



Managers Know Intuitively that the ROI on Diversity Recruitment is Good for Business

The new hire must learn the employer's business methods and job responsibilities, while also adapting to a unique culture.

"Onboarding" is accepted as a business strategy for accelerating the time a new hire reaches full competency. The reasons it's grown in popularity include the fact more people are working globally, making the learning curve steeper. The new hire must learn the employer's business methods and job responsibilities, while also adapting to a unique culture. In addition, technology has made it easier for workers to search for employment when dissatisfied in current positions, so early engagement is important. Companies are experiencing long periods of employee underperformance, high turnover rates, and high levels of dissatisfaction that make assimilation into the company more difficult.

Typically, management has turned to human resources, training manuals and development sessions to initiate and integrate new hires into the organization. The first few days of employment are filled with tedious hours of completing forms, reviewing company policies and procedures and learning industry standards. After the initial start period, there are more weeks during which information the person needs to do a good job is meted out piecemeal, making it difficult for the new staff member to understand how their job supports the corporate vision and mission. Instead of contributing to productivity, the new hires become a drain on company resources and eventually seek other employment.

Onboarding Component of Talent Management

Onboarding is a management process designed to engage a new employee and to make the time between employment start and competent performance as short as possible. Onboarding programs are a core component of talent management programs in that the employee is first oriented and then mainstreamed in a way that quickly engages the person and makes the new hire feel valued. It's also designed to ensure the employee has the up-front knowledge, tools and resources needed for his or her job.

One of the important aspects of quality and effective onboarding programs is the focus on helping the new employee establish working relationships with co-workers. A mentor can be assigned so the person is never left floundering while trying to learn organizational culture, practices and accepted behaviors. Management mentoring also includes overviews of responsibilities, assessment of computer competency, training, and access to necessary online and offline systems. The first day or two of employment should focus only on the most essential information needed for employment so the new staff member doesn't spend an inordinate amount of time sitting in human resources doing paperwork.



Onboarding includes a review of the job description and performance expectations and standards. An onboarding program can last up to six months depending on the complexity of the job. At regular intervals during those six months, the performance standards are reviewed, feedback is offered, discussions are held with supervisors and a performance evaluation is completed. The evaluation at this stage is designed to raise any issues the employee or the supervisor may have.

Global Onboarding

For global companies, the onboarding program can be more complex because cultures, customs, standards, processes, learning processes and expectations can be quite different from country to country. Companies may have global onboarding standardized guidelines that blend well with the corporate talent management strategy, but they must be flexible enough to accommodate the country or local level.

Ernst & Young, a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services, surveyed companies on the alignment and integration of talent management programs, which includes onboarding. Over half responded that talent management processes are integrated globally or integrated across the organization with regional variations. The effort put into talent management flows right to the bottom line, in that talent management programs, including onboarding, increases the return on equity by as much as 20 percent compared to companies that don't use talent management.

The guidelines establish performance standards and activities to insure consistent quality in the onboarding process from country to country. However, there are key differences between managing an onboarding program in the United States versus another country. A new hire in another country will have to learn more than just the job requirements and must be oriented to local customs, labor laws, cultural diversity and the relationship of the job to local and global operations.

Kelly Services, a workforce management and staffing firm, has over 650,000 employees working worldwide. The company uses a quality global onboarding program that communicates corporate vision and mission and standards of practice. New employees are given a globally deployed code of business conduct and ethics, as well as diversity and ethics training. The company focuses on diversity and engagement with employees and workforce suppliers.

With so many global workers and workforce suppliers, Kelly Services leverages new technologies to deliver its onboarding program. Supplier onboarding begins with registration on a supplier portal where the applicant can register, read the program manual, find a supplier agreement, read about insurance and find a wealth of other information needed. On the employee side, Kelly Services uses standard methods and social networking for recruiting. Once employed, the onboarding program is used to support new hires. Onboarding was first developed to improve employee retention and reduce turnover by 40 percent, while also reducing time to productivity. The Kelly onboarding program uses both face-to-face and virtual processes, which accommodates employees in any location. The sessions present the Kelly history and technology, service requirements and career development opportunities. The results of the program were outstanding, with turnover reduced, productivity increased, program delivery expenses cut and retention costs reduced. The program was expanded to include the Kelly Outsourcing and Consulting Group so new consulting hires could



spend several hours each week using an online training program to learn Kelly history, culture and consulting systems.

Kelly employees can take advantage of free and for fee online courses and workshops to expand their skills and competencies. Courses taken are recorded on a My Learning page in the company's Talent City system. Employees can also maintain a career profile that is accessed by Kelly Services for training and development and succession planning. Using social media for recruiting and communication and offering online career development is geared towards today's new workforce that is technologically savvy and global based.

When you visit the Kelly Services website, it is apparent the company is building a global framework. Customized websites with local or region appropriate content in the country's language are easily accessible because the links are listed.

Key Principles

There are some key principles to keep in mind when developing an onboarding program. First, the program should take advantage of technology and especially social networking. It's a forum that the new generation of recruits is comfortable using and it has a wide reach. Second, managers must continue to accept responsibility for employee performance and use onboarding programs as one success strategy. Third, new hires should not be inundated with information the first day. Onboarding programs are designed to first engage and then train and develop new hires over a period of time. Fourth, new hires should be able to access and document training experiences. The record becomes the foundation for succession planning, compensation, compliance and further skills development.