



Smart Start

Onboarding for Success in Your New Job

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Get a Smart Start!

Once you have landed that great job it is critical to create an onboarding plan that will position you to “hit the ground running” and build a foundation for success.

The following onboarding kit gives you the key components that you need to build your plan. You’ve worked hard to get your new job now leverage your hard work and enthusiasm and get a smart start!

Onboarding Definition:

A process that positions an organization’s new employees with its vision, strategies goals and culture

Benefits of an onboarding plan:

- Provides foundation for long term success
- Decreases the time it takes to new employees to be productive
- Provides focus and direction for the first 90 days

Common Mistakes:

- Going too fast, too soon
- Not learning the culture
- Unrealistic expectations
- Not asking enough questions—working on assumptions
- Not creating a plan or strategy for first 90 days

Tips for success:

- Create a plan
- Identify key stakeholders; build relationships
- Be clear about your role and what is expected of you
- Be patient
- Ask questions
- Listen, observe

Key elements of a successful onboarding plan:

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organization• Business Unit• Function
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key stakeholders• Boss, peers, team members, internal/external customers
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onboarding vs. performance• Expectations• Cultural
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the organization work• How is success defined• What behaviors are rewarded and recognized

The following templates give you a foundation for your onboarding plan. It is important to begin building your plan as soon as you accept your new position.

Onboarding Plan Template

Knowledge

Building your knowledge base about your organization, business unit, function and specific role gives you a foundation for success. A strong knowledge base allows you to understand your role faster, make smarter decisions, understand the role your job plays within the organization and perform at a higher level.

The following table outlines the type of information you may want to gather in your first 90-plus days.

Understand your organization's:	Notes
Overall structure and how your role it fits into overall department/organization	
Business model	
Financials	
Competitors	
Language	
Decision making process	
Performance management process	

Relationships

As someone once said, “it is not what you know, but WHO you know”. This statement is true after you get the job, as well as in you job search. The first step is to identify the individuals that are important for you to have a positive relationship. Use the table below to help you list and keep track of the individuals who are key to your onboarding success.

Individual	Notes/Progress
Boss	
Peers	
Team members	
Internal customers	
External customers	
Others	

Feedback

How do you know if you are headed down the right path if no one gives you input and direction? Most of us “assume” that we are doing a good job unless someone tells us otherwise. A lack of feedback is the most common reason it takes new employees longer to get up to speed and/or derail during the first months on the job.

Use the following as a guide to gather feedback about how you are doing early in the onboarding process.

Sample Opening and Questions: As you know I am new to the organization/my role. I would appreciate your feedback on how I am doing so far.	
Overall, what would you suggest I do more of to learn about the organization and how it is different from my previous experiences?	
What can I do to make sure I am communicating effectively?	
What additional advice do you have for me that will enable me to focus on delivering results?	
What relationships should I focus on building?	
What should I start and stop doing?	



Culture

Each organization has a unique culture. When we are new to a culture it can feel strange and even uncomfortable. It can be challenging to figure out all of the “unwritten rules of the road”. Many times we do not know these rules until we unknowingly break one of them!

As you go through your first months on the job, answer the following questions, through conversations and observations. The answers will give you a solid understanding of the organization’s culture and how to be successful within the organization.

Question	Responses
What words would you use to describe the company?	
What does the company value—what is important here?	
How are decisions made?	
How long is someone considered new?	
What three pieces of advice would you give me to be successful?	