5

STEPS TO
MAXIMIZING
ONBOARDING
SUCCESS

KNOLSKAPE

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In an ideal world, employees would work for the same organization their entire lives, minimizing the need to on-board new employees. HR teams wouldn't have to worry about assimilating them into the organization culture, with a clear understanding or policies, and processes. However, employees join and leave organizations all the time, and for a multitude of reasons. Therefore, HR teams must have healthy strategies for new employee on-boarding. Why?

Research and conventional wisdom both suggest that employees get about 90 days to prove themselves in a new job. The faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the organization's mission. Having employees leave the organization soon after they have been painstakingly scouted, sourced, hired, onboarded and trained, only to be left restarting the process is a cumbersome and costly activity for HR and employees alike. Studies indicate that it costs 6 to 9 months' salary on average every time a business replaces a salaried employee. Therefore, onboarding needs to be looked at strategically, rather than just a check-mark activity to hiring new employees.

While every organization has its own version of the complex process through which new hires learn attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors required to function effectively, the delivery of this information sets the tone to how employees view the organization, and their overall employee experience within the workplace. The important question to ask here is if your onboarding process is indeed effective. The key to measuring effectiveness comprises focus on achieving three crucial components:

1

Employee Job satisfaction - Research suggests that nearly 69% of employees are more likely to stay with a company for at least three years if they experience great onboarding. When employees get off on the wrong foot at an organization, it can have major implications on long term integration.

2

Improved productivity and performance - Studies show that it typically takes eight months for a newly hired employee to reach full productivity. This is because managers' lives are busier than ever, making it difficult for them to focus on easing a new employee's first few months at the organization welcoming, stimulating and as productive as possible.

3
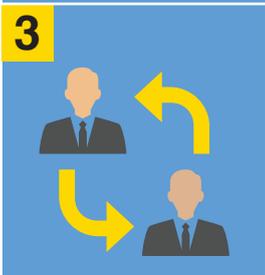
Reduce employee turnover - The organizational costs of employee turnover are estimated to range between 100% and 300% of the employee's salary. Due to the lack of an effective onboarding experience, however, 23% of new hires turnover before their first anniversary.

Therefore, it is pertinent that an organization invests in effective onboarding. What makes for an effective onboarding process?

These 5 steps ensure that the onboarding process at your organization is proactive, clear, and effective.
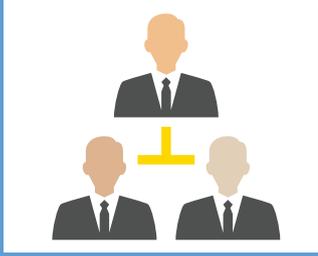
Step 1
Engage before onboarding

Hiring a new candidate is a time & energy consuming activity. Having potential hires drop out on the day of onboarding or even a little after is disheartening to experience. Offer-not-joined is a major challenge for HR professionals – if only there were a way to track or predict it! The first thing to remember is that employee onboarding starts even before an employee joins the organization. Engaging a potential hire before hiring them allows:

Potential hires to experience and understand the organization culture, allowing faster fitment and immersion into the organization

Recruitment professionals to understand the seriousness with which candidates are pursuing a job within the organization

Enabling a platform where potential hires can engage with the organization, understand its core values and vision, and showcase their own talents and capabilities, while HR professionals can track the pattern of this interaction is a sure-shot way for hiring the right candidate, as well as ensuring that they will in deed join the organization.
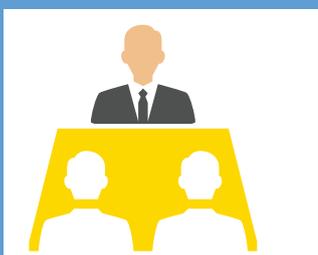
Step 2
Evaluating Engagement Practices

Research shows that 35% organizations don't invest any money at all in their onboarding process. Of organizations that do have an onboarding process, only 37% of companies extend their onboarding programs beyond the first month. It takes new employees time to assimilate into the work environment, and culture. Therefore, it is important that they are given all the necessary tools to succeed within the workplace, even when their managers, teams, and HR doesn't have time for them.

In her seminal work on 'Onboarding new employees: Maximizing success', Dr. Talya N Bauer lists 4C's to effective onboarding - **Compliance, Clarification, Culture, Connection:**

✓	Compliance	Ensuring new hires' understanding of basic legal, policy-related, and process related rules and regulations
i	Clarification	Ensuring that new hires understand of their job and all related expectations
🌐	Culture	Ensuring that new employees understand formal and informal organizational norms
🤝	Connection	Ensuring that new employees have vital interpersonal relationships and networks established

Dr. Bauer states that for the onboarding process to be successful, it is important that all 4 Cs are fulfilled. However, less than 20% of organizations in the world achieve this, which is why they unanimously rank among the greatest places to work, around the world.

Most of the organizations in the top 20% incorporate mentorship programs and a buddy system as part of the onboarding process. These traditional methodologies, while effective, are incredibly time consuming, and result in subject experiences – the new employee onboarding experience is just as good as the buddy or mentor's guidance and support. There is also very little that the organization can do to track a new employee's assimilation into the organizational culture. However, there are signs all around to indicate onboarding effective. If the average scores on a quiz based on organizational values are very poor, maybe it is time to change the way that the content is disseminated.

In the digital age, why not increase the speed and efficiency of the onboarding process using technology? Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality have given birth to chatbots and augmented scenarios. Chatbots anticipate your queries and provide relevant answers based on pre-programmed tags and patterns, eliminating the need for real buddies or mentors.

Augmented Reality gave us the super popular 'Pokemon Go' game. What if that same experience was replicated onto the onboarding process? New hires would experience their organization's physical space, meet leaders, observe group dynamics, and gain insight into the work culture, in a short span of time, via technology, fulfilling the organization's short-term onboarding goals of self-efficacy, role clarity, social integration, and cultural knowledge.

This highly engaging and differentiated approach would also set the tone of experience for new employees, motivating them to perform more efficiently, and effectively.
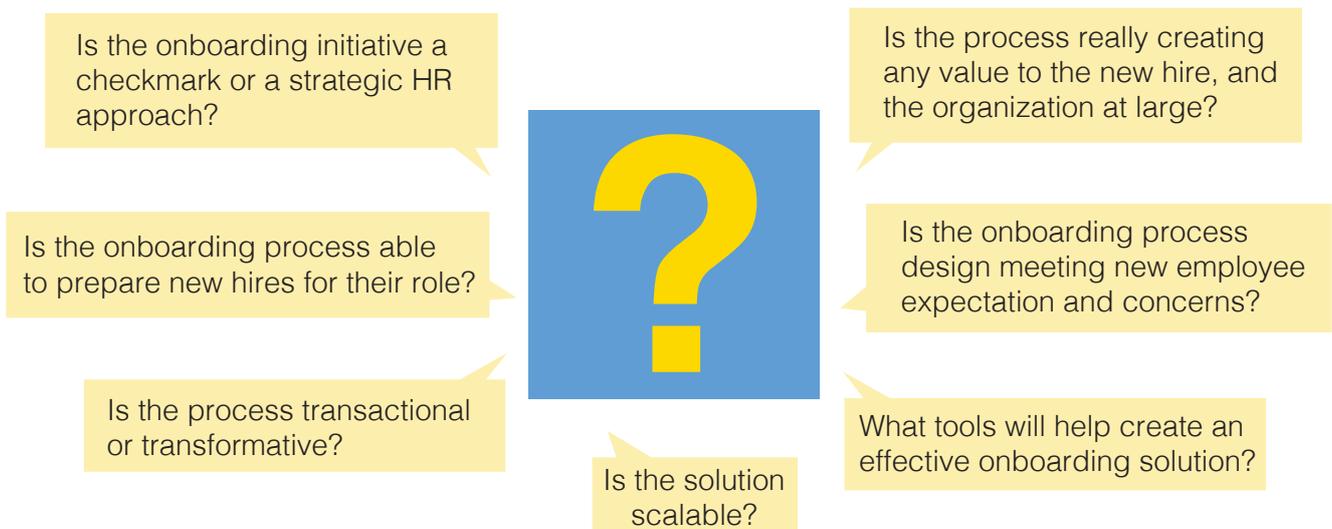
Step 3
Picking the right onboarding process

While the onboarding process, and a formal one at that, is crucial and beneficial to the organization, the individual elements of the process vary across organizations, because it needs to fit into the exact requirements of the organization, and help achieve organizational goals. We looked at Dr. Talya Bauer's 4C concept earlier. The amount of focus that an organization gives to each of these components dictates at what level of effective onboarding that the organization operates at:

	Complaince	Clarification	Culture	Connection
Passive Onboarding	Yes	Some	Little/None	Little/None
Hi-Potential Onboarding	Yes	Yes	Some	Some
Proactive Onboarding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

There are essentially three onboarding levels – from passive to proactive. If an organization is systematically onboarding new hires with a strategic human resource management approach, it is at Level 3. Only about 20 percent of organizations achieve this level, but that doesn't mean that more organizations cannot reach this level. To get there, it is important that HR teams think carefully about the following questions:

Is the onboarding initiative a checkmark or a strategic HR approach?

Is the process really creating any value to the new hire, and the organization at large?

Is the onboarding process able to prepare new hires for their role?

?

Is the onboarding process design meeting new employee expectation and concerns?

Is the process transactional or transformative?

What tools will help create an effective onboarding solution?

Is the solution scalable?

Each organization's responses to these questions will vary. Since the process designed is based on these questions, each organization is likely to have its own, unique onboarding process. The common link is that the onboarding process across organizations is effective.
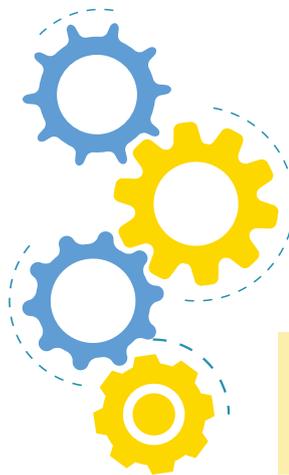
Step 4
Ensuring Standardization and Formality

Research shows that having a standard onboarding process is crucial for an organization as it estimates 50% higher employee retention, 54% greater new hire productivity, and 77% of new hires who hit their first performance milestone had a formal onboarding. Why? A formal onboarding ensures that everybody is on the same page in terms of roles and expectations, and the onboarding experience is uniform and scalable for all new hires.

A formal onboarding process also allows for proactive dialogue between the organization and new hires resulting in:

Crucial conversations on key issues concerning the organization and employees

Fresh perspectives on key challenge areas

Clarifications on culture, vision, objectives

Motivated performance and strong commitment to the organization

Step 5
Measuring Effectiveness

As with everything else in the digital age, measuring the impact of an onboarding process is important to understand its effectiveness. Technology has made it easy to track performance, improvement, and impact among other kinds of data, as digital platforms and products track these on a real-time basis.

While the data is readily available, what is more important is what organizations are doing with this data. With respect to the onboarding process, technology gives us data such as learning effective, new hire productivity, employee attrition rate, time-to-productivity rate, etc.

This in turn allows organizations to change and tweak their existing onboarding process, along with other employee engagement initiatives that the organization actively pursues for its workforce. It is important to remember however, that measuring the effectiveness of an onboarding solution is two-pronged, and not all its impact manifests immediately. Effectiveness must be measured in the short term as well as the long term:
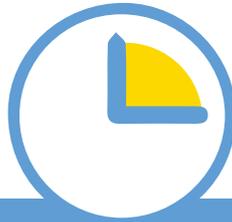
Short term measurement

▸ Self-Efficacy – Is the new hire confident in his/her performance on the job?

▸ Role Clarity – How well does the new hire understand his/her role and expectations?

▸ Social Integration – Does the new hire feel comfortable with his/her peers, colleagues, and work environment?

▸ Knowledge of and Fitment into Organizational Culture – Does the new hire understand and relate to the organization's goals, values, politics, and unique way of working?

Long term measurement

An effective onboarding process leads to:

- Job satisfaction
- Organizational commitment
- Lower turnover
- Higher performance levels
- Career effectiveness
- Lower stress levels

Thanks to technology and digital advancements, dissemination and measurement of short term goals can be put into effect even before the employee starts his/her first day. However, for an onboarding process to be effective, organizations need to start emphasizing on measuring the long-term goals that the onboarding process establishes. This pattern only becomes evident after years of study into employee attrition, motivation, performance, and productivity patterns. However, it is an investment that is in the best interest of the organization and its future.

In conclusion, successful onboarding is a key part of any talent management strategy. With the high cost of recruiting, organizations must understand that effectively integrating new hires into the organization is an important step to ensure their success.

Thank You

To experience is to learn.
Everything else is just information.

About KNOLSKAPE:

KNOLSKAPE is a Modern Workplace Learning company that uses experiential technologies to accelerate learning, transform employee experience and boost productivity across four key areas: Leadership Development, Sales Effectiveness, Digital Transformation and Frontline Development. More than 200 clients in 17 countries have benefited from KNOLSKAPE's award-winning experiential solutions. Using business simulations, gamification, mobile, social, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and machine learning, KNOLSKAPE delivers transformative learning experiences for the modern learner, rich analytics for the HR teams and improved performance for the organization.

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