

# How to onboard employees effectively

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If you excel at the first few days of an employee's experience at your company, they're more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to your organization and less likely to turnover or burnout.

Effective employee onboarding involves

- **Culture:** Infuse your company culture into the onboarding experience.
- **Customer:** Ensure every employee has at least a baseline understanding of your customers.
- **Connection:** Engage new people with your brand and other employees.

In this video, I show how to onboard employees effectively and I provide specific recommendations for onboarding employees who are working from home.

*To learn more from Denise Lee Yohn or to book her to speak to your organization, see her [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).*

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## Transcript

The first few days on the job are critical to a successful employee-employer relationship. Gallup reports that effective onboarding leads to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, higher performance, lower turnover and less stress. But Gallup also reports that only 12% of employees strongly agree their organization does a great job of onboarding. And after their onboarding experience, only 29% of new hires say that they feel fully prepared and supported to excel in their new role.

So how do you onboard new employees effectively? Through three “Cs” -- culture, customer and connection.

First, culture. Infuse your company culture into the onboarding experience.

According to TalentLMS, an employee training platform, only 39% of U.S. employees receive company-culture training during onboarding. That means the majority of companies bring on new employees without ensuring they learn the ways they are expected to behave and understand the attitudes and beliefs that should inform those behaviors. Moreover, companies are missing out on the opportunity to cultivate employee appreciation and adoption of the more distinctive and defining aspects of the organization.

So, explain your organization’s purpose and core values, share important stories from your company’s past, and convey cultural norms and anecdotes that demonstrate your culture.

And then go beyond just talk. Allow new employees to experience the culture through observation or hands-on learning. For example, Salesforce involves new employees in volunteer projects since philanthropy is core to the company’s culture.

The second "C" in employee onboarding is "Customer." Every employee in your organization should have a baseline understanding of your customers – not only because every employee impacts the customer experience in some way, but also because helping people understand who they’re ultimately working for can give their work more meaning and increase their motivation.

So, take a page from Hootsuite, the social media management platform, where every new hire, regardless of role, is taken through customer personas, buyer and user needs, and how Hootsuite solves customer problems. New employees at Airbnb shadow support specialists so they learn the challenges customers face and how Airbnb supports them.

And finally, during onboarding, connect new employees to your brand and to other employees. Teach them what your brand stands for and how you want it to be positioned in the market. Share the differentiators that distinguish your brand from competitors and show them how to interpret and support brand attributes in their daily work. Every touchpoint with the outside world matters, so brand-building is everyone’s responsibility.

Also, facilitate connections between employees. Assign a peer mentor to each new employee; or initiate a cohort group among employees who join around the same time; or create an employee directory that enables people with similar backgrounds or hobbies to find each other; or introduce new employees to leaders of employee resource groups that they might be interested in; or all of the above.

But keep in mind, you want not only to connect new people with others quickly and easily; those connections need to last beyond the first few weeks of employment. So, build in mechanisms to facilitate periodic check-ins at least throughout the first year.

That brings me to recommendations for onboarding employees who are working from home. Getting new employees aligned, oriented and motivated in a virtual work situation can be particularly challenging. And it might take up to a year or more for them to feel truly settled in, so design the employee onboarding experience to last at least that long.

Also, understand that long onboarding sessions over Zoom won't be engaging. So, consider splitting up the content and experiences into smaller chunks over multiple days or even weeks. And finally, make sure new employees receive before their first day all the tools and technology they need.

Remember, the adage "you never get a second chance to make a first impression" applies to employee onboarding.