

The background is a teal color with a white grid. Overlaid on the grid are various white technical drawing elements: a large circle with concentric dashed lines in the top-left corner; a vertical dimension line on the left with the label '12x'; several horizontal and vertical dimension lines with tick marks; and various dashed lines representing geometric shapes and paths.

How to deliver an unforgettable employee onboarding experience

A blueprint for success

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About Natural HR

Designed by HR professionals for HR professionals, Natural HR is core Human Resource Management and payroll software for growing businesses.

Headquartered in Birmingham, Natural HR delivers an all-in-one solution for HR teams managing a workforce of over 100 staff.

Entirely developed in Birmingham, and proudly so, Natural HR was founded in 2010 by husband and wife duo, Jason and Sarah Dowzell. The software delivers everything a HR department needs to support and manage their people, freeing up valuable time to focus on their organisation's strategic HR objectives.

Available on any web-enabled computer or smartphone, Natural HR delivers an industry-leading suite of tools that simplify and automate HR and payroll processes for management and employees alike.

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Introduction

Welcoming new members of staff into a team is an exciting time for your company. Your family is growing, your team are getting new colleagues, and you have a brilliant opportunity to welcome them with open arms and demonstrate exactly why you're the best company to work for.

But the first few days, weeks and months for a new starter in your business are critical to their success, engagement and perception of your company. Today, onboarding is more than a basic orientation programme and it begins long before their start date.

Research by Glassdoor found that organisations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%.

After all, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

What is onboarding and why is it important?

Employee onboarding is the process of welcoming and integrating a new employee with your company. From the basics of ensuring your new hire has the tools, system access and information they need to carry out their role to immersing them in your culture; it is not to be confused with induction.

For clarification, induction is usually a one-time thing that involves the completion of any required paperwork and other routine tasks that every employee goes through on their first day. This might be completing a new starter checklist, being introduced to your business structure and goals or meeting their fellow new recruits.



I truly believe that onboarding is an art. Each new employee brings with them a potential to achieve and succeed. To lose the energy of a new hire through poor onboarding is an opportunity lost.

Sarah Wetzels, Director of Human Resources
engage:BDR

Onboarding encompasses a series of events (including induction) that helps your new recruit to be successful in their new role and develops their understanding of how their work contributes to business success.

Your onboarding process sets a precedent for an employee's time with you and it is often the very first impression they will get of what it is like to work for your company.

Research by the [Aberdeen Group](#) found that 86% of new hires decide to stay or leave a company within their first six months and new employees are 69% more likely to stay longer than three years if they experience well-structured onboarding.

For this reason, it is so important to get it right.

In this guide, you'll find a blueprint for delivering an unforgettable employee onboarding experience. Along with handy checklists, you'll find tips and advice to ensure an onboarding experience your new recruit won't forget.

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Before their first day

Every good onboarding process begins the day an employee accepts their offer of employment. Right after your recruitment process is complete, it is good practice for the recruiting or HR manager to send a warm welcome email or call the new team member to chat through what happens next. Follow up by sending any essential documents such as their contract of employment for signing and any key policies or forms to complete ahead of their start date.

Set them up on your HR system

Add your new employee's details to your HR system, if you haven't done so already during the recruitment process. Allow your new recruit to input their own details ahead of their first day. With access to your central HR system, they can start to 'meet' their team and build relationships prior to their first day, removing some of those early awkward interactions and ensuring any doubts or questions can be answered straight away. You can even upload company videos so new starters can get a real 'feel' for what they're going to experience, as well as stay up to date with your company news.

Prepare their workstation and assets

Every new employee will need their own designated workstation in your office along with the tools, assets and equipment they need to carry out their role.

Before your new starter arrives, make sure you've created them an email account, assigned them a door access card (if applicable) and ensure they have logins to the software or shared files they require. As an HR manager, it may be useful to check what their team members have access to in order to make sure nothing is overlooked.



System set up

Add the new employee to your internal systems and complete their profile.



Prepare assets

Source assets, set up a workstation and create system log ins.



Discuss role

Assign initial tasks and objectives for your new employee.



Complete paperwork

Send employee paperwork to complete and prepare new starter documents.

Doing this ahead of time will help to ensure an employee can hit the ground running with everything they need and makes them feel that they aren't an afterthought. And it gives you plenty of time to procure any assets that you don't have available, so they are delivered in good time.

Discuss the role and initial projects/task with their line manager

Spend some time with the new recruit's line manager to discuss their role, set goals and define any initial projects they can get involved in early on. Having a new team member floating around the team with no tasks to help out with is wasting their expertise and doesn't make the best early impression.

Get the paperwork out of the way

All too often, the excitement of starting a new job is wasted on policies, signing paperwork and reading documents for their onboarding.

Most HR software will allow you to send these documents via email and, where required, your new hire can sign them electronically. Not only does this give your employee the chance to read these important documents in their own time, but it frees up their first day to focus on immersing them in your company culture and helping them to settle in.

On their first day

Now that their first day is here, it is important that both HR and their line manager set aside time to accommodate the new starter. Acclimating your new employee should be your priority for today. The first day should help your new starter to find their feet, familiarise themselves with the working environment and meet their new colleagues and managers.

Induction

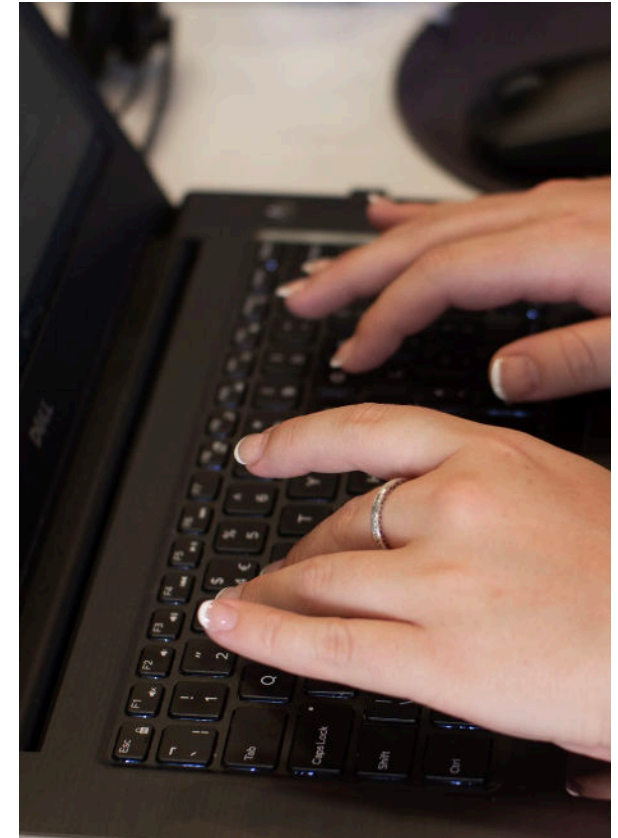
To ease your new team member into their job, a thorough induction session is key. This is often the first order of the day and involves helping a new employee to understand everything about your business.

From your business' mission, products or services and history to a run-through of health and safety rules, company procedures, values and policies; a good induction can help your new recruit to start getting acquainted with your business and settle in.

While inductions are mostly handled by HR, an employee's line manager also has a role to play in explaining any role-specific information, how their role fits into the business and any learning and development tasks that they need to complete.

Finalise any paperwork

If there is any outstanding paperwork or documents that need signatures or acknowledgement, now is the time to do it. Ensure you have everything you need to set them up on your HR and payroll system, contracts have been signed by both parties, and any visa or working requirements have been verified.



The faster you finalise the (boring bit!) paperwork, the faster you can focus on the engagement side of your onboarding process.

Introductions

Beyond HR, the team an employee is joining play a significant role in a new hire's engagement during the first few days and weeks of their tenure. After all, they will be working in close contact with them day in, day out.

Welcome them to the team and introduce them to their peers. Ideally, the team should have been made aware of and even met the new hire before their first day and briefed on the schedule for the day. Think about assigning a buddy (preferably a teammate rather than a manager) that your new hire will feel comfortable around and can act as a fountain of information about the office, culture and team. Your new hire will appreciate having an avenue of advice and someone they can work with on active projects. What's more, a buddy will ensure your new hire is swiftly oriented in your business, processes, facilities and much more.

Onboarding is a task not reserved just for HR and line managers; it should include your new hire's team too – at the very least.

Take them to lunch!

There is nothing more awkward than being the 'newbie' and eating lunch alone. After a morning of work chat, getting their team members to take their new colleague to lunch can be a great time to get to know them on a more personal level.



Our research found that after their first week on the job, new hires with buddies were 23% more satisfied with their overall onboarding experience compared to those without buddies. This trend continued at 90 days, with a 36% increase in satisfaction.

Harvard Business Review

Their first few weeks

Once your new hire has found their feet and settled in, it is prudent to look ahead to their first week. The first week is critical to your new hire's investment in your culture, values and business as a whole.

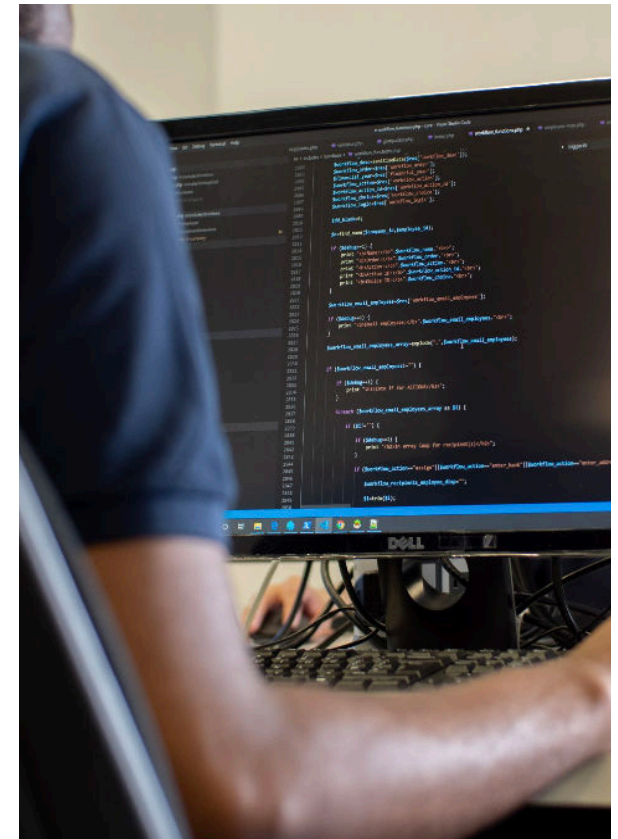
Ensuring your employees are set up for success requires clear goals and objectives. Throwing them in at the deep end will end in failure, so ensuring your new team member is able to 'ramp up' to meaningful contributions is key.

It is important that employees are immersed into their roles over a period of time. Starting a new role, learning new systems and understanding a new product or service can be overwhelming; so, don't expect them to know everything there is to know within a matter of weeks. It takes time.

Importantly, make sure they understand the impact of their work and how it fits in with the departmental and overarching business goals.

Prepare an agenda

Preparing a high-level agenda of your new hire's first week can make sure they don't get lost in and amongst their team members' busy schedules. Keeping enthusiasm high is the goal here and providing your new hire with an idea of what to expect, what they need to do and where to be. This will give them an idea of what to expect during these early days.



Define clear goals and objectives

In the early days of an employee joining your business, make sure they have clear goals and objectives to work towards. Work with their line manager to set out some goals for the next week and let them know exactly what they will be expected to achieve.

Doing this as part of the first week can help to ensure this task is not put off, or forgotten altogether. Arrange a time between the new hire and their line manager to get together and review expectations, ask and answer questions and set objectives together for long-term success.

If you have them in your business, these goals may form part of a probation review process.

Arrange any required training

Where necessary, the new hire should be trained on how to use the systems and tools required to carry out their role within these first few weeks. Whether it is mastering a new CRM system or receiving key training on your product or service; getting your new hire up to speed will ensure they can hit the ground running armed with all the knowledge they need.

Co-ordinate departmental deep-dives

Throughout an employee's first week, set up informal meetings with each department in your business.

This not only helps a new starter to meet colleagues outside of their direct team, but also provides helpful exposure to the functions and responsibilities of each team. Following these deep-dives, your new hire will know exactly what each department does, the members of each team does who they need to go to if they have a question or issue further down the line.



It's important to continue the onboarding process throughout the first six months (and even the first year) to set new hires up for long-term engagement.

Glassdoor

Check-in regularly

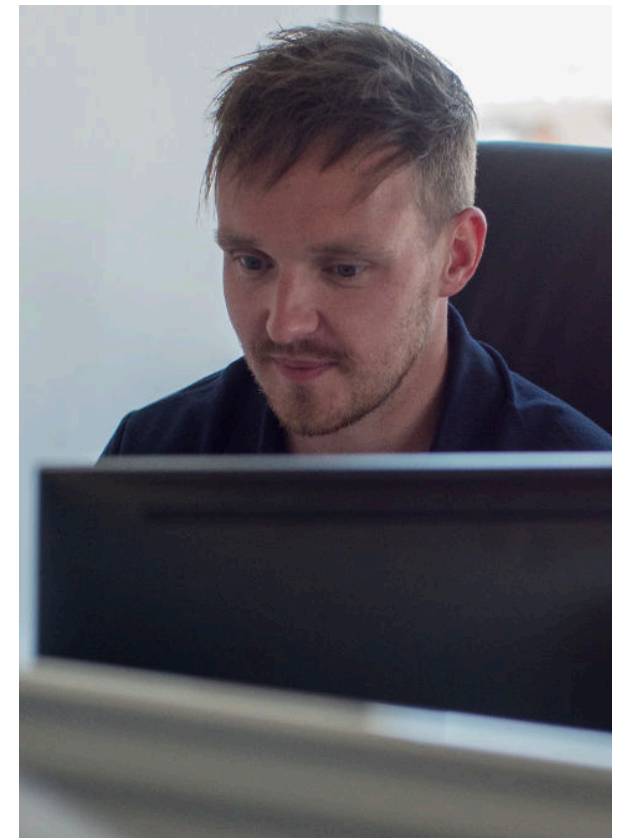
One of the most important parts of any new starter onboarding is frequent check-ins and clear communication. Schedule regular intervals to meet with your new hire and provide them with a platform to feedback, ask questions and check-in with their line manager.

If you can, try to wrap up every day of the first week with spending a few minutes with your new hire. Find out how things are going and whether they need any help or support. This will help to drive engagement from early on and demonstrates a level of respect and compassion for your new hire.

Remote onboarding

As competition for the best talent has led companies to look further afield, many companies have had to find ways to onboard their new hires remotely. What's more, the number of companies that have no physical location with employees based in different parts of the country, is on the rise too. To boot, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has seen a general increase in remote HR practices, onboarding included.

Whatever situation your business finds itself in, onboarding employees remotely is entirely possible. Ensuring your new starter receives the assets required for their role ahead of their first day means increased collaboration with IT and procurement to ensure they are ready to hit the ground running on day one. Stellar communication is crucial for remote onboarding, as is the need for a new starter to feel part of the team. Think about how you can immerse them in your culture; maybe a virtual get together, quiz or event to help your new hire settle in. Many of the aforementioned onboarding stages in this guide are still possible, albeit with a few obvious tweaks.



Learn more

Join hundreds of happy customers who use Natural HR every day to help them manage employees more effectively. Get in touch today to arrange a free one-to-one demo.

★★★★★ Based on reviews from  G2 |  Capterra

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The future will see us use Natural HR as an all-in-one system to remove all the manual processes, and we all absolutely love it! The system has benefitted us in so many ways and is a great platform.

— Olivia Anderson-Lynch, HR and Admin Officer

BCI Better Cotton Initiative

“

Natural HR ticked all the boxes. From an HR perspective, it has everything we need. Natural HR is an easy system to use and that's what we wanted.

— Anne Dyer,
HR Director

Breyer Group