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Hassle-Free Best Practices for Onboarding

> **What you need to know to start rocking a more effective new-hire strategy**

The onboarding opportunity

There are few sure things in life OR business, but at one time or another, every organization needs to hire new employees — which leads to something many HR teams dread: **Onboarding**. The chaos. The paperwork. The drain on resources. Not fun.

Onboarding is tough for a lot of growing organizations. Maybe business is booming and you need to bring on additional workers. Or you've had a lot of turnover lately. Regardless, are you sure you have the time and resources to make onboarding these new hires easier? If not, there *is* a way to simplify the process for your HR team while delighting your new hires with a more positive experience.

So how do you make this happen? Grab a snack, settle in, and read on!

Research shows that having a more effective approach to onboarding can lead to better **new-employee retention**,[1] **reduced turnover**,[2] and getting new hires ramped up and **productive more quickly**.[3]

1   Society for Human Resource Management, *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success* (2011), at 6.

2   Forbes, *First Minutes Are Critical in New-Employee Orientation* (2013), found at https://www.forbes.com/sites/hbsworkingknowledge/2013/04/01/first-minutes-of-new-employee-orientation-are-critical/#61dae94c4830.

3   Human Capital Institute and Kronos Incorporated, *New Hire Momentum: Driving the Onboarding Experience* (2017), at 26.

The new employee experience

For organizations seeking new talent today, offering a great employee experience is THE new competitive differentiator. Why? Prospective hires want choices. They no longer want to work *for* a company — they prefer to work *with* a company.[4] Capitalizing on this means you as an HR pro must find ways to set your organization apart so that new talent chooses *you*. And that's where the experience you deliver comes in.

It can be the typical new employee experience …

✘ Talent accepts your offer, BUT …

✘ They don't hear from your recruiting or hiring manager for weeks

✘ They have to follow up before their start date to get important first-day details

✘ They arrive on their first day and spend hours completing forms and paperwork and watching policy videos, THEN …

✘ They're shown to a work area that lacks the technology or equipment they need to start work, AND …

✘ Their manager or supervisor can't be reached for questions until the end of the day

Or a *great* experience!

✔ Talent accepts your offer

✔ Within days, they get an email from your recruiter with a link to their first-day agenda, AND …

✔ Links to all the necessary forms and documentation to complete online at their convenience BEFORE day one!

✔ Your new hire spends their first day learning more about your organization, meeting teammates, and getting familiar with their new work environment!

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4   Lori Sylvia, *Generation Why: The Attitudinal Shift Uniting Today's Workforce* (2017), found at: http://blog.smashfly.com/2017/03/01/generation-why-the-attitudinal-shift-uniting-todays-workforce/.

Why good onboarding matters

That's easy: **retention**. If your new hires leave after six months, whatever you've put into finding them and ramping them up has been wasted. A good onboarding plan gives new hires clear direction from the start on their responsibilities and goals, provides solid training to set them up for success early, encourages engagement with their manager and co-workers, and monitors for trends to keep them on the right track.

In the following section, we'll show you how to shape your own successful onboarding approach.

Preboarding: Making progress *before* day one

Spending a lot of time, energy, and resources on recruiting new talent is an old story. A 2016 SHRM survey showed that the average cost per hire is $4,129, and the average time to fill a position is 42 days.[5] Crazy, right?

We've already established that an onboarding program focused on new-hire retention and success should be job one. But once someone is hired, what's the best way to take them from the *candidate* experience to the *employee* experience? Enter **preboarding**.

The time between offer acceptance and the employee's first day is the perfect opportunity to leverage the new hire's excitement until they're fully on board — and a great way to streamline processes and save HR a ton of time.

Here are some things to include in your preboarding process:

- **A leadership welcome message** on your new-talent online portal or linked in your welcome email

- **A day one agenda:** What time to arrive, whom to ask for, what to bring (e.g., a valid ID), and their upcoming schedule if applicable

- **Electronic availability of critical information:** Having new hires fill out tax forms, review your employee handbook, and make decisions on benefits in advance is the ultimate efficiency!

- Determine the new hire's **preferences for technology, equipment, and/or schedule**

- **A personal touch:** Collect fun information and use it to delight new hires to show you value them as people

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5   Society for Human Resource Management, *Average Cost-per-Hire for Companies Is $4,129, SHRM Survey Finds* (2016).

Onboarding: The essentials

So now that preboarding is in the rearview, where to next? Here are some suggested actions to take you from your new employees' first day through their first six months.

day **1**	week **1**	first **30** days	first **60** days	first **90** days	first **6** months
Hold a new-hire orientation:	**Help new hires build relationships and share key learnings with other new hires by:**	**Start aligning onboarding to the new hire's role. HR and cross-functional teams should partner to support the onboarding experience by having new hires:**	**By now, managers and peers have become the main sources of information. Here's where HR should:**	**Prepare for new hire's formal 90-day review by:**	**Maintain cross-functional support:**
• Review what your organization does and its structure	• Scheduling informal meet-and-greets	• Attend key trainings and/or gain certifications	• Clarify company culture and management philosophy	• Ensuring they're on track with performance expectations	• Managers should be providing ongoing new-hire coaching and feedback
• Provide a "whom to call" list; e.g., HR contacts, IT, payroll	• Assigning them a buddy or mentor	• Meet with relevant stakeholders	• Set professional goals and milestones	• Proactively addressing any outstanding questions or concerns	• A final HR check-in to ensure all is well
• Give a tour of work areas and also point out break rooms, printers, where teammates sit, and, yes … the bathroom!	• Introducing them to senior leaders	• Job shadow teammates	• Check in to monitor ongoing progress		
• Have a lunch plan (because no one wants to eat alone)		• Access necessary tools and systems			
• Assign and issue uniforms or equipment if applicable		• Chat with HR so they can monitor progress and answer questions			
• Issue facility access badge					

Sharing the onboarding burden

The most effective onboarding processes are shared among different stakeholders. This way, no one person is overburdened with managing the entire process — and more importantly, it allows the new hire to engage with different teams and departments throughout your organization.

HR and individual managers play the largest roles in onboarding. Here are a few areas for each to consider when creating a shared onboarding approach that ensures roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clear.
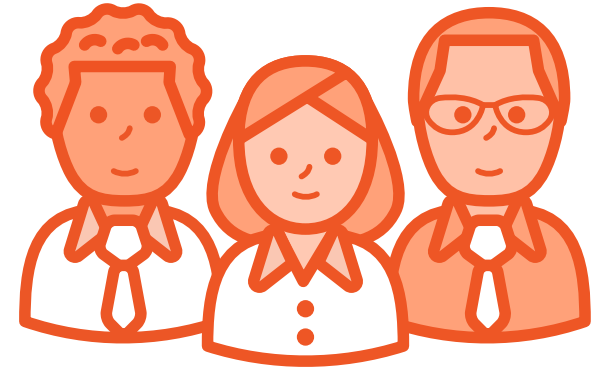
What managers need to effectively integrate new hires into their teams:

- Knowledge of what's covered in new-hire preboarding and orientation

- Understanding of the overall onboarding plan and their role in it

- Communication with current employee(s) about expectations for helping onboard new hires

- Visibility into new-hire milestones and their progress

- The tools to manage all tasks for which they're responsible

What HR should focus on throughout the process:

- Administering preboarding

- Running orientation sessions

- Handling benefits enrollment and form completion

- Managing timelines and holding new hires and managers accountable

- Communicating onboarding expectations to managers

- Checking in with the new hires at the 60- and 90-day marks

Measuring your onboarding program's success

Okay, you've developed your awesome onboarding plan and it's in full swing. So how will you know if it's working? You'll need to **monitor** and **evaluate**.

A 2017 survey showed that more than half of organizations don't track the efficacy of their onboarding programs[6] — even though those that do have more favorable talent and business outcomes.[7] Why would you do all that work and then throw the game in the final seconds?

Don't be those guys. Build an evaluation plan into your onboarding that includes:

- Watching for peaking turnover rates (hopefully, they're not!)
- Ongoing contact with managers to make sure new hires understand their role, critical processes, and who's who in the organization and to find out if they're completing assignments on time
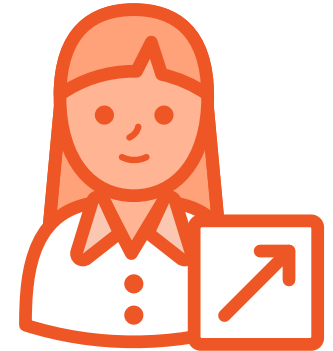
Dropping the ball: One of the hidden perks of an onboarding program is its potential to **boost new-hire time to productivity**. But while 33 percent of organizations in a recent survey said they consider shortening time to proficiency an onboarding goal, **only 7 percent actually measure it**.[8]

6   *New Hire Momentum: Driving the Onboarding Experience*, at 25.

7   Ibid., at 26.

8   Ibid.

Hassle-free onboarding? Yes, please!

Don't let confusing, inconsistent processes, stacks of paper forms, and limited resources make your new hire's first day not the best day. Use this eBook as a guide to creating an exceptional onboarding program for both your new hires and your organization.

As you now know, a more effective approach to onboarding can lead to better new-employee retention, reduced turnover, and faster time to productivity. And with the right tools, it can be a hassle-free process that will allow you to focus on the human part of human resources!

Contact Kronos at +1 800 225 1561 or visit kronos.com/onboarding.

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