The employee onboarding mini-guide

The 6 stages of great employee onboarding (powered by an adaptive collaboration hub)

slack

The Tale of Two Hires

Karyn bites her lower lip. She's arriving for her first day of work as a data analyst at Coyote Controls, but it feels like it's her first day of junior high.

As she drives into the company parking lot, she's already confused. Should she use the guest parking or one of the numbered spaces? What the heck, she chooses guest.

At the reception desk, she introduces herself as a new hire. Blank stare.

"Who should we notify?"

"Um … not sure, actually. Maybe HR?"

Things don't get much better from here. There's no workstation for her yet, and her laptop and email account haven't been set up. Her manager is in an important meeting and won't be available until late in the day.

After half an hour, Karyn is shown to a corner of the cafeteria and given a stack of forms to fill out.

Welcome to Coyote.

The Tale of Two Hires

Kareem can't wait. He's starting a new job as the head of customer service at Acme Anvils.

As part of his "pre-boarding," he's already ordered his own security pass and PC and set up his email address. His orientation packet included the location of his parking space and the name of the person to ask for at reception.

He's greeted by Luis, his assigned work buddy. As they drop Kareem's stuff off at his new desk, he sees that it's covered in swag: an Acme T-shirt, Acme notebooks, Acme pens, even a personal welcome note from the country head.

Luis gives Kareem a tour of the office, introducing him to some of the people he'll be working with.

Over coffee, Luis logs Kareem into the company workspace on their collaboration hub.

"OK, these three channels are your home for the first week: #new-hires, #hr-help, and #customer-service-guide."

This is going to be great.

Welcome aboard!

You can tell a lot—some say everything—about a company by the way it welcomes new employees.

Onboarding isn't just a *demonstration* of your company culture; it's one of the critical employee engagements that defines, creates, and promotes that culture.

Get it right, and good things happen:

- New hires feel better about the company

- They ramp up to full productivity faster

- They stay more aligned with company goals

- They're more engaged

- They stay longer[1]

Get it wrong, and the reverse gear kicks in: People feel less engaged, take longer to reach productivity, and leave sooner.

In short, onboarding is a critical HR process and the gateway to the kind of great employee experiences that drive the world's most successful companies.[2]

1. "Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success," Talya N. Bauer, SHRM Foundation

2. "The Employee Experience Advantage," Jacob Morgan, Wiley, 2017
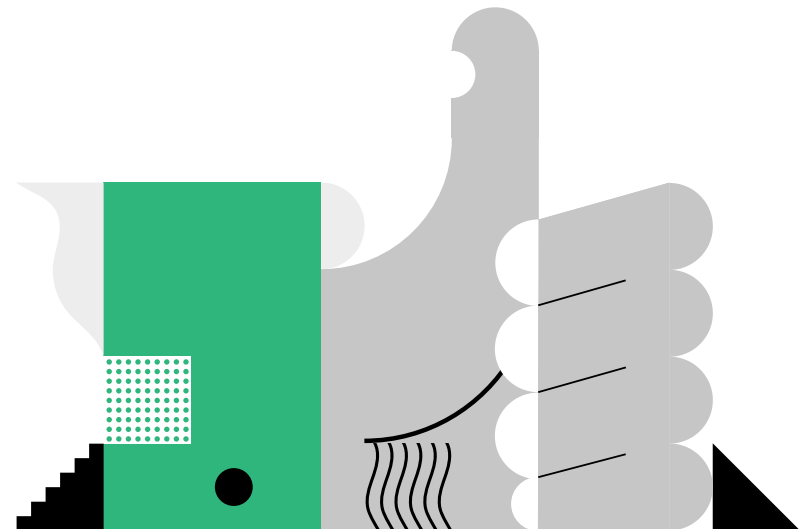
The 5 C's of great onboarding

Talya N. Bauer, a leading expert on professional relationships, breaks down onboarding into four building blocks:

- **Compliance**
  Getting new hires up to speed on your company's basic policies, rules, and regulations

- **Clarification**
  Ensuring that new employees understand their job and its expectations

- **Culture**
  Introducing your company values and organizational norms: "How we do things around here, and why"

- **Connection**
  Initiating the relationships and information networks that will define the role[3]

To these four, we'd add a fifth:

- **Confidence**
  Helping new hires feel they've made the right choice: that this is a great company, they'll be successful here, and they'll enjoy it

A structured, strategic onboarding process will actively manage all five of these dimensions for each new hire.

Onboarding overhead

For most companies, the biggest challenge in onboarding comes down to resources and bandwidth. Hiring managers and HR teams already have packed schedules.

The companies that onboard best are the ones that invest time up-front in designing great onboarding experiences that optimize employee engagement while minimizing management burden. That means combining personal interactions with automated and self-service processes. The adaptive collaboration hub makes that possible.

The goal:
To deliver onboarding experiences that give new hires a warm welcome, accelerate their ramp-up to full productivity, and increase their chances of success—*without* creating an unsustainable burden on HR or line managers.

3. "Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success," Talya N. Bauer, SHRM Foundation

What good looks like

Great onboarding experiences quickly and efficiently connect new employees to three things that will be critical to their work: the people, knowledge, and software they'll need to do their jobs every day.

Smooth connections to these three resources are the fabric of all productive, efficient work.

It makes sense for your onboarding experiences to get new hires connected to all three resources at the right pace and in an easy, natural way.

People

The colleagues you need to align with. Domain experts, tenured colleagues, project owners, resource stewards, etc.

Great onboarding

Knowledge

The information needed to make good decisions. From raw data sources and structured reports to team conversations and historical analyses.

Software

The apps and tools you use to get work done. From specialized applications to more general productivity and collaboration tools.

Old-school onboarding isn't up to the new challenge

Times have changed. Every company now recognizes the importance of Employee Experience (EX) in winning the battle for talent. And millennials entering the workforce bring new expectations shaped by their personal, digital, and online social lives.

Against this background, old-school onboarding doesn't make the grade.

Old-school onboarding is:

■ **One-way**
Talking *at* new hires instead of *with* them

■ **Passive**
Rote checklist exercises instead of active engagement

■ **Overly focused on compliance**
A barrage of policies and rules

■ **Time-consuming**
Wasting too much of everyone's time— managers and new hires alike

■ **Paper- and email-based**
Fragmenting the onboarding journey

■ **Isolating**
An overly individualized experience instead of actively connecting new hires to people and resources

In short, it's an impersonal and inefficient way to welcome people to your company, your culture, and your community.

32% of global executives rate the onboarding they experienced as poor

"Rapid Onboarding at Capital One," Harvard Business Review, 2008

Introducing the adaptive collaboration hub

A new approach to managing onboarding (and all of HR)

Human-resources leaders across a wide range of industries have discovered a powerful new way to streamline and accelerate the work of HR. It's called an *adaptive collaboration hub*, and it's different from first-generation intranets and collaboration tools in some important ways.

An adaptive collaboration hub is:

- **User-driven**
  Managed for and is about users

- **Fluid and organic**
  Supports the way each team wants to work on each project

- **Open**
  Sharing is the default setting (with airtight privacy and security)

- **Channel-based**
  Organized logically into project, team, or topic channels

- **Searchable**
  So company knowledge becomes available and discoverable

- **Integrated**
  Unites all your HR and productivity apps in one place

- **Easy to adopt**
  So users take to it spontaneously and effortlessly

This isn't just a new way to support how people have always worked together.

It's a new way of working based on a new kind of collaboration.

And onboarding is just one of its many HR use cases (it also supports more efficient recruiting, hiring, internal communications, and benefits administration, for example).

The 6 stages of great onboarding

The first 90 days, powered by an adaptive collaboration hub

An adaptive collaboration hub helps HR teams:

- **Centralize** the most essential onboarding information

- **Automate** the processes that connect new hires to key people

- **Integrate** core HR applications, simplifying work for HR teams and employees

It's not about taking people out of the onboarding experience. It's about bringing in the right ones at the right times, and doing so automatically.

Let's see how the first 90 days of a new hire's journey are shaped by an adaptive collaboration hub. There are six stages.
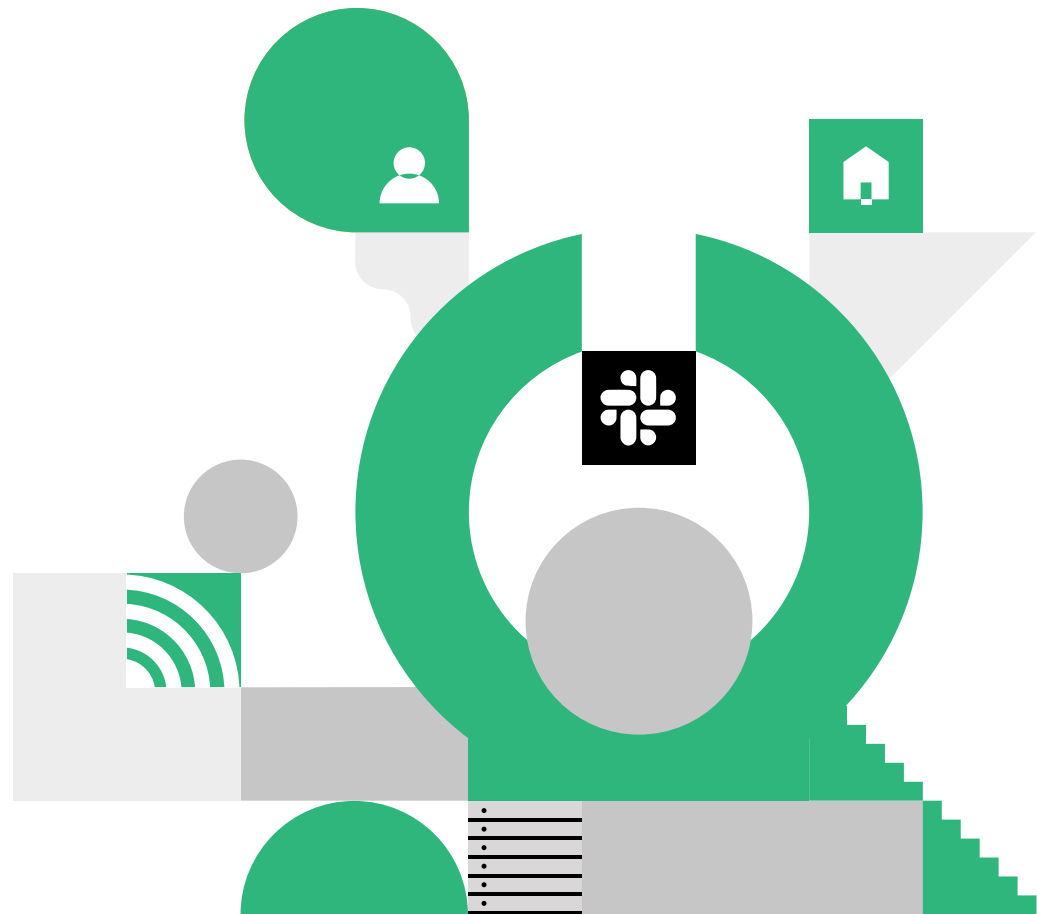
1. Pre-boarding

Onboarding starts when the job offer is accepted

Many companies kick off the administration of onboarding—and introduce the company culture—even before the new hire's start date.

With an adaptive collaboration hub, pre-boarding starts by inviting the new hire into a private and secure pre-boarding channel. Here, new hires can get the dry stuff out of the way, meet colleagues, and discover immediate answers to the things they worry about most.

A pre-boarding channel
Professional orientation starts here:

- Start with a warm welcome from the boss or a senior exec

- Introduce the collaboration hub itself

- Suggest completing essential forms (tax and benefit forms, security pass application, background check permission, policy agreements, etc.)

- Schedule a lunch with the new manager

"Pre-boarding is all about prepping your new hire, as well as drumming up excitement as their first day approaches. How you welcome them depends on your company culture and how creative you want to be."

Recruiterbox blog

Tip:
One company posts photos of the new hire's closest colleagues, so employees can start to put names to faces.

2. Day 1: The warm welcome

Building connections fast

Everyone remembers their first day of a new job.

Designing a great Day 1 experience is all about empathy: putting yourself in the shoes of the new hire and asking questions like *How would I be feeling right now?* and *What would I most want to know?*

It's the perfect time to lead with your company culture—and to start connecting new hires to the people, knowledge, and software they'll be working with.

Here's how an adaptive collaboration hub helps:

The #new-hires channel
Everything your new hires need to know, in one place.

- Pin key documents to the top (company mission, policies, etc.)

- Encourage people to ask questions

- Invite leaders in to welcome everyone

- Set automated reminders, so people submit documents and register for benefits on time

The HR resource channel
One place for all benefits information.

- Maintain up-to-date benefits FAQs and documentation

- Make announcements to specific teams or the whole company

- Make self-service easy, and make everything searchable

Onboarding apps
Integrate dozens of third-party onboarding apps into your hub, like:

- **Donut**
  Match new hires with a new coffee buddy each week

- **Icebreakers**
  Share fun facts about coworkers to get relationships started

- **Guru**
  Create team wikis and invite new hires to the right ones

"The greatest predictor of happiness is social connection, by far."

"The Happiness Advantage," Shawn Achor

Tip:
Many companies use Day 1 to focus on people connections—especially if a lot of the admin has been done in pre-boarding.

3. Days 5-10: The ramp up

Getting people up to speed

Introducing new hires to the company and culture is important. But you also need to introduce them to their actual jobs, as efficiently as possible.

By quickly connecting new hires with the right people, knowledge, and software, an adaptive collaboration hub gets them to full productivity faster and with less friction. Here are some of the ways it does that:

Project channels
The entire history of a project, made scrollable and searchable.

- Make it easy for new hires to review all project conversations and decisions

- Put all relevant documents in one, searchable place

- Pin the critical stuff to the top—like the brief, the proposal, or the contract

- Introduce new hires to the team, so they can start building connections

File-store integrations
Bring it all together.

- Integrate your channels with popular file-storage services like Box, Dropbox, and Google Drive

- Make all these files discoverable and searchable from one place

- Pin or highlight links to the most important documents and presentations

"New employees are at full productivity ~25% sooner because there are fewer questions asked—they know where documents are and where to access them with Slack."

"The Business Value of Slack," IDC Research, 2017

Tip:
Encourage new employees to scroll up through the relevant project channels, drill down into files, and follow shared links. It's a wealth of knowledge, and it's all there waiting.
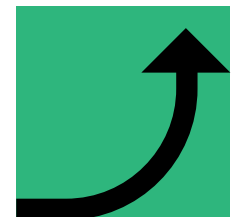
4. Days 11-30: Accelerate

Finding their stride

New hires are eager to make a contribution as soon as possible. That's a good thing, because time-to-full-productivity is a key success metric for your onboarding program.

By Day 11—the start of their third week— new employees are starting to feel more comfortable in knowing their way around and building relationships with colleagues.

Your adaptive collaboration hub now plays an important role in ramping up productivity. It starts by activating core software integrations.

Core app integrations
Collaboration gets domain-specific.

- Introduce the first core integrations (e.g. Zendesk for customer support people or Salesforce for salespeople)

- Activate secure single-sign-on access (with apps like Okta)

- Link payroll and benefits and manage time off with apps like ADP, Ultimate Software, and Workday

This is also a great time to kick off training and development programs for the new hire.

Integrate your learning management system
Push alerts and notifications from platforms like:

- **Bridge**
  Communicate with learners where they spend their time

- **Lessonly**
  Give direct access to learning content and assignments

- **Continu**
  Manage online and in-person training, and track engagement

Companies lose 25% of all new employees within a year.

"Allied Workforce Mobility Survey," 2012

Tip:
Don't deluge new employees too quickly with every app they'll be using. Start with a few core apps and then roll out more. (It helps that the apps are united in the hub!)
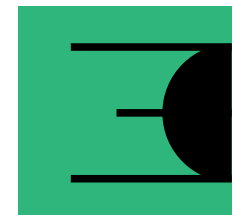
5. Days 31-90: Reward success

Nothing motivates like recognition

The big question in the mind of every new hire is *How am I doing?*

After the first month, the new employee's managers will have seen enough to be able to bring in some positive reinforcement, drawing attention to the things they want to see more of.

Because your adaptive collaboration hub includes public channels, it's a great place to recognize outstanding performance and to celebrate how far and fast a new hire has progressed.

Recognition and reward apps
Where the team celebrates wins.

- **HeyTaco!**
  Bring recognition and rewards into the hub for all to see

- **Kudos**
  Let peers recognize each other's contributions

- **Growbot**
  Celebrate awesome work when it happens

Alert execs to key milestones
Demonstrate that you value each new hire.

- Set automated reminders for managers to check in at 60 and 90 days

- Managers and execs can see their collaboration trails and make relevant comments

- Share colleague shout-outs with key execs so they can weigh in

Up to **20%** of employee turnover happens in the first 45 days.

"An Onboarding Checklist for Success," O.C. Tanner blog

79% of people who quit their jobs cite "lack of appreciation" as their reason for leaving.

"Performance Accelerated," O.C. Tanner white paper, 2014
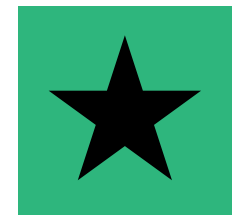
6. Days 90+: Improve

Build in a feedback loop

A world-class onboarding process is one that keeps getting better.

To make that happen, you need a way to gather feedback from your recent hires. An easy way to do this is to ask questions like "How was it for you?" and "What could we have done better?"

Your adaptive collaboration hub makes that easy too.

**Survey and feedback integrations**
Listen harder.

- **SurveyMonkey**
  Run a post-onboarding survey to guide improvement

- **TinyPulse**
  Use pulse surveys to improve culture

- **Neko by Culture Amp**
  Invite employees to give feedback anytime

You can also design and deploy your own custom bots to make feedback fun. They can pop up randomly or respond to pre-selected triggers within the hub.

69% of employees are more likely to stay with a company for three years if they experienced great onboarding.

Society for Human Resources Management, 2017
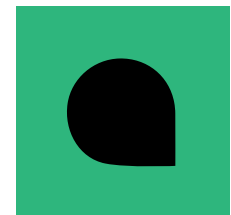
A better way to onboard

Using an adaptive collaboration hub (and mindset) to support your employee onboarding program pays dividends in three main areas:

1. **Your people become productive faster.**
   So they add value earlier.

2. **You improve your employee experience.**
   Driving all kinds of business benefits

3. **You reduce the management burden of onboarding.**
   By streamlining, automating, and encouraging self-service.

That's what happens when you replace old-school, disconnected onboarding practices with strategic, actively managed onboarding supported by an adaptive collaboration hub.

EX pays off

Experiential organizations (those with the highest employee experience scores) see these advantages over average EX performers:

2.1x more revenue

4.4x more profit

2.9x more revenue per employee

40% lower employee turnover

"The Employee Experience Advantage,"
Jacob Morgan, 2017

"Slack companies reach full employee productivity 24% faster."

"The Business Value of Slack," IDC Research, 2017

"Companies using Slack see a 10% improvement in employee satisfaction."

"The Business Value of Slack," IDC Research, 2017

Learn more

Employee Onboarding with Slack
A quick tour of Slack in action
for onboarding

The Slack-Powered HR Department
A quick guide to some of the ways
Slack can help

Integrations for HR and team culture
Check out our App Directory

Integrations for onboarding
Check out our App Directory

We should probably talk.
Schedule time with our team.

LET'S GO

About Slack

Slack is a layer of the business technology stack that brings together people, data and applications—a single place where people can effectively work together, find important information, and access hundreds of thousands of critical applications and services to do their best work.

From global Fortune 100 companies to corner markets, businesses and teams of all kinds use Slack to bring the right people together with all the right information.

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