

New Job? Go Hire A Transition Coach

MOST COMPANIES today do not have a formal program of indoctrinating new executives. And not surprisingly, a recent survey by the Corporate Executive Board's Recruiting Roundtable found that 89% of new hires across enterprise organizations did

not have the optimum level of knowledge and tools necessary to do their job.

Typically, organizations that do have so-called "onboarding" programs in place focus on getting junior hires up to speed in their new position, learning responsibilities and expectations as well as the company's culture. This strategy is equally important for newly appointed executives whether they are promoted internally or from the outside. More often, however, when new leaders come on board, they do not have the necessary information, tools or a plan to make them successful in their new role.

Therefore, instead of the anticipated productivity gains expected with a management change, a business might, at least initially, experience poor financial results, decreased employee morale and costly turnovers. On the other hand, if organizations use the right success strategies when transitioning leaders, they will not only prevent failure but will also create additional value by accelerating the new leader's effectiveness—thus having a more immediate positive impact on the business.

The first step to managing an effective job transition is to provide newly appointed leaders with guidance on how to take charge in their new roles through the development of a transition plan. This plan can make a major difference in the way a new leader performs in the new assignment and should begin with Transition Coaching, a proven, integrated and systematic process that engages new leaders in the company's corporate strategy and culture to accelerate productivity. Transition Coaching helps a new leader immediately offer positive economic value to the company, while preventing mistakes that can lead to failure and harm the business.

The system functions as a roadmap to help newcomers navigate the challenges of transition, the existing organizational structure, strategy and culture. But equally important, the new leader's own personality traits, management style and professional skills must be considered. Here, a transition coach can act

as a sounding board to assist in diagnosing the new situation and to assess his or her own skills.

Next comes a transition plan to define critical actions which must take place during the first 120 days to establish credibility, secure early wins and position the leader and team for long-term success. A coach can help develop such a plan, but Transition Coaching doesn't end there. Regular meetings with tutorials, skills practice role-plays, on-the-job actions, and ongoing feedback are all important follow-up steps to provide the new leader with continuous one-on-one support.

After six to eight weeks, it's worthwhile to do a pulse check of key players including the boss, direct reports, peers and other stakeholders to gather early impressions and offer feedback so the new leader can make any course corrections needed. The entire process allows a leader to take charge of the new situation, get the information he or she needs to properly set high expectations for the future, and achieve alignment with both the team and the larger organization, in order to move the business forward.

By incorporating Transition Coaching into the leadership development processes, your company will be making an investment that will result in cost-savings over the long term. Whether promoting an internal high-potential candidate or welcoming a new hire, transition coaching sets new leaders on a course for success, eliminating the need to repeatedly fill top positions and incur a loss of productivity. The company's decision to accelerate the transition of new leaders with a proven approach will not only drive improved business results but also allow the company to meet customer needs and win competitive challenges in the marketplace.

By Ronald Bossert

**Most new leaders
don't have the tools
or plan to be successful
in their new role.**

Ron Bossert is senior vice president of transition leadership at Applied Research Corporation a human resource consultancy based in Metuchen, N.J. Earlier, he worked in executive development at Johnson & Johnson. Contact: www.arlead.com.