Onboarding: A Strategic Partner Model for Bringing About Cultural Change

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Presenter

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Implementing a comprehensive onboarding model that includes all levels of the organization can:

- Position **HR as a strategic partner**
- Positively affect **organizational culture**
- Help the institution **achieve initiatives** as aligned with the **mission and vision** of the institution
Onboarding is the *process* by which new employees become *fully integrated members* of the organization.

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
Purpose of Onboarding

To help new employees reach higher levels of productivity, faster

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
How long does onboarding last?

A. 1 Week
B. 30 days
C. 90 days
D. 1 year
Onboarding begins at the **time of offer** and continues through the **first year** of employment

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
Adapted from: The Difference Between Orientation and Onboarding and Why Organizations Can't Afford Not to Onboard Hampel, B. & Lamont, E. (2011)

Onboarding
At the end, employee is fully integrated

Orientation
At the end, employee is still new

Set-up
At the end, employee is still new

Overarching Process
Onboarding spans the first year of employment

Sub-set of Onboarding
Event or series of events
Orientation sessions; introduction to the unit, team, job

Sub-set of Onboarding
Tasks and Action Items
Direct Deposit, W-4, I-9, Benefits Enrollment, Email, Phone, Desk, Supplies

Adapted from: The Difference BetweenOrientation and Onboarding and Why Organizations Can’t Afford Not to Onboard Hampel, B. & Lamont, E. (2011)
Employee Turnover is Costly

- 30-50% of the annual salary of entry level employees
- 150% of middle level employees
- up to 400% for specialized, high level employees

Why Onboarding?

Turnover Timing – National Averages in Corporate Sector

- Half of hourly workers will leave within the first 120 days
- Half of senior outside hires will leave within 18 months

Why Onboarding?

The *decision* to leave is usually made in the first 90 days.

New Hire
Remorse

Onboarding Outcomes

- Faster *time-to-productivity*
- Increased employee *retention*
- Higher levels of job *satisfaction*
- Lowered *stress*
- Helps the new hire *confirm their decision to accept* the job offer

Through the strategic implementation of a comprehensive onboarding model at CU Boulder, cultural change is being affected.
Comprehensive Model

Activation
Orientation
Integration

CU Boulder’s Three-Tiered Model
The research of Lilith Christiansen and Mark Stein has influenced our campus onboarding program which encompasses the entire first year of employment.

Onboarding is a process, not an event

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
Onboarding Philosophy: Four Pillars

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
Onboarding Philosophy: Four Phases

Prepare → Orient → Integrate → Excel

Offer Acceptance → Close of First Year

Reference: Stein & Christiansen (2010) Successful Onboarding
Onboarding Program Considerations

- Sponsorship from campus leaders
- Research into **Best Practices**
- *Campus Needs Assessment*
- Provide Onboarding Tools and Resources
- *Learning Opportunities* for New Employees
POLL QUESTION

What is your level of readiness to strategically partner with your institution through an onboarding initiative?

A. Considering the Concept
B. In the Development Stages
C. Currently Improving our Program
D. Successfully partnering with our institution/college/department
University of Colorado Boulder

Major employer in Boulder County

- 31,861+ Undergraduate and Graduate students
- 2,150 Academic Faculty
- 2,055 Research Faculty
- 800+ Visiting Scholars from 61 Countries
- 4,000+ Administrative Staff
- 300+ Departments
- Decentralized HR
- No Automated Onboarding Platform
Organizational Culture Shift

Top-down and Bottom-up

Shared responsibility for onboarding occurs at all levels of the institution
Affecting Cultural Change:
Steps for Program Implementation

1. **Research** Best Practices
2. **Campus Needs Assessment**
3. Sponsorship from Campus **Leaders**
4. Program **Design**
5. Program **Launch**
6. **Ongoing** Improvement
1. Research Best Practices

- Literature Review
- Benchmark to Peer Institutions
- Interview other Institutions
- Historical Practices at home Institution
2. Campus Needs Assessment

CU Boulder’s Results

- Qualitative
  - Focus Groups
  - Interviews

- Quantitative
  - Surveys
  - Data Queries

- Supervisors lacked understanding of what is expected of them when onboarding new employees
- Campus needed tools and resources
- New employees felt disconnected from the campus culture, mission, and vision
3. Sponsorship from Campus Leaders

- **Critical** to program success
- Alignment with campus vision and mission
- Supports campus *strategic imperatives:*
  - Shape Tomorrow’s Leaders
  - Be the Top University for Innovation
  - Positively Impact Humanity
4. Program Design
Components of CU Boulder’s Model

A. New Employee’s Experience
B. Hiring Manager’s Experience
C. Tools and Resources for departments
D. Strategic Communications
E. Technology
A. New Employee’s Experience

New Employee Welcome Experience (Orientation)

- **Full-Day Campus Tour & learning event**
  - History, values, traditions,
  - Initiatives, governance & organizational structure
  - Campus architecture and layout
  - Perks and programs for employees

CU Discover Series

- Monthly *lunch and learn* sessions
- In-depth introduction to campus operations and initiatives
Help employees understand where they work – demystify it!
A. New Employee’s Experience

Web-based resources
• Toolkit: checklists, guides, information
• Central “hub” for new employee information

Targeted Email Communications
• Pre-start welcome message
• “Drip” campaign with emails at Day 1, 30, 60, 90, 180, 360
• Just-in-time information
B: Hiring Manager’s Experience

Web-based resources

• *Onboarding Toolkit* – checklists, templates
• Campus onboarding philosophy
• Best Practices guidance

• Hiring Managers receive the onboarding *toolkit* via email with every new hire
In-Person Guidance

• **Training Courses:**
  - Employee Management & Compliance Essentials
  - The Highly Effective Manager

• **Consultation Services**
  - 1:1 Guidance for supervisors as needed
  - Group Workshops for departments

• **Informational Briefings**
Consultation Services

- College, division, *department-specific onboarding procedures, processes and programs*

- College or divisional *orientation program development*
Resources for HR Liaisons & Administrative Support Personnel

- **Web-based** resources
- Quarterly meetings
- Informational briefings
- Just-in-time **communications**
Onboarding Communications

- Campus news
- Email campaigns
- Informational briefings
- Web content
- Talking points
- Just-in-time email messages
Technology to Support Onboarding

- Self-service portal for:
  - W-4, Direct Deposit, I-9, Benefits Enrollment
- Web checklists
- Automated emails
- Timely provisioning of credentials
- Online learning platform
Affecting Cultural Change:
Steps for Program Implementation

1. **Research** Best Practices
2. **Campus Needs Assessment**
3. **Sponsorship from Campus Leaders**
4. **Program Design**
5. **Program Launch**
6. **Ongoing Improvement**
5. Program Launch

Following change-management best-practices:

- Begin with **pilot**
- Make **adjustments**
- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate**
- **Full-scale launch!**
6. Ongoing Improvement

Program Evaluation

- Surveys
- Participation numbers
- Web and communications analytics
- Consultation hours
- Metrics
  - Turnover/retention rates
  - Promotion rates

Make adjustments as you continue program
What are some steps you can take to move to improve your institution’s onboarding efforts?

• Please share one or two ideas in your chat box
Affecting Cultural Change

Increased

- Employee engagement
- Retention
- Productivity
- Ability to achieve institutional goals
Implementing a comprehensive onboarding model that includes all levels of the organization can:

- Position **HR as a strategic partner**
- Positively affect **organizational culture**
- Help the institution **achieve initiatives** as aligned with its **mission and vision**
Ask Us Anything: Onboarding

**What:** Facilitated online discussion about onboarding

**When:** March 18-22

**Where:** The General Discussion Community in CUPA-HR Connect

**Why:** Crowdsourc awesome ideas for onboarding new faculty and staff

www.cupahr.org/connect/ask-us-anything
Thank You
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References:


Thank You!

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