Trends in New Hire Onboarding

Successful new employee onboarding involves more than just orientation. Onboarding is the process that builds the initial relationship between an employee and an organization. It continues several weeks and months into employment. The orientation program is part of the more comprehensive onboarding process.

Onboarding is one of the most important contributions to the new hire’s success at the company. Onboarding can contribute to employee satisfaction and engagement quickly increasing the employee’s effectiveness and productivity in his/her new role.

The trend in onboarding programs is to use a blended approach. Some of the program’s information delivery is better suited to classroom training, some via eLearning, and others through meetings with key personnel, or through written material.

Below are some suggestions you can add to your onboarding program that might prove helpful to your organization.

Pre-Employment

- Add an eLearning module to the candidate page on your website that has upbeat music and features some of your employees talking about what it means to work at the company, outlines some of the company benefits offered, describes how the company is perceived in the community, and discuss how working for your company benefits a person’s career.

- Create an eLearning game that allows potential candidates to discover through play whether they are a good match for your company’s culture.

First Week Activities

Although it is difficult not to overwhelm a new hire, many items must be presented to the new employee soon after they begin.

- Create an eLearning course that covers the basic benefits offered to all employees. This course could also include a welcome message video from the executive team. Follow up questions and answers can be covered by the employee’s manager.

- Provide paperwork and handbooks for review and completion in the first days on the job.

- Establish a link on the company’s website just for new hires. Provide FAQs, maps, and other relevant information.

- Assign a “Welcome Coordinator” or concierge that the employee can contact with questions. This individual can help the new employee through the informal processes that would normally take months for a new hire to figure out on his/her own.

- Ask the employee with whom they would like to meet during their first week and schedule “no cancel” meetings. As an example, if the new hire is in the Sales Department he/she might request to meet with someone in the Marketing Department.

- Have the employee’s business cards ready the first day.

On-The-Job Activities

The following suggestions are for use during the first weeks or months on the job.

- Provide employees with a glossary of acronyms, buzzwords and on-line FAQs to bring them up to speed and to make them comfortable with the company jargon. Understanding these words or phrases may help decrease time to productivity for the new hire and decrease the number of errors on the job.

- Give employees “New Employee Question” coupons to give to others to help ease their fear of asking silly questions.
• Recognize employees by providing a “dinner for two” certificate for the employee to tell their spouse or friend about their new job.
• Present new employees with a pre-dated five-year pin to show the company’s interest in a lasting relationship.
• Depending on the size of your company, a phone call from the CEO or Department Head welcoming him/her to the organization or a reserved “new hire” parking spot is a fun way to celebrate.
• Refresh the buddy system by developing a “new hire network” of recent hires to act as helpful sources for new hires.
• Provide the new hire with a designated number of “free lunch coupons” to spend on co-workers so that they will rapidly get to know the team and the local restaurants as well.
• Provide new employees with a department listing along with pictures (on-line or possibly in an electronic file) to make getting to know the team easier.
• Involve the family during the onboarding process if relocation is required for the employee. Send the spouse/children welcome gifts or corporate products to make them feel they are part of the team.
• Utilize technology to provide webcasts from key personnel or develop a chat room for the new hires to share information with each other. Another technique is to create a web-based Facebook on the company intranet featuring photos and short biographies of new employees.

To improve upon new hire onboarding programs, vigorously solicit feedback from all participants, including the employees’ managers and supervisors. Conduct surveys of past new hires and identify their problems and frustrations about their experiences in the first days on the job. Also identify what they would like to see “more of or less of” during their first week or month on the job.

New employees wish to feel as if they made the right choice by joining the organization. Companies want to increase retention and boost productivity. Well developed new hire onboarding helps achieve these objectives and strengthens a lasting relationship.