

How to Onboard a New Hire (With Free Tools)



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Congratulations, you hired a new employee! After a few interviews and negotiations, you have brought on the person that will help bring your team to the next level. Now, the next step is getting this new hire onboarded and ready to hit the ground running. But as a busy manager or HR leader, how do you maximize the effectiveness of the onboarding process? How can you make sure your new hires have a good first experience?

The onboarding process is unique for each organization, covering specific training, tasks, company policies, role clarity, and outlining of the company culture. In this post, we're going to focus on giving you the tools to onboard new hires to have clarity in their new role and make an impact for years beyond initial onboarding.

How to Start Thinking About the

Onboarding Process

When onboarding a new hire, you have a lot of ground to cover in a short amount of time. This pressure can cause feelings of stress or anxiety from the HR team, hiring manager, and new employees. Before you start, take some time to think about what a good onboarding experience should look like and what a bad experience would look like. We've outlined a few of those examples to help get you started:

Good: New Hire...

- Feels welcomed
- Is confident in their role
- Is clear on expectations
- Knows how and whom they will impact
- Understands company policies
- Feels they belong and understand the company culture

Bad: New Hire...

- Is confused
- Feels like a number
- Is unclear about their role
- Is on an island
- Doesn't know where to start

This simple exercise will help you reset each time you start the onboarding process. When you're in the right mindset, you will be more focused on providing the best experience possible, which will be a win-win-win for you, the new employee, and the organization. The numbers below show the contrast of an employee's tenure depending on their onboarding experience.



If people don't feel seen as a person, they won't feel connected to their surroundings. It's easy to think strictly about the process and forget there is a person on the other side. A good onboarding process starts with seeing each new hire as a person who wants to feel like they belong in their new role, team, and organization.

Understand Common Onboarding Challenges

Another part of this process is understanding common onboarding challenges for new hires. Knowing these will help you understand how to engage and interact with your new employee on a human level. When people are not seen as people with their own needs, challenges, and objectives, they are often seen as objects to be used. The problems below are more likely to occur when people are seen as objects.

Employees report their most common onboarding challenges are:

The first day

Handling personal transition and change

Issues with the manager

Misleading job descriptions

Misassumption of skills

Challenges with expectations and results

Little or no feedback

Time management, flexibility with schedule

Navigating the culture

Too much information too quickly

The quality of the information

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To help counter these challenges, we have a few tips and tools for you to use when bringing on a new employee.

#1 Create Clarity Around Roles and Responsibilities

One of the most difficult areas of joining a new team is understanding what a day in their new job will entail. What are the main functions? To whom are they reporting? Where do they fit on the team? What does growth look like? Etc. These questions are not only essential for the new hire but for their manager as well. Without clear roles and responsibilities, both parties will end up confused and frustrated if these aren't addressed upfront and in detail.

Arbinger's Clarify Roles tool will help shape your new hire's understanding of what they will be doing and who their work will be impacting.

The difference between this approach and traditional onboarding approaches is the emphasis on the impact of one's work. Most organizations fail or ignore this step, which sets everyone up for failure.

Once there is an understanding of what needs to be done, the next step is understanding whom it will impact. If you're working on your own without any idea of how the work you do will positively or negatively affect someone else, you're working in a silo. And if this isn't cleared up in the onboarding process, you'll soon find conflict and frustration for everyone involved.



With a focus on role clarity and impact, your new hire will feel confident and understand how to contribute in their new role.

#2 Ask the Right Questions

This is the most practical and simple step of the onboarding process. We call it, Three Questions. These three questions will help your new employee fully understand how they will be impacting their co-workers and set up a cadence to check in and assess impact. To start, the questions are:

1. How does someone in my role affect or potentially affect your ability to do your work (both positively and negatively)?

2. From your perspective, how could a person in my role be most helpful to you?
3. How and at what frequency would you like me to check in and stay accountable to you for my impact on your ability to do your work?

One overlooked area of the onboarding process is creating space for [people to build relationships](#) with their new co-workers. With all the other steps in the process, there is little time associated with connecting with the people on their team. At the foundation of this process is allowing people to feel they are seen, heard, and understood as a person before anything else. Not a number, a job title, or their ability to produce.

When organizations use our tools and training to onboard, we've found they drive key conversations that:

- Build Relationships
- Develop Connections
- Spark Creativity
- Locate Accountability

By simply using these three questions, your new hire will understand their role, whom it will impact, and how to regularly check in to assess their efforts and hold everyone accountable.

#3 Share with Your Manager

To wrap up this process, the last step is to have your new employee share their findings with their manager. Getting everyone on the same page will give everyone the ability to measure the results from the same viewpoint. The areas to cover in this meeting are:

1. How they perceive their roles.
2. What adjustments do they plan to make to elevate impact? (Capability, Impact, Effort?)
3. Ask for feedback.

The goal of a leader or manager is not to hold people accountable, but to develop accountable people. If your mindset as a leader is set only on holding people accountable, you will find yourself teaching and correcting more than trying to understand and build relationships. These three prompts will help develop your people to be accountable and give them actionable ways to assess their work and its impact on others.

How to Onboard New Hires in Practice

A successful onboarding process sets an employee up to succeed beyond the standard 90-day probation period. It gives them the tools to feel confident to do the work they were hired to do without confusion. No matter who you're hiring, remember to focus on:

- Orienting their work to account for their impact on others.
- Ensuring there is clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, and performance standards (including impact).
- Establishing a regular cadence of reporting and feedback based on one's capabilities, impact, and effort.

Above all, remember your new employee is a person with needs, goals, and objectives that matter, just like yours. When your mindset is outward and you see people as people, you'll help everyone perform at their highest level from the start of

their onboarding process. If you need help, connect with one of our team members today.