

Article 1: Onboarding

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Onboarding is the process of getting a new employee established in the organization they now work for. It is imperative that this process helps newcomers feel welcome and included, introduces the member to tools and resources, including other employees at their disposal, provides clear expectations for the job at hand, and sets goals for the employee in their new role.

An important element of onboarding is selecting your onboarding team. If those first interacting with new hires are not good team players, or warm, friendly faces, they probably should not be setting the initial impression for the company. This team must be friendly since they will be offering their aid to and answering all questions of the new hire as they enter this new role.

According to Tarika with Zoho People, there are four phases of onboarding. The *first* phase is pre-onboarding which involves helping a new hire complete all necessary paperwork. Pre-onboarding gets all payroll and “need-to-know” information about safety or time management out of the way. It is also the least overwhelming step allowing for a simple transition.

The *second* phase is welcoming new hires which is where the company has the opportunity to make a good first impression, calm the new hire’s nerves, and get them excited to join the organization. This is the ideal time to establish the organization’s core values and beliefs as well as introduce the newcomer to team members they will be working with.

The *third* phase is role specific training which is the best time to train your hire to do all that is expected of them. Here is where you can show them all the tools at their disposal as well as how to use them to their greatest advantage. It is vital that employers clearly set expectations and goals for their new hires at this stage. If your new hire does not know what you expect, they will likely feel uneasy about beginning their work since they don’t have clear goals laid out by your organization.

The *fourth* and final phase is the transition into the new role. Employees are no longer “new” but full-fledged and established in the workplace with a well-rounded understanding of goals, core-values, and the organization’s culture that they could teach to another new hire.

In the past, I have experienced onboarding a few times and in each case I felt capable of tackling the job at hand by day 3 or 4. In these cases, a successful onboarding included a present instructor: someone who was willing to sit and engage with me about what they needed me to do and exactly how they wanted me to do it. The instructor set clear expectations of my day to day as well as long term goals for a few months later. With these long term goals in mind, I confidently accomplished daily tasks with a larger picture in mind.

Additionally, it was imperative to my onboarding to know who was at my disposal and to know they were competent and experienced at their job. In all onboard experiences I have had, I knew who to talk to when I was uncertain how to do something, and I knew they had the skills to help me solve my problem at hand.

If I was to create an onboarding experience in the future, on a Tuesday or Wednesday, I would start by bringing in friendly faces to help with paperwork and pre-onboarding as well as organize a “low-stakes” setting for the new hire to meet their team. Next, I would do specific training in 1-2 days, a Thursday and/or Friday. This timing allows for the new hire to have the weekend to step back and process the new information before they hit the ground running the next week. The following week I would have a meeting planned for them to connect with me to ensure they were comfortable in their new position and see what else they may need to be successful.

Most importantly, I would make sure they had open lines of communication with whoever they needed to, including myself. If the new hire feels like they cannot ask for help without fear of being seen as incompetent simply because they are human, then the onboarding process was unsuccessful. Mistakes and questions are normal, even expected. We must keep in mind that new hires are as human as we are, and we need to keep their humanness and neediness in mind in order to best care for them as they enter our organization.