

HR Insights

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Onboarding New and Young Professionals

Research finds that the process of onboarding new employees is one of the most important HR practices in terms of the impact it has on a business. Effective onboarding extends beyond standard orientation and training programs and focuses on preparation for long-term goals—both for the employer and the employee.

Young professionals and those new to the workforce have unique needs and hope to be engaged during their initial days of employment. Generational changes should be considered, rather than having one-size-fits-all onboarding practices that aren't effective for retaining young talent and those who are new to the professional world. Generation Y, Generation Z, and those new to the workforce are eager to add value to an organization, and an effective onboarding process can expedite the transformation from a new hire to a high-contributing employee.

Benefits of Strategic Onboarding

In scale to other necessary practices within a business, onboarding does not always receive the attention and resources that it deserves. According to The George Washington School of Law, of 500 HR professionals surveyed, 81% reported no allocated budget for onboarding. This creates challenges for integrating an effective process and measuring outcomes. By formalizing a process with success metrics, onboarding processes can receive necessary buy-in from leadership.

Establishing Onboarding Practices

According to a study by the Wynhurst Group, when employees go through structured onboarding, they

are 58% more likely to remain with the organization after three years. To effectively engage professionals new to the workforce, consider these practices when creating a structured onboarding program:

- **Preboard new hires before day one.** Utilize technology to get a start on HR tasks prior to the new employee's start date, and send a welcome letter and onboarding information in advance of the new hire's first day.
- **Be straightforward and transparent.** Younger talent appreciates honesty; while they are eager to make contributions, they also do want to learn and be aware of necessary social adjustments. Clearly address policies, expectations and appropriate behavior.
- **Assign new hires a mentor.** A mentorship program can both address intergenerational gaps and equip new talent to navigate company culture and feel at home. These relationships can benefit both the mentor and the mentee.
- **Involve new hires in projects right away.** Young professionals are eager and excited to begin making an impact—get them involved with a project during Week One.



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- **Set up introduction meetings.** Be intentional about having a new employee spend time with their manager and team members. Deliberate efforts to make introductions can begin to build meaningful relationships.

Be Aware of Generational Differences

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, a survey found that 44% of managers of young workers find that, to some degree, workplace intergenerational conflict exists in their organizations. Think proactively about how a new workforce may influence an environment. Generation Y and Generation Z will bring a new perspective—and will utilize technologies in new ways. Be ready to listen as well. While new talent will be able to learn from senior employees, young professionals may be able to teach even the most tenured employees something new.

Younger generations may be able to influence positive change, but that doesn't mean that they don't want to comply and fit in with current expectations. Make sure that clear, effective and timely feedback is given so that good habits can be formed within the first 90 days.

Focus on What New Professionals Value

Young talent values the purpose and broader goals of an organization and wants to contribute to those objectives. The onboarding process can help connect how each individual can fit into organizational goals. How does your organizational purpose make a positive influence on society? Onboarding efforts should be aligned with the purpose and mission statement of an organization.

Discuss with new employees how individual goals and contributions can fit into these objectives. Employees new to a professional environment will be thrilled to not only discuss their dreams but also create a plan on how they can be achieved. Work with new employees to set goals, and create tangible plans to achieve them.

Professionals new to the workforce are interested in an environment that values productivity, rather than purely face time and subjective performance measures. While Generation Y and Generation Z are likely to move jobs more

often than their older counterparts, effectively rewarding and recognizing talent can boost retention efforts. Young professionals and those new to the workforce hope to receive recognition for productivity and understand how their hard work can translate into career growth and increased rewards.

Establish Training Programs

An effective onboarding program ties into company success, and the process of having new employees become contributing team members can be expedited by creating goal-oriented training programs. Discuss cross-functionally about how your onboarding program and training programs can be intentional about not only engaging new hires but being an effective and intentional use of time and resources.

Plan Ahead for Success

Plan for how your onboarding process can best attract, retain and engage new and young professionals.

Employers should consult with their legal counsel when creating or modifying internal practices, as there are laws protecting individuals against age discrimination—most importantly the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age. Under the ADEA, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of his or her age with respect to any term, condition or privilege of employment, including hiring, firing, promotion, layoff, compensation, benefits, job assignments and training.

Every business is different, so there isn't one right way to handle the onboarding of both young professionals and those new to the workforce. Create a process that works best for your organization, but is accommodating to the generations that will be transforming and growing your company. Contact McGohan Brabender for additional onboarding information.