

CREATING A CULTURE OF CARE

The Impact of New Hire Engagement Through Onboarding

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It was a long process. Numerous candidates were reviewed, screened, and interviewed, but you found the right hire, the best hire, the “it” candidate! The kicker – the candidate unfortunately has an extended start date. In my 15+ years in executive search and human resources, I have countless examples of clients that have lost their new hire to another company while waiting for that extended start date or during the first two months of employment.

While we as recruiters do our best to secure, engage, and assist with the onboarding of new talent, nothing replaces the touch points and meaningful interactions that the new employer can provide to the incoming candidate during the days prior to the start and within the first 30-45 days. The job market is fiercely competitive and the demand for organizations to attract and retain top talent is intensifying. The investment of time spent in onboarding can be the critical factor that keeps the future employee from taking another offer or choosing to stay in their new company.

I have been on both sides of the hiring spectrum having started as an HR professional and in executive search recruitment. The most effective organizations start their onboarding process before the employee even begins their first day working at the company. I have found that there are four critical areas that should be focused on during this period of vulnerability: communication, company structure, systems, and the social integration.

*"If you take care of your employees
they will take care of your
customers and the business will
take care of itself."
- J.W. "Bill" Marriott*



SHOWING YOU CARE

- Have the hiring manager and other key leaders in the interview process communicate by reaching out with a phone call and / or written letter or email to the candidate to express their excitement that they are joining the team.
- Meet for a coffee, lunch, or schedule a virtual video call to maintain that face-to-face interaction. Remember, communication and making the incoming candidate feel that they are already a part of the team is important. You can ask them things like, has HR reached out and set you up on benefits, do you have questions about policies or procedure, any questions they don't have answered...there are numerous areas to cover.
- Engage the new employee with material that is relevant to the first few days or weeks that would be helpful for them to know. Sending the certain information such as an organizational chart or a "how to" list so that the employee can glean a more clear understanding of the company structure.
- Make sure their office or work area is set up ahead of their start date. What better way to make someone feel welcome than to have their computer, phone and any other technical systems in working order.
- Never underestimate the importance of social integration. Whether it is virtually or in an office, building a sense of community and making an employee feel welcomed and a part of the team, is crucial in the first 45 days.
- Establish a formal check-in at key intervals to make sure they are integrating well. I do this as part of my retention process but it is even more important for hiring managers to engage in these conversations to make sure that the employee understands how they are doing and integrating.