

From new hire to effective worker

Best practice employee onboarding





Onboarding is the term used by HR professionals to describe the process of **helping a new starter integrate into a business.** It starts from the moment the role has been offered and, if managed well, turns candidates into **engaged** and **effective employees.** But, managed poorly, it can cost your business dearly in terms of profits, resources and reputation.

This guide offers hints, tips and practical tools to help you with your own onboarding process. It also demonstrates how technology can help you manage and deliver an effective and engaging onboarding experience.

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The business approach



Onboarding – the current landscape

Onboarding costs UK businesses £200 million a year. It's a process that starts from the moment the role has been offered and, if managed well, turns candidates into engaged and effective employees. But, managed poorly, it can cost your business dearly in terms of profits, resources and reputation.

In this guide, we will:

- **Look at the current landscape of employee onboarding**
- **Offer hints and tips on how to create the best possible experience for your employees based on best practice for your business**
- **Show how technology can help streamline and improve the onboarding experience for both HR professionals and onboardees.**



Day one is too late

Many businesses suffer under the misconception that employee onboarding starts on the first day of employment, when it should start from the moment the offer is made.

This is a critical time for collecting relevant information from your onboardee. You'll need to exchange offer letters and contracts and provide them with details of their role and more information about your company.

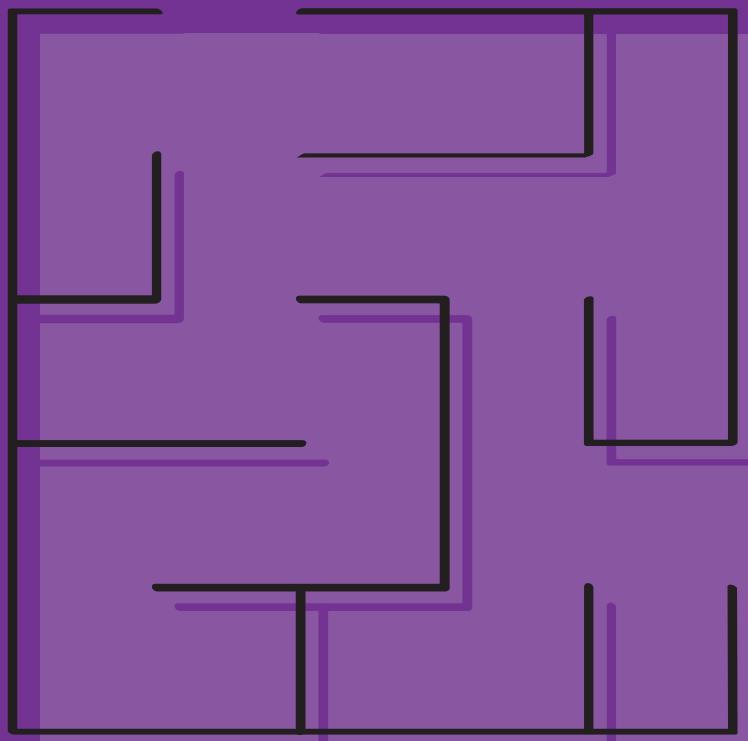
As soon as the role has been offered, your business should think of them as an employee. Taking a casual approach to communications and failing to nurture your relationship with your onboardees in the early days could leave them tempted to take their talents elsewhere.

Keep talking to onboardees during their notice period, to maintain their enthusiasm and increase their understanding of their new role and your business brand and you can look forward to welcoming an engaged and productive employee.

Onboarding vs induction

Onboarding shouldn't be confused with induction – the process of integrating a new employee in the business and embedding them in their new role. Engaging and developing a productive employee is an ongoing process, but you can gain a head-start by focusing on your onboarding process.

Onboarding – the challenges



Onboarding – the challenges

Contracts and offers

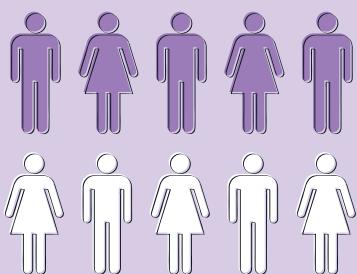
Issues with onboarding can start even before your new employee walks through the door. According to our research, 69% of HR professionals say that issuing contracts in a timely and accurate way has caused them problems.

Delays in collating information from the hiring manager, and getting contracts checked can mean losing a preferred candidate to a counter offer. Almost half (47%) of the HR decision makers we asked said that they had lost a potential candidate because of delays at the offer stage.

Whilst you don't want to lose great candidates by taking too much time to formulate offers and contracts, these are important documents and it's crucial that they are accurate. Details of things like pay, working hours, conditions of employment, notice periods and holiday entitlement need to be correct.

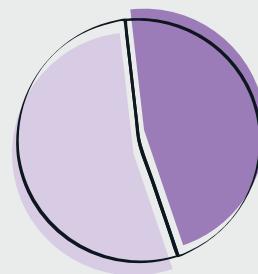
Making a mistake in a contract can mean additional, unexpected costs to your business or, even worse, legal disputes that take time and resources to resolve.

In our survey, 45% of HR decision makers said that inaccuracies in contract clauses or offer details created future issues for their organisations.



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45%

of HR decision makers surveyed said inaccuracies included in contract clauses or offer details have created future issues for their organisation

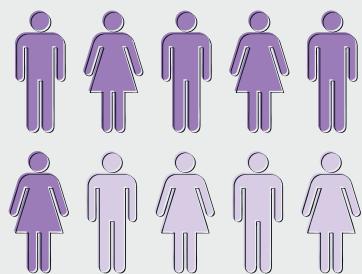
Too much paperwork

Traditional onboarding is a manual process that amplifies the potential for delays and inaccuracies.

Even seemingly simple tasks such as completing and returning documents can have a large effect on HR resources. In our survey, 69% of HR decision makers said they had to spend time chasing up successful candidates to return completed or missing documents. That's time they could be spending adding value to your business.

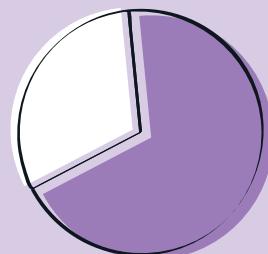
When new employees join a business, much of the information gathered during the onboarding process needs to be transferred into company systems. Despite having already gathered this data, our research shows that 58% manually transfer this information into their HR and Payroll systems.

Businesses can save a great deal of time and resource by automatically transferring onboardee details into the relevant payroll HR and other company systems. This not only reduces the need to replicate data, but also helps to cut down on errors too.



58%

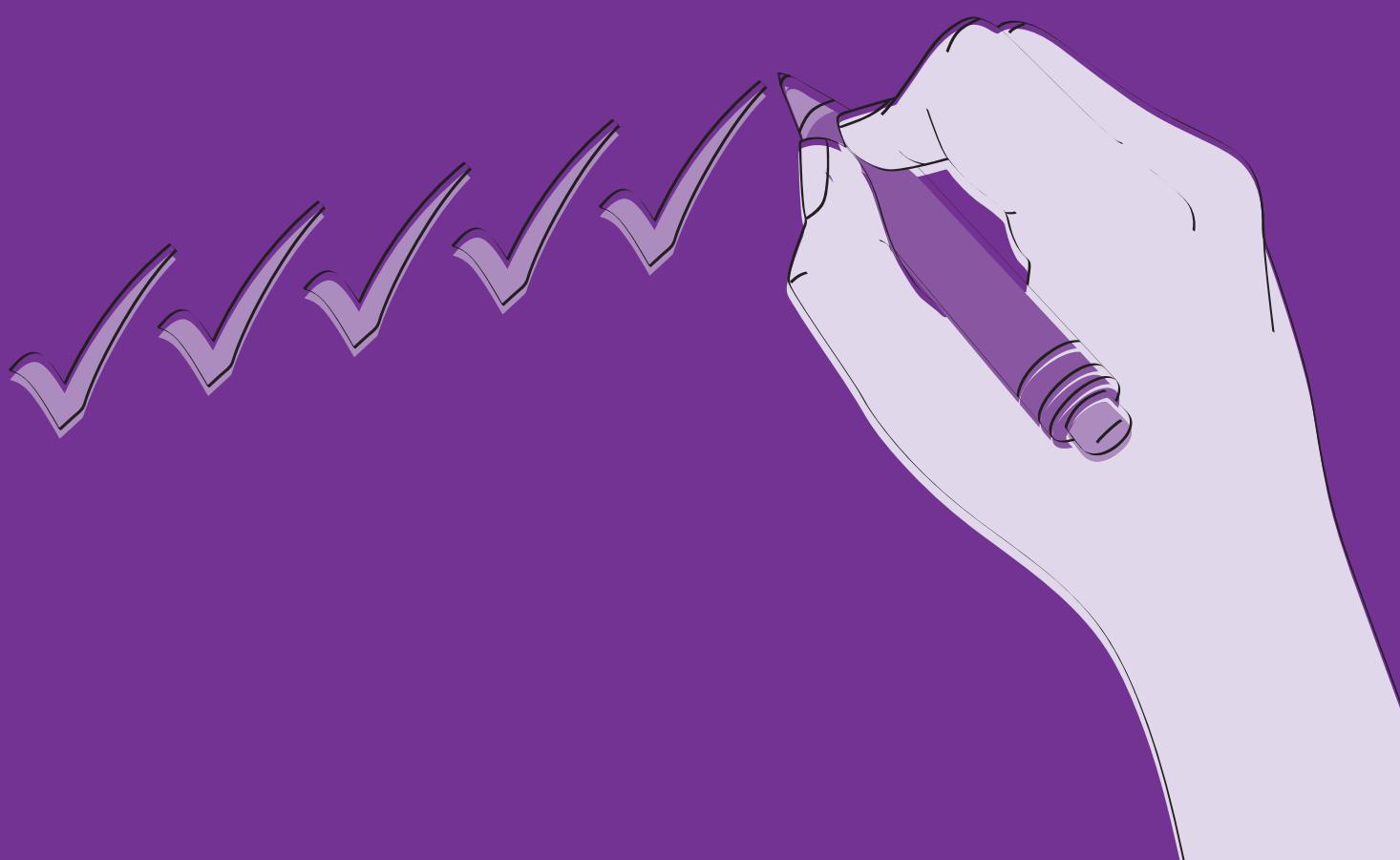
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69%

said the process of issuing offer letters and contracts of employment in a timely way has caused them problems

Five essential tips for successful employee onboarding



Five essential tips for successful employee onboarding

Want to ensure your new hires become productive employees in double quick time?

Take a look at our onboarding steps and turn new employees into effective team members.

1. Engage early

Good candidates are hard won. Your business needs to impress them at the interview stage when the candidate becomes an employee, and in the crucial onboarding stage in between.

Start engaging with your candidate as soon as you've made the job offer. It shows that you're already thinking of them as an employee before they arrive.

In many cases, there's a gap between recruitment and employment, when candidates have little or no contact with the company they're joining. Bridging that gap, with a robust onboarding process, can help make the move from recruitment to employment a seamless and positive experience, for both the employee and the hiring organisation.

You'll need to cover all the bases including confirming their start date, and instructions for where to go and what to expect on their first day. But you can also start to feed in more information about your company, and how their role fits within it.

Communicating regularly will help your new hires feel prepared and confident for their first day on the job.

“Over three-quarters of organisations that attempted to fill vacancies experienced recruitment difficulties, regardless of sector.”

CIPD Resource and talent planning survey

2. Keep two-way communication open

Delays in onboarding can mean losing the best and brightest talent to a counter offer from an organisation that moves quicker or offers a more engaging experience. According to our research, almost half of HR professionals (47%) said they had lost their preferred candidate due to delays in the onboarding process.

There are lots of reasons why candidates may change their mind between accepting an offer and starting work. By keeping communications open, you can address any objections and concerns they may have and get things back on track.

If you're communicating with them regularly, you will also be aware when a candidate does drop out for any reason. This allows you to re-start the recruitment process quicker and to find your new hire without further delays.

3. Think digitally

Making use of digital technology as part of your onboarding process is a great time and cost saver for it will bring greater efficiencies to your business. Many tasks can be automated, saving time and resources and ensuring consistency and accuracy.

Digital technology also enables anyone to see where onboardees are in real time throughout the process. HR professionals and candidates are reminded of tasks they need to complete or information they need to provide, without the need for constant chasing via email and telephone.

Taking the onboarding experience into the digital domain doesn't mean it becomes impersonal, in fact, it's quite the opposite. You can tailor communications with personal messages and give candidates control over some aspects of their onboarding, for example by allowing them to choose aspects of their training.

4. Use onboarding to strengthen your employee brand

Your employer brand is your reputation. It's what you do and what people say about you. Employee experience should be given the same level of attention as customer experience.

Melanie Guy, HR Manager for webexpenses says: "As an employer, if you don't impress and keep the experience positive, or fail to keep lines of communication open between the offer stage and day one, the feedback about your organisation will be negative. That can make it more difficult to turn a new employee into a productive member of your team."

Bringing new employees onboard is not merely an administrative exercise. Reaching out with a human touch can make a real difference in helping new employees feel welcome.

In many cases, HR teams represent an onboardee's first experience of your company, so they are guardians of your brand. A simple card from their new team, or a call from their new manager can reinforce strong brand values.

5. Use feedback to refine your onboarding experience

In our recent research, we found that 27% of employees left during their induction period. There are many reasons for this, but badly planned inductions, lack of understanding about the role and a poor interaction with managers and colleagues during the onboarding and induction period play a part.

All the way through their probation period, employees are deciding whether they want to stay. Gathering regular and timely feedback during the induction period can help you spot if things are going off track and do something about it.

We recommend that you start by getting daily feedback during their first week, then on a weekly basis until they are settled in their role with clear objectives and performance measures in place.

Getting feedback as candidates go through onboarding and progress to become employees, can help you to recruit and retain employees in the future.

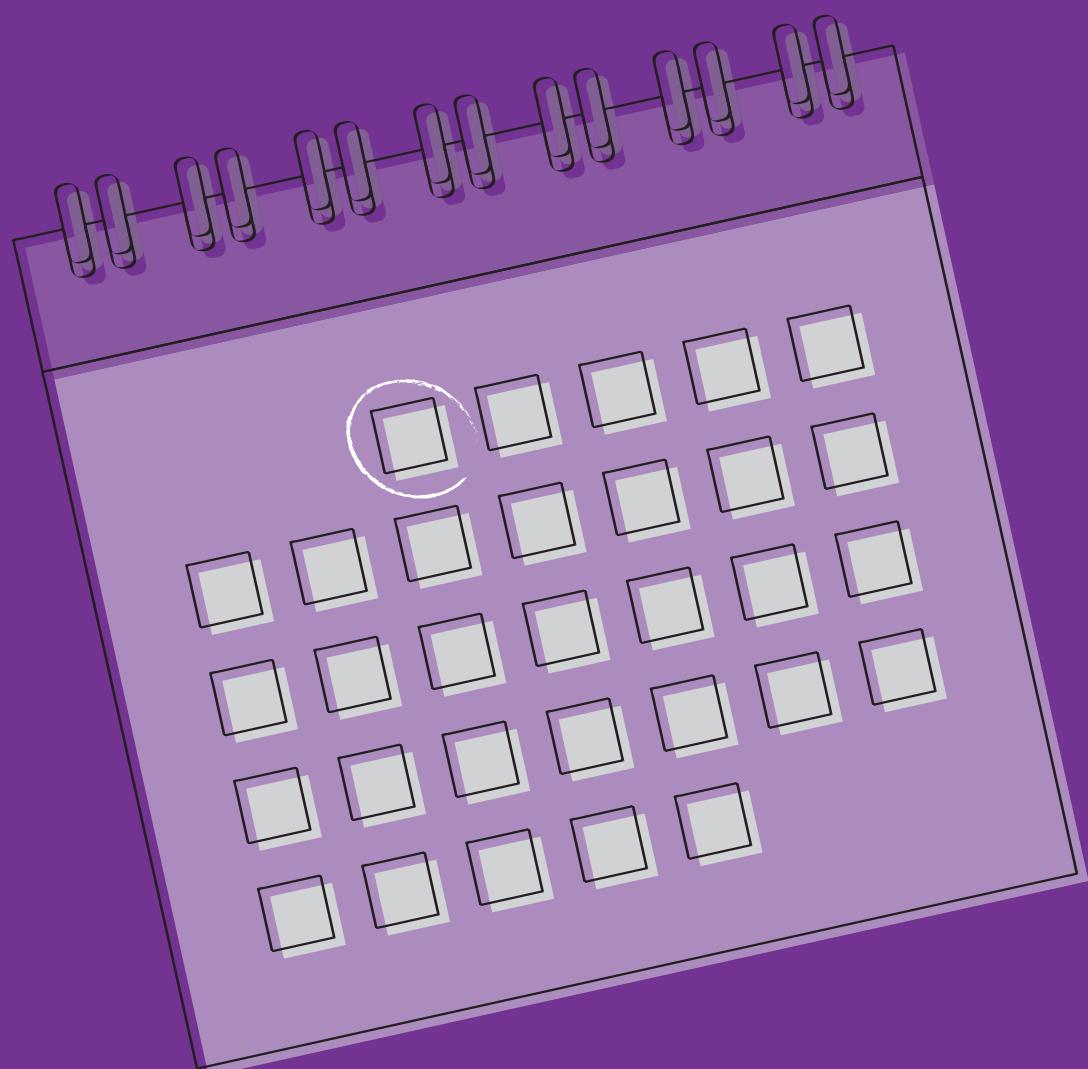
Ask questions such as:

- Did you have all of the equipment you needed for your first day?
- Was there anything missing that you need to know?
- Did you get introduced to the people you work with?
- Do you feel you had enough time to get used to your new role?



A lack of communication between the business and the onboardee, coupled with a less than adequate induction process, contributes to 27% of employees who leave a new job in the first year doing so within the induction period."

What needs to happen before an employee's first day?



What needs to happen before an employee's first day?

Many HR teams tell us that they are often missing onboardee information including who to contact for a reference, details of qualifications and proof of identity. For best practice onboarding, we recommend getting these in place before an employee starts work.

Essential admin and paperwork

There is information that you need to collect to confirm any offer of employment, about an onboardee's qualifications, right to work and security clearance for example.

We recommend that you agree working hours, holiday entitlement and conditions. You may also need to carry out a health assessment, depending on the kind of work that you're offering.

We also recommend that you inform new employees about pension, healthcare, childcare and other provisions and get them to sign up to the relevant schemes.

While many companies will cover some of these tasks on day one, having a new employee spending time filling out multiple forms often with the same information, doesn't offer them a great experience, and isn't a great use of their resources.

It's far better to get as much admin as possible sorted in advance, so that your new hire can hit the ground running.

Start the welcome preparations

There's nothing worse for a new starter than turning up on the first day to find no one was expecting them, there's no equipment, no welcome and nothing for them to do.

We recommend that you contact your IT providers or IT department so that they can order relevant hardware and software and organise network and email access.

We also recommend ensuring the new starter will have the appropriate access to premises, and office furniture and equipment is in place ready for their start date.

Having the necessary equipment and tools ready for new employees puts them on the fast track to becoming effective members of your workforce.

Let the team know

Let the team know that there'll be a new person joining them. Include their name and start date, and maybe outline what they will be doing for their first few days. This is also a good moment to clarify their role and position within the team.

Let your new employee know what to expect and plan before day one

Starting a new job can be daunting for even the most confident candidate, no matter their level of experience. Simple things can help ensure they start off with a smile.

You'll need to confirm their start date and time, along with details of where they should go and who they need to report to. Include the address and location of their new workplace (as it's not necessarily where they will have been interviewed) and to provide details of parking and public transport access.

Set expectations about dress code and conduct and to let them know about any induction plans for their first few days.

Onboarding checklist

Each business and roles within those businesses will have different onboarding needs. Use our quick checklist below to outline the basics.

Check for any recent changes:

- Employment law and rights - www.acas.org.uk
- Tax and national insurance - www.gov.uk/hmrc
- Health and safety - www.hse.gov.uk

Send offer letter

Confirm offer letter accepted

Send recruitment docs

Complete background checks

Complete any paperwork

Enrol in any benefits or services

Confirm start date and time

Provide any maps, parking passes, etc.

Communicate business policies

Communicate business practices

Inform department, HR, and IT

Order security pass, IDs, uniform etc.

Request hardware and network setup

Order furniture, supplies, etc.

Obtain nameplate, business cards, etc.

Phone installation and setup

Schedule induction and training

Identify onboarding buddy

Prepare welcome pack

How better onboarding can save you money



How better onboarding can save you money

For most businesses, the biggest expense is in employing people - wages, benefits, training and recruitment all add up. But a focus on onboarding can help your business save money.

Cut out hidden recruitment costs

In addition to traditional recruitment costs including advertising and agency fees, research by webonboarding has shown that HR decision makers in the UK spend an average of £195 on the onboarding process, per hire.

Even if you only recruit relatively small numbers each year, these costs soon mount up. And for businesses who need to recruit large numbers of employees on seasonal, temporary and fixed term contracts, the costs are multiplied many times over.

Convert all your offers into employees

It takes the same amount of time and effort to make an offer that turns into an employee as it does to make an offer that doesn't. Making sure that you can convert 100% of your offers into productive workers, and doing it as efficiently as possible can be a great time and cost saving to your business.

Most businesses accept recruitment costs on the basis that they will recoup any investment by attracting good talent. But according to our research, 27% of people who leave a new job in the first year do so within their induction period. That hardly gives you time to benefit from investing in a new employee.

Save time and resources

Traditional onboarding can be very inefficient. HR professionals say they spend 24% of their time on the onboarding process. That's almost a quarter of a resource being used on people who aren't even working for your business yet.

Issuing and exchanging paper-based documentation is a resource hungry exercise, with 69% of HR professionals saying that they spend time chasing candidates for details and signatures.

Operating a well defined onboarding plan, and using digital technology to manage and track communications can speed up the process and save on HR resources.

Everything in one place

Having to enter the same information into multiple systems is a chore for new employees, line managers and HR teams, and it detracts from more useful and profitable work.

Onboarding technology records all the details you need in one place, making it simple to set up payroll, HR and performance management systems once the new employee enters the workplace.

Keep everyone informed and up to date

Using online technology such as webonboarding to manage your employee onboarding can make the whole process more visible and accessible.

The benefits of an online onboarding system:

- **HR teams can easily access standard contracts and employment terms**
- **You can send out employment documents to multiple onboardees using email merge**
- **New employees can see what documents they need to approve in real time**
- **Line managers can keep track of the onboarding progress through reporting functions**
- **Everyone stays up to date with preparations for start date**



From new hire to effective worker - best practice employee onboarding



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Improve the experience for everyone

No one wants to lose a great candidate for a job. By using technology to automate and streamline onboarding, you're less likely to have candidates drop out during the process.

For those managing the onboarding process, onboarding technology can help make sure that all the documents and information are accurate and up to date.

For prospective employees, using technology as part of their onboarding process will feel familiar and efficient. It shows that they're joining a company that invests in technology to provide a great experience, and demonstrates that you're already thinking of them as an employee.

Webonboarding is the solution which enables you to onboard new starters in a professional and streamlined way. Removing the manual process and the paper trail, it reduces the hidden cost of recruitment and maintains the human touch. Strengthen your employer brand and start to embed employees into the business before they even start.

In this guide we've:

- **Shared best practice for employee onboarding**
- **Given you tools and checklists to help you build a well-structured onboarding process**
- **Explained how better onboarding can save your business time and money**

Sources:

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<http://hhstaffingservices.com/disruptive-onboarding-shake-improve-hiring-process/>
<https://www.tpp.co.uk/employers/recruitment-advice/managing-staff/an-employee-onboarding-checklist>
Data from a UK survey of 1000 HR professionals commissioned by webonboarding 2016

Next steps

Find out how webonboarding can help at
www.webonboarding.com

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