



THE FIRST 90 DAYS WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOUR NEW HIRE

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You spend thousands of dollars and countless man-hours to attract top quality employees through advertising, interviewing and wooing talent. And when you finally get them, what do you do? If you are like most employers, you squander the best opportunity you have to engage, shape and retain them as employees.

Most employers are so driven to find talent and make a good first impression through the recruitment process that they neglect to think about what will happen once the employee shows up on their first day, ready for work.

Seem counter intuitive? If you are going to spend valuable time and money acquiring employees and paying them to come to work, why not prepare them to succeed and convince them to stay?

Five Strategies for the First 90 Days

The first 90 days play a significant role in a new hire's developing opinions about you as an employer. Their experiences during this highly - impressionable period directly affect their long - term engagement, retention and performance.

Recruiting new employees is a significant investment of resources. To maximize that return and to ensure that your new employees prosper (and persist) at your company, follow these five strategies for success:

1. **Build the business case for effective onboarding practices** - Onboarding new employees is not the job of HR alone, but instead, it requires the buy-in and commitment of executives and line managers who play a hands-on role in shaping a new hire's experience at your company. To achieve their support and participation, build the business case for investing in new hire onboarding by demonstrating the cost of poorly-executed onboarding practices (increased turnover, diminished productivity, reduced engagement and the degradation of the company brand) and the benefits of successful onboarding (increased revenue, customer satisfaction, and employee retention and engagement).

2. **Focus on the experience** - What new hires encounter during their first 90 days will make or break their commitment to your company, so it is critical to focus on creating a positive experience. Start by mapping out your current onboarding practices to determine whether they:

- Make it easy for new employees to get the information they need
- Help pave a new hire's path to high performance
- Reduce a new hire's time to productivity
- Ensure the success of new employees

3. **Onboard with intention** - Onboarding practices in most companies feel arbitrary, untimely, and uncoordinated to new employees. It creates disillusionment among new hires and can seem like a "bait and switch." To ensure a consistent and positive outcome for each employee, outline and implement the activities and experiences that new hires should encounter before they start work, on the first day, during the first week and the first 90 days.

For example, prior to their start date new hires should receive welcoming communication from the company, first day logistics information, and any employment and benefits paperwork to review and fill out in advance.

4. **Leverage your NEO** - New Employee Orientations have become dumping grounds for compliance and employment information, resulting in jam-packed sessions of PowerPoints and talking heads. Instead of reaffirming an employee's decision to take the job, companies unintentionally create finger-wagging sessions that leave new hires weary and dispirited.

NEOs are a once-in-a-life-time occasion, during which a captured group of employees is able to assemble without interruption to learn something. Leverage this opportunity by off-lining administrative matters, to be accessed on an as-needed basis, and focus on teaching corporate history and culture, organizational values, and helping your new employees establish bonds with their peers and others in the organization.

5. **Invest in career development** - New employees, especially Millennials, expect their employer to provide them with structured information and guidance about their careers from the very start of their employment. You can meet their expectations by providing new hires with:

- Visual career paths - where employees can visually see how they can progress in your organization
- Success profiles (clear descriptions of what success looks like in each role and what competencies and skills are required) for jobs that employees may aspire to
- Career development plans for individuals that begin when the employee joins your company and that are revisited regularly

Your Imprinting Window

The first 90 days are a strategic imprinting window of time during which you make an impression that stays with the employee while they stay with you but also for the duration of their careers. You are already investing so much in attracting the best possible talent. To fully realize your investment, follow these five strategies for success.