One of the most challenging and expensive things an organization can do is to bring someone new on board. The average cost for hiring and training a new employee can exceed $10,000, not including salary, benefits, advertising or recruiting fees so ensuring that they get a good start and are fully ready to be assimilated into the new organization is crucial to their success. Having a solid on-boarding plan can increase engagement with their new company before an employee even sets foot in the door. The first 90 days on the job can be the most challenging both for an employee and the organization as they adjust and get used to each other and the new ways of doing business.

Successful Pre-Boarding Sets the Stage

While on-boarding starts when an employee starts their tenure, pre-boarding may begin before the ink is dry on the acceptance letter. The application and review process can also contribute to the feeling that the employee is starting off on the right foot and with an organization that they can support strongly. Highly-qualified candidates are in high demand, and assuring that your team sticks to the interviewing and decision process can be a big deciding factor for the candidate. Changing jobs is difficult and stressful both for the new employee and their family—especially if things like relocation are required in order to get them in place to get started.

Pre-boarding can help new employees feel at home

You can use tools such as a welcome video with a quick office tour that can be customized with colleagues welcoming their new teammate, as well as a glimpse of their new office space if possible. If the employee is moving from a different area of the country, include a little treat or gift from a local vendor to get them in the mood for the move. Including an organizational chart and details on their new team can help a new hire hit the ground running and have a strong understanding of the unique organizational structure.

Make-or-Break Point: On-Boarding

Employees may be thrilled with the ease of the process up until the moment they walk in the building. If everything falls apart into chaos—or worse yet, the new employee is ignored—then that can set a tone for their entire tenure with the organization or may even cause them to rethink their decision to join the organization. Heading this off early can be done with a few simple steps that will help your new employee feel valued from Day 1.

Step 1 – Schedule their first day and beyond. An on-boarding schedule with specific details such as who the employee will be meeting with can help them feel welcome and less disoriented. The first 90 days should be covered with any necessary reviews or deadlines clearly marked.

Step 2 – Provide a welcome packet with critical information. Everything from work hours to parking spaces to dress codes and the location of key areas of the building are great to include, as well as any passwords needed to access their computer system. Having all this information together can be invaluable.

Step 3 – Create their nest. Employees need to know that they have been anticipated

and having their computer, phone, necessary office accessories such as staplers, pens, paper and more can help them feel that they are entering a work space ready for them to begin producing.

Step 4 – Use the buddy system. Whether you call it a buddy, or a mentor, or a partner—you need to have one person specifically assigned to help get your new employee up to speed and that can answer any general questions about the organization or structure that are asked. Another trick is to incentivize the buddy with a bonus if the new hire is employed after 6 months.

Step 5 – Foster new connections. Leaving your work family is hard; make it a little easier for your new hire by scheduling some team lunches and having a series of individuals queued up to actively engage them in the first few weeks.

Avoid the post-hire shock that employees may have by helping them get started and up to speed quickly. Offering a solid support network may be enough to bring some employees on board quickly and efficiently, while others may require a bit more hand-holding in order to feel a part of the organization. The last thing you want is for your hard-earned new employee to feel alienated or alone in their new work home, and you certainly don't want to take the chance that they will immediately leave. Be on the lookout for signs that they are not assimilating well, and take swift action to bring them back into the fold.