your current onboarding strategy?

A couple of hour’s induction, once a quarter? A first week that involves finding a desk, getting a security pass and setting up an email account? A day reading the company procedures manual?

Maybe not quite as soul destroying as these real life examples? Even so, the chances are that you are missing out on an investment opportunity with guaranteed returns, missing out on the chance to make your business a place where people are knocking on the door to join, a place where from day one people decide this is the place for them and then have them stay with you for the long term, a place where right from the start your employees are excited, motivated and energised to be there?

Pipe-dreams?

In this summary of the best practices that are out there, what emerges is actually a highly practical guide for how to create an insanely great onboarding process. A process that begins well before you ever considered and is seamless with your overall talent management, hiring and engagement practices. A process that can have measurable proven returns on investment, that makes doing this really well one of the most impactful process improvements a business can implement, as important as any product innovation, the business deal of a lifetime, or any massive capital investment you are likely to implement.

Why?

There is plenty of data and research on why this matters.

- 70% of new hires make the decision to stay at or leave an organization within their first six months (HCI 2012)
- 25% of all turnover occurs in the first 45 days (People Fluent Research 2012)
- Delivering on employment Brand Promise is the No1 Employee Engagement factor in Asia in 2012 (Aon-Hewitt Engagement Survey)
- Formal Onboarding increases the chance of keeping a new employee for at least 3 years by 69% (Aberdeen Group 2013)
**Objectives:**

There are typically three primary objectives for delivering better onboarding:

- Meeting strategic objectives
- Building engagement, fast
- Accelerating “Time to Perform”

The strategic objectives are linked to both hiring the right talent and providing an upfront vision of what the company stands for and educating new joiners on what success looks like. Building engagement fast is about people making the decision to stay with you and keep making the decision to stay, reducing attrition for the long term, as well as building the willingness and motivation to give the discretionary effort that translates to the delivery of the company strategy. Engagement levels, as measured by reduction in attrition of new hires and increases in long term tenure are a great hard metric for the success of your onboarding initiatives.

Accelerating time to perform is able helping new hires to help themselves get up to speed faster, to start delivery measurable results sooner and generating returns from on your people investment faster. Time to perform is a practical measure of short term onboarding success with a measurable financial impact, based on a breakeven point for new employees.

![The Breakeven Point](image)

The value consumed is not just salary and benefits, the cost of training and onboarding, it is also the cost of each successful hire and the costs of early attrition of successful hires. In some companies the breakeven point for new hires can be beyond 12 months.
**Best practices and examples of how to think differently**

In reviewing many reports and studies, we have identified a range of best practices that when put together begin to shape a completely transformed process, an end-to-end process improvement that will have measurable benefits.

We lay no particular claim to these examples, or the cut outs from best practice thinking and reports, the references at the end will highlight many sources, all freely available with a bit of diligent searching online.

What we do see as different is in the starting point and the ending point, the challenge to the very idea of what is onboarding anyway. So the first best practice is to **stop seeing onboarding as induction**. There is a small place for induction in the process; the best way to create a transformation is to look at onboarding as much more extensive end-to-end points of leverage.

Onboarding begins **before they have even considered working for you** and if it really ends at all, it ends end of the first 12 months, when the process blends into the normal talent management practices linked to performance management, career development and succession planning.

**Best practice #1, change your thinking**

Onboarding is not induction.

Onboarding can be thought of as seven phases, seven areas of potential activity and leverage where you can change your approaches and implement ways that deliver on high engagement, almost guaranteed retention and faster time to perform.

1. Pre-hire
2. Hiring
3. Before starting
4. The first week
5. The first three months
6. At six months
7. At twelve months

1. Pre-hire best practices

The pre-hire phase is crucial beginning to the onboarding process, how can that possibly be? It’s about three things, that right from the beginning set the scene for what employment with your company will be like, and is an opportunity to

- Create and manage your employment brand in the market place
- Educating people on your culture, your values and on roles
- Creating valid opportunities for people to self-select for your company and test for their own fit in any specific role

Your employment brand: In our highly connected world candidates and potential employees talk and share perceptions, it’s firstly about your brand in the market place. What do people say about what it’s like to work for your company, or to interact with your company, perhaps as potential candidates or even as customers?

There are many ways these perceptions are formed, it is now relatively easy to get a read on how these perceptions are: have you checked out your reputation - are you one of the 800 or so companies - on www.glassdoor.com alternatively, what are people saying about their experiences on LinkedIn alumni groups for the company, what do your suppliers or rivals say about you, have you asked your recruiters about the reactions they get when they sell your company to passive candidates?

The solutions and best practices in this part of the process are essentially the same activities that relate to successful hiring practices at this stage. What you do here heavily leverage online and social media channels to deliver the brand perceptions, the education on what you are about and the self-selection opportunities for people to test for themselves their own alignment with the values you stand for and for their own fit with the requirements of specific roles.
Google was one of the first to innovate in this space with this mysterious billboard back in 2006:

There was no branding, no explanations, just the implied challenge of the mathematical puzzle which could be solved with a bit of clever programming. On resolving this and going to the website, you were then presented with a more complex challenge and so on, having solved them all, the mystery was revealed and you then were taken to a page that allowed you to apply for a role at Google. A great way of having people self-select for roles and of highly targeted awareness of the capabilities the company was looking for at that time.

Since this example there have been many examples of companies working to build their brand in similar ways. One of the best recent examples is Marriot jobs and careers on facebook.

https://www.facebook.com/marriottjobsandcareers

- Marriott Careers and Jobs Facebook page is a leading example of the effectiveness of social media recruiting.
- Over 1 Million likes on facebook (more than facebook itself)
- 50000 people interacting with the page every week One of the most surprising leaderboards of the decade.

Within the Marriot facebook page is a future looking experiment – My Marriot Hotel – where you can play a game to try out roles at the hotel and understand more about is that the kind of job you would like to do. https://www.facebook.com/marriottjobsandcareers/app_145796492133388
At the moment the site is limited to practicing the role of a chef, the intention being to add more roles over time.

A further example of this approach is at Domino’s Pizza, where you can play a game that if you are successful; you are invited to apply for a role:

http://dominospizzahero.com/

There are also significantly more sophisticated gaming examples that allow people to understand what the organisation is about and what job roles exist.

One of the most successful recruiting games of the last few years is the Official American Army game, a genuine sophisticated popular game in its own right, it had become a significant recruitment tool for the army:

To find out more and even to play the game itself: http://www.americasarmy.com/
One other sophisticated example, at Maersk’s Quest for Oil, it is reported that the first time the CEO of this company played the game he failed, now you can compete against the CEO as one of the top players at: [http://www.questforoil.com/](http://www.questforoil.com/)

In managing your brand, LinkedIn is becoming a significant channel in its own right, especially through the active use of LinkedIn company pages. LinkedIn highlights a range of best practices in managing your brand with potential candidates, including:

1. “Don’t be shy about asking for recommendations on your products.” (eg HubSpot)
2. “Before posting an update, ask yourself – Would I want to read this story? Would I want to share this with my connections?” (eg CNBC)
3. “Post content that interests your followers and less about how great your company is.” (eg Xactly Corporation)
4. “Publish photos & content from top events to show everyone what you are all about.” (eg HireVue)
5. “Encourage employees to like and share your updates with their network. This helps grow your follower base.” (eg The IT Media Group)
6. “Stay fresh by reaching out to your followers at least once a day, if not more.” (eg The Walt Disney Company)

The full LinkedIn report with these examples and more is available to download on slideshare at: [http://www.slideshare.net/linkedin/best-linked-in-company-pages-2012-tips](http://www.slideshare.net/linkedin/best-linked-in-company-pages-2012-tips)

### 2. Hiring

The reason for focussing on the hiring phase in relation to onboarding, is that interacting with the company during hiring is often the employees first experience of the company’s values in practice.

Although linked, this is not a discussion of hiring best practices, although these overlap, I want to call out examples that ensuring you consider what best practices can be applied in further managing your brand in the market place and educating potential future employees on what you stand for and on what the employment experience will be like.

(You can read more about what we think about hiring best practices at [http://www.nolimitsblog.com/2013/09/hiring.html](http://www.nolimitsblog.com/2013/09/hiring.html))
We know that a significant disengagement factor for new employees, that results in people deciding to leave a company in the first few months is the failure to deliver on the employment brand promise, so this is not about over-promising, it is about fairly and accurately representing who you are as a company.

In a recent DDI/Oracle Survey 2013:

- Of those who did not receive accurate job preview information, 14% said they were highly engaged and 88% said they were looking for another job.
- Of those who did receive accurate job preview info, 93% said they were highly engaged and only 22% said they were looking for another role.

In the same survey, what new employees wished they had known examples are:

- “The exact assigned position, the expectations and requirements of the position, and the culture. Honesty goes a long way toward preparing new leaders for the reality of their new position.”
- “More information about the job.”
- “The true state of the department and the lag of technology at the company. It would not have deterred me from accepting, it would, however, have better prepared me for what challenges I would be faced with.”
- “Opportunities within the company, international relocation possibilities.”
- “A more realistic preview of the current state of the organization and the anticipated future challenges. The organization has little infrastructure, which makes every task cumbersome and almost impossible to complete in an effective, efficient manner. Had I known, I would not have accepted the offer.”
- “How my job relates to the bigger picture.”
- “I really didn’t know what my job was going to be until I was mostly through orientation. I didn’t end up staying in that position past the first three months.”

While you have to ensure you can deliver, so much of this information can be provided even before the person accepts employment with you.

*Curry’s drops the ball.* It is also possible to spectacularly get it wrong during the hiring process and not only fail to communicate you company values, but actually completely undermine your brand. Any one for a job at Curry’s? One recent example in 2013 that went viral, interview candidates was asked to dance to a song at the UK Electronics Superstore [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-23972952](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-23972952) The company has since apologised, however the employment brand impact is undoubtedly significant. The question is do you know what your own
hiring managers are doing at interview, have you been clear about the interviewers role in representing your brand, even with unsuccessful candidates? How are you managing people who apply for roles at your company and how aware are you of what both successful and unsuccessful candidates are then sharing online about your brand?

The days of not responding to unsuccessful applicants, failing to manage the application process efficiently, or using stock responses such as “we will keep your details on file” are well past. With the technology options you have today you can maintain a dialogue and long term relationship with every person who applies for your company, whether they are successful or not. LinkedIn’s candidate management systems are a prime example of how technology can easily support doing a much better job of managing your brand and information about roles, with people who ultimately become employees, or not. All candidates can be your brand ambassadors in the market.

**Best practices at Barclays.** One example of a company doing a great job in this regard is Barclays. The bank has implemented best practice hiring approaches that included hiring managers awareness of representing the brand and the application of consistent best practices in its interviews. In addition to this it has a least two examples of managing its brand with anyone who might be a potential candidate.

The active use of Wikijobs to engage and inform: [http://www.wikijob.co.uk/wiki/barclays](http://www.wikijob.co.uk/wiki/barclays) Barclays provide a wealth of information and practical guides on how to apply, what to expect at interview and what are the expectations of various roles.

**A truly gamified educational App.** An even more interesting and exciting example is to go to the apple app store and search the *iPhone* apps for Barclays Interview Skills. This game like app is a brilliant example of how to share expectations about roles and values of your company, as well as being a great preparation tool if you are going for an interview. The fun and engaging game like experience is also an outstanding example of how to deliver online learning in a bite-size package, as the same app can be used internally to educate hiring managers on their roles at interview. Pure Genius – just a bit hard to find!

3. **Before starting**

In the time after acceptance and before starting, best practices are linked to preparing employees for their new role and them to really ‘hit the ground running’

Examples include:

- Send new hires all key documents to complete (Facebook Employees complete all required paperwork before their start date).
• Getting to know colleagues. Research shows new workers stay on the job longer when they’re plugged into a social group early on and recommends that managers connect new workers with colleagues and mentors with complementary skills, instead of assuming ties will form naturally.

• Prepare the Desk, there might be nothing worse for a new employee as turning up on day one and finding they have no desk, no id cards, no system logon, no email (in one global MNC client, that I cannot name, the first week on the job is about the employee getting all these things sorted, with little or no support, and having to find their own way through the company bureaucracy. This doesn’t exactly make people feel welcome.

• Preparing the networking plan. Best practices include one example where new hire plan their own networking and book their first week of meetings using LinkedIn connections – they get invites directly from all the senior leaders they need to know on LinkedIn and can then self-arrange all their meetings for the first week with all their key stakeholders. (Obviously all the senior leaders are on LinkedIn)

• Preparing the personal development plan. This is a radical best practice that relies on effective interview assessment. The DDI/Oracle survey highlights the issue:
  
  o The information gathered during the selection process provides rich information about a new hire’s strengths and areas for development. This should be used to accelerate onboarding and development. The aggregate data can provide companies with a broader view of their capabilities.
  o Yet 41% of new hires said they received no feedback on their performance during the selection process and 26% said the data was used to inform their development. Hiring managers concur and only 24% leveraged the information. Not knowing how they were evaluated prevents new employees leveraging skills that got them the job in the first place and the opportunity to improve skills that could’ve lost them the job.

  Best practice is that before day 1, the employee receives information on how they performed at interview against the competencies required for their role. With information on how to do development plans and guidelines on shaping and owning their personal development plan. In the first meeting with the hiring manager on day one, they review and refine the development plan actions for the first three months that the employee needs to own and execute on. How cool is that!

More specific recommendations on how to enable the upfront social interactions involve the use of the ‘secret groups’ functionality in Facebook or setting up private groups on LinkedIn: you can keep the group activities hidden from the public network, thereby addressing the issue of confidentiality. Secret groups can be leveraged well for the following:-

• **Controlled Distribution List** – You can include only those participants who are relevant for new hire orientation.

• **Publishing Content, guides, materials, forms**
• **Assessments** – Facebook and LinkedIn groups allow you to create polls and multiple choice questions. Though limited, this functionality can be used for assessments of new hires or for feedback.

• **Employee Engagement** – While new hires can definitely interact with one another, the new hire onboarding manager can create opportunities, new hires can also interact with key management team members in the same group.

• **Connecting New Hires to Management Team** – During pre-onboarding or on Day 1, the new hires could send LinkedIn connection requests to the company’s management team, briefly introducing themselves.

Interestingly Google’s internal research reports that there is an ideal size for groups of new starters to be connected together during the whole onboarding process. Based on their data and testing of multiple group sizes, apparently the best outcomes are obtained when exactly 12 new starters are grouped together as a formal cohort.

### 4. The first week

In the DDI survey 50% of new hires said that their feelings of disconnection were fueled by poor onboarding experiences.

The first week begins with the first day.

One of the simplest best practice is that the first day should be fun! (This assumes you have used the time before starting to successfully eliminate the paperwork and ‘prepared the desk’)

There are some basic must do requirements first:

- Have a designated individual to meet and greet a new employee upon arrival and show him/her around for the first day, help with ID cards, access and directions to facilitates.
- Send out a welcome letter or email to make existing employees aware of the new hire.
- Have the work station set up and properly functioning complete with computer, email address, supplies, training materials, etc.
- Have business cards pre-ordered with name, direct dial, and email address complete and spelled correctly
- Have lunch pre-arranged with the team co-workers and peers, make sure people commit to being available.
- Make sure a meeting with the employees manager happens, duh! (you would be surprised, or maybe not?)
- If you are delivering on other practices well, the new employee will also meet their mentor/buddy - for the first year - on day one (if they haven’t already met the week before!)
Then, fun! Do something with a group of new hires, or the team. In one company the team finished early and went laser shooting with the new hire.

In other examples reported in a recent Wall Street Journal Article (Companies Try to Make the First Day for New Hires More Fun) Dog-boarding site Rover.com has new developers make live updates on the firm’s website on their first day of the job.

Scott Porad, Rover’s head of product development, says he was inspired by research showing that tasks associated with employee dissatisfaction—such as paperwork and bureaucracy—characterized typical new-hire orientations. Meanwhile, autonomy, learning and feeling productive all contributed to employee satisfaction.

Software engineer Johann Heller, who started at Rover earlier this month, was surprised by the fast pace of his first day; his previous jobs had far more "procedural" orientations, he says. Mr. Heller was quickly issued a new laptop and "by the end of the day I had pushed some changes" to the company's website, he says. "It helps you feel like you made an impact on day one." It also forces the company to have most technology and administrative logistics in place before the employee arrives.

**Pepsico**

- Pepsico developed an on line portal called “pre start” where new employees can find useful information on company Values, culture, organizational structure etc.
- In addition Pepsico incorporated social media to make new comers feel like a coherent group.

**Welcome to the PepsiCo Employee Onboarding Website.**

This site has been created to help employees familiarize themselves with PepsiCo and their new role in it. A password is required to enter. New hires typically receive this information upon acceptance of their new position.


**Gamification for engagement**

To make your early induction more engaging, fun and especially appealing to Gen-Y, consider the opportunity for gamification elements. Research shows that companies that incorporate gamification into their onboarding process, experience:

- Better performance
• Higher levels of engagement
• Higher retention rate
• Better alignment between onboarding and Learning & Development initiatives

**Example: DBS Bank - Induction Program - Online Game**

• An induction training designed for new recruits. The course is based on a travel theme and is driven by a mentor. The journey begins by issuing a boarding pass to the learner and starts from banks’ global branches to the branches within India and further to the corporate HO and eventually concluding at the office desk allocated to the learner. During the journey, it talks about organization values, growth data, multiple setups, internal systems, and policies that govern the bank culture.

• The course is woven within a maze and the learner would clear the maze to proceed from one stage in the journey to another. During each stage, the learner would collect souvenirs by visiting various interactivities on course frames which would qualify him/her to attempt the maze game.

• To maintain learner interest, Stereoscopic 3D effects have been built on select screens and these provide a newness and an element of inquisitiveness to the induction program. Engaging videos, personalized welcome messages from department heads, rich media, and select screens in 3D ensure learner interest throughout yet cover the details in a cost and time effective manner.

**Other key tips in the first week:**

• Making Induction personalized can boost retention and performance: In a study of 605 employees at Wipro in India went through an orientation that focused on their individual strengths. Newcomers shared stories in their lives when they felt “born to act.” and discussed how to enable this at work. Those workers were even given sweatshirts emblazoned with their names, and not the company's. Six months later, those who went through the employee-centered orientation were up to 32% less likely to have quit than those who sat through the typical company-focused onboarding process.

• Google which onboarded some 5,000 new hires in 2012, has experimented with its orientation procedures to help new staffers, dubbed "Nooglers," make more social connections and get up to speed more quickly. The company has tested whether the size of an orientation group affected how new workers assimilate. Workers who went through orientation in cohorts of 12 people felt the most comfortable and created stronger social bonds than those put into larger or smaller groups.
5. The first 3 months, 6 months and 12 months

In his highly recommended book, “The first 90 days” Michael Watkins highlights a check list for what new leaders need to do. Whether leaders or not the list is a powerful thought starter for what needs to be in place to enable success in the first 3 months. The new leader/employee should have achieved seven key benchmarks, including:

1. **Diagnosis.** This includes identifying key challenges and opportunities. New leaders often think they asked all of the necessary questions during the recruiting process, but they need to test their understanding within the context of their role in the organization.

2. **Alignment.** It is imperative to have meaningful conversations with the boss to ensure that goals and expectations are aligned with those of the team and the organization.

3. **New relationships.** The new leader should have begun to build his or her internal network, identified key stakeholders and knowledge sources. This includes direct reports, peers, and key supporters such as HR and other functional leaders.

4. **Understanding communication styles.** It is important to understand not only the manager’s communication preferences, but also those of the company as a whole. Organisations have a “communication culture” that dictates, for example, whether it is best to send an email or have a face-to-face conversation.

5. **Clarified expectations.** It is important to ensure that everyone is aligned in their thinking. Often, executives are brought in as change agents, but the changes they think they should make and their authority to make them may be incongruous.

6. **Team assessment.** The new leader should be able to identify “keepers” — those who are key contributors — as well as any skill or competency gaps. This enables the new leader to have a better understanding of the strength of the team and development opportunities.

7. **Identified opportunities for early wins.** It is important to start contributing quickly. Early wins highlight the new leader’s ability to quickly assess and take initiative.
360 Benchmark Data

One of the key recommended benchmarks at the end of three months is to run a 360 feedback report on the new employee, confidentially for the employee only, to know how they are doing against role and performance expectations and demonstrating key competencies.

At 6 months and again at 12 months, the 360 is repeated and this time the audience is the again new employee, while also the employee is supported to discuss the results and development needs with their manager as the process is integrated into their regular performance and coaching discussions.

In addition to benchmarks and data, there are many examples of companies empowering their new hires during the first three months and beyond.

EMC 2 faced a number of challenges

At EMC 2 there was no specific onboarding programme that addressed the new hires, instead they had to attend training courses/seminars that didn’t meet their needs. Any relevant info existed on different websites making it difficult to navigate and find. There was also a lack of commitment from senior leaders who did not understand the full financial impact of hiring mistakes.

After extensive research, including identification of what actions would be the most useful for a person starting a particular job and what current employees would have liked to know, they developed an on line solution called Fast start aimed at providing all the relevant information a new hire would require.

They “began with the basics and made them relevant” for over 70 job roles. They provided a comprehensive company overview and linked that to organizational resources. They included both general and role specific info and provided users with a clear pathway to learning including milestones and rewards.

EMC 2 sought to use technology as much as possible eg creating a library of online videos on edutube their own version of YouTube. On line discussion groups and mentors were used to help answer questions.

In the real world, networking and senior executive seminars provided the opportunity to “press the flesh”.

L’Oreal Fit

Starting with a first-day welcome, global beauty company L’Oreal says, “Our aim is to develop successful, committed and mutually beneficial relationships with each of our employees.” The
company supports onboarding with a two-year, six-part integration program called “L’Oreal Fit.” The program includes:

• Training and roundtable discussions.
• Meetings with key insiders.
• On-the-job learning supported by line management.
• Individual mentoring and HR support.
• Field and product experiences such as site visits and shadowing programs.

**Zappos extreme onboarding**

One organization that engages in intensive onboarding during orientation is Zappos.com

Zappos managed to move from 23rd place on *Fortune* magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list in 2009 to 15th place in 2010.

New employees at Zappos.com learn about the organization’s values and procedures in an intensive five-week training course, during which new hires are offered $2,000 to quit if they feel they are not a good fit for the organization.

To date, only about one percent of new hires have taken this offer.

**IBM’s “Assimilation Process”**

IBM created the Assimilation Process, which consists of three steps: affirming, beginning and connecting. Clear timelines for each step became part of the new process.

• **Affirming** occurs prior to a new employee’s start date and includes welcoming the new employee, preparing a workstation and assigning a coach.

• **Beginning** occurs during the employee’s first 30 days. On the first day, strict rules are in place to ensure that the new worker is met in person, introduced to the team, has a functional area in which to work, completes paperwork and is introduced an intranet onboarding platform, known as “Your IBM.” During this crucial first month, managers make sure that any needed resources are available, clarify roles and responsibilities, encourage the newcomer, and schedule “check in” times to be sure that the new employee is making progress with “Your IBM.”

• **Connecting** occurs during the employee’s first year on the job and consists of three phases. After two months, an “ask coach” checks in to make sure things are on track. At this stage, networking is a priority, so the employee is encouraged to find interest communities within the company. Between four and six months into the newcomer’s tenure, the focus becomes his or her accomplishments and understanding IBM’s way of getting things done. By the end of one year, IBM considers new
employees to be fully integrated. One of the most valuable elements of the Assimilation Process is the individual assigned as a new employee’s coach—a friend to answer questions, reinforce concepts, share processes and tools, and help transmit the intangible cultural values of the firm.

**BOA Merrill Lynch highlights the importance of structure**

The BAML Six Month Programme has clear stages and timelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Onboarding tool</th>
<th>Why Is It Used?</th>
<th>When Is It Used?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Program</td>
<td>Includes information on the business, history, culture and values of Bank of America</td>
<td>Held on the first day on the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Onboarding Plan</td>
<td>Helps new executives organize and prioritize the onboarding process</td>
<td>Provided in the first week after entry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Tools</td>
<td>Help new executives understand the leadership frameworks at Bank of America</td>
<td>Provided in the first week after entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stakeholder Meetings</td>
<td>Allow for important flows of information and for expectation setting</td>
<td>Must be done in the first two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Leader-Team Integration</td>
<td>Helps accelerate the development of relationships between the new executive and his or her team members</td>
<td>Occurs between two and three months after entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Peer Integration</td>
<td>Helps accelerate the development of relationships between the new executive and the rest of the executive team</td>
<td>Occurs between two and three months after entry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Stakeholder Check-in Meetings</td>
<td>Help diagnose potential problems, receive developmental feedback and create solutions</td>
<td>Occur between three and four months after entry</td>
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<td>Executive Networking Forums</td>
<td>Help new executives connect and network with other executives</td>
<td>Held quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>360-Degree Feedback</td>
<td>Helps new executives gauge how they are performing on key metrics as measured by those around them</td>
<td>Occurs after six months after entry</td>
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**Success factors in planning how to structure the first year.**

In each phase of the first year – 1st week, 90 days, at 6 months, at 12 months – validate the delivery of 4 sets of critical needs for you new hires:

- **Personal Effectiveness**
  - Confidence from knowing I am doing a good job
  - Developmental feedback, recognition, coaching and support

- **Clarity of role**
  - Understanding of expectations
  - Performance feedback, 360 feedback

- **Fitting in**
  - Personal and social integration
  - Employee led networking and connecting with stakeholders and peers, social activities

- **Culture and values**
  - Ensuring understanding of vision, strategy and goals
  - Developing awareness of unwritten ground rules and politics
  - Understanding the internal language
How to implement your own transformational onboarding?

Use following checklist and recommendations to implement your own onboarding approaches:

**Step 1: Form a guiding team.**

As with any change project, find a group of committed individuals who share the vision and can engage at the appropriate levels in the organisation to help make change happen.

**Step 2: Clarify your outcomes.**

Review each of the seven phases and define the outcomes you want to set for yourselves, based on the best practice examples. For each phase consider:

- What’s matters most to us at each stage?
- Who is involved in each stage?
- What do they need to know?
- What is measurable?

**Step 3: Use a Design Thinking approach**

Design thinking is the perfect tool to shape how to implement your own solutions.

Begin with data and story gathering, use each member of your guiding team to seek stories and experiences on how people experience your onboarding today, review sites like glassdoor and LinkedIn forums related to your company, talk to your new hires over the last 12 months and collect their real experiences.

Use this data about peoples experiences to map the needs of people at each stage and brainstorm innovative ideas to deliver these needs.

**Step 4: Plan it**

Engage your stakeholders in planning for the solutions and develop your formal onboarding plan.

Ensure your plan includes: Objectives, timelines, roles and responsibilities for each onboarding phase.

Ensure measurement and metrics for each onboarding phase and also how you will measure success for your onboarding overall to demonstrate return on investment (ROI). Determine performance indicators, such as retention and time to performance. Some of these metrics may include employee engagement levels, 30-90-120 day retention and hiring manager satisfaction. Use 360 feedback.
Step 5: Create an owner

Have an onboarding manager - A dedicated manager takes responsibility to make sure onboarding is consistent throughout the organization and also tailored to meet individual needs. Onboarding needs to meet the unique needs of various department cultures, job roles and generational groups.

Task your onboarding manager to ensure key stakeholders have visibility into the process. Without a clear understanding of the expectations and tools involved, onboarding risks becoming an ad-hoc approach with little value to the business, provide visibility into onboarding progress to key stakeholders to ensure understanding and consistency.

Step 6: Ensure your implementation includes the most proven elements of success

- Engage the new employee in owning their own development planning during onboarding, provide a development plan linked to interview performance, provide regular feedback and have clear expectations of expected performance and capabilities at key milestones, back up with 360 feedback.
- Have the new employee own their networking and integration planning, provide LinkedIn groups(or similar) for cohorts of joiners which create connections to all their key stakeholders, and opportunities to share experiences, challenges, questions and answers, include formal mentoring or buddy systems for the new employee and create opportunities to connect socially with their teams and peers.
- Ensure you “Prepare the desk”, get all the paperwork done before starting and make the first day fun.
- Obtain the buy in of your hiring managers and ensure your managers are equipped with the skills and capabilities to develop and coach new hires and give regular feedback on performance and regular coaching on development.

Step 7: Continue to innovate

Explore the development technology and your onboarding approaches; explore platforms for onboarding, gamification and application development. Continue to track feedback in the market place on glassdoor.com and other online sources. Gather formal feedback on the effectiveness of your new approaches.

And finally: Remember to celebrate your successes.

Martin Cropper

CEO NoLimits

Contact us for a complimentary consultation on how to implement your own transformational onboarding approaches at info@nolimitsasia.com or on +65 6232 2466