Elevate Your Onboarding:

How to Create an Onboarding Experience that Delivers Results

High-performing organizations are recognizing the value of strategic onboarding more and more. Research continues to show that a high-quality, structured onboarding experience affects everything from productivity to operating costs to recruitment and retention—and ultimately organizational success. Does your organization have an onboarding program or procedures in place, but you're interested in taking it to the next level? This guide is the perfect place to start. We'll introduce you to our Launch-Learn-Link framework that you can use to guide your thinking and planning. We'll walk you through some initial brainstorming about the outcomes you're looking for, where you are now, and how you can make an action plan to elevate your onboarding and deliver results.

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What results would you like to see?

A well-designed onboarding experience can have a significant impact on your organization and its ability to reach its goals. The outcomes listed below can all be affected by onboarding practices. To begin thinking about how your organization might elevate onboarding, read each of the outcomes below. Check the box to show if you do this very well, if you do this adequately, if you could improve—or check the last box if you're not sure.

Companies with a standard onboarding process saw...

54% greater new hire productivity

50% greater new hire retention

2x the level of new hire engagement

as compared to those that did not.
(Aberdeen Group, 2011)

	We do this very well	We do this adequately	We could improve	Not Sure
1. Recruiting top talent	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Retaining new hires	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Engaging new hires	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. New hires' time to productivity	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. New hires' level of performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Transferring knowledge from seasoned employees to newer employees	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are there any other outcomes you'd like to see from onboarding? If so, list and rate them below.

	We do this very well	We do this adequately	We could improve	Not Sure
7.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Before moving on, look at all of the outcomes above again. List those that are most important to your organization below.

Where are you now?

To elevate your onboarding, it's helpful to begin by thinking about where you are now. In the space below, list every onboarding component that you offer right now. You might include formal training programs, informal learning from peers or managers, information provided, benefits selection, HR paperwork, introductions to key people, etc.

> " Productivity is perhaps the most important reason onboarding has taken on such immense strategic relevance for progressive firms. "
>
> (Stein & Christiansen, 2010)

Let's dig deeper into the onboarding experience your organization currently offers. Read each item below and check the box to show if each item is done always, sometimes, rarely, or never—or check the last box if you're not sure.

|	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Sure
1. Each new hire has a similar and consistent onboarding experience, regardless of location, business unit, manager, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. We are consistent and clear in communicating onboarding expectations to new hires.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. New hires, their managers, and other stakeholders thoroughly understand what the new hires' onboarding experience entails	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Our onboarding experience is longer than two weeks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. All parts of the onboarding experience are tied together into a cohesive, integrated whole.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Our onboarding experience reflects our company's brand, values and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. We seek feedback from new hires regarding their onboarding experience, and use it to make improvements,	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Based on your answers for the items above, which are the strongest for your organization?

In which areas do you see potential to elevate your onboarding experience?

The Launch-Learn-Link Framework

When we create onboarding experiences, we use our Launch-Learn-Link framework to guide our planning and design. It's a useful tool for assessing the current state of a program, and for determining how to elevate it.
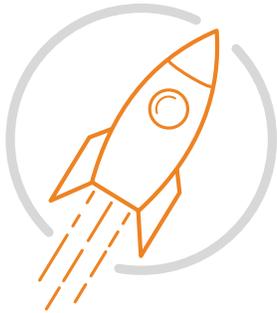
The Launch category is all about getting started. It includes providing the information a new hire needs right away, and the first tasks that must be done to begin their employment.
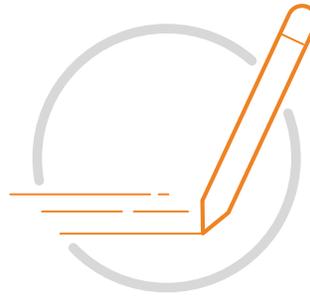
The Learn category includes formal and informal learning, and resources and information needed to do the job.

The Link category focuses on connecting the new hire to people and to the organization itself. It includes introductions, structured networking, and building sense of belonging.

LAUNCH: Initial Information and Tasks

Let's dig deeper into how your organization currently helps new hires to Launch. Read each item below and check the box to show if each item is done always, sometimes, rarely, or never—or check the last box if you're not sure.

83% of the highest performing organizations began onboarding prior to the new hires first day on the job.

(Aberdeen Group, 2011)

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Sure
1. Our onboarding experience begins before the new hire's first day.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Before the new hire's first day, we inform their team about them and their role.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. New hires get a tour of the facility on Day 1 (if working on site).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. New hires have their work systems and equipment ready on Day 1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. New hires are well informed about first-day logistics such as where to park, how to get an ID, lunch/break procedures, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Managers block time to spend with their new hire on Day 1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. We have an efficient system in place for new hires to complete required paperwork.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. New hires have short-term goals that allow them to attain "quick wins".	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Based on your answers for the Launch items above, which areas are the strongest for your organization?

In which areas do you see potential to elevate your onboarding experience?

LEARN: Training and Accessing Resources

Let's dig deeper into how your organization currently helps new hires to Learn. Read each item below and check the box to show if each item is done always, sometimes, rarely, or never—or check the last box if you're not sure.

75%
of new hires said training during the first week on the job was most important to them.

(BambooHR Survey, 2014)

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Sure
1. New hires learn about the organization's culture, values, norms and language in detail.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. New hires are provided with insight into the organization's strategy and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. New hires develop a solid understanding of what exemplary performance looks like.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. New hires develop competency in their role, in a reasonable amount of time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. New hires learn the policies and procedures that apply to their role.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. New hires have structured learning opportunities on-the-job, rather than only in a training setting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. New hires apply new knowledge immediately after learning it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. New hires' learning is assessed to determine if they are learning successfully.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Based on your answers for the Learn items above, which areas are the strongest for your organization?

In which areas do you see potential to elevate your onboarding experience?

LINK: Building Connections with People and the Organization

Let's dig deeper into how your organization currently helps new hires to Link. Read each item below and check the box to show if each item is done always, sometimes, rarely, or never—or check the last box if you're not sure.

> " Newcomers are more likely to have learned and internalized the key values of their organization's culture if they have attended social events and spent time with an organizational mentor.
>
> (Chatman, 1991) "

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Sure
1. We provide new hires with a mentor during the onboarding period.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. We provide new hires with a work peer or "buddy" to answer any questions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. We provide new hires with structured networking opportunities with key individuals in the organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. New hires develop competency in their role, in a reasonable amount of time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. New hires have the opportunity to meet organizational leaders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. We help new hires to understand how their role connects to the organization's goals and successes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Our onboarding experience generates enthusiasm and pride in being part of our organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. We help new hires begin to feel connected to our culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Based on your answers for the Link items above, which areas are the strongest for your organization?

In which areas do you see potential to elevate your onboarding experience

What's next?

You've noted some outcomes that have room for improvement, and you've identified strengths and potential areas for growth in your current onboarding experience. So what's next? Now, you'll begin to develop an action plan to elevate your onboarding. Use the following checklist as an outline for your action plan. Add your own action steps or notes under each item.

New hires are **58%** more likely to be at the company three years later if they completed a structured onboarding process.

(Wynhurst Group, 2007)

☐ **Conduct a comprehensive onboarding needs assessment.** Use the preceding sections of this guide to provide some clues on what to investigate further. Dig deeper into what's working and where there are gaps. Be sure to get input from recent hires, their managers, HR, and other stakeholders. A well-executed needs assessment will provide clear direction on how to proceed.

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☐ **Redesign the overall onboarding experience.** Decide what changes need to be made to the overall onboarding experience. Determine what components need to be added or revised, such as training modules, resources, communications, or a mentoring program. Plan a timeline for the entire onboarding experience. Identify who will be involved in creating, revising, and implementing each component. Determine what technology you will use to keep new hires organized and present the experience as a cohesive whole.

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☐ **Create or revise each of the components, as needed.** Possible components may include: eLearning modules, "how to" resources, training course materials, introduction or explainer videos, networking or mentoring procedures/materials, new hire app or website, pre-boarding website or packet, etc.

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☐ **Conduct a pilot test.** Implement the new onboarding experience with a small group of new hires. Get detailed feedback, and revise the experience as needed.

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Need Help?

If you have any questions as you work through this guide, we'd love to chat with you about it....

Please contact us for a no obligation discussion:

Pia Proal - cell: 508.878.8907
or emial us at info@rcplearning.com