On-Boarding – Orienting to Success

On-Boarding – Orienting to Success

Introduction

This help desk module provides managers and supervisors with accessible, practical tools, information, and resources to help integrate new employees into their new workplace.

You can use many methods to bring employees on-board. Do what works for you and your employees. We encourage you to think creatively about which tools to use and come up with some of your own. As competition between employers for candidates tightens, having a thorough on-boarding program for new staff increases the likelihood that they will become productive more quickly, become more engaged with your organization and stay for a longer time.

Work closely with your department's Human Resources and Training Office to ensure you follow any internal procedures required by your department.

What Is On-Boarding

On-Boarding is a process in which new employees are assimilated into the work place and given the tools and knowledge they need to become successful at their new job.

It is different from the traditional new-employee orientation program, which focuses more on processing an employee into a new unit or department   and tends to be a one – two day event. Generally on-boarding encompasses activities from pre-arrival through the end of the employee's first year. It is a process that needs to be managed over that entire period. Both employer and employee realize benefits from this process.

On-boarding can help alleviate some of that stress and creates a positive view of you, the organization, the other staff and the job. It can be broken into phases to address the employee's evolving needs. Think of on-boarding in terms of pre-arrival, first day, first week, first month, first 90 days and first year.

Pre-Arrival

Making a great first impression reinforces all of the reasons your new employee chose the position, and helps alleviate your new employee's possible feelings of buyer's remorse! Your approach will be different depending on if they are already a state employee or if they are new to state employment.

Contact them before they come to work – just touch base with them and let them know you haven't forgotten about them – you are still excited they are coming to work for you.

- Give them an idea of what their first day will be like.
- Ask if they have any questions or needs for their first day, such as parking information.
- If they can complete paperwork before the first day, send it to them.
- Identify a co-worker your new employee can go to with questions and who can help your employee understand the workings of the department.   Encourage the co-worker to contact your new employee (see sample e-mail)

Equally important is to make sure their work area is ready for them on their first day.

- Make sure they have a working computer and phone at their workstation and their e-mail account is set up.
- Put a copy of your department's mission and vision on the desk.
- Let your staff know who you have hired and when they will start (see sample).
- Use this checklist as a start and add your department specific information you think will help.

Remember, one of the goals is to help your new staff become productive as soon as possible.

The First Day

Get your new employee engaged and involved from Day 1. Don't let people spend their first day at their new job reading a ream of paper on policies or benefits, wondering what in the world they did to end up here. Get them involved in order to help them maintain enthusiasm for new job.

- Be there when your employee arrives and make yourself as available as possible the first day.

- During your first meeting with them describe and discuss the department's vision and mission and how their job supports them.
- Make sure your conversations are two-way – this is not only your opportunity to give information to your employee, but also, your employee's opportunity to give you information about her/him self.
- Introduce your new employee to the co-worker you selected.
- [Other areas to cover during the first day](#).

Your goal -- at the end of their first day, new employees leave knowing that they have joined the right team and with a basic understanding of both the operational traditions of your work unit as well as how their specific job will relate to the organization as a whole.

The First Week

The first day laid the foundation for a good beginning, but the rest of the week is also important. Every day your new employee should experience more self assurance, comfort and productivity. At this point, you are probably going to be focused on the unique aspects of the job. You won't be spending as much concentrated time with the employee, but you will still need to stay in close contact. It is difficult to make yourself available, but remember hours invested this week may save hundreds of hours in the weeks and years to come.

- Since the employee will never be more attentive than they are the first week, it's a good time to review policies and procedures. Don't overwhelm your employee by reviewing all the policies and procedures at once. Start with the most important ones and introduce new ones as the employee learns related processes. Make them relevant to the work performed.
- Make sure the employee understands your expectations, his or her role and responsibilities, and department policies.
- Try to structure an assignment that will allow your employee to demonstrate their competence, prior knowledge, or their ability to learn quickly within the first week.
- If possible, have your employee attend meetings with your other staff as a way to get to know the organization, how it operates, and get to know key players.
- Help your employee learn the organization, discuss performance expectations and begin sharing philosophy and values. This [link](#) will give you ideas on how to do this.

- Set up regular "check in" meetings with your new employee to monitor their progress as they acclimate to their new job. Remember - be available and approachable.

The First Month

The first month, your employee should be making solid progress on work assignments and objectives.   They are on [probation](). Begin giving them a variety of assignments so you can assess their ability to perform the full range of duties assigned. You are also determining what training they need to become proficient at their job.   Other areas to focus on can be found at this [link]().

Provide the employee with feedback during this first month. This can have a considerable impact on the new employee's perceptions of themselves and their jobs. When giving feedback remember:

- Standards should be realistic, clear cut, objective and previously communicated and explained to the new employee
- Assess the person's performance, not the person.
- Appraisal comments should relate directly to the standards you have previously communicated to the employee.
- After presenting data, listen carefully and do not dismiss or discount the employee's comments – you may learn a lot!

The First 90 Days

By the end of the first 90 days, you have either given or are about to give your new employee a probation report. You have been monitoring performance against your expectations and making sure your employee is progressing and their performance is improving. They have gained confidence and feel more comfortable in their surroundings.

- Increase the complexity and scope of the work you give them so you can assess their ability to perform the full range of duties within the scope of their duty statement.

- Continue coaching them and exposing them to more people they will be working with both inside and outside the department.
- If they have been assigned a lead or mentor, consult with that person to get feedback regarding performance and training needs.

If they are progressing successfully, the employee may need less time with you, but you must stay engaged and monitor the performance for continuing development and success.

At this point, if your employee is not progressing, you should be in contact with staff in your Human Resources Office to discuss options available to you.

The First Year

Throughout this first year you continue development efforts with him/her. Over this year,

- Give them the opportunity to perform the full range of duties
- Develop and implement training plan that will close any knowledge gaps that have surfaced.
- Continue to monitor and assess performance and encourage staff development. Information check-in meetings should occur on a regular basis along with the formal evaluations.
- Monitor your on-boarding process by asking for feedback:
  - Have new employees provide feedback on what has been good,
  - What was missing during the orientation and on-boarding process that would have been helpful to know?
  - Listen carefully to what they have to say - they may have suggestions that will make your on-boarding program better and more relevant for both you and your new staff.

Congratulations!!

Your employee has passed probation and is a contributing member of your staff!!