

BEST
PRACTICES
FOR

ONBOARDING MILLENNIALS



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When it comes to a company's talent attraction and management strategy, effective onboarding is an often-overlooked element. If you're looking to attract Millennial job seekers, new onboarding technologies have several key advantages that provide ease, effectiveness, leverage, and even offer a competitive advantage to attract talent. **But more critically, these solutions empower organizations to create emotional connections with candidates that result in longer retention and a greater return on the investment.**

Millennials are chronic job hoppers and so the need to automate, simplify, and create emotional connection in the onboarding process is greater than ever before. Finding and keeping talent in the 21st Century is so critical to company success, companies cannot risk losing the people in whom they've invested. 91% of Millennials (born between 1977-1997) expect to stay in a job under three years, according to a study by the Future Workplace "Multiple Generations @ Work". That means your greatest threat with personnel lies in investing in them and then losing them to another company after they've learned the ropes from you.

Cost effective, consistent and technology-driven onboarding is not just a tool to make the process faster, it can be leveraged to attract talent and to bind the new hires to your company on an emotional level that spells long-term success for you and for them.

Google's Project Aristotle is a study that looked into the dynamics and outcomes of the company's internal teams. Their findings reveal the main difference between those teams that functioned well and thrived, and ones that broke down and failed. It came down to what's known as "psychological safety" – a mutual

feeling within a group of being accepted and respected. Another study demonstrated that 50% of American office workers have stayed at an unsatisfying job because of positive emotional relationships. Conversely, 65% say they would look for a new job because of poor internal communication.

Given this trend, would you want your company onboarding process to be labor intensive, old fashioned, and erratic? Or efficient, emotionally connecting, and consistent?

Hiring teams and managers spend hours selecting and interviewing just the right candidate, only to lose them to an onboarding process that is often disorganized, disconnected, or overwhelming. Such experiences fail to connect the new hire to the heart of the company, impacting initial job satisfaction. It is so commonplace, it is the norm.

Statistics abound regarding the role effective onboarding contributes to an employee's productivity and ability to create value for the organization. And for Millennials, it's even more pronounced. Studies show that effective onboarding can improve retention rates by

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52%, time to productivity by 60%, and overall customer satisfaction by 53%. And yet a recent Gallup survey finds that only 12% of employees strongly agree that their organization does a great job onboarding new employees. This failure impedes the formation of an emotional bond between the new hire and the company – a connection that can greatly impact employee retention. Despite all of these known facts, the most common approaches to onboarding often fail.

So what elements are needed in a world class onboarding process to capitalize on the good will and positive energy created in the interviewing process? Our contention is that organizations with onboarding processes that contain the following elements have the best chance of solidifying the new employee's effectiveness, speed to productivity, and commitment and bond with the company.



Millennials want to know why, not just how

Previous generations were content with understanding how to do a job function and took pride in doing it well. They were happy to gather up the larger ideas about the organization's goals and larger sense of purpose over years of service...if ever. But Millennials are unique in that they want to be able to identify how their actions attach to larger goals, and how those goals attach to a larger sense of purpose...and all of it very early on in the relationship. They are not content to blindly follow, but instead want to understand the core values of the employer and will make decisions of allegiance or distrust based on them. Capturing and sharing the best practices of onboarding is critical but so is capturing the WHY of your organization. What are your values? What is your purpose? What's the founder's story and how does it reflect the choices that are made each day? Millennials are holding employers to higher standards of communication and onboarding is where that begins.

BEST PRACTICE:

Employ a healthy complement of videos and content about the company's goals, vision, and values along with the more foundational training and onboarding content. Use videos of your leadership team to inspire your new hire with a sense of purpose and belonging in something great and valuable. Also include videos of people on the team sharing stories about how they felt when they started with the company and what they appreciate about it.



Look at onboarding as a Journey – not an event:

Strategic onboarding is more than just transactional check-lists owned by HR and designed to “dot i’s and cross t’s”. Given the emphasis on “enculturation” as a need for Millennial workers, it is best to consider onboarding as a multi-step process: a journey that gives them immediate learning experiences to reach basic proficiency levels, functional training to understand the nuances of their roles, and strategic touchpoints to maintain long-term engagement. If done correctly, this journey can create “moments around the campfire” — that can help move employees from initial excitement to long-term engagement, increased proficiency levels, and, potentially, long-term career viability.

BEST PRACTICE:

Create an entire journey for onboarding using emotions as guideposts. Then use video as the medium when onboarding to increase personalized engagement and create a relationship with the new hire. Video combines information with connotation and connection and is now more affordable and convenient to use than ever before. Also, video as a delivery system makes your onboarding mobile ready and therefore appealing to Millennials workstyles.

Onboarding involves multi-level learning:

It seems obvious that new employees will need to learn new processes, activities, tasks, and corporate knowledge to be successful in new roles. Yet many managers forget how much knowledge is learned or intuited after being with the company for a length of time. They’ve normalized what might have taken decades to learn.

Technology can help here in many ways. A strong onboarding program can use technology by enabling interactivity and connectivity between new hires and veterans in the organization. For example, a knowledge management software like Playbook-Builder can function as a central repository for all onboarding processes, tools, and materials...but also interviews with people who do the job every day. It functions as an

interactive resource providing personalized content and experiences to each employee. Such a software reduces the stress of accessing multiple HR systems and provides the ability to complete HR tasks quickly, creating incredible leverage to HR teams and hiring managers. Keep in mind that people are no longer learning solely through lectures and traditional methods of teaching anymore. Learners want to interact with and have control over their learning format, timing and platforms. They don’t want to just read a paper – they want to see a visual, learn through a story, or see a process in action. They want to have that connection in an intrinsic way.

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Onboarding involves multi-level learning: CONTINUED

BEST PRACTICE:

In addition to using your company trainer (if you have one), interview your subject matter experts (SMEs) at all levels of the company to capture best practices and cultural insights. You'll accomplish a great deal doing this, including: honoring your existing people, capturing their best practices for future training, and putting faces to names for a new hire.

Onboarding Takes a “Just in Time” Approach:

As stated above, there's a lot for new employees to learn when they join a company, but usually there's a need for sequential learning. The ongoing use of such technology sets up the right environment to leverage data that identifies pain points for new hires, tracks performance and adoption early, and helps organizations make data-driven decisions. It doesn't have to be a “one & done” meeting, rather the use of video and online resources allows the new employee to refer back to the information as needed, as well as receive reminders and follow up notes from managers. This gives new employees the opportunity to create and internalize knowledge - not just memorize it.

BEST PRACTICE:

Learning is most effective when a small portion of learning is followed by a small portion of application. Use technology to enable new employees to learn a skill and try it out, and then go back for additional information or learn the next step. It's the application part of the cycle that builds lasting knowledge and skills.



Onboarding Teaches Big Picture AND Essential Details:

Millennials want to understand the company's overall strategy, position in the market, and organizational or departmental priorities. Without this birds-eye view, it can be difficult to determine how an employee and his/her position fits into the organizational Big Picture. But at the same time, employees need to graduate from onboarding knowing the essential details of precisely what they are supposed to do when they get back to their desks – all day, everyday. If they don't know what to do, time (and money) is wasted while they flounder around figuring it out for themselves. Interactive technology can give employees insights to both the Big Picture and the critical details. It can capture those “campfire” moments – a leader explaining the essence of the company and/or department, and why it is important but it can also help a new hire understand simple logistics such as where to park their cars,

where to go for lunch, and how to use essential software. Video tutorials and assessments can ensure that the basic details of an employee's role are fundamentally understood and internalized by the new employee.

BEST PRACTICE:

Provide tutorials for skill-building at every level: from basic tips on professionalism, company vision and goals, right down to job-specific activities. Culture training should be considered just as critical as job training if you expect to keep new hires around. Help them know how to be effective and successful both in terms of work product and the forming of workplace relationships.

Onboarding Provides Examples of What “Right” Looks Like:

Providing new employees with templates or examples further enhances a company's onboarding effectiveness. And technology now provides us with the ability to deliver training and resources right at the new employee's fingertips – regardless of where they're located. Documents like sample emails, scripts for customer/client interactions, agendas for meetings and templates for presentations all ensure consistency of message, procedure and internal/external communications. Technology can take this one-step further by using videos for role plays, in depth explanation, or dissemination of background information. The more examples you provide, the more you take the “winging-it” factor out of the equation.

BEST PRACTICE:

Take the guesswork out of the equation by layering into your training good examples of what “quality work” looks like. Help your new hire know, without any ambiguity, how they can win and then showing them “how to” will be more pointed and easier to grasp.



Conclusion

While technology is not the only onboarding tool in a company's toolbox, it has become a critical and fundamental component of an effective and world-class onboarding experience. Technology allows managers to capitalize on the good will and excitement that new hires have and move them quickly to becoming a functioning, emotionally aligned part of the team. It helps the company deliver on its recruiting promises and minimize the feeling of being overwhelmed. And, it sets the standard for effective communication and company expectations in a consistent, thoughtful manner.

The decision to join a new organization is often accompanied by leaving another, and Millennial new hires are placing bets that their new role will be better than the last, fulfilling a need the previous employer was not. Given that those within the Millennial generation are... likely to have, on average 15 - 20 jobs over the course of their working lives, having a cutting edge, effective and personalized onboarding process reinforces the feeling that the new employee made an excellent decision to join your organization...and in today's tight labor market, that gives your company a distinct competitive advantage.

About PlaybookBuilder

PlaybookBuilder is a complete solution to help onboard your new hires before their first day of work. Using our PlaybookBuilder software, a complete set of resources, and a team of specialists, we reduce your onboarding time (and increase onboarding success) by a factor of ten.

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