

Your
SUCCESS
Starts Here

New Employee Experience
Onboarding Partnership Guide



About this guide.

This guide will help new employees and their onboarding partners navigate their onboarding relationship throughout the first 3 months of the new employee's career. The goal is to build an effective relationship that allows the new employee to confidently navigate the tasks associated with their role on a daily basis. An onboarding partner is an experienced employee within the new employee's division that serves as their go to person. They provide answers and introduce new employees to resources that they can use to become self-sufficient and knowledgeable about department practices and organizational culture in a shorter period.

Having an Onboarding partner will maximize the productivity of the manager/new employee meetings by allowing them to focus on job-specific issues, welcome new employees and reaffirm their decision to join OLG.

This guide contains tips for Hiring Manager, Onboarding Partner and New Employee, as well as, templates that can be leveraged to ensure you are making the most of your Onboarding relationship. It is a set of guidelines and, therefore, you can alter the tools and templates contained within.

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Introduction

As part of the overall onboarding process for new employees, OLG recommends the implementation of an Onboarding Partner program within each department. This document is designed to brief those who will be an Onboarding Partner to a new employee, and it will also help the manager and the new employee understand what the Onboarding Partner Program is, and what is expected of each party involved in the partner relationship.

An Onboarding Partner program teams up the new employee with a peer. An Onboarding Partner program is a tool to make the new employee feel welcome, and to help them understand the organization's norms, values, and culture.

Outline

The Onboarding Partner Program matches the new employee with an experienced employee, for a period of three months, with two goals:

- 1) Provide the new employee with a main point of contact for general questions regarding day-to-day operational issues (such as the location of facilities, information processing requirements and relevant company policies), and
- 2) To help the new employee integrate with their team and department by providing access to someone who is familiar with the organization and who is able and willing to provide peer guidance and help with informal networking.

Objectives

By providing such a relationship, it is intended that:

- The new employee will feel more welcome with OLG, within a shorter period
- Relatively straightforward questions regarding basic operational issues are dealt with simply and quickly
- The initial confusion and uncertainty faced by all new employees is lessened
- Hiring Manager time with new employees is freed up to deal with added value issues
- The new employee begins to add value more quickly, leading to increased confidence and self-esteem
- The Onboarding Partner broadens their work experience and is actively involved in making OLG a better place to work

Roles & Responsibilities

Hiring Manager Responsibilities

- Select onboarding partner for your new employee
- Review the overall program with onboarding partner
- Establish clear goals for the onboarding relationship

Onboarding Partner Responsibilities

- Be a contact for general information on policies, procedures, work rules, norms, day-to-day operational issues, etc.
- Help the new or transferring employee integrate with the department and organization regarding OLG culture, norms, and expectations.
- Make introductions and help establish networks
- Assist in training the new employee, by being responsible for a portion of their job-specific orientation plan
- Be a tour guide and provide introductions
- Identify resources
- Provide opportunities for observation and job shadowing for transfer of knowledge
- Follow up with the new or transferring employee on a weekly basis. This can include meeting for lunch, brief chats, accompanying them to a meeting, virtual chat, video call

New Employee Responsibilities

- Plan and coordinate meetings; establish timeframes
- Actively listen, ask questions, and follow through on assigned tasks
- Track progress made and adjust if necessary
- Follow through on assigned tasks
- Ask for feedback and be open to accepting it

Onboarding Partner Selection Criteria & Process

Individuals can volunteer to be considered as an Onboarding Partner or recommended by others. The Hiring Manager will make the final choice based on the selection criteria.

The most effective choice for an "Onboarding Partner":

- Has been employed with OLG for one year
- An employee in a similar role/job type and in the same or a similar department
- Has good communication and interpersonal skills
- Has a positive attitude and is proud of the organization
- Has a good performance history and is a positive role model (well regarded and accepted by current employees)
- Is given time to be accessible to the new employee
- Wants to be a "Onboarding Partner"
- Has been selected in advance and trained in "Onboarding Partner" responsibilities

Additional Insight:

- Hiring Managers do not need to look for a "perfect" Onboarding Partner. Onboarding Partners do not need to have all the answers however, as the main point of contact for questions the new employee may have while completing daily tasks, they are accountable for pointing them in the right direction. As a rule of thumb, the more diverse the backgrounds and skillsets new employee can draw from the better.
- The Onboarding Partners social/interpersonal skills are just as critical as chemistry. You do not need to be tremendously concerned with finding a perfect "match" between Onboarding Partners and new employees.

- Onboarding Partners do not need to be seasoned veterans. Often, for new employees with no experience or just a few years' experience in role, being matched with an Onboarding Partner several years into their career can be just as effective as being matched with someone more senior. Partners several years into their career may be in a better position to help the new employees, as they'd be working in the positions new people managers are interested in. The new employee will feel more comfortable in sharing and the employee will be able to relate better to their experiences, having more recently worked through similar issues.
- Onboarding Partner should be in the same or similar role as the new employee. If this is not possible, they should have past experience in the role of the new employee.

Relationship Expectations

The relationship between the Onboarding Partner and the new employee should be open, confidential, positive, and supportive. Discussions between the Onboarding Partner and the new employee should be confidential. OLG asks that you are both supportive of the organization and your co-workers.

What the Onboarding Partner Expects from a New Employee

- Confidentiality – the Onboarding Partner expects that the new employee can be trusted with information, whether it be technical, business, personal or otherwise
- Constructive feedback– the Onboarding Partner expects that the new employee will receive constructive criticism in good spirit
- Learning – the Onboarding Partner expects that the new employee will display an open, positive attitude and an eagerness to learn

What the New Employee Expects from their Onboarding Partner

- General advice, guidance, and encouragement
- Clear information, honest feedback, and a positive attitude
- Help in understanding the norms and values of the organization and finding out how to get things done
- Assistance in building networks and insight into how to make them effective and productive
- Ask thought-provoking questions to guide decision-making
- Role modelling through words and actions.
- Demonstrate critical thinking for effective decision making through problem solving and analysis
- Facilitate the new employee's ability to practice self-development

Concluding the Onboarding Relationship

When the Onboarding Partner/ new employee feels that the relationship is reaching its end, you should:

- Assess whether the relationship's goals have been reached.
- Discuss how you each will use what you have learned from the Onboarding relationship in the future.
- Take stock of lessons learned, directions taken, and what is still needed to be accomplished.
- Determine if the relationship should be extended.
- Try to leave the relationship with positive feelings.
- Are there any other changes we can make to improve the relationship?

Engagement

Meetings Between the Onboarding Partner and the New Employee

After the Onboarding Partner has been notified of the name and contact information regarding the new employee they will be working with, they should arrange for some time to have an initial meeting with them. Arrange this through the new employee's Hiring Manager. If possible, meet with the new employee on their first day either in person or via video call. Otherwise, have an initial meeting with them within their first week. For example, you may wish to arrange to meet them for lunch.

Frequency and Timing of Subsequent Meetings

You should aim to meet with the new employee regularly for 30 minutes, once a week during their first month and once a month thereafter. This meeting should be used to discuss any non-urgent issues the new employee may have.

First Meeting

Your first meeting with the new employee should be introductory in nature. Show them around the department and introduce them to their colleagues. Explain the operation of any equipment or systems they need to commence work. Be familiar with the content of their job-specific orientation plan and the General Orientation training program, so that you do not duplicate any training provided there.

Explain to the new employee how they can contact you during the day and make it clear that you are available to them as required, but that they should always use their discretion. Explain that you will be meeting with them regularly, and that non-urgent issues should be left until those times.

Explain your role as an Onboarding Partner, and how it is different from that of a coach or manager. Ask if they have any initial questions or issues, and deal with them; then leave them to get started.

Be Prepared to Discuss the following:

- ☐ Background, values, needs, and interests
- ☐ Goals for the Onboarding relationship
- ☐ Work styles and habits
- ☐ Strengths and opportunities
- ☐ Relationship structure, objectives, expectations, and responsibilities
- ☐ Separation – when we will conclude the orientation

End of Program Evaluation

This evaluation is to be completed by all Onboarding Partner and New Employee upon conclusion of the Onboarding Partnership.

Questions	5 Strongly Disagree	4 Disagree	3 N/A	2 Agree	1 Strongly Agree	Comments
I was briefed on my responsibilities as a part of the Onboarding Partnership						
The goals of our Onboarding Partner relationship were achieved						
Frequency of meetings was accurate						
New networks and connections were made because of the Onboarding Partnership						
Communication with New Employee/ Onboarding Partner was smooth						
Insight and opportunities helped New Employee successfully transition into new role						
The content of our discussions was appropriate						

Overall:

1) What worked well?

2) What are opportunities for Improvement?

Appendix

Onboarding Partner Tip Sheet.

What are some good questions for an Onboarding Partner to ask when engaging a new employee?

Ask thoughtful and thought-provoking questions to guide decision making and problem solving. Practice active listening in regular, meaningful conversations. Use the questions below to help build your Onboarding relationship:

Question Type	Follow-up Questions
Where are you now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the situation, problem, or issue you are working on?• Are there any risks, difficulties, or stress you will be facing in the next few months (deadline, conflicts, fears, etc.)?
Where do you want to be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your goal (growth area)?• What would you like to be remembered for over the next few years (personal vision)?• What do you think will be the most challenging or rewarding for you?
How do you plan to get there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What steps can you take to achieve that goal?• What is your plan to minimize any upcoming risks, difficulties, or stress?• What are your strengths and how will they help you reach your goal?• What skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience?• What are you most worried about/afraid of?
What happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What action did you take?• How well did you accomplish your goal?• What did you learn?• How can you use this knowledge, skill, or ability in the future?• What was the most challenging or rewarding for you?• How are you different now than you were at the beginning?

How to maximize your time together?

- Schedule meetings in advance.
- Be serious and diligent about scheduling and keeping appointments and returning emails and phone calls.
- Do not multitask at meetings – both partners should focus solely on the issues at hand. Turn off your phones.
- Fully prepare for any discussions or meetings beforehand – both you and the new employee.
- Focus the session on critical issues by starting each session or discussion with a progress review or update.
- Book a follow-up session at the conclusion of a meeting or discussion.
- Monitor the time and look for opportunities to use that time more effectively and efficiently.

New Employee Preparation Checklist.

Instructions

This checklist will help you prepare for the Onboarding relationship. Please review and complete all the sections of the checklist prior to the first meeting and bring it with you to the meeting. You are encouraged to make notes for each of the points listed below.

Getting Ready

Before the Employee's First Day

- Meet with your HRBP or the hiring manager to clearly define your role and schedule a date to have lunch with the employee during his/her first week.
- Learn about the employee.

Identify and Define Your:	Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> Goals for the Onboarding relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn processes specific to my new team (i.e. How do we store and share files?)
<input type="checkbox"/> Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The OLG value that most aligns with my own is...
<input type="checkbox"/> Work styles and habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I prefer email first, phone call second
<input type="checkbox"/> Strengths and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am great at networking; however, this is my first time working in the Public sector
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and skill gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am not familiar with One Note and I understand the team uses to communicate daily

The First Meeting

On the Employee's First Day

- Stop by the employee's office to introduce yourself or set up a video call if working remotely. Confirm plans to meet with the employee later that week. Give them your contact information.

Be Prepared to Discuss:	Notes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background, values, needs, and interests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goals for the Onboarding relationship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work styles and habits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengths and opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship structure, objectives, expectations, and responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separation – when we will part ways	

During the First Week

- Take the employee to lunch (in person or virtually). Share information about yourself – how long you've been at OLG; what it was like when you first started; your role, interests, and hobbies. Learn about the employee's background and interests.
 - Show the employee around the working area and make introductions.
 - Explain how to order equipment and supplies.
 - Take a walking tour across offices or share a map of the facilities if working remotely.
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During the Following Months

- Plan by scheduling meetings for the next several months. Meet over in person or virtual coffee.
 - Check in with the employee in between regularly scheduled meetings to see how things are going and if he/she has any questions.
 - Continue introducing the employee to others.
 - Invite employee to relevant business or social events.
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Helpful Tips

- Don't worry about being perceived as the "expert" or think you need to have all the answers. Your experience at OLG is what's most important to the employee.
- In some situations, listening is more valuable than giving advice. Ask questions like "What do you need?" or "How can I help?"
- We all have a preferred communication style. Talk about each other's preferences, as the new employee may have a different style from yours.
- Recognize that it takes time to develop a relationship.
- Be patient, positive, and supportive. Don't try or expect to cover everything over a short period of time.
- Stay open minded and avoid being judgmental.
- Maintain confidentiality.