

Effective Onboarding Discussions at Days 30, 60, and 90

From Paul Falcone's new 3rd edition of *96 Great Interview Questions to Ask Before You Hire* (AMACOM Books, 2018)

Employers often mistakenly allow new hires to integrate into the organization without specific touch points or check-ins to measure progress and assess the individual's comfort level in the new organization and role. The easiest way to engage new hires and ensure they stay on track is to implement specific conversations at 30-, 60-, and 90-day intervals to ensure a smooth transition into the new role by identifying roadblocks as quickly as possible.

Try initiating onboarding meetings using some of the questions that follow. Then be prepared to address any shortcomings in individual performance or organizational challenges that may be hindering productivity. It doesn't take much time, can head off problems proactively, and will demonstrate your effective leadership and communication abilities.

30-Day One-on-One Follow-Up Questions

- What do you like about the job and the organization so far?
- What's been going well? What are the highlights of your experiences so far? Why?
- Tell me what you don't understand about your job or about our organization now that you've had a month to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty.
- Have you faced any unforeseen surprises since joining us that you weren't expecting?
- What could we have done differently during the interviewing process to realistically prepare you for your new role?

60-Day One-on-One Follow-Up Questions

- Do you have enough, too much, or too little time to do your work? Likewise, do you have access to the appropriate tools and resources? Do you feel you haven't been sufficiently trained in any aspects of your job to perform at a high level?
- How do you see your job relating to the organization's mission and vision?
- What do you need to learn to improve? What can the organization do to help you become more successful as you transition further into your role?

- Compare the organization to what we explained it would be like when you initially interviewed with us. Have you experienced any surprises, disappointments, or other “ah-ha” moments that you’re comfortable sharing?
- How does it go when your supervisor offers constructive criticism or corrects your work?
- How would you describe the general tenor or tone from your coworkers: do you find that they’ve been supportive of your success or somewhat critical or pessimistic?
- Do you see a particular pivot point coming? In other words, after two months in the role, do you feel that you’ll need to make a major adaptation to what you originally imagined you’d be doing or a critical change in your focus or expectations to remain successful?

90-Day One-on-One Follow-Up Questions

- Which co-workers have been particularly helpful since you arrived? (Goal: Pinpoint which employees can be influential in retaining new hires.) Would you recommend anyone to become a mentor to new employees?
- Who do you talk to when you have questions about your work? Do you feel comfortable asking? Has anyone gone out of their way to make you feel welcome or included in social or work-related events?
- Have you had any uncomfortable situations or conflicts with supervisors, co-workers, or customers? Did you feel inclined to escalate matters to your supervisor or to human resources on any particular occasions?
- Does your supervisor clearly explain what the organization expects of you? How would you rate leadership communication overall on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being highest)?
- Do you believe your ideas and suggestions are valued? Can you give me an example of some type of change you’ve recommended that’s been implemented?
- In retrospect, what could we have done differently in terms of setting your expectations appropriately for working in our company overall and for your job specifically?
- [If the new hire supervises leaders:] Have you engaged in any skip-level meetings with your extended reports to gauge how they’re feeling about their immediate supervisors? Is there anything you’d recommend reinventing in terms of how your department or team functions?
- How would you grade us in terms of our extended onboarding program, and what suggestions can you share that would make our program stronger?

The end result: Better performance, improved engagement, and stronger retention. After all, it only stands to reason that employees who are engaged in these types of activities from the first

day will feel a stronger connection to your organization over time. They'll feel acknowledged, included, and more excited about their prospects for long-term success so they'll likely demonstrate greater loyalty and productivity. What a high payoff activity for such a minimal (but smart) investment of your time!

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