

Alignment and Assimilation Should be Part of the Hiring Package

By Ronald Bossert, D.Ed.



Amazingly, most companies do not have formal alignment and assimilation or onboarding programs. A recent survey conducted by the Corporate Executive Board's Recruiting Roundtable found that 89 percent of new hires across enterprise organizations indicated that they did not have the optimum level of knowledge and tools necessary to do their job. Candidates typically go through a rigorous recruiting process, and then their first day on the job consists of filling out forms, taking ID pictures, and learning more don'ts than do's about the organization.

Be advised that welcoming new hires in this fashion could have them running for the door before they ever make it to their desk! While first-day fundamentals are important, it is also equally imperative that new hires receive the information that will help them gain a clear understanding of their new responsibilities and accompanying expectations, as well as the company's mission, values, and culture. Candidates turn to recruiters to place them in positions where they can be successful, and organizations utilize recruiters to help them select the best candidate for the position. Ensuring the hiring organization has an established, effective process for onboarding new hires validates the company's brand and can set the stage for a win-win situation for all parties.

Expectations are always high when new hires, especially new leaders, come on board. If organizations use the right success strategies when welcoming new hires, they will not only prevent failure but will also create additional value by accelerating

their effectiveness – thus having a more immediate positive impact on the business. Aligning and assimilating new hires through an established process gives them the ability to navigate their way through the challenges of the transition and increase their understanding of the existing organizational structure, strategy and culture of the company.

The first step to aligning and assimilating new hires is to provide them with guidance on how to take charge in their new roles. For new leaders, this should also include the development of a customized transition plan that will prepare them to take on new and significant business responsibilities. This plan should leverage information gained from assessments conducted during the recruiting process of the leader's personality traits, management style and professional skills. For organizations that do not have the internal resources to provide one-on-one support, the plan might also include sessions with a trained transition coach who can provide the new leader with additional guidance to accelerate the transition period and avoid costly mistakes.

Quite frankly, all hires should be provided with a plan that defines several critical actions that must be completed during the first few months in the position. Organizations should take advantage of the enthusiasm of new hires by allowing them to get to work as quickly as possible, thereby securing early wins, establishing credibility and invigorating their team. For new leaders, the plan should also incor-

porate tutorials, skills practice role-plays, on-the-job actions, and ongoing feedback to provide the new leader with continuous one-on-one support. A transition coach can help with these activities and also take a pulse check of the key players including the boss, direct reports, peers and other stakeholders after two to three months to gather early impressions so that the new leader can make an early course correction if needed. For all new hires, the entire transition process should be designed to allow them to take charge of the new situation, get the information they need to properly set high expectations for the future, and achieve alignment with the team, as well as the larger organization, to move the business forward.

By incorporating an established alignment and assimilation process, the company is making an investment in its team that will result in cost-savings over the long-term. Whether promoting an internal high potential or onboarding a new hire, a transition plan will help set them on a course for success, eliminating the need to repeatedly fill positions and incur a loss of productivity. The company's decision to accelerate the transition of new hires 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. □

Editor's Note: Ronald Bossert is the senior vice president of Transition Leadership Services at Applied Research Corporation (www.arclead.com), an HR consulting firm. Previously the director of Management Education and Development at Johnson & Johnson, Bossert is considered to be a pioneer in and one of the most prominent experts in this field.