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How to Make Employee Onboarding a Top Priority in 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Make Employee Onboarding a Top Priority in 2023

What Does Onboarding Mean?

How Long Does Onboarding Take?

Onboarding vs. Orientation

How to Onboard New Employees: The 6 Best Tactics You'll Need

Craft a Compelling Job Offer

Use Onboarding Software to Create a Standardized Process

Go Paperless

Make a Good First Impression

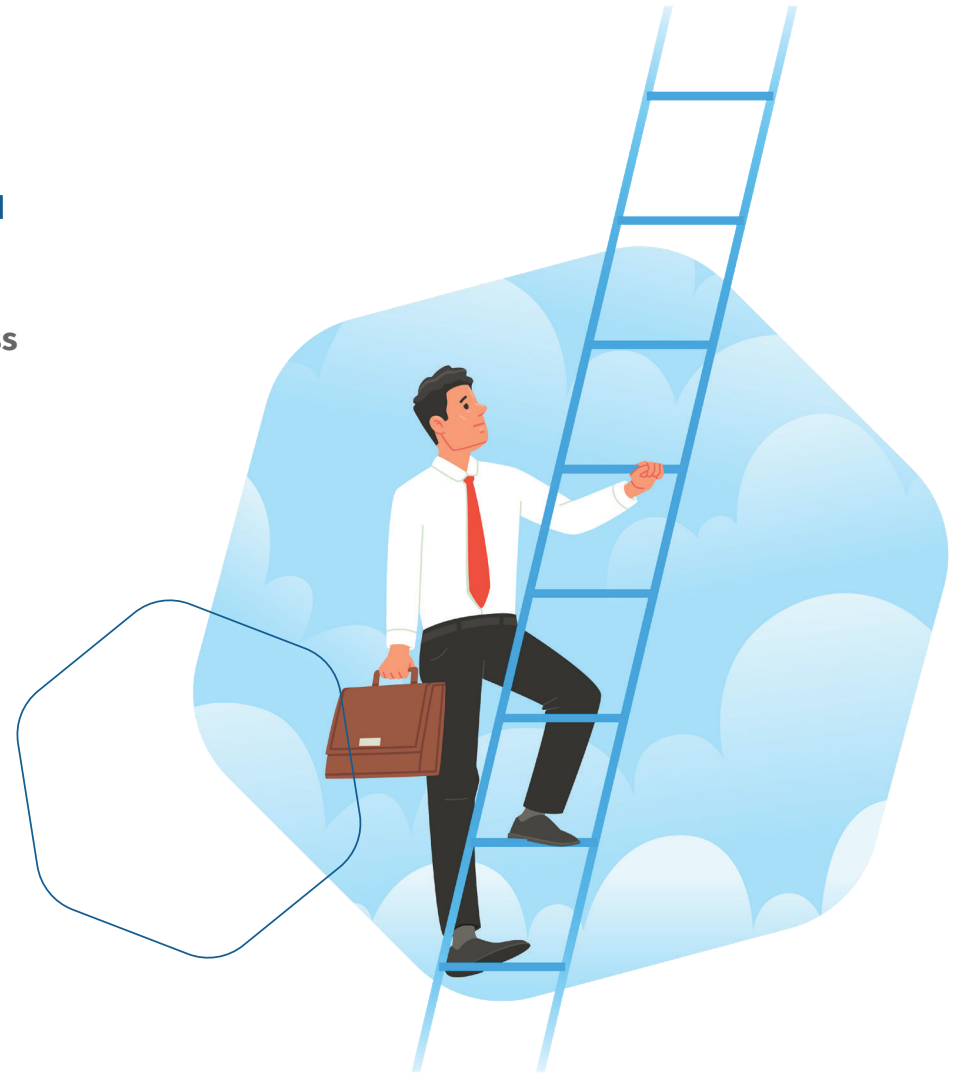
Case Study: Help New Hires Enroll in Benefits

Establish Your Organization's Culture and Values

Provide Ongoing Support

Next Steps: Discover the Best Tools for Onboarding

FAQ



How to Make Employee Onboarding a Top Priority in 2023

Hiring a new employee is an expensive and time-consuming process.

According to the [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#), it typically costs \$4,425 to hire a new employee – not to mention the [36 days the average team spends trying to fill a position](#).

Yet nearly 31% of employees have quit a job within the first 6 months.

To learn why so many companies are struggling with onboarding, [BambooHR surveyed](#) employees who quit. We found that:

- 23% wanted clear guidelines about their responsibilities
- 21% expected more effective training
- 17% said a friendly smile or a helpful coworker could have persuaded them to stay

New hires should feel like they belong. In this guide, you'll learn how to spend less time on formalities and more time creating better first days. We'll cover actionable tips for improving new hire paperwork, assigning onboarding tasks, facilitating personal connections, and more.



What Does Onboarding Mean?

Onboarding is the process of introducing a new employee into your organization. It's a critical time when new hires acclimate to the work they'll be doing, forge personal connections across your team, and generally settle into their new role.

Making a good impression during this time is critical – and onboarding can make or break your overall employee retention.

When BambooHR surveyed employees about their onboarding experiences, we found that new hires who had a positive onboarding experience are 3x more likely to feel a strong commitment to their employer

In fact, more than 80% of employees who had a positive onboarding experience continue to hold their organizations in high regard.

How Long Does Onboarding Take?

Onboarding can last several months or up to a year, depending on the role and the organization.

In most cases, you should expect to devote several months to onboarding before new hires feel fully integrated into your organization.

To make sure all new hires are onboarded effectively, we recommend creating a standardized onboarding process. Many onboarding tasks – such as benefits enrollment or sharing standard company policies – can be streamlined or automated to make sure nothing slips through the cracks.

A standard onboarding process helps new hires feel welcomed and supported – and according to research by SHRM, their productivity can increase by **as much as 50%**.



Onboarding vs. Orientation

ONBOARDING is an ongoing process that helps new employees master their role and acclimate to your organization.

ORIENTATION is a part of the initial onboarding process, during which new hires sign paperwork, enroll in benefits, and review company policies.

What Are the 4 Phases of Onboarding?	
Before the First Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafting a job offer • Negotiating salary • Completing new hire paperwork
New Hire Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering a virtual or in-person facility tour • Introducing new hires to their teams • Introducing new hires to executives
New Hire Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating new hires on company policies, compliance, procedures, and more • Introducing company culture and values • Completing benefits selections • Providing job training • Offering guidance on roles and responsibilities
Ongoing Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing regular feedback • Creating regular check-ins between new hires and managers • Establishing formal or informal mentors or “onboarding buddies”



How to Onboard New Employees: The 6 Best Tactics You'll Need

Craft a Compelling Job Offer

A good offer letter will go a long way: In a recent BambooHR study, we found that employees who receive a highly effective offer letter are more than 17x more likely to feel emotionally connected to their organization.

Digital offer letter templates can streamline this process. If your **applicant tracking system** includes template options, you can easily customize them to include personal, genuine, and specific details from your new hire's interview process.

Timing also matters. Be prepared to send the offer immediately after your final phone call with the candidate. Your applicant tracking system will also help you manage deadlines for candidates' decisions so you can stay on top of next steps.

A year from now, your new employee might not remember what the letter said – but they'll remember if it made them feel good about joining your team.



Use Onboarding Software to Create a Standardized Process

To create a truly effective onboarding experience, you need a standardized process.

Onboarding software is the key – and the quality of your software matters. A thoughtfully designed system allows you to automate time-consuming tasks and create a consistent process you can easily repeat throughout multiple hiring seasons.

For example, BambooHR's onboarding tools can help you craft offer letters, digitally distribute new-hire packets, collect e-signatures, create automatic reminders, and more.



Go Paperless

A big part of onboarding involves collecting information about a new hire – and while we don't have any proof, we're confident it's often the most dry and boring part of the process.

An emailed preboarding packet with e-signature software can save time that's better spent on valuable training and introductions.

A company with 100 employees can save as much as 40 hours per month by using e-signature software.

Make it convenient and flexible by speeding up the process with electronic preboarding and e-signature software. Easily gather new employee information in a way that's trackable, organized, and fast.

- To test our theory, ask any new employee if they would rather:
- Spend an hour filling out a stack of printed forms and signing paperwork by hand OR
- Clicking through digital forms and automatically applying their e-signature

We're guessing the second answer will be popular with most people – excluding, perhaps, people in the pen, pencil, and printer industries.

Make a Good First Impression

To get up to speed, new employees will need instructions on company policy, benefits, compliance, procedures, and more. In many cases, this training will be the first extended face-to-face interaction new employees will have with your HR team.

This training is critical because it:

- Establishes what the company stands for and against
- Outlines expectations for employee behavior
- Showcases the human side of the organization

An effective onboarding process will cover these topics in engaging, inviting, and even funny ways. A well-written and up-to-date handbook or a funny video on IT procedures can go a long way towards showing your organization is made up of real people, not robots.

Making issues like standard procedures, mission statements, and other important information engaging also makes them memorable, furthering the primary goal of any training exercise.



Case Study: Help New Hires Enroll in Benefits

Too many companies pay thousands or even millions of dollars in premiums without bothering to ensure their people fully understand the packages and programs being provided to them.

That's a waste of money – and a missed opportunity to improve employees' wellbeing and retention.

Among employees who received benefits training, 70% fully utilize their benefits. That number drops to just 27% among employees who didn't receive effective benefits training.

Self-service software is the best way for HR to support new hires when enrollment rolls around. These tools will help you monitor employees' progress without physically chasing them down over missing paperwork. Most importantly, you'll be able to easily identify employees who may need additional support.

Take time to fully explain your benefits package—and how benefits work in general. In group situations, most people would rather stay uninformed than ask a question revealing their lack of knowledge; your willingness to explain the fundamentals helps employees make better choices.

If you're speaking to a group, schedule a break following the presentation and offer employees the chance to approach with any questions. Let them know you understand it's important to get input from their families, and give them a day or two to do so.



Establish Your Organization's Culture and Values

Whether your business is onsite, remote, or hybrid, it's important to help build connections between coworkers.

Small companies often handle introductions intuitively, with zero instruction or issues. Shake hands all around, make some small talk, then take the new guy or gal out for lunch where you can ask whether they'd rather fight 100 duck-sized horses or a single horse-sized duck. Simple!

As companies expand, welcoming new employees gets harder. You want to make sure the new hires feel valued, but personalized introductions can become time-consuming or even overwhelming on large teams.

Still, introductions are important no matter the size of your organization – and set the tone for your overall culture and values.

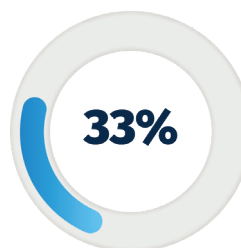
To help solve this challenge, BambooHR offers templates for get-to-know-you questionnaires. These informal surveys make it easy to gather personal details, such as a new employee's hobbies, favorite foods, or hometown. By distributing new hires' answers, current employees will have plenty of opportunities to initiate conversations about common interests.

Meeting executives face-to-face is a rarity in larger organizations and can be tough to coordinate. But it's a great way to make new employees feel valued – not to mention it safeguards against the embarrassment of a missed greeting later on. After all, there's nothing worse than finding out you passed the CEO in the hallway without saying hello.



Provide Ongoing Support

New hires will be frustrated if they're left to sink or swim. While HR should support onboarding, especially with paperwork, managers have the most impact on whether onboarding is a success or not.



33% of new hires said they wanted their manager or direct supervisor to be the one to show them the ropes

Managers should set up regular check-ins with the new hire to make sure everything's going well. This is especially important if the employee is remote and won't strike up a conversation over coffee or at the copier.

New hires need to have a clear vision of the expectations so they understand what success looks like. Err on the side of over communication, especially if the new hire is remote.

While managers play a critical role in onboarding, new hires also appreciate support from someone who isn't their boss. In a [BambooHR survey](#), more than half of new hires (56%) say that having an onboarding buddy or mentor is one of the most important factors that helps them get up to speed and begin contributing.

Pair up your new hires with seasoned employees who will take interest in their careers.

This person should also be available to answer questions, especially those they may feel silly asking (like where the best lunch spot is or when most people log off).

Assigning a mentor also creates an automatic "friend" who can give new employees a connection. If the new hire is remote, try to match them with a mentor who is in the same city so they can meet for lunch or outside of work.

Next Steps: Discover the Best Tools for Onboarding

Take a close look at how you're onboarding today. Whether you're dealing with higher-than-ideal turnover or company values that exist on paper instead of in daily life, the right onboarding tools can turn things around.

BambooHR's powerful onboarding software helps you spend less time chasing down paperwork and more time creating better first days.

Onboarding tools allow you to:

- Schedule personalized welcome emails
- Personalize pre-built new hire welcome packets
- Collect e-signatures on paperwork
- Encourage employee self-onboarding with automated checklists
- Launch surveys to collect feedback
- ...and more!

Onboarding FAQs

How long does onboarding take?

Onboarding can take anywhere from several months to a full year, depending on the role and position. Learn how to successfully integrate new employees into your organization with six expert-approved tips.

What are the 4 phases of onboarding?

The four phases of onboarding are: Setting expectations during recruitment, orientation, training, and ongoing support. Organizations that skip any of these steps risk lower productivity from new hires and higher turnover. Learn how to create an effective onboarding process.