

THE ELEMENTS OF ONBOARDING

*A guide to recruiting, engaging
and retaining top talent through
effective onboarding processes*



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LET'S TALK ONBOARDING

New hires enter your door on their first day with shining faces and anxious demeanors. They're eager and excited—and they're looking to you to help in their success. But do you know what it's going to take to make that happen?

It's the ongoing dilemma of needing help but not having enough time to train the help you need. That's why formal onboarding programs are so important—they're a key factor for hiring great talent and ramping them up to be productive, quickly.

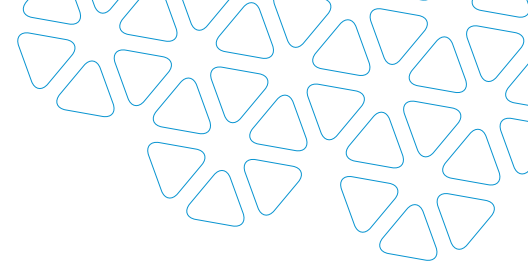
THE FACTS

- **93%** of IT leaders say onboarding is an “extremely important” way to enhance a new hire’s productivity ([Human Resource Executive](#))
- **40%** have little or no formal onboarding ([TalentLMS](#))

BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING

- Improved talent management and engagement
- Decreased time to productivity
- Increased retention rates
- Instilled early connectiveness to company culture

According to [Digitalist Magazine](#)

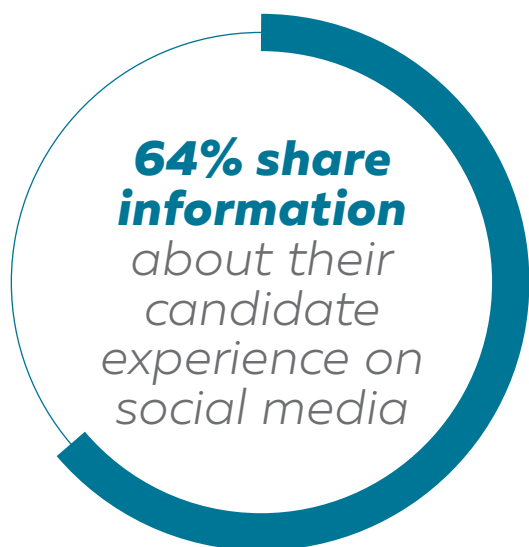


SKILLS FROM THE START

Failing to understand the difference between orientation and onboarding makes it likely you'll overlook key components that can make or break the success of your efforts.

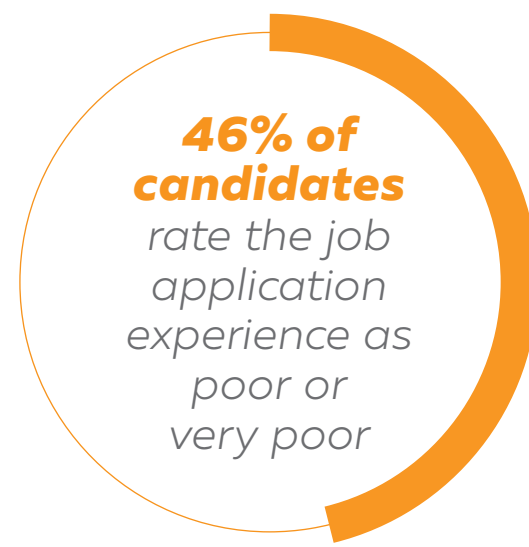
What's the difference between orientation and onboarding?

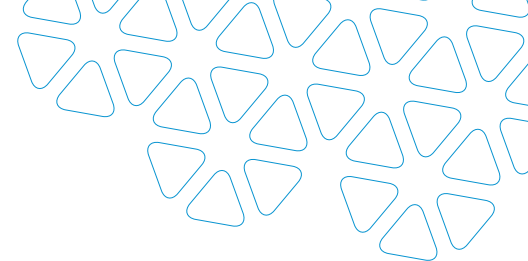
	Orientation	Onboarding
What is it?	An event	A process
When does it occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within first week on the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing through first 18 months of employment
What is the purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the new hire, introduce them to the company culture and illuminate the company's history, vision and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramp up new hires for peak performance
Who is involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, HR and Training; Delivered to all new hires, regardless of role or department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hires and their direct managers and team members
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make a good first impression and validate they made the right choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better retention, faster time to full productivity and a greater sense of belonging



*"A holistic onboarding program that includes role-based specifics provides confidence that the company cares about the new hire and prepares them to be successful in their job. **They gain the confidence needed that he/she can do the job and it prevents attrition,** which is vital to company growth."*

EMILY CHUNG
Practice Manager of
TEKsystems Learning Solutions





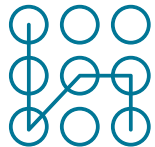
ORIENTATION: WELCOME TO THE PARTY

Orientation is an event to welcome the new hire and officially establish them as part of your company. This event generally occurs the first week on the job for all new hires, regardless of their role. Orientation introduces a new employee to your company's culture and offers socialization with other new hires. Many organizations will bring in top leadership to illuminate your company's history, vision and goals. This is your opportunity to make a great first impression and help validate they made the right choice in coming to work for your company.

Trying to develop a world-class orientation? Consider these important factors:



Geographical diversity



Hiring patterns and volume



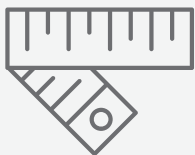
Availability of leadership and business area speakers



In-person vs. remote events



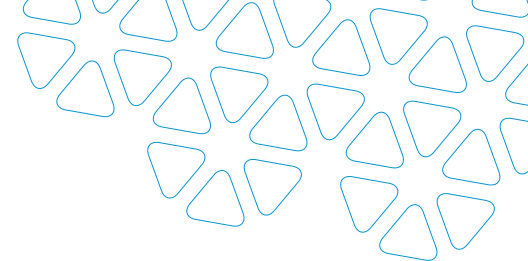
Orientation and welcome activities can start prior to Day 1 on the job



METRICS THAT MATTER: New hire engagement

Why measure it? Surveying new hires after orientation on their impressions of corporate culture, business strategy and whether they feel connected to colleagues has implications for retention and productivity

When: Issue postorientation survey within one to two business days of orientation completion



ONBOARDING: ACQUIRING THE SKILLS

To ramp up new hires for peak performance, onboarding unfolds throughout the first six to 18 months of employment. High-performing organizations know that while onboarding encompasses orientation, it also goes far beyond it.

Most organizations have invested heavily in developing orientation materials and content. HR and corporate training departments play a valuable role in defining the essential information that new hires need to begin their job. When evaluating the maturity of an organization's existing orientation, collaborate with internal stakeholders to create an experience that is memorable, aligns new hires with the company's brand and connects them to go-to people within their business area and across other areas.

Did you know organizations with structured onboarding programs experience...



Organizations with a standard onboarding process have **50% greater new hire retention**

EMILY CHUNG
Practice Manager of
TEKsystems Learning Solutions



MOLDING THE OPTIMAL ONBOARDING PLAN

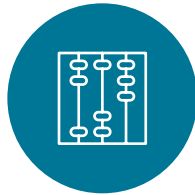
First, let's look at three key tenets for designing the ideal program:



CREATING THE PROGRAM



COMMUNICATING CONSISTENTLY



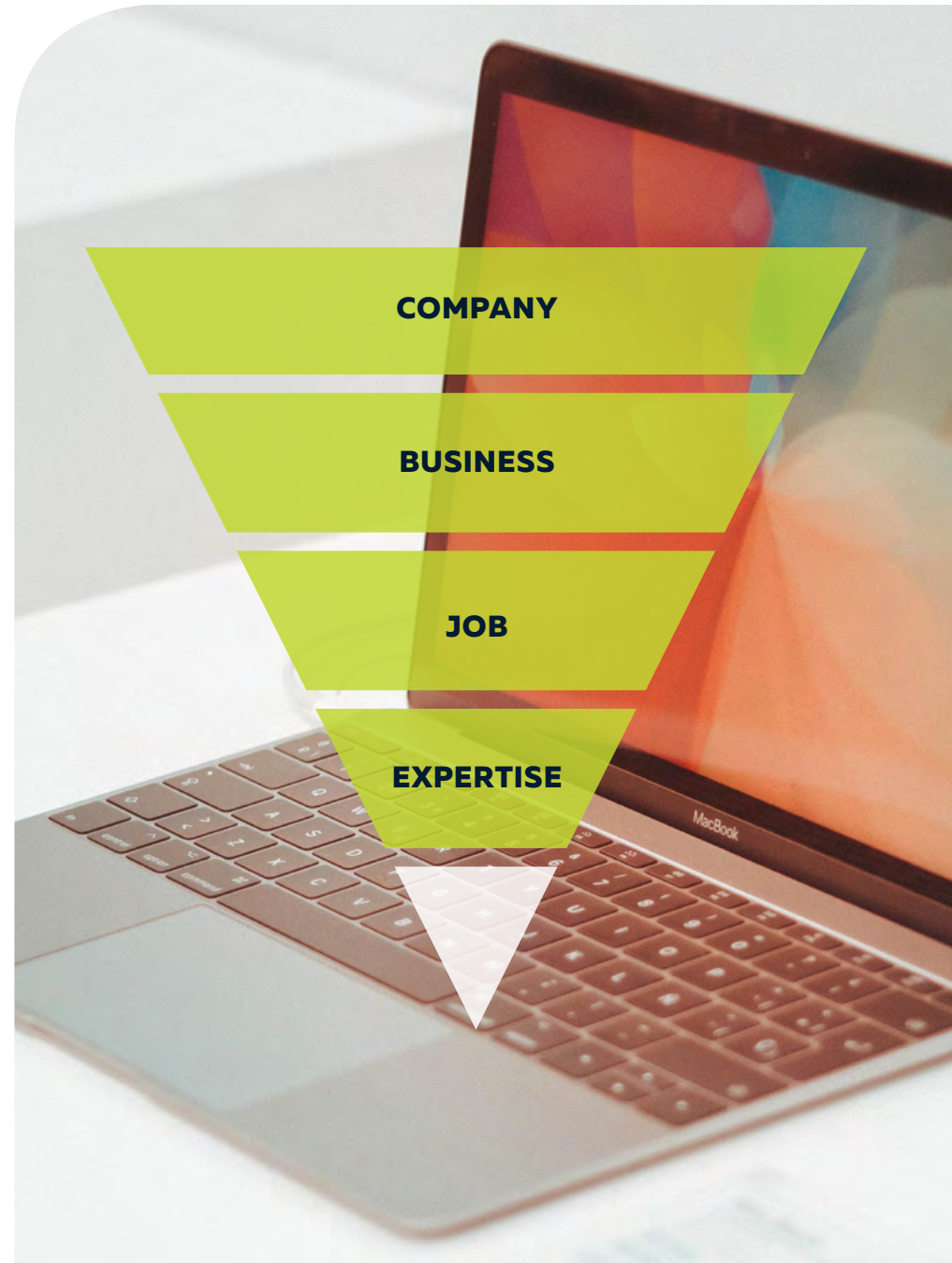
CALCULATING THE RIGHT METRICS

DELIVERING ON A BROAD-TO-NARROW APPROACH

Onboarding can be as overwhelming to you as it is to the new hire. We recommend dividing the program into manageable pieces. Start with the basic components that apply to everyone (e.g., overall company culture) and move into more specific areas.

For this successive approach, ask yourself:

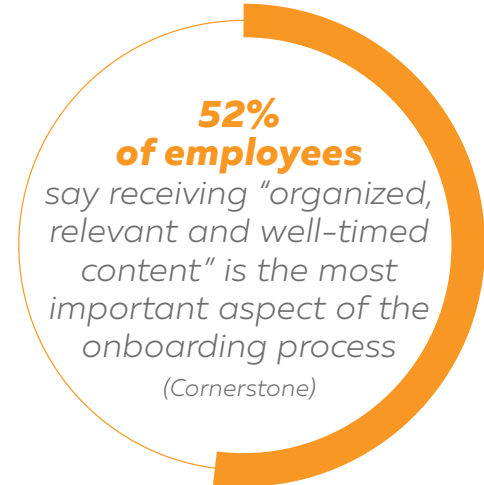
- What does every new employee need to know about your company?
- What does an employee need to know about their department or line of business (LOB)?
- What do they need to do their job successfully every day?
- What do they need to know to be successful in their area of specialty or expertise?



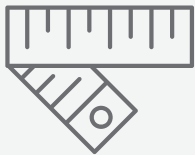
A BROAD-TO-NARROW APPROACH

STEP BY STEP

- 1. Define the knowledge and training every employee needs, regardless of department or role.** Think of your company's mission, vision, values and goals, as well as company policies, continuity and compliance. This is where you want to provide employees information on time and expense, healthcare and corporate benefits.
- 2. As the employee transitions to their LOB, clarify what they need to know about that particular department.** Map out things such as where they'll sit, setting up equipment (phone, computer, etc.), establishing lunch and break times, and meeting their colleagues. Which systems development life cycle processes need to be followed? Which departments or customers do you support?
- 3. Break the program down further and assess what is needed for the employee to successfully do their job and become productive as quickly as possible.** What training is needed for the specific project they're assigned to? What milestones need to be reached in the next 30, 60, 90 days? How is individual success measured? In some departments or job roles, this can be narrowed down even further by looking at what's needed for a specific role.
- 4. Provide a blend of learning experiences, not just classroom.** Building expertise within a given timeframe requires more than just formal consumption of training materials. Creating opportunities for new hires to gain on-the-job experiences and industry knowledge can accelerate their success. By creating an actionable plan that outlines the nontraining tasks that can be done on the job, you offer your new hires more chances to build expertise quickly instead of waiting for the "classroom" training event to start learning. Think about what tasks would be easily shadowed, what tasks you would want a new hire to be able to do after a defined period of time, and then what the best way for them to see it in action, on the job would be. Document these tasks for your new hire, as well as those that will need to contribute to the on-the-job portion of onboarding, and track them on a regular basis to ensure completion.



1 in 3 workers start searching for a job within weeks of starting a new position
(CareerBuilder)



METRICS THAT MATTER: Time to productivity

Why measure it? Compare time to productivity for new hires who participated in the onboarding process vs. those who did not; this evaluates performance and ramp-up for individual roles

When: Set 30, 60 and 90-day benchmarks



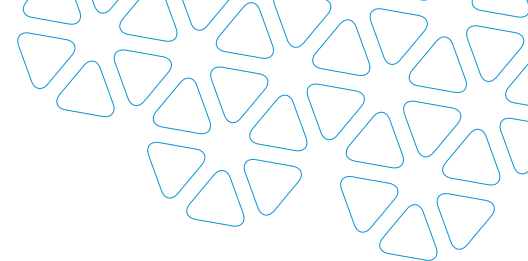
DOUBLING UP ON CONSISTENCY

Whether your employees are colocated or distributed, each new hire needs to have the same positive, uniform experience. You can create consistency by engaging key leaders and stakeholders in each department—here are a few ideas:

- Hold quarterly meetings with key stakeholders to discover what's working and what's not.
- Conduct brief surveys with managers and stakeholders to ask what worked well (and what didn't), what training modalities delivered the best results and what effective processes could be automated for even greater efficiencies.
- Ask existing employees to volunteer as mentors, coaches or trainers.
- Assess overall hiring projections—how many and where growth is expected, which can determine your delivery plan and even home in on needs within a certain geographical region or across similar roles.
- Regularly review the program and the processes to ensure consistency and adherence. Make corrections where needed and get buy-in so everyone is onboarding new employees the same way.

*“Having a consistent approach and structure to your onboarding program reduces new hire confusion about the expectations of them and **immediately creates trust in the company.** If I’m new and onboarding is chaotic, inconsistent and spotty, I immediately wonder if I made the right choice and if the company has its act together.”*

EMILY CHUNG
Practice Manager of
TEKsystems Learning Solutions



UNLOCKING THE METRICS

Measuring the success of your onboarding process is key.

Metrics, when used effectively, can drive change and align individual and organizational behavior to achieve goals. Not all metrics are useful, though, and can cause unforeseen negative results. The best way to gauge the success of your program is to establish expected, measurable outcomes. These metrics are not only based on best practices, but also need to be unique to your business drivers.

Several recent studies have confirmed a direct causal linkage between a strong, comprehensive onboarding program and superior results, like 16% improved customer retention and 17% higher revenue per full-time employee.

Strong, comprehensive onboarding program delivers results:



KEEP IN MIND

Talent retention: Potentially, 20% of new employees leave within their first 45 days of employment ([Harvard Business Review](#)). Measure your talent loss at the beginning of your new hire program, and then measure every 60, 90 and 180 days.

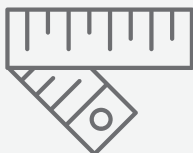
Cost of hiring: Calculate the present cost to recruit, hire and onboard a new employee. Re-evaluate these numbers at six months and again at 12 months to weigh your investment in the new hire program.

Compliance: Determine the current adherence to company policy and measure it at given intervals to assess employee compliance.

First milestone: Analyze the completion time of the first deliverable, task or milestone and measure that against your projections for the new hire's productivity timeline. Is it meeting your expectations?

Satisfaction: Conduct surveys at 30, 60, 90 and 180 days with new hires, as well as managers, to evaluate the level of satisfaction with the program.

METRICS THAT MATTER: Retention



Why measure it? Compare results for new hires who participated in all/some/no onboarding processes to measure overall onboarding impact on turnover; this measures overall onboarding effectiveness

When: Evaluate at 6 months, 12 months, 3 years

COVERING YOUR BASES

If you aren't already capturing metrics—start now. The No. 1 missed opportunity when implementing metrics is failing to measure the current state. Capturing the pretransformation status allows you to show how your onboarding investment yields benefits, and also establishes realistic targets for incremental improvement as you make progress toward your goals. Think better retention, faster time to full productivity and a greater sense of belonging ultimately impact the bottom line.

In the case of onboarding, remember the benefits aren't limited to new hires only—better retention and engagement save you the incremental costs of recruiting, hiring and additional onboarding for replacement hires.

As new hires bring their enthusiasm and high-performance mindset into the workforce, they inspire their teammates and reignite their passions. The benefits of a great onboarding program are contagious and motivate existing employees, as well as your new hires. Evaluating your onboarding program is the final step in creating a best-in-class onboarding experience.

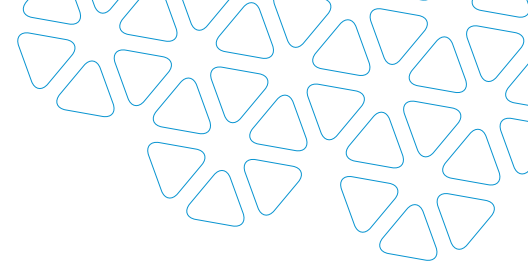
MEANINGFUL ONBOARDING METRICS

Look at how to use existing systems to generate useful onboarding data, even if it means investing in a few key enhancements. This will pay off in the long run as you can monitor trends, compare results across different areas of the organization and elevate onboarding metrics to become a useful tool for decision-making.

By establishing a few key metrics in each onboarding pillar, you create important information for decision-making that will yield ongoing benefits, such as:

- **Targeting onboarding dollars effectively:** Align content and programming where it's most impactful to generate desired results (e.g., if Day 1 readiness is an issue for you, metrics help you find the root cause and potential solutions).
- **Providing clarity into process gaps:** Home in on areas requiring improvement (e.g., posttraining surveys to measure content effectiveness).
- **Directly linking onboarding program participation to business performance:** For instance, determine if there are notably different outcomes if new hires meet regularly with peer mentors within their area versus other business areas.



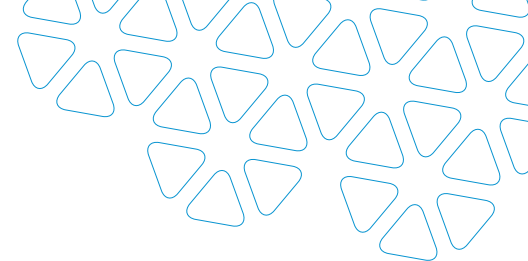


HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

High-performing organizations know prospective employees are forming opinions of their new company long before their first day. Throughout the selection and hiring stage, employees glimpse into the inner workings of the organization—including HR processes, organizational transparency and interdepartmental communication.

Starting an employee off on the right foot isn't just about the bottom line of productivity and efficiency. Ramping new hires up to productivity quickly helps them gain confidence and makes a big difference in improving individual and team morale, increasing retention and fostering a high-performance culture.





Firms that use preboarding are **1.6X more likely** to have a lower cost per hire than those that don't
(Aberdeen Group)

LEADING WITH PREBOARDING

A strong preboarding (or pre-onboarding) process engages new hires from offer acceptance to their first day on the job. It also reduces operational overhead by automating administrative and logistical tasks. Most importantly, it provides opportunities for new hires to feel welcomed and valued, while ramping up for Day 1.

Relationship building and peer networking are deeply important to each of us, so a powerful first step is to connect with your new hire right away. Preboarding has many benefits: It will make a new hire feel welcomed and like a part of your organization before they walk in the door. It validates their decision to accept the job and gets them excited to hit the ground running.

PREBOARDING INSPIRATION

Make it personal

Is the new hire moving to the area? If so, ask HR if they can recommend local realtors or ask if anyone on the team is willing to act as a local ambassador. Send a welcome email explaining the plan for the immediate first day and week, and ask for a short bio, including one to two personal things about themselves to share as an introduction for the team in advance of their first day.

Share info in advance

If corporate overviews or other materials are publicly available, share them with the new hire so that they can read in advance. This reduces the sense of information overload in those first few days.

Help them navigate their first day

Prepare a welcome packet with helpful information about Day 1, such as where to park or which train to take, how to find the cafeteria or coffee shop, and who will greet them when they arrive. In addition to ensuring that the new hire knows logistically where to go on Day 1, you can set expectations by explaining the plan for their first day and week.

Make key introductions

Introduce the new hire's mentor and provide contact information in case the new hire has questions. If it will be more than two or three weeks from offer acceptance until start date, consider having the new hire participate in team or corporate events during that period, especially social networking opportunities.

Prep your existing team

Send an email prior to Day 1 including the logistical details to meet the new hire(s) at a specific time and place for the initial welcome. Send an email welcoming the team member and include the new hire's short bio as an introduction to the new hire's team or people they will work with.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

One of the biggest complaints we hear is that hiring managers find it challenging to keep on top of the tasks and handoffs needed to enroll a new hire into important programs and tools. Employees can spend days or even weeks sitting at their desk while waiting for their workstation or access to essential systems and tools, which impacts morale and productivity.

No one wants to start a new job with a badge that can't get into the building or a desk without a computer. Day 1 success can begin with Day 1 access: workstation, systems, facilities, badging and security.

We've found that a few critical operational improvements can make a huge difference to ensure Day 1 readiness.

- Forms and task management processes that are standardized and automated
- Centralized status/information sharing across multiple functional areas (e.g., access to an employee onboarding tracker)
- Automated provisioning tools for granting user accounts and access
- Organizations that set targets for achieving Day 1 readiness create accountability and urgency across all stakeholders and typically achieve better outcomes than those that take a more informal approach



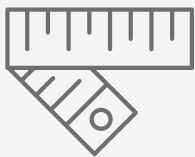
50 days:

*average time before a new hire becomes productive
(Aberdeen Group)*



Remote employees:

*Don't forget to meet and greet your remote workers on Day 1!
The hiring manager should set up a call in advance of an employee's first day.*



METRICS THAT MATTER: Day 1 readiness

Why measure it? Shows whether your checklists, handoffs and automation improvements work or require optimization

When: Before Day 1

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Keep in mind—for a new hire, trying to remember everything learned during the onboarding process can be overwhelming. (It's also on top of any formal training or on-the-job training required for the role!)

The most successful onboarding programs share a common link: they provide clear expectations for what “good enough” looks like at 30-, 60-, 90- and 180-day milestones and a support plan for how to get there. There are many [studies](#) that show that companies with six-month-plus onboarding programs achieve vastly superior business results to shorter ones.

Engage immediately

Managers who engage with the new hire immediately and start setting goals together, coming to a shared commitment on the milestones and describing what success looks like, report higher satisfaction with onboarding.

Allow opportunities for practice and coaching

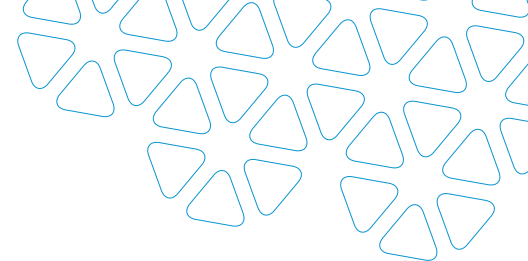
In reality, the time it takes for employees to mature in the job will differ for each individual. For new hires, the pressure to get it right the first time is high and can lead to fear of stretching themselves to take risks. To round out the more formal aspects of training, add “safe” practice opportunities to get the most out of those new on-the-job experiences, as well as assigning a peer mentor to model internal best practices. Failing in a safe environment teaches new hires what to do—and what not to do. In turn, this gives them the chance to master critical skills before they face complexities on the job.

Encourage formal and informal networking within the team

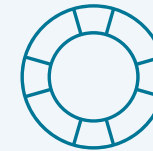
Networking to build relationships within a team and across cross-functional departments has been proven to improve a new hire's productivity and engagement. Managers can easily incorporate networking opportunities into a new hire's ramp-up plan, and encouraging more senior team members to become peer mentors helps develop their leadership abilities.

Evaluate, iterate, improve

You can't “set and forget” your onboarding program. Solicit positive and negative feedback from all involved in onboarding and use that to improve the onboarding experience for the new hire and their manager. At a macro level, your onboarding program needs to be flexible to shift as business priorities change. At a micro (or employee) level, ongoing communication and collaboration creates more meaningful work by encouraging reflection, personal growth and advancing career opportunities.



Consider incorporating these steps:



Build a buddy system: Activities that pair new hires and experienced team members help forge relationships and build the trust necessary for high performance, while boosting loyalty



Identify go-to people: Be sure the employee meets the leadership and project teams, support personnel and other key cross-functional colleagues to build their informal network

ABOUT TEKSYSTEMS

We're partners in transformation. We help clients activate ideas and solutions to take advantage of a new world of opportunity. We are a team of 80,000 strong, working with over 6,000 clients, including 80% of the Fortune 500, across North America, Europe and Asia. As an industry leader in Full-Stack Technology Services, Talent Services and real-world application, we work with progressive leaders to drive change. That's the power of true partnership. TEKsystems is an Allegis Group company.

ABOUT TEKSYSTEMS LEARNING SOLUTIONS

The future starts and ends with the power of your people. Peppered in between are challenges of performance, development and behavior. How do you change the way people work and learn to positively impact your bottom line? The answer: innovative learning solutions that enable high-performing teams to operate in a climate of constant change.

TEKsystems' forward-thinking corporate learning solutions are designed to drive your business' growth through:

- Learning and Performance Consulting
- Custom Content Development
- IT and Business Learning Solutions
- Training and End-User Adoption



LESLIE DEUTSCH, DIRECTOR OF TEKSYSTEMS LEARNING SOLUTIONS

Leslie Deutsch began her career at TEKsystems in 2012 as the practice director for Learning Solutions. As the director, Leslie oversees a team that drives learning and adoption services within our client organizations. These programs focus on building a future workforce with tomorrow's skills, upskilling and reskilling current teams, or changing behavior needed to impact productivity.

Prior to joining TEKsystems in 2012, Leslie spent 11 years at Element K (now known as Skillsoft), a technology company that provides high-quality learning management system

software and content. During her tenure, Leslie obtained her Project Management Professional certification and held various positions in project and program management of large-scale enterprise training programs. Her portfolio of customers provided an amazing opportunity for her to wear various hats and be customer-focused in all areas of her work—which ultimately led to her growth into a leadership role.

Leslie has her bachelor's degree in information technology with a minor in instructional design systems from Rochester Institute of Technology.

Our impact at a glance

500+

hours of custom learning developed annually

10+

countries where training was delivered

600K

learners reached since 2006