



INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE SEARCH
FEDERATION

FROM WELCOME TO WINNING

A 4-Step Checklist to Superior Onboarding

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Onboarding is a crucial aspect of successful business operations, particularly when it comes to senior and director-level positions. This is primarily because these roles involve making critical decisions that shape the future of the organization, influencing its culture, and leading teams. Therefore, efficient onboarding at these levels is not just about getting the new executive to understand the role, but also about quickly aligning them with the organization's vision, strategy, and culture.



SUCCESS IN QUADRANTS

The conversations you have had concluded positively, and soon the new colleague will come on board. To make the new employee a part of the organization as quickly and pleasantly as possible, we would also like to assist you with the onboarding. Your new colleague can then be productive and involved with your organization more quickly and pleasantly.

We often see that onboarding is neglected when appointing management and board members. We believe it is important for all new employees to carry out this process well. New colleagues must quickly be able to deliver their added value to the organization. This can only happen when all practical matters are well arranged and they quickly become part of both the formal and informal network of the organization.

Onboarding takes a little time, but it pays off doubly. In collaboration with Ardienne Verhoeven, we offer you this document to improve your onboarding process. Ardienne is the founder of Workwonders and has been focusing on intake and onboarding for 17 years.





A FOUR-PHASE APPROACH

There are four key points of focus for the onboarding of your new employee:

- Starting well-prepared
- A warm welcome
- A flying start
- Genuine connection and engagement

Well-executed onboarding programs provide these executives with the knowledge and resources needed to understand the organization's business model, operations, expectations, and strategic objectives, enabling them to contribute to the company's success more rapidly.

Additionally, it helps them to grasp the organization's culture and values, which can foster better working relationships with their teams and other stakeholders.

Moreover, onboarding aids in establishing a strong network within the company. For senior and director-level roles, understanding both the formal and informal networks within the organization can be invaluable in making strategic decisions and driving change.

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WHY IT HELPS YOUR BUSINESS

While it may require an initial investment of time and resources, a well-executed onboarding program significantly increases engagement, productivity, and retention of executives, leading to improved business outcomes in the long term. It is, therefore, a critical investment for all organizations, regardless of size or sector.

Good onboarding has a direct impact on business results and profit margins, according to a study by the Boston Consulting Group (2012). They compared top-performing and least-performing companies. And what was the finding? Companies that had their intake process (recruitment, onboarding, and employer branding) in order experienced a revenue growth that was up to 3.5 times larger.

About [Ardienne Verhoeven - Workwonders](#)
Workwonders was founded in January 2000 by Ardienne Verhoeven. After completing her studies in Law and Business Administration at the University of Groningen, she worked for seven years as a HR manager at KPN and Unilever. At Unilever, she gained experience as a Management Development Officer, specializing in recruitment and selection, coaching and development of managerial talent, and establishing an (international) Business Academy. Workwonders specializes in optimizing talent acquisition within organizations.

Well-prepared to work: checklist 1 Preboarding

- ✔ Please inform your new employee in a timely manner about the start time and date. Also, provide information about the dress code within your organization and what is appropriate for lunch.
 - Ensure there is a clear point of contact who the employee can reach out to in advance for any questions and who will then guide them during the onboarding process. Also, indicate where and to whom your new colleague should report on the first day.
 - When your new employee will be using a car provided by your organization, make sure to establish clear agreements regarding its availability. Consider the possibility of having the car delivered to the employee's home before their first working day.
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- Ensure that the workspace is set up in advance. Make sure that there the new manager has access to a functional computer (software/accounts), telephone, key/entry pass, business cards, and other office supplies. Consider providing a welcome gift, such as a bouquet of flowers, as it can work wonders.
 - Compile an information package including items such as challenges for the job, expected results, a brief history description, employee handbook/policies, strategic plan, organizational chart/staff list, any manuals, and other available documents.
 - Inform colleagues about the arrival of the new employee. Allow the new colleague to introduce themselves in advance, for example, via email, linked In, other social media or your intranet. Clearly communicate the tasks and responsibilities of their new colleague. Ensure that the closest colleagues keep their schedule clear for an introduction or schedule the appointments in advance. Don't forget to inform the reception for a warm welcome.
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- Invite your new employee in advance to attend gatherings, such as a team outing or staff meeting. Alternatively, provide them with a tour before their arrival, so it doesn't have to be scheduled on a busy first day.
 - Prepare an onboarding program. You can find more information about it on the following pages.

A warm welcome: checklist 2 First day/week

- ✔ Personally welcome the new manager or director.
 - Introduce the employee to the team and allocate ample time for an initial introduction with each individual team member. A quick round of introductions may lack impact due to the overwhelming amount of new impressions.
 - The first week is a great opportunity to introduce the departments and other stakeholders to the new employee. Ensure that it is clear what their relationship is with each of them and how they can engage and collaborate with them.
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- Take ample time for a discussion about the further onboarding process. A new employee aims to be successful quickly. It is beneficial to work together with them to identify what they need in order to achieve that success.
 - Establish clear expectations from both sides and address any uncertainties. This applies to both the expectations of the employee regarding the company, such as training or development opportunities, as well as practical matters. Avoid getting too far ahead and focus on the present without overlooking practical considerations.
 - Schedule several follow-up discussions in advance so that the employee knows what to expect and can anticipate those moments.
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- Discuss any customs, especially regarding sensitive information or situations where face-saving or social disapproval may occur.
 - Evaluate how the first working day has gone at the end of the day and leave the premises together.

A flying start, checklist 3: Quick orientation & training

- ✔ Clearly communicate expectations from both sides: what the employee can expect from you and what they are expected to deliver to you. Define their role and the specific outcomes you anticipate. Determine when and how you will evaluate these agreements together.
 - Utilize the data from the selection process to create a personalized development plan with the new employee. This is especially important for high potentials transitioning from an organization with growth opportunities, as they want to understand what lies ahead for them.
 - If it aligns with your organization, consider implementing a mentorship or peer support program for a new employee. Assign someone who is well-versed in the unwritten rules and with whom the new employee can collaborate. Ensure that this person does not have a role in evaluating the new employee. This can also be an external executive coach.
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- Encourage the practice of mutual feedback. Start early, even on smaller points, and don't wait until the first formal evaluation. Assess how the new employee receives feedback: do they perceive feedback as doubt in their abilities and a lack of quality, or do they view it as constructive and an opportunity for growth? Engage in conversations about feedback to better understand each other's perspectives.
 - Ensure that an employee can also provide feedback to the organization. Ask them questions, organize a meeting within the management team, other stakeholders and/or the Advisory Board. Leverage their fresh perspective and take advantage of their insights to improve your organization. By incorporating their contributions, they will see the immediate impact of their feedback.
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- Integrate multiple formal feedback moments during the onboarding process. These can occur at two weeks, one month, three months, and six months for example. Additionally, consider implementing a 360-degree feedback process for new employees, if it aligns with your organization. This allows for feedback from various stakeholders and provides a comprehensive perspective on the employee's performance and development.

Real connection & engagement checklist 4: Intention to stay

- ✔ Getting to know the culture: Focus on understanding the unwritten rules within the organization. What are the beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions within the organization? Consider how the founder, for example, thought about certain matters. Determine how you can transmit this knowledge to your new employee.
 - Engage in a dialogue with your new employee, not only about the collective ambitions of the organization but also about the individual motivations of the candidate. Explore how you can mutually benefit each other.
 - Strategic impact: clearly communicate how someone can contribute to the organization's strategy and where they can make a difference. Involving them in working towards a higher long-term goal can be motivating and beneficial for the new employee's retention.
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- Ensure a diverse and extensive network for your new employee: Identify key individuals and provide opportunities for them to meet many new people. Newcomers gain better information through personal interactions rather than reports. This way, they will have a better understanding of who they need to approach to get things done.
 - Social connectedness is fostered through a strong network and involvement with the team. Engage your new employee in as many meetings as possible or organize gatherings to facilitate their introduction to people. Additionally, provide them with an initial assignment that allows them to interact with employees within the organization. This will help them build connections and establish a sense of belonging.
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- Evaluate the network that your new employee has after one month and identify any gaps that may hinder their ability to perform their work effectively.
 - Provide a valuable sounding board for your new employee. Assign someone at a similar level who can offer guidance and support, and with whom they can discuss any uncertainties at an early stage.



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