ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES:
MAXIMIZING SUCCESS

By Talya N. Bauer, Ph.D

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FOREWORD

According to recent data, more than 25 percent of the U.S. population experiences some type of career transition each year. Unfortunately, many transitions are not successful.
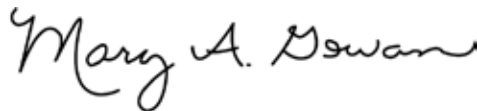
Half of all hourly workers leave new jobs in the first four months, and half of senior outside hires fail within 18 months. Clearly, there is room for improvement.

An important way leaders can combat these challenges is to implement a robust employee onboarding program. Onboarding helps new hires adjust to the social and performance aspects of their jobs so they can quickly become productive, contributing members of the organization. This report, *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success,* will provide the tools you need to create an effective onboarding process in your company.

In 2004, the SHRM Foundation created this Effective Practice Guidelines series for busy HR professionals like you. It's a challenge for practitioners with limited time to keep up with the latest research results. By integrating research findings on what works and expert opinion on how to conduct effective HR practice into a single publication, we make theory and practice accessible to you.

Recent reports in this series include *The Search for Executive Talent, Employment Downsizing and Its Alternatives, Recruiting and Attracting Talent,* and *Human Resource Strategy.* This report is the 12th in the series. Subject matter experts write the reports, and the drafts are then reviewed by both academics and practitioners to ensure that the material is research-based, comprehensive and presented in an easy-to-use format. We also include a "Suggested Readings" section as a convenient reference tool. All reports are available online for free download at www.shrm.org /foundation.

This series supports our vision for the SHRM Foundation to "maximize the impact of the HR profession on organizational decision-making and performance by promoting innovation, education, research and the use of research-based knowledge." Overall, the Foundation has a strategic focus on initiatives designed to help organizations maximize leadership talent. We are confident that the Effective Practice Guidelines series takes us one step closer to making our vision a reality. Please let us know how we are doing!

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Research and conventional wisdom both suggest that employees get about 90 days to prove themselves in a new job. The faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission.

ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES: MAXIMIZING SUCCESS

After effective recruitment and selection, one of the most important ways that organizations can improve the effectiveness of their talent management systems is through the strategic use of onboarding. Onboarding is the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly. This should always be a priority for HR departments, because in the United States, every year more than 25 percent of the working population experiences career transitions.[1] In *Fortune* 500 companies alone, about 500,000 managers take on new roles each year, and overall, managers begin new jobs every two to four years. Unfortunately, in the midst of all these transitions:

- Half of all senior outside hires fail within 18 months in a new position.[3]

- Half of all hourly workers leave new jobs within the first 120 days.[4]

This report will explain why onboarding is so important, where it fits into the larger HR context, how HR managers can proactively manage onboarding and, finally, how new employees can help facilitate their own onboarding process.

A RANGE OF APPROACHES

Research and conventional wisdom both suggest that employees get about 90 days to prove themselves in a new job. Every organization has its own version of the complex process through which new hires learn attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors required to function effectively. Academic researchers who study onboarding also use the term *organizational socialization*.[5] No matter what the terminology, the bottom line is that the faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission.

The formality and comprehensiveness of onboarding programs varies widely across organizations, and those considered "best in class" for onboarding have more formal onboarding programs.[6] For example, starting with a first-day welcome, global beauty company L'Oreal says, "Our aim is to develop successful, committed and mutually beneficial relationships with each of our employees."[7] The company supports onboarding with a two-year, six-part integration program called "L'Oreal Fit." The program includes:

- Training and roundtable discussions.

- Meetings with key insiders.

- On-the-job learning supported by line management.

- Individual mentoring and HR support.

- Field and product experiences such as site visits and shadowing programs.

Approaches to onboarding range from quite structured and systematic—as in the case of L'Oreal—to the "sink or swim" strategy, in which new employees often struggle to figure out precisely what is expected and to understand the norms of their new workplace.

One of the first things HR managers should consider is whether their firm is served best by *informal* or *formal* onboarding.

- *Informal onboarding* refers to the process by which an employee learns about his or her new job without an explicit organizational plan.

- *Formal onboarding* refers to a written set of coordinated policies and procedures that assist an employee in adjusting to his or her new job in terms of both tasks and socialization.[8]

Research shows that organizations that engage in formal onboarding by implementing step-by-step programs for new employees to teach them what their roles are, what the norms of the company are and how they are to behave are more effective than those that do not.[9] Again, as in the case of L'Oreal, formal onboarding provides a fixed sequence of activities for new employees—a sequence that is timed carefully—as well as help from organizational role models.

Some other variables HR managers will want to look at when analyzing their firm's onboarding procedures are sequencing, numbers of new hires grouped together and how supportive the company is—an intangible that is always difficult to measure.[10]

THE FOUR C'S

Onboarding has four distinct levels, the Four C's:[11]

- *Compliance* is the lowest level and includes teaching employees basic legal and policy-related rules and regulations.

- *Clarification* refers to ensuring that employees understand their new jobs and all related expectations.

- *Culture* is a broad category that includes providing employees with a sense of organizational norms— both formal and informal.

- *Connection* refers to the vital interpersonal relationships and information networks that new employees must establish.

The building blocks of successful onboarding are often called the Four C's.

The degree to which each organization leverages these four building blocks determines its overall onboarding strategy, with most firms falling into one of three levels.

LEVEL 1: PASSIVE ONBOARDING

Almost all organizations naturally cover compliance as part of formal onboarding. For firms that engage in Passive Onboarding, or Level 1, some role clarification may be given, but neither

Increase Job Satisfaction
• Jump start relationships

Increase Performance
• Clarify delivery expectations
• Clarify objectives

Innoculate Against Turnover
• Provide support through feedback, coaching and follow-up

Onboarding helps new employees adjust to their jobs by establishing better relationships to increase satisfaction, clarifying expectations and objectives to improve performance, and providing support to help reduce unwanted turnover.

| Connection |
| Culture |
| Clarification |
| Compliance |

The building blocks of successful onboarding are often called the Four C's.

Culture nor Connection is addressed. Some informal ways of guiding new employees in terms of Culture and Connection may have developed over time, but no one—including HR staff—is coordinating the task to maximize onboarding success. If your firm is engaged in Passive Onboarding, you are likely to view onboarding as a checklist of unrelated tasks to be completed. Research shows that approximately 30 percent of organizations—large, medium and small—work at this level.[12] Passive Onboarding can be functional, but it is certainly unsystematic.

LEVEL 2: HIGH POTENTIAL ONBOARDING

When compliance and clarification are well covered by a firm's formal onboarding practices and some culture and connection mechanisms are in place, Level 2—High Potential Onboarding—has been reached. In these organizations—about 50 percent of all firms—the complete process has not yet been established in a systematic way across the organization.

Onboarding Strategy Level	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
1 Passive	YES	SOME	LITTLE/NONE	LITTLE/NONE
2 High Potential	YES	YES	SOME	SOME
3 Proactive	YES	YES	YES	YES

IBM's "Assimilation Process"

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, IBM executives recognized that the firm had some success with new employees, but it was stuck at Level 2—High Potential Onboarding. With increased hiring as a result of restructuring and more job mobility, the new-hire population became crucial. The new IBM philosophy boiled down to a simple concept—so much money, time and resources are spent on recruiting and hiring that it is essential to hang onto new employees.

Realizing that new hires have different needs than longer-tenured employees, IBM created the **Assimilation Process**, which consists of three steps: *affirming, beginning* and *connecting*. Clear timelines for each step became part of the new process.

- **Affirming** occurs prior to a new employee's start date and includes welcoming the new employee, preparing a workstation and assigning a coach.

- **Beginning** occurs during the employee's first 30 days. On the first day, strict rules are in place to ensure that the new worker is met in person, introduced to the team, has a functional area in which to work, completes paperwork and is introduced an intranet onboarding platform, known as "Your IBM." During this crucial first month, managers make sure that any needed resources are available, clarify roles and responsibilities, encourage the newcomer, and schedule "check in" times to be sure that the new employee is making progress with "Your IBM."

- **Connecting** occurs during the employee's first year on the job and consists of three phases. After two months, an "ask coach" checks in to make sure things are on track. At this stage, networking is a priority, so the employee is encouraged to find interest communities within the company. Between four and six months into the newcomer's tenure, the focus becomes his or her accomplishments and understanding IBM's way of getting things done. By the end of one year, IBM considers new employees to be fully integrated. One of the most valuable elements of the Assimilation Process is the individual assigned as a new employee's coach—a friend to answer questions, reinforce concepts, share processes and tools, and help transmit the intangible cultural values of the firm.

With the new process in place, IBM is now an example of a Level 3 onboarding organization.

LEVEL 3: PROACTIVE ONBOARDING

All four building blocks are formally addressed in Level 3, Proactive Onboarding. If your firm is systematically organizing onboarding with a strategic *human resource management* approach, you are at Level 3. Only about 20 percent of organizations achieve this level.[13]

USING NEW TOOLS TO KEEP ONBOARDING ON TRACK

W. K. Kellogg, founder of the 100-year-old Kellogg Company, famously said, "I'll invest my money in people." In line with this philosophy, in the 21st century Kellogg still sees attracting, selecting, engaging and retaining the best talent as critical to the company's business success.[14] Feedback from internal surveys indicated a need to improve Kellogg's onboarding process, so the company put a transition framework in place. The framework includes new ways to add value, connect and build relationships, navigate unwritten rules to get things done, and review performance and progress. Specifically, Kellogg uses new employee onboarding training, new manager assimilations, employee resource groups and a 30-60-90 day checklist.

Kellogg's transition web site is a focal point of onboarding revitalization. On the web site, employees can assess their own onboarding status by using the *onboarding track record tool*. This tool analyzes potential strengths and weaknesses of past onboarding activities, so it becomes easier to pinpoint areas for improvement of a formal onboarding plan.

To better understand your organization's onboarding level, you may want to try an inventory like the Onboarding Track Record see page 5. This will identify strengths and weaknesses, help you analyze your current situation, and establish where you would like to be in the future. Other helpful tools are available later in this report.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES OF ONBOARDING: NEW EMPLOYEE ADJUSTMENT

Researchers have identified four major levers—related to both job roles and social environment—that organizations can use to help new employees maximize their onboarding success.

The first lever for successful onboarding is *self-efficacy*, or self-confidence, in job performance. To the degree that a new employee feels confident in doing the job well, he or she will be more motivated and eventually more successful than less confident counterparts.[15] Organizations should target specific onboarding programs to help boost employees' confidence as they navigate new organizational waters. Self-efficacy has been shown to have an impact on organizational commitment, satisfaction and turnover.[16]

ONBOARDING TOOL #1: ANALYZING YOUR TRACK RECORD		
Step	+ Successes	− Opportunities to Improve
1. Understand how onboarding can take the organization to the next level.		
2. Clarify how the new employee will meet organization's needs.		
3. Align stakeholders' expectations of new employee.		
4. Create a powerful slate of potential candidates.		
5. Evaluate candidates against the recruiting brief.		
6. Make the offer and close the sale in a way that reinforces your leadership message.		
7. Co-create a personal onboarding plan with each new employee.		
8. Manage the announcement cascade to set the new employee up for success.		
9. Do what is required for the new employee to be ready, eager and able to do real work on Day 1.		
10. Manage first impressions both ways.		
11. Create conditions for new employees to work well early on with those who were most helpful.		
12. Give your new employees the resources and support they need to deliver better results faster.		
13. Follow through to ensure ongoing adjustment and success.		
Other		
Used with permission from Bradt, G., & Vonnegut, M. (2009). *Onboarding: How to get your new employees up to speed in half the time.* NY: John Wiley.		

A second task-related lever is *role clarity*—how well a new employee understands his or her role and expectations.[17] Performance will suffer if expectations are ambiguous. In fact, a study of employees in the United States and United Kingdom found that businesses lose an estimated $37 billion each year as a result of employees not understanding their jobs.[18] Therefore, role clarity (or its flipside, role ambiguity) is a good indication of how well-adjusted a new employee is, and measuring role clarity can help organizations stop potential performance problems before they get worse, leading to poor job attitudes.[19] If new employees say they understand the roles they occupy, that obviously indicates higher role clarity.[20] Researchers have also studied *role conflict* in new employees, with lower role conflict indicating more positive onboarding outcomes.[21] Overall, measures of role clarity are among the most consistent predictors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment during the onboarding process.

Social integration is the third lever for successful onboarding.[22] Meeting and starting to work with organizational "insiders" is an important aspect of learning about any organization. In addition, new employees need to feel socially comfortable and accepted by their peers and superiors. Research has long found acceptance by peers to be an indicator of adjustment.[23] According to one estimate, 60 percent of managers who fail to onboard successfully cite failure to establish effective working relationships as a primary reason.[24]

Integration into one's work group is positively related to commitment

Selection	+	Self-Efficacy	+	Role Clarity	+	Social Integration	+	Knowledge of Culture	=	Successful Onboarding

After selection and entry, new employees go through multiple adjustments.
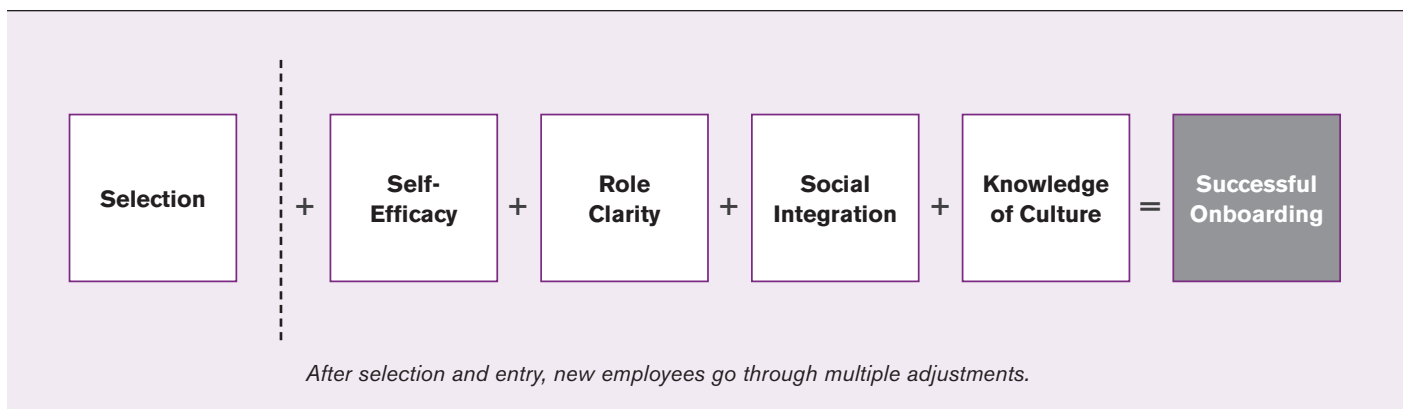
and turnover.[25] And high-quality relationships with leaders and other team members undoubtedly are related to favorable onboarding outcomes,[26] including performance and job satisfaction.[27] New employees should expect help from HR staff, but they also must *facilitate their own onboarding* by actively building strong relationships. Useful tactics include:

- Making time to engage in small talk with colleagues.

- Arranging informal social interactions, such as lunches or coffee breaks.

- Participating in voluntary company functions.

- Trying to build a relationship with a supervisor by taking on new responsibilities and successfully completing assignments.

Knowledge of and fit within an organizational culture is the fourth aspect of onboarding. Every company has a unique culture, so helping new hires navigate that culture—and their place within it—is essential.[28] Understanding an organization's politics, goals and values, and learning the firm's unique language are all important indicators of employee

adjustment and down the line are associated with commitment, satisfaction and turnover.[29]

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES OF ONBOARDING: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Beyond the short-term issues related to employees' initial adjustments, many long-term outcomes of onboarding affect a firm's bottom line. When surveyed, organizations perceive effective onboarding as improving retention rates (52 percent), time to productivity (60 percent) and overall customer satisfaction (53 percent).[30] For employees, long-term outcomes of good onboarding include *job satisfaction* and *organizational commitment.*[31]

New hires should help an organization accomplish specific goals, and the degree to which they do this can be helped or hindered by onboarding.[32] So *performance* is also an important long-term outcome of onboarding. A study of the onboarding process at Texas Instruments found that employees who went through an improved onboarding program were fully productive *two*

months faster than employees in a traditional program.

The ultimate failure of onboarding is the withdrawal of potentially good employees. Losing an employee who is a poor fit or not performing well may be a fine outcome, but losing employees because they are confused, feel alienated or lack confidence indicates inadequate onboarding.[33] Simply put, good onboarding leads to good retention rates. At Corning Glass Works, new employees who attended a structured orientation program were 69 percent more likely to remain at the company up to three years.[34]

In summary, research on new employee onboarding[35] shows that when onboarding is done correctly, it leads to:

- Higher job satisfaction.

- Organizational commitment.

- Lower turnover.

- Higher performance levels.

- Career effectiveness.

- Lowered stress.

Case Study: Effective Onboarding and Integration Following an Acquisition

By Renee' Parratore, MA-HRIR, manager, HR, and Darin Artman, Ph.D., director, HR, Bristol-Myers Squibb

When Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), a mid-sized pharmaceutical company with nearly 30,000 employees, acquired Medarex, a biotech company of fewer than 500 employees, in September of 2009, our key objective was to onboard and integrate employees into one organization effectively. Following a talent assessment and placement process, approximately 100 Medarex employees would be transferring into BMS positions within a five-month period. The onboarding approach focused on two dimensions—operational integration and cultural integration—which built on the existing processes for external new hires while enhancing processes that would make a positive impact on our newest biotech employees.

Operational Integration

One factor in making a strong first impression on a new employee is to provide functioning workspace and tools on Day 1. Teams from Finance, Facilities, Information Technology, Compliance and Human Resources were tasked with preparing all "behind-the-scenes" processes for the influx of 100 new employees over the course of four months. Keeping in mind that many of our processes require actions from both the hiring manager and the new employee, we generated a "Preparation Checklist," which described the key activities needed beginning 30 days prior to the selected start date. Training was provided to all hiring managers, and pre-Day 1 communication to the employees outlined clear expectations of the integration process.
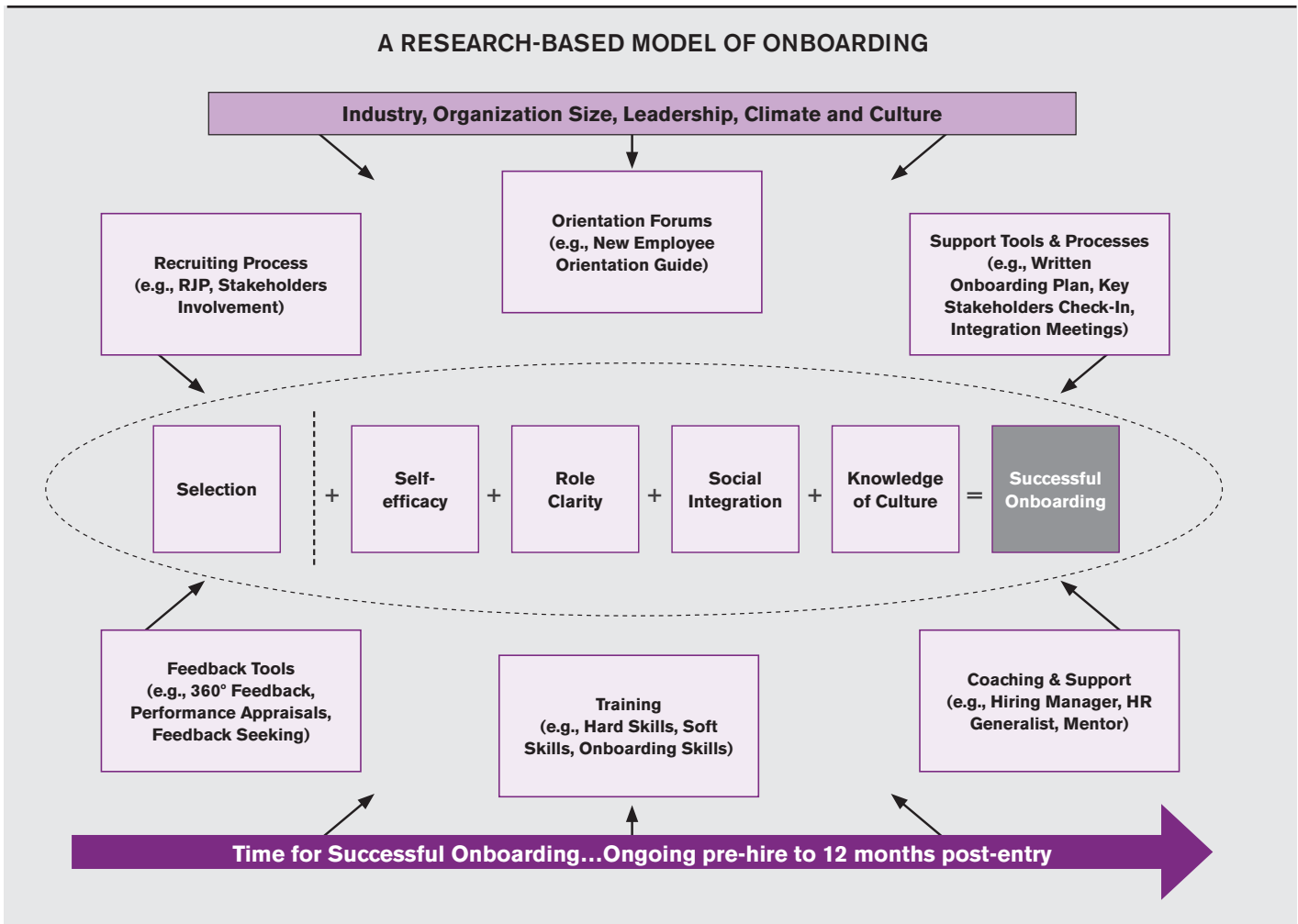
Cultural Integration

Any employee moving from a small company to a larger, highly matrixed organization will need time to assimilate. However, for this important group of employees, BMS wanted to accelerate the process for both managers and employees. An analysis was completed to compare the Medarex biotech culture with the BMS biopharmaceutical culture in order to identify the key areas of significant change. Managers were then trained in mitigating actions to support the integration.

Following the manager training, our focus shifted to the newly onboarded employees. In the first of two "Cross Cultural Awareness" sessions, a diverse group of BMS leaders who had experience working in or with biotech companies shared their personal stories of integrating into a larger organization during a panel discussion. In the second session, two senior BMS leaders discussed the BMS cultural journey, from its inception—when BMS was a traditional pharmaceutical company—to the present and on to its desired future state. Both sessions provided employees an opportunity to ask leaders questions, learn about the BMS culture and provide candid feedback to their managers about how their integration was progressing.

After focusing on both the operational and cultural components of the onboarding experience, we completed an evaluation for the new employees to provide feedback to our centralized team. The evaluation concluded that 92 percent of our employees believed they were productive and contributing members of their teams after one month on the job—a result that reinforced the value of our onboarding efforts.

Biotech vs. BioPharma: What's the difference? What can you do to smooth the transition during the Onboarding/Integration period?

Culture Dimension	Change Impact Hypotheses	Potential Manager Onboarding Actions
Governance & Decision-Making	• Biotech employees may feel overwhelmed when navigating within the large matrix organization. • Biotech employees may be frustrated by seemingly slow decision-making processes.	• Educate onboarded employees on the matrix structure, highlighting organizations, governance, key success factors, etc. • Leverage existing collaboration approaches used within the company, particularly in the Research group, to facilitate knowledge sharing. • Educate new managers on their decision rights for go-forward roles. • Encourage employees to provide input into decision-making process, where appropriate, so they feel that they are contributing as part of the process instead of just waiting for decisions.
Performance, Accountability & Rewards	• Expectations on performance and accountability may be different at a Biotech than at a larger BioPharma.	• Communicate performance expectations, including alignment to company goals and compensation and incentives.
People & Communications	• Biotech employees can often "walk down the hall" and talk to all of their colleagues, while BioPharma colleagues are geographically dispersed across sites and departments.	• Educate employees on the new matrix structure, highlighting organizations, governance, key success factors, etc. Provide them with a 'buddy' to help in navigation.

A RESEARCH-BASED MODEL OF ONBOARDING

Industry, Organization Size, Leadership, Climate and Culture

Recruiting Process
(e.g., RJP, Stakeholders Involvement)

Orientation Forums
(e.g., New Employee Orientation Guide)

Support Tools & Processes
(e.g., Written Onboarding Plan, Key Stakeholders Check-In, Integration Meetings)

Selection + **Self-efficacy** + **Role Clarity** + **Social Integration** + **Knowledge of Culture** = **Successful Onboarding**

Feedback Tools
(e.g., 360° Feedback, Performance Appraisals, Feedback Seeking)

Training
(e.g., Hard Skills, Soft Skills, Onboarding Skills)

Coaching & Support
(e.g., Hiring Manager, HR Generalist, Mentor)

Time for Successful Onboarding...Ongoing pre-hire to 12 months post-entry

ONBOARDING AND HRM

Until recently, academics have studied the onboarding process under the larger category of "socialization," and onboarding has been considered a minor part of human resource management (HRM). Today, however, both academic researchers and those responsible for onboarding within their organizations understand that the best programs are those that are based on solid research and also make sense in practice. Above is a diagram of research about factors that play a role in successful

onboarding of new employees. The model summarizes both new employee adjustment and outcomes of successful onboarding. The recruitment and selection process is actually the first step to effective onboarding. Clearly identifying valued behaviors and hiring candidates who demonstrate them will increase the likelihood of a smooth onboarding process.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING ONBOARDING?

During onboarding, firms engage in a variety of activities that may facilitate

the process. Recall the three levels of onboarding discussed above: *Level 1–Passive*, *Level 2–High Potential* and *Level 3–Proactive*. Most onboarding practices fit into one of these levels.

Successful onboarding is the result of several HRM functions working together in a coordinated fashion. Although here each function is discussed separately, the key to successful onboarding is for HRM functions to work together seamlessly to support new employees. The process starts even before a new employee arrives: the first HRM function,

and the first interaction of a new employee with the firm, is *recruiting*.

Recruiting

In Passive Oboarding, organizations' recruiting processes are unrelated to new employee onboarding plans. Rather than viewing recruitment as a time to begin the onboarding process, it is seen as a separate function. In fact, the entire goal of recruitment should be to get candidates to the next step—selection—and then to help them fit into the organizational environment and get to know organizational insiders and stakeholders.[36] The recruitment process provides information, but it also helps new employees form realistic expectations and engage coping mechanisms.[37] In this way, the quality of recruitment practices relates to higher organizational commitment.[38]

Realistic Job Previews

Organizations can provide employees with realistic job previews (RJPs) regarding both the specific job to be done and the organizational culture. RJPs have advantages and disadvantages. As an experiment, one firm randomly assigned prospective employees to either an RJP group or a non-RJP group. As expected, the RJP group was more likely to reject a job offer, but they had 50 percent less turnover than the non-RJP group.[39] Realistic previews help to prevent new employees from suffering unmet expectations. Past research has found that new employees receiving large amounts of accurate information about a company and their new job tend to adjust better than those who don't acquire this information.[40] RJPs can be provided during recruitment and hiring or through more on-the-job experiences such as internships.

Orientations

Some 93 percent of organizations now use some type of new-employee orientation—either in person or online.[41] Formal orientation programs

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Case Study: Intensive Onboarding at Zappos

One organization that engages in intensive onboarding during orientations is Zappos.com (acquired in 2009 by Amazon.com, Inc.). Zappos managed to move from 23rd place on *Fortune* magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" list in 2009 to 15th place in 2010.

New employees at Zappos learn about the organization's values and procedures in an intensive five-week training course, during which new hires are offered $2,000 to quit if they feel they are not a good fit for the organization. To date, only about one percent of trainees have taken this offer. This might be why even though Zappos has more than 1,300 employees, the company has been able to maintain a relatively flat organizational structure and prides itself on its extreme transparency.

– from Bauer, T., & Erdogan, B. (2010).
Organizational Behavior. Nyack, NY: Flat World Knowledge.

help new employees understand many important aspects of their jobs and organizations, including the company's culture and values, its goals and history, and its power structure.[42] Orientation programs also serve a social role, helping newcomers feel welcome by introducing them to their co-workers and other individuals within the organization. Orientations, which may last a few hours to a few months, can provide new employees with valuable information and the chance to process a lot of paperwork and procedures quickly, using tools that include discussions, lectures, videotapes and written material. During short orientations, companies often use computer-based information systems and intranets to help support new employees. This approach lends consistency to orientations in different locations and at different times.

Support Tools and Processes

Both during and after the orientation, readily available support tools, such as those discussed below, are invaluable for onboarding success.

- *A written onboarding plan.* A formal document, or roadmap, that outlines the specific timeline, goals, responsibilities and support available to new hires will help them succeed because it spells out what they should do and what assistance they can expect. The most effective onboarding plans are usually written, communicated to all members of the company, consistently applied and tracked over time.[43]

- *Stakeholder meetings.* Proactive/ Level 3 organizations often create check-in meetings at specific intervals to help new employees get the information they need in a timely manner. Many stakeholders should be involved in these onboarding meetings, and the schedule should identify who is involved at what point in time. With regular "touching base" meetings, potential problems can be solved before they expand into large problems.

- *Onboarding online.* Some organizations use technology to deliver initial orientation programs, but one study shows that benefits may not be quite as positive in computer-based orientations. Researchers compared employees taking part in a regular, face-to-face orientation to those in a computer-based orientation and found less understanding of the job and the company for those in the computer-based version.[44] Technology also can be used to follow the onboarding process, automate basic forms, track progress against development and career plans, and help stakeholders monitor new employees to see when they may need additional support. About 68 percent of Level 3 organizations have onboarding systems that are partially or fully online.[45]

Coaching and Support

As mentioned above, stakeholder involvement is extremely valuable for successful new employee onboarding because stakeholders can help newcomers manage and meet expectations.[46] Stakeholders include

Onboarding Tool #2: Conversation Guide
Some useful questions to ask during onboarding conversations
Learning
Give me your read on the general situation at the firm. What strengths/capabilities are required? Which strengths/capabilities exist now? Can you offer some examples?
Expectations
What do you see as high priorities? Lower priorities? Current untouchable topics? What resources are available to invest against these priorities?
Implementation
Tell me about the control points, both metrics and process, such as meetings, reports, etc. Tell me about some of the decisions we make. Who makes them, and who else is involved? How? What is the best way to communicate with you, including mode, manner, frequency and how to deal with disagreements?
Used with permission from Bradt, G., & Vonnegut, M. (2009). *Onboarding: How to get your new employees up to speed in half the time.* NY: John Wiley.

those involved in hiring, training, HR, and normal coaching and support. They can influence new hires by not only sharing information but also serving as role models to be emulated.

Mentors are a similar resource to help new employees learn the ropes. A mentor can teach new employees about the organization, offer advice, help with job instruction, and provide support in social and political terms. New employees may go to mentors with questions that they are hesitant to ask their managers for fear of seeming incompetent.[47] One study found that new employees with mentors became more knowledgeable about their new organizations than new employees who did not have mentors.[48] Researchers have also found that new employees are more likely to have learned and internalized the key values of their organization's culture if they had spent time with a mentor.[49] Mentoring

programs, opportunities for informal interaction with colleagues and adequate information certainly will help the new employees adapt more easily to the new work environment.

Both internal and external coaching can be critical in the success or failure of new employees. External coaches can be especially important for executive onboarding, where the stakes are high. An objective coach can help new executives by offering a safe sounding board for ideas and approaches. External coaches can also help new executives prepare for their onboarding process before they enter, as well as assist with any challenges they encounter in their new organization.

Training

A new employee needs the confidence, clarity and skills to do the job he or she has been hired to do. Potential training for new employees includes
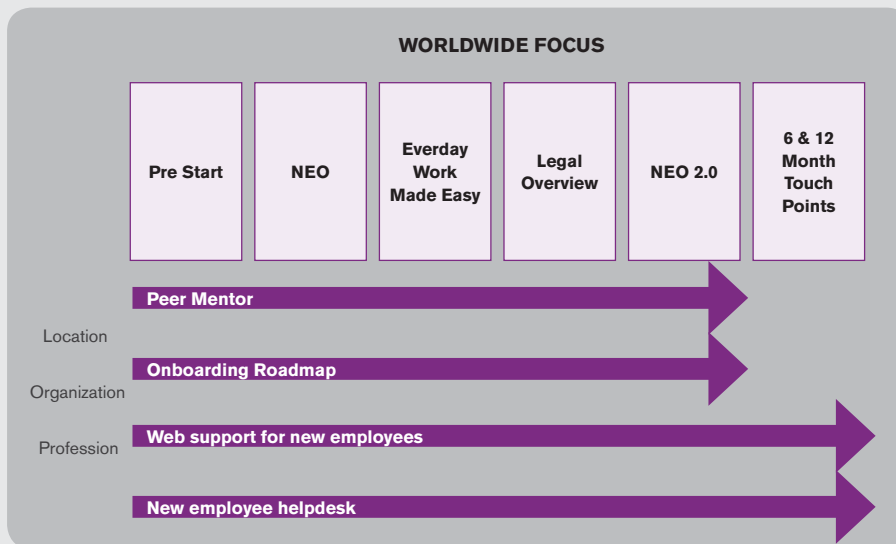
Case Study: Keeping Onboarding Up-to-Date at Microsoft

In 2009, Microsoft employed 90,000 individuals worldwide in 108 countries. In 2004, the software giant hired more than 7,000 new employees, and in 2006, the company hired nearly 16,000. Even with a challenging economy, the company expects to start 8,000 employees in 2010. With such a large influx of newcomers each year, Microsoft saw an opportunity to leverage onboarding of employees around the world.

The corporate onboarding mission is to enhance the new employee experience through high quality, scalable onboarding programs and frameworks that support Microsoft's business goals, advance the "aspire to" culture, encourage community, and build organizational capability to onboard others.

To achieve this mission, a team of HR professionals within Microsoft works to keep the onboarding program up-to-date and relevant. After a major revision of the company process, the team came up with a framework that includes core philosophies:

- Managers play a critical role in onboarding new employees.

- Peer mentors provide "safe havens" for new employees to ask questions, gain knowledge and explore the culture.

- Onboarding is "everyone's job"—not just HR's.

- Team members play a critical role in providing support, knowledge and a welcoming climate.

WORLDWIDE FOCUS

| Pre Start | NEO | Everday Work Made Easy | Legal Overview | NEO 2.0 | 6 & 12 Month Touch Points |

Peer Mentor

Location

Onboarding Roadmap

Organization

Web support for new employees

Profession

New employee helpdesk

+Custom additions for senior levels

Overview of Microsoft's Onboarding Program.[55]

hard skills, soft skills and *onboarding skills,* and each skill set is important. If a new employee has low levels of self-efficacy at the start, training is even more necessary to boost subsequent ability to cope and job performance.[50] Training can show newcomers how to proactively help their own adjustment and therefore encourage successful onboarding.

FEEDBACK TOOLS

New employees often make missteps and may find it challenging to understand and interpret positive or negative reactions they receive from co-workers. This means they will often need feedback and guidance. Research consistently shows the benefits of feedback for new employee adjustment. During onboarding, feedback is a two-way process. New employees seek and receive information, and companies vary in how well they use feedback tools during the onboarding process. A couple of common approaches to employee feedback are:

- *Performance appraisals and 360-degree feedback.* Within the HRM system, performance appraisals can give new employees developmental feedback. Normally, however, organizations conduct appraisals only once or twice a year. When integrating appraisals into the onboarding process, quarterly meetings can be helpful. The benefit of 360-degree feedback is that it helps new employees understand how others view them. Feedback from all sides can help resolve any disagreements early on.

- *Employee-initiated information and feedback seeking.* Employees can help or hinder their own onboarding. Information-seeking and feedback are proactive new-employee behaviors that may help them adjust as they ask questions about different aspects of their jobs, company procedures and priorities—all to make sense of the new workplace.[51] Workers may seek information using more passive methods—monitoring the environment, viewing the company web site, reading the employee handbook or other written literature. But very little insight about company culture and unwritten rules will emerge from passive methods. As time passes, employees should start asking more questions of supervisors about expectations and evaluation, but they may be reluctant to do so if they believe such questioning will reveal their own weaknesses.[52] Yet asking questions will often communicate to others that the new employee is interested in learning the norms and performing well.[53] The need for new employees to ask the most basic questions is lessening as more organizations institute formal onboarding programs that include help desks, online information centers and regularly scheduled meetings with stakeholders.

ONBOARDED EMPLOYEES: EXECUTIVES VS. HOURLY WORKERS

Although the best practices presented in this report certainly apply to both executives and new employees lower in the organizational hierarchy, practices must be tailored to the type of employee being onboarded.

EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING

Onboarding is more developed for higher-level employees than for hourly workers. Organizations understand that getting executives and managers up to speed quickly is important because these leadership positions are highly visible and influence the bottom line more clearly.[56] Estimates vary depending on the organization, but the cost of a single failed executive-level manager can be as high as $2.7 million.[57] Unfortunately, 32 percent of global executives say the onboarding they experienced was poor.[58]

Executive onboarding differs from traditional onboarding in several ways.[59]

- Executives have more stakeholders with whom to interact.

- They are normally brought in to help with specific strategic initiatives that may require changing the status quo rather than fitting into it.

- They often are confronted with unique and challenging situations that require unique solutions.

Executive onboarding has a long history in organizations such as Dell, Toyota, General Electric and PepsiCo.[60] The higher a person's level in the organization, the more tailored and flexible the program will need to be.

Case Study: Executive Onboarding at Bank of America

Bank of America is an organization with an effective executive onboarding program. Between 2001 and 2006, the bank hired 189 external executives, and more than 200 internal candidates went through a formal executive onboarding process. The company has three major goals for its executive onboarding program:

1. Minimize the high costs of executive derailment.
2. Accelerate executive performance results.
3. Facilitate a smooth integration experience for new executives.

The derailment rate for Bank of America's executives is 12 percent, compared to an industry average of 40 percent for large organizations. How does the Bank of America accomplish this?

Best practices developed at Bank of America include:

- Viewing onboarding as unfolding over time.
- Encompassing multiple interventions.
- Gaining support from multiple organizational resources.
- Involving key stakeholders.
- Emphasizing quality interactions.

Source: Bauer, T.N., & Elder, E. (2006). Onboarding newcomers into organizations. Presentation at the Society for Human Resource Management Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.; Conger, J.A., & Fishel, B. (2007). Accelerating leadership performance at the top: Lessons from the Bank of America's executive on-boarding process. *Human Resource Management Review, 17,* 442-454.

Onboarding Tool #3: Bank of America's Onboarding: What, Why and When

Onboarding tool	Why Is It Used?	When Is It Used?
Orientation Program	Includes information on the business, history, culture and values of Bank of America	Held on the first day on the job
Written Onboarding Plan	Helps new executives organize and prioritize the onboarding process	Provided in the first week after entry
Leadership Tools	Help new executives understand the leadership frameworks at Bank of America	Provided in the first week after entry
Key Stakeholder Meetings	Allow for important flows of information and for expectation setting	Must be done in the first two months
New Leader-Team Integration	Helps accelerate the development of relationships between the new executive and his or her team members	Occurs between two and three months after entry
New Peer Integration	Helps accelerate the development of relationships between the new executive and the rest of the executive team	Occurs between two and three months after entry
Key Stakeholder Check-in Meetings	Help diagnose potential problems, receive developmental feedback and create solutions	Occur between three and four months after entry
Executive Networking Forums	Help new executives connect and network with other executives	Held quarterly
360-Degree Feedback	Helps new executives gauge how they are performing on key metrics as measured by those around them	Occurs after six months after entry

HOURLY WORKER ONBOARDING

Almost all research studies to date have examined the onboarding of salaried workers (executives and knowledge workers) rather than hourly workers. Recently, however, using a qualitative approach, researchers conducted structured interviews with hourly workers and their managers to get a better understanding of what onboarding looks like at the other end of the corporate ladder.[62] What they found was a different picture. Given how unique this approach is, the following sections delineate the findings to offer HR professionals who work with hourly employees the latest information.

How do hourly workers differ?

- *Time.* New hourly employees reported that they were fully on board after an average of three-and-a-half weeks, but supervisors reported that new hourly employees were not fully functional until three months after they were hired. Three months is more in line with past research and theories; less than one month is not.

- *Stakeholders.* For hourly employees, direct supervisors and co-workers were involved in onboarding—with little contact from regional managers or those higher up in the organizations. Getting adequate time and attention from supervisors was a common challenge for new hourly employees.

- *Content of onboarding.* Most of the content of onboarding for new hourly employees was related to Level 1—Passive Onboarding. Paperwork and rules were covered, but little else was systematically addressed. While limited, other onboarding practices included job shadowing, mentors and understanding who to go to for specific information.

Based on these limited findings, it is clear that there is a potential to greatly enhance the onboarding of hourly workers if the business case can be made that doing so will result in higher performance, lower turnover and more positive work attitudes.

Although this report has focused primarily on the role of organizations, it is important to remember that employee onboarding is a two-way street. The employees themselves bear some responsibility for making onboarding work and should be encouraged to think about their own roles in the process.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS

Many of the examples given in this report refer to the best practices of large organizations with vast resources to invest in their onboarding plans. For small to medium organizations, many best practices can translate and be effective. In fact, looking at the onboarding best practices in this report, the only recommendations that may be expensive to implement for smaller companies are those that involve technology and getting the onboarding process fully online. Bringing a program online is not necessarily important

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Onboarding Tool #4: A Checklist for Individuals

How Can a New Employee Maximize Onboarding Success?
- Gather information.
- Manage first impressions.
- Invest in relationship development.
- Seek feedback.
- Show success early on.

if fewer employees are undergoing onboarding at any given time. So, fortunately, small and medium organizations can accrue the benefits of best practices developed within large organizations simply by investing some attention to developing their own strategic plans.

ONBOARDING BEST PRACTICES

Both the big things—like using a formal orientation program and written plan—and the little things—like greeting a new employee warmly, taking her or him to lunch, and providing a functioning workstation on Day 1—matter in your onboarding program. The most important day on the job for a new employee is the first day. The CEO of one major organization recognizes this and takes newcomers to lunch within their first month. This is part of the company culture, and employees proudly share this observation. Because research shows that the trajectory of a new hire's success is set as early as the first two weeks, it is important to make the first day a special one. Many hourly workers do not come back if the first day is disappointing. To get beyond the first day, review the list of organizational best practices for onboarding below.

Best Practices for Onboarding

✔ Implement the basics prior to the first day on the job.

✔ Make the first day on the job special.

✔ Use formal orientation programs.

✔ Develop a written onboarding plan.

✔ Make onboarding participatory.

✔ Be sure your program is consistently implemented.

✔ Ensure that the program is monitored over time.

✔ Use technology to facilitate the process.

✔ Use milestones, such as 30, 60, 90 and 120 days on the job—and up to one year post-organizational entry—to check in on employee progress.

✔ Engage stakeholders in planning.

✔ Include key stakeholder meetings as part of the program.

✔ Be crystal clear with new employees in terms of:
  - Objectives.
  - Timelines.
  - Roles.
  - Responsibilities

CONCLUSION

Successful onboarding is a key part of any talent management strategy. With the high cost of recruiting, business leaders must understand that effectively integrating new hires into the organization is an important step to ensure their success. Understanding who owns the onboarding process as a whole and who controls various steps in the process is vital to onboarding success and sustainability over time. Simply writing down a formal plan will not help new employees succeed. The key is to engage important stakeholders and new employees in interactions that help them understand one another and how they interact over time. Used in conjunction with HRM best practices, effective onboarding will result in a faster learning curve for new hires, improved communication, and a more productive and engaged workforce.

Both internal and external coaching can be critical in the success or failure of new employees. External coaches can be especially important for executive onboarding, where the stakes are high.

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Used in conjunction with HRM best practices, effective onboarding will result in a faster learning curve for new hires, improved communication and a more productive and engaged workforce.

SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Books and Book Chapters

Bauer, T.N., Morrison, E.W., & Callister, R.R. (1998). Organizational socialization: A review and directions for future research. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resource management: Vol. 16* (pp. 149-214). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

The report looks at the socialization of newcomers in regard to three different trends: increasing cultural diversity in the workforce, the increasingly temporary nature of employment and downsizing. The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the research done thus far with regard to socialization and suggest that socialization can be better understood when considered in the context of the above trends. The most important areas for future research are highlighted, including the process of cultural learning, the effects of organizational characteristics, how new entrants develop power, pre-entry values and proactive behaviors other than information seeking. These authors encourage researchers to be mindful of the context in which one works, especially in regard to globalization and cultural diversity.

Bradt, G., & Vonnegut, M. (2009). *Onboarding: How to get your new employees up to speed in half the time*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

What problems can an uninformed employee pose to an organization? The authors of the book address this question by explaining some of the most effective tactics in orienting new employees about organizational culture and norms and ways to enable newcomers to begin contributing as soon as possible to the organization. Not properly orienting new employees can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction on the part of the employee, but it also can ultimately hurt the organization as a whole. Consultants Bradt and Vonnegut have created the Total Onboarding Program and suggest ways to prepare employees quickly and efficiently, which ultimately leads to organizationwide success.

Sims, D. (2001). *Creative new employee orientation programs: Best practices, creative ideas, and activities for energizing your orientation program*. New York: McGraw Hill.

This book provides strategies for companies that want to move the orientation process beyond filling out paperwork, toward familiarizing new employees with organizational norms and culture. The objective of this book is to inform those responsible for the orientation process how to effectively increase a newcomer's understanding of the company's mission and maximize new employee productivity. The author provides specific programs designed for an effective orientation as well as case studies for comparison. Preparation creates

increased success in the workplace, and a comprehensive orientation program provides the tools for that success.

Wanous, J. (1980). *Organizational entry: Recruitment, selection, and socialization of newcomers.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

The author of this book addresses the important role that HR departments play in an organization's effectiveness. In addition to understanding the way a business functions, it is important to understand the value of behavioral studies and how to effectively bring new employees into an organization. This book offers solutions for what the author considers "chronic human resources problems," including how to choose the right employees for the job, how to develop successful incentive programs and how to effectively address conflict within the organization.

Wanous, J., & Colella, A. (1989). Organizational entry research: Current status and future directions. In G. R. Ferris & K. M. Rowland (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resources management: Vol. 7* (pp. 59-120). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

This article focuses on four topics: the effects of realistic job previews (RJPs), the effectiveness of different recruiting sources, job candidates' job selection process and the organizational socialization of newcomers—specifically the behavior and perspective of the newcomer. To complete this study, the authors used research articles and previously unpublished work. The key findings summarize past research that has been conducted in regard to the above topics and suggests

areas for future research. The most accumulated data and field studies are in the area of realistic job previews. Only a moderate amount of research has been conducted on the other three topics. The authors point out that when one focuses on a narrow topic within socialization, it quickly becomes clear that there have been relatively few studies conducted, which accounts for the large disparity between theory and data.

Watkins, M. (2003). *The first 90 days.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

This book walks the reader through the necessary steps one must take in the critical transition to a new role in order to become a successful and effective leader. The author describes the "break-even" point, which occurs when the organization you work for needs you as much as you need it. The strategy outlined in this book can be applied to a diverse spectrum of leadership positions and tailored to meet your specific needs. Based on research and field work, the author describes how to build credibility during this crucial period, understand your own personal strengths and weaknesses, become a constructive negotiator and maintain balance.

Articles

Adkins, C.L. (1995). Previous work experience and organizational socialization: A longitudinal examination. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*, 839-862.

The author of this article sets out to measure socialization variables longitudinally. The study begins with organizational entry, specifically

looking at nonprofessional workers prior to entry into an organization and examining how these experiences influence the socialization process. In addition, the change and process that an individual experiences in transforming from an outsider to an insider and contributing to the success of the organization is studied further. In conclusion, the author finds inadequate support for the previously held belief that prior work experience in similar settings will positively relate to socialization variables. The author emphasizes the importance in future research to be mindful that socialization is a continuous process rather than a series of isolated events.

Allen, D. (2006). Do organizational socialization tactics influence newcomer embeddedness and turnover? *Journal of Management, 32*, 237-256.

New employees are a significant investment for an organization, but at the same time, many organizations experience the highest turnover rates among new employees. This creates a significant loss to the company monetarily and productively. The hypothesis of this study postulates that socialization tactics influence newcomer turnover and specifically that turnover is influenced by embedding new employees into the organization. The author describes steps that can be taken to entrench employees more firmly into an organization. The findings of the study suggest that organizations that invest in continuous socialization methods have a lower probability of worker turnover. Strong socialization strategies for newcomers have the

potential to assist individuals in feeling more at ease by building relationships, minimizing uncertainty and creating structure within the new environment. Creating structural support enables new employees to feel a sense of independence and proficiency within their roles.

Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1990). Organizational socialization tactics: A longitudinal analysis of links to newcomers' commitment and role orientation. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*, 847-858.
This study provides evidence that newcomers' organizational socialization experiences are negatively related to role innovation after employees have been on a job for six and 12 months, and positively related to organizational commitment after six months. Role innovation and commitment were negatively correlated at six months. The article suggests that organizations should be able to tailor newcomers' socialization experiences to foster a desired commitment-role orientation profile. To facilitate analysis, the authors build on the findings of Jones (1986), as well as their own data from two successive graduating classes of undergraduate and graduate business programs. In conclusion, the authors find that the best predictor of role orientation, and the only one to contribute uniquely in multiple regression analysis, was the serial-disjunctive dimension. An important direction for future research will be to identify the processes by which socialization tactics influence role orientation. The authors also suggest ways in which organizations can facilitate and tailor their socialization

practices to foster the desired level of commitment of their employees.

Ashford, S. J., & Black, J. S. (1996). Proactivity during organizational entry: A role of desire for control. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 199-214.
Historical literature focuses on ways that an organization influences individual behavior. This study examines a sample of organizational newcomers and looks at the ways these individuals attempt to gain feelings of personal control during organizational entry and how individual character affects the entry process. The study suggests that individuals proactively seek information and feedback, foster new relationships and negotiate job-change requirements. The actions of newcomers during the entry process can be viewed in part as manifestations of a desire to gain control in the new setting in order to maximize performance and increase satisfaction. Individuals entering new work situations are thought either to change their jobs or change themselves to create a better fit between the individual and the new job. Entry into a new organization often requires an individual to temporarily lose and proactively regain feelings of control. Individuals with a high desire for control sought more information, socialized more, networked more with interdepartmental colleagues, negotiated more job changes and tried to put a positive frame around their situations. In addition to individuals attempting to control their surroundings, the study supports the argument that newcomers also can seek control within themselves by focusing on how they frame their situations. Individuals who desired control were

more likely to engage in this self-focused control tactic. The newcomers' attempts to frame their new situations positively were related to increased self-reported performance and job satisfaction.

Ashforth, B.E., & Saks, A.M. (1995). Work-role transitions: A longitudinal examination of the Nicholson model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 68*, 157-175.
This article analyzes the prior work of Nigel Nicholson, creator of the Nicholson model, which suggests that new role entry encourages individual personal and/or role development. Personal development refers to an individual's intentional changing of behavior and habits to fit the new circumstances and surroundings. Role development refers to an individual's ability to change the role to fit his or her own requirements. Nicholson believed that these two processes were independent. The authors of this study suggest otherwise, and using the data collected from recent business school graduates they maintain that the Nicholson model can be expanded upon by considering the effects of the new entrant's desires as the interaction between personal and role development rather than independent variables.

Ashforth, B.E., & Saks, A.M. (1996). Socialization tactics: Longitudinal effects on newcomer adjustment. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*, 149-178.
The authors of this study examine the effects of the socialization tactics from Van Maanen and Schien's (1979) model and the effect of tactics on an

individual's ability to adjust to new and unfamiliar work surroundings. Data for the study were gathered from business school graduates four and 10 months after the start of a new job. Findings indicate that the methods were related negatively to attempted and actual role innovation, role ambiguity, role conflict, stress symptoms and intentions to quit. The methods were positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational identification. In concluding the study, the authors suggest that the interaction between the tactics and newcomer adjustment variables was stable over time. In addition, they comment on possible additions and enhancements to the current model and areas for future research.

Ashforth, B.E., Saks, A.M., & Lee, R.T. (1998). Socialization and newcomer adjustment: The role of organizational context. *Human Relations, 51*, 897-926.
The focus of this article is to review and evaluate a model that links context, socialization and newcomer adjustment. The authors also look at particular reasons that an organization might adopt particular human resource practices, a field of study that is generally missing from human resource management research. It has generally been accepted that organizations adopt HRM practices based on the aggregate needs of the company. The authors go a step further and also consider the best human resource practices from a contextual standpoint. This research views the impact of socialization tactics with regard to three contextual variables: mechanistic/organic structure, organization size and job design.

Bauer, T.N., & Green, S.G. (1994). The effect of newcomer involvement in work-related activities: A longitudinal study of socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 211-223.
This study analyzes a group of Ph.D. students based on data compiled from the time the new students entered their doctoral program and again nine months later. The authors look at the effects of behavior on socialization. The findings indicate that the newcomers who actively participated in the socialization process and in work-related activities had less conflict, had increased feelings of acceptance and were more productive with greater feelings of commitment toward their organization. These socialization activities include having realistic expectations and learning about the organization prior to entry, attending the same institution for undergraduate studies and participating in doctoral research. The authors conclude that role ambiguity is positively related to submissions, and the possible explanation for this is that the more research a student is engaged in, the more ambiguous his or her role may seem. In other words, the individual might not know how best to spend time in the many demands of a doctoral program. Organizational commitment is also negatively related to self-confidence. Those individuals who are unsure of their abilities may feel that they have fewer options in moving forward.

Bauer, T.N., & Green, S.G. (1998). Testing the combined effects of newcomer information seeking and manager behavior on socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*, 72-83.

Socialization can be defined as the time during which an individual obtains new knowledge and skills in order to become a productive member of an organization. The authors of this study analyze the interaction between the newcomer and the manager and how these two individuals influence the socialization process. Specifically, the focus is on how knowledge is acquired within an organization—whether it is as a result of the new employee actively seeking information or the manager providing information. The authors hypothesize that newcomers and employees can work in conjunction to create a more accommodating entry into the organization. The findings of this study, which included 205 newcomers, 364 co-workers and 112 managers, conclude that proactive behavior on behalf of the newcomer was not a reliable predictor of newcomer socialization. The only predictor of performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment was accommodation, and different management behavior can be used to accomplish different goals in the socialization process. Managers and supervisors are an important part of the socialization and accommodation process, and they can enable a more successful transition for a new employee into the organization.

Bravo, M.J., Peiró, J.M., Rodriguez, I., & Whitely, W.T. (2003). Social antecedents of the role stress and career-enhancing strategies of newcomers to organizations: A longitudinal study. *Work & Stress, 17*, 195-217.
This study suggests that there are two overriding factors that provide for a successful socialization transition:

1) socialization tactics and 2) the behavior of managers, supervisors and co-workers. The authors analyze the results of initial socialization strategies and what effects associations with peers in the workplace have on new-employee stress levels and work-role performance. The findings suggest that these variables have a positive impact on the socialization of newcomers. Creating a relationship with managers resulted in less role ambiguity and increased the success of work-related adjustment. Nurturing a relationship with co-workers also resulted in positive career enhancement. Having initial positive socialization experiences in a new organization can lead to lasting positive effects on the organization as a whole. These tactics reduce stress and encourage individuals to become actively involved with the strategies and the process.

Cable, D.M., & Parsons, C.K. (2001). Socialization tactics and person-organization fit. *Personnel Psychology, 54*, 1-23.
This work provides analysis of the tactics that organizations use to create a positive fit between organization and new employee. The authors followed individuals for two years and collected data from a series of surveys: the first distributed before students began their job search and the last distributed 18 months after college graduation. Results indicate that two variables are associated with two types of socialization tactics: newcomers' fit perceptions and changes in individual values. This study also indicates that perceptions of positive person-organization fit are more likely to occur when newcomers

experience continuing socialization information and insight into role expectations and career progression, as opposed to experiencing inconsistent socialization. Interaction with superiors and networks of support also create feelings of acceptance into the organization, but newcomers who do not receive consistent support are more likely to feel disconnected from the organization as a whole.

Chao, G.T., O'Leary-Kelly, A.M., Wolf, S., Klein, H.J., & Gardner, P.D. (1994). Organizational socialization: Its content and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 730-743.
This article provides a review of the socialization research done thus far and specifically looks at the relationship between different strategies for teaching organizational processes and the outcomes of socialization. Information about six socialization factors—proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals and history—was collected from 594 full-time professionals and compared with factors for three groups of individuals in different organizational transitions: those who did not change jobs, those who began a new job within the same company and those who changed both jobs and companies.

Chen, G. (2005). Newcomer adaptation in teams: Multilevel antecedents and outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*, 101-116.
The question of how newcomers change with an organization over time is addressed in this article, which studied employee performance. Results of the study indicate that performance improved the most for individuals

who were successfully integrated into the organization early on in the socialization process. The relationship between newcomer performance and team performance was also evaluated, and results indicated that team performance was an accurate predictor of individual performance and vice versa. Because group-based projects are an increasingly common part of the work experience, it is important for personnel departments to understand the dynamic between individuals and teams and know how to properly integrate these two elements. How a newcomer interacts and assimilates into a new team is an important field of research and will allow for more effective integration, ultimately leading to a stronger and more successful organization. This article more specifically looks at the role of teams within the high-tech world.

Chen, G., & Klimoski, R.J. (2003). The impact of expectations on newcomer performance in teams as mediated by work characteristics, social exchanges, and empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal, 46*, 591-607.
Because many organizations are moving toward group-focused projects and work environments, it is more important than ever to analyze the dynamics of teams and the process of newcomer socialization in the formation of teams. The findings of this study indicate that both motivational and interpersonal processes are accurate predictors of newcomer performance in a team environment. The authors suggest that to facilitate a smooth transition into a team work environment, it is

necessary for organization members to communicate clear expectations, goals and role requirements. Also beneficial for newcomer entry into a group setting is choosing individuals with a high level of self-efficacy and facilitating a sense of empowerment. Empowerment results from creating clear expectations as well as team support and encouragement. In this climate, teams have a greater chance for success and productivity.

Cooper-Thomas, H.D., van Vianen, A., & Anderson, N. (2004). Changes in person-organization fit: The impact of socialization tactics on perceived and actual P-O fit. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 13*, 52-78.
The authors of this article refer to the idea of fit as the degree to which an individual's personal values align with the values of the organization. This study looks at possible explanations and influences on perceived and actual person-organization fit and how different tactics can affect the transition process. The results of the study indicate that perceived fit is influenced by socialization tactics, job satisfaction and group commitment, but these same elements do not influence actual fit. The tactics do not necessarily change an individual's overall perceptions but rather change his or her perception of the organization's values. Over time, perceived and actual fit become more harmonious and aligned.

Cooper-Thomas, H.D., & Anderson, N. (2005). Organizational socialization: A field study into socialization success and rate. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 13*, 116-128.

Although the field of research in regard to organizational socialization is vast, the possible underlying patterns of organizational socialization have been somewhat neglected. The authors of this article look at newcomer learning, job satisfaction and intent to quit as indicators of socialization. Results suggest that learning assists newcomer adjustment during the early post-entry period and has a positive impact on an employee's intent to stay in the organization and job satisfaction. This is consistent with the presumption that after the initial entry period, individuals begin to feel more comfortable in their surroundings and their role within the organization. The authors also suggest that context is extremely important when analyzing organizations, in that findings from different organizations with extremely different contexts cannot be used to reach the same conclusions about socialization.

Feldman, D.C. (1981). The multiple socialization of organization members. *Academy of Management Review, 6*, 309-318.
The author of this study suggests that because organizational socialization can be defined so broadly, research that has been conducted is not necessarily cohesive. This article lays out a more comprehensive view of organizational socialization using three different perspectives of the socialization: the view of socialization as determining and learning performance expectations, the view of socialization as the cultivation of new skills and proficiencies, and the view of socialization as changes in team ideals. Also missing from studies of newcomer

adjustment are the appropriate criteria to assess socialization progress. The author suggests it would be useful to consider the congruent processes that occur during the socialization process. Building upon the empirical research that has been conducted might otherwise lead to the wrong conclusion. This is a preliminary research paper, and the author suggests building upon it in order to increase our understanding of motivation within an organization.

Finkelstein, L.M., Kulas, J.T., & Dages, K.D. (2003). Age differences in proactive newcomer socialization strategies in two populations. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 17*, 473-502.
The authors of this article explore the influence of age on the effectiveness of socialization tactics and the correlation of age to both socialization strategies and the resulting outcomes. Research was conducted with individuals from the retail and academic sectors. In addition, the authors wondered whether the style of information-seeking influences the outcome of the socialization process. Findings of the study indicate that there is a negative relationship between age and covert forms of information-seeking. Both groups of subjects found that information-seeking was an important part of the socialization process, but each group employed different strategies to obtain the desired information. Covert, or non-direct, information-seeking may correlate to a sense of ineffective socialization tactics in part because newcomers may assume their organization is unwilling to offer overt information or that co-workers lack knowledge.

Fisher, C.D. (1985). Social support and adjustment to work: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Management, 11*, 39-53.

Entering a new organization can often be a difficult transition. Role expectations are often unclear, which can lead to high levels of stress. High rates of newcomer turnover are costly, but unfortunately, they are not uncommon in some organizations. Co-worker and supervisor support can help facilitate a transition and help new employees in the socialization process. This research study explores the interaction of workplace stress and organizational support. Findings suggest that social support has a positive effect on reducing stress and helping to smooth the transition into a new organization. The author describes the importance of organizations offering some form of support for newcomers. This includes open channels of communication between new hires and supervisors. It can also be beneficial to create a mentor system in which new employees are paired with a co-worker whom they can ask questions. Finally, support from other new employees can ease the transition as well.

Haueter, J.A., Macan, T.H., & Winter, J. (2003). Measurement of newcomer socialization: Construct validation of a multidimensional scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*, 20-39.

The ability to effectively and efficiently socialize newcomers is vitally important to the success and productivity of an organization. The initial entry into an organization can create problems with the proper acquisition of new information on the part of the new employee. Successful socialization can lead to employees remaining at an organization longer, to greater feelings of job satisfaction and to overall better fit for the employee in the organization. The authors suggest there is a lack of research in regard to direct outcomes of socialization tactics. Direct outcomes include such results as effective learning of organizational norms. In conclusion, the authors suggest that further research is needed in this area to expand upon these findings and to explore their validity.

Holton E.F. III, & Russell, C.G. (1997). The relationship of anticipation to newcomer socialization processes and outcomes: A pilot study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 70*, 163-172.

This study explores the effect of anticipation and non-anticipation on socialization into a new organization. The author suggests that new graduates with low levels of anticipation one year later have less organizational commitment, motivation, satisfaction and feelings of fulfillment than those graduates who highly anticipated their jobs. Individuals who had feelings of anticipation were more likely to have positive feelings toward their organization, higher levels of commitment and greater levels of involvement. Three factors were used in this analysis: proper understanding of the organization, the perception of the actual transition into a new organization and understanding of the organization and organizational norms. Influencers such as grade point average (GPA) were considered, and it was found that GPA does not account for socialization success or failure. Those who had the highest and the lowest GPA and did not anticipate their entry into an organization had lower levels of job satisfaction than those who had high/low GPA and had anticipated entry.

Jones, G.R. (1986). Socialization tactics, self-efficacy, and newcomers' adjustments to organizations. *Academy of Management Journal, 29*, 262-279.

This article looks at the correlation between socialization strategies and personnel outcomes. Specifically, the author was interested in how information provided during the socialization process influences newcomers during the adjustment period. In addition, the self-efficacy of newcomers was examined, as was the resulting influence on socialization. Because a new employee's assumptions about an organization are often inaccurate, the newcomer must readjust his or her perceptions, seek new information and reevaluate role expectations in order to be successful. The results of this study indicate that socialization tactics are important in the assimilation process and that different socialization strategies result in different behavioral outcomes. Socialization tactics are particularly important in the orientation process, during which new employees receive information about role expectations and requirements.

Kammeyer-Mueller, J.D., & Wanberg, C.R. (2003). Unwrapping the organizational entry process: Disentangling multiple antecedents and their pathways to adjustment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*, 779-794.

This article looks at several different factors in the socialization adjustment process, including knowledge of the organization, newcomer personality, outside influences on role understanding, and organizational integration and team development. These factors and results were compared to such factors as organizational commitment and turnover. Because turnover is so costly to organizations, it is important to analyze and understand the possible influences on newcomer retention. Results indicate that individuals with a proactive personality are more likely to experience a successful adjustment into the organization, leading to greater role acceptance, integration and knowledge of the workings of the organization as a whole.

Kammeyer-Mueller, J.D., Wanberg, C.R., Glomb, T.M., & Ahlburg, D. (2005). Turnover processes in a temporal context: It's about time. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 644-658.

The authors of this study attempt to analyze turnover in the context of time and explain that when viewed in this way, there are several consistent predictors of employee turnover. The article begins by describing the main predictors and the relationship they have within an organizational setting. One of the most reliable predictors of turnover is the perception of costs on the part of the newcomer. An additional important indicator of turnover is the level of commitment felt toward an organization. And finally, experiences or events occurring after entry into an organization can also influence turnover. An individual's perception of an event is more important than the nature of the event. The authors conclude by indicating that further research is needed to fully understand the influence that time has on turnover rates. They hope to stimulate movement in this direction by initiating this important conversation.

Kim, T., Cable, D.M., & Kim, S. (2005). Socialization tactics, employee proactivity, and person-organization fit. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 232-241.

This article looks at the influences that proactive behavior has on the socialization process and whether employee behavior results in changes in the person-organization fit. Person-organization (P-O) fit refers to the suitability of an employee for a job or a task. Obviously, P-O fit is inherently important for the success of an organization, but the challenge comes in finding individuals who are best suited for a position. The authors of this study conclude that proactive behavior is at least as important as the socialization tactics of an organization. Newcomers who seek out and create meaningful relationships with supervisors attain high levels of P-O fit and are as successful as the organization's socialization tactics in creating a positive fit.

Klein, H.J., & Weaver, N.A. (2000). The effectiveness of an organizational level orientation training program in the socialization of new hires. *Personnel Psychology, 53*, 47-66.

Job orientation is a form of socialization and training intended to assist newcomers in becoming familiar with an organization and role expectations. The authors of this study wonder how important voluntary orientation programs are to the success of socializing new employees. Following a group of new hires, both before and after orientation, the authors found that orientation has a positive impact on conveying organizational goals, values and culture to those who attend orientation when compared with those individuals who do not attend the orientation session. They also found that orientation training positively affects an employee's commitment to an organization. Because these programs are one of the primary vehicles for conveying important organizational culture and information, it is suggested that further in-depth research is needed on this subject matter.

Louis, M.R., Posner, B.Z., & Powell, G.N. (1983). The availability and helpfulness of socialization practices. *Personnel Psychology, 36*, 857-866.

The authors of this study analyze different socialization tactics available to employees and indentify tactics that are viewed by newcomers as most important and beneficial during the transition into a new organization. Because the socialization process can affect the subsequent performance of a new employee, and because there are both direct and indirect

costs associated with the socialization process, it is important to understand which practices are effective and produce desirable results and which practices are less beneficial. This article reviews several different socialization tactics and discusses which are most influential on a newcomer's attitude. Results of the study indicate that regular contact and relationships with co-workers are an important factor in the success of socializing employees and subsequent commitment and satisfaction. The authors suggest that a mentor program can be beneficial to new employees and can increase organizational commitment.

Major, D.A., Kozlowski, S.W.J., Chao, G.T., & Gardner, P.D. (1995). A longitudinal investigation of newcomer expectations, early socialization outcomes, and the moderating effects of role development factors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 80*, 418-431.
Because expectations are not always an accurate description of one's actual role function, it is important to understand the consequences of unmet expectations. The authors of this study go one step further, and rather than simply explaining the consequences of unmet expectations, such as lack of commitment and increased turnover, they discuss possible ways to mitigate the negative impact of a newcomer's unmet expectations. This study suggests that negative effects can at least partially be alleviated by involving supervisors and co-workers in the role development process. Working in groups and teams can create a system of support and lessen the negative effects of unmet role expectations. However, this form of support did not

mitigate turnover intentions, and new employees who held a high level of clarity expectation had a greater rate of turnover than those individuals with unmet clarity expectations.

Maier, G., & Brunstein, J.C. (2001). The role of personal work goals in newcomers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 1034-1042.
This study looks at the relationship between an individual's organizational goals and their effect on a new employee's work attitude. Establishing job goals can create feelings of satisfaction, structure and organizational commitment. The findings of this study indicate that a relationship exists between goal commitment and levels of new employee satisfaction. Newcomers who felt their organization was conducive to their career goals and objectives felt a higher level of organizational commitment. As might be expected, the opposite was also true: those individuals who had specific goals but felt that their organization did not create the proper conditions to attain those goals had a lower level of commitment. To maintain commitment over time, it is important that individuals reach a level of goal success in the workplace. In conclusion, the authors explain that individuals have a strong affinity to create their own socialization tactics. Newcomers who enter an organization with specific goals evaluate their organizational experiences based on the ability to achieve their personal goals.

Meyer, J.P., & Allen, N.J. (1988). Links between work experiences and organizational commitment during the first year of employment: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 61*, 195-209.
The authors of this study explore individual work commitment at different points in the year following student graduation. Findings indicate that employees who had the most accurate organizational and role expectations prior to entry and those with the greatest ability for self-expression had the highest level of organizational commitment. Because organizational behavior has been closely linked to turnover, it is important to understand the drivers of commitment and the variables that motivate an individual to stay or leave an organization. This article analyzes the influence of the individual, the job within the organization and organizational characteristics to gain a better understanding of why an employee feels commitment toward an organization. In conclusion, the authors find that self-expression warrants further analysis, but preliminary results indicate that this variable is an important indicator of newcomer turnover.

Morrison, E.W. (1993a). Longitudinal study of the effects of information seeking on newcomer socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*, 173-183.
This article analyzes the connection between new employee socialization tactics and proactive information-seeking. Such strategies on the part of the newcomer can accelerate and assist the transition into an organization.

More than 100 accountants were followed. The more frequently and persistently an individual sought out information regarding his or her role and specific job expectations, the quicker and more successfully the person was able to assimilate, become comfortable in the organization's culture and fully embrace the socialization process.

Morrison, E.W. (1993b). Newcomer information seeking: Exploring types, modes, sources, and outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal, 36,* 557-589.

This study addresses the limitations of previous socialization research strategies, in that the author takes into account the fact that newcomers are engaged individuals who actively seek out information about their organization and the environment they will be entering. New employees are an important factor in the success or failure of the socialization process. Individuals who actively seek information about their organization are generally found to successfully experience socialization. It was found that newcomers discriminately seek out information from different sources depending on their objective.

Morrison, E.M. (2002). Newcomers' relationships: The role of social network ties during socialization. *Academy of Management Journal, 45,* 1149-1160.

This article looks at the correlation between the socialization process and how it is affected by relationships. Relationships between new employees and their peers and supervisors have an effect on an individual's commitment toward an organization, role expectations and individual attitude. Although the importance of these relationships has been understood for some time, the exact nature of the relationship remains relatively unknown. What types of relationships are most beneficial to the socialization process? The author analyzes relationships with both strong and loose ties, as well as those that are diverse and homogeneous, in an attempt to understand the socialization process from the perspective of the social network.

Ostroff, C., & Kozlowski, S.W.J. (1992). Organizational socialization as a learning process: The role of information acquisition. *Personnel Psychology, 45,* 849-874.

The authors of this study wanted to find out what type of information acquisition newcomers go through during the socialization process. Results indicate that new employees rely on co-workers and supervisors as valuable knowledge centers. The type of information an individual is seeking was found to determine whom the newcomer approaches. Because the socialization process is vital to the long-term success of an organization, it is valuable to understand how newcomers acquire pieces of information. Information-seeking was found to be at least as important as the formal socialization process.

Reichers, A.E. (1987). An interactionist perspective on newcomer socialization rates. *Academy of Management Review, 12,* 278-287.

Because socialization research has largely focused on situational factors, such as job structure, strategies and group culture, the author of this article begins to ask questions about the rate at which new employees move beyond the initial stages of socialization and the types of interactions that help facilitate this process. A relatively quick socialization period is desirable for both the organization and the new employee. An individual ready to move beyond the socialization process means that job anxiety is reduced, and the focus can be on job performance—and for an organization it means increased productivity. In conclusion, the article suggests that organizations may be able to increase the speed of socialization by initiating interaction between new employees and insiders by creating a mentor system, conducting performance evaluations and setting up social activities, among others.

Reio, T.G., & Callhan, J.L. (2004). Affect, curiosity, and socialization-related learning: A path analysis of antecedents to job performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 19,* 3-22.

How an individual's emotions such as anxiety and anger influence the socialization learning process is the focus of this article. Data were collected from over 200 employees in service industries, and anxiety was found to negatively influence curiosity, organizational learning and job performance, while anger was a positive influence on these same elements. Because these emotions are such a determinant of job performance and outlook, the authors suggest ways to mitigate the negative effects through specific job learning processes and, as a result, influence overall job satisfaction.

Riordan, C.M., Weatherly, E.W., Vandenberg, R.J., & Self, R.M. (2001). The effects of pre-entry experiences and socialization tactics on newcomer attitudes and turnover. *Journal of Managerial Issues, 13*, 159-176.

Pre-entry experiences can and do influence a newcomer's perspective of the organization that he or she is getting ready to join. The selection process is considered to be part of the socialization phase, during which an individual begins to form views of the organization. This article analyzes pre-entry and post-entry socialization tactics and experiences together and the influence they have on a newcomer's work-related attitudes. The recruitment and training processes are costly for organizations, and so it is in the best interest of an organization to understand the most successful way for a newcomer to integrate into an organization and its culture. The authors suggest that socialization tactics should be associated with the attitudes of the newcomer as well as a newcomer's perception of work satisfaction, intent to stay and organizational commitment.

Rollag, K., Parise, S., & Cross, R. (2005). Getting new hires up to speed quickly. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 46*, 35-41.

Rapid onboarding is the process by which new employees become contributing and productive members of an organization. This is of vital interest because if an individual does not successfully become integrated into the system, feelings of job dissatisfaction and decreased performance can result. This article suggests that employees will become socialized more successfully with the support of a social network and relationships with co-workers and supervisors whom the newcomer can turn to with questions and requests for information. Many organizations fail in this regard because of the existence of several common myths. For example, managers often believe that the best new employees will be fine on their own, that simply disseminating information allows the employee access to what he or she needs, and that new employees will be able to successfully sift through the given information. Many managers also believe that introductions to co-workers are all that is needed to make a newcomer feel comfortable. Clinging to these myths will often lead to longer periods for a new employee to become a productive member of the organization.

Saks, A.M. (1995). Longitudinal field investigation of the moderating and mediating effects of self-efficacy on the relationship between training and newcomer adjustment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 80*, 211-225.

Self-efficacy is one's ability to become a productive member of an organization and to properly accomplish a given task within that organization. The purpose of this article is to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy and the socialization process and the effect of self-efficacy on employees during the first year after employment. The study focused on attitudes and behaviors with regard to one's job and the resulting levels of self-efficacy. Findings indicate that there is a correlation between socialization tactics and a newcomer's perceptions and level of self-efficacy prior to entry. For example, individuals with a lower level of self-efficacy were more influenced by training processes than those individuals who entered the organization with higher levels of self-efficacy.

Saks, A.M., & Ashforth, B.E. (1996). Proactive socialization and behavioral self-management. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 48*, 301-323.

Entering a new organization can lead to feelings of uncertainty and tension. The authors continue the study of self-management in the socialization process, finding that emotions such as anxiety, tension and stress are related to a newcomer's ability to adjust to a new role and organizational norms. Emotions also related to an individual's relationship management ability. The findings of this study, which are consistent with previous research, indicate that there is a relationship between a newcomer's ability to cope and his or her active versus passive participation in the socialization process. Active participation includes information-seeking, goal-setting and self-management. Individuals who are active in their socialization process generally have reduced feelings of uncertainty and general anxiety.

Saks, A.M., & Ashforth, B.E. (1997). Organizational socialization: Making sense of past and present as a prologue for the future. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 51*, 234-279.

The 1990s were a period of rapid growth in the field of organizational socialization. This article reviews the culmination of research from the previous five years. Patterns and trends in the field of study are covered,

as well as the major theoretical perspectives. The major areas of focus are socialization tactics, socialization training, socialization learning and content, group socialization, and moderators, mediators and individual differences. In conclusion, the authors address possible areas for further exploration. Research has positively contributed to the understanding of how newcomers adjust to new organizational situations and their ability to become productive members of that organization. The socialization process has been found to decrease stress and contribute to increased levels of job satisfaction.

Saks, A.M., & Ashforth, B.E. (2000). The role of dispositions, entry stressors, and behavioral plasticity theory in predicting newcomers' adjustment to work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 43-62.

Because individuals react differently to similar circumstances, to successfully predict behavior one must consider both the context of the situation and the organizational factors influencing the newcomer. The objective of this article is to examine environmental factors in relation to a new employee's ability to successfully and effectively adjust to his or her new role. The authors studied self-efficacy in relation to four job-related stressors—including conflict and expectations—and the ability to predict a newcomer's capacity for adjustment. The conclusion of the study indicates that there is minimal support for the role of personality and behavioral plasticity theory in successfully predicting a new employee's ability to adjust to work. The study results also support the

theory that the situation rather than an individual's personality is a better predictor.

Saks, A. M., Uggerslev, K. L., & Fassina, N. E. (2007). Socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment: A meta-analytic review and test of a model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 70*, 413-446.

This article discusses the importance and effectiveness of socialization tactics on the process and success of onboarding. The authors attempt to speak to the limitations of socialization strategies and suggest other possible theories. Findings of this study indicate that there is a relatively strong relationship between socialization tactics and a new employee's ability to successfully adjust to an organization and the organization's culture.

Settoon, R.P., & Adkins, C.L. (1997). Newcomer socialization: The role of supervisors, coworkers, friends and family members. *Journal of Business & Psychology, 11*, 507-516.

The authors of this article explore the use of referents by new employees in the decision-making process. Individuals were surveyed at different intervals after initial entry into a new organization. Findings show that depending on the amount of time that has passed since entry into an organization, newcomers use different groups for reference. At the time of the first survey, which was the closest point after hire, newcomers most routinely used friends and family as referents, and at the time of the second survey, individuals had begun to use co-workers and supervisors as referents for decision-making. Overall, results

indicate that newcomers predominantly use referents from inside their organization rather than from outside the organization. Interestingly, newcomers associated the use of referents with a negative perception of their own performance. Possible explanations might be that individuals view information-seeking from outside sources as a weakness. Newcomers might be concerned that using referents could be viewed as a sign of weakness or that they should have prior knowledge of this information. The authors conclude that because socializing new employees is so vital to the success of an organization, understanding information-seeking behavior is central to newcomer adjustment.

Sias, P.M., Kramer, M.K., & Jenkins, E. (1997). A comparison of the communication behaviors of temporary employees and new hires. *Communication Research, 24*, 731-754.

The information-seeking behaviors of temporary employees versus new hires is the topic of discussion for these authors. Research suggests that compared with permanent employees, temporary employees are less concerned with creating a positive impression and image with supervisors and, as a result, seek information less frequently than those hired permanently. In addition, these individuals are less likely to provide information to others and are therefore more likely to find themselves isolated in terms of communication and information. Temporary employees lack a connection to their organization and their role within the organization. It is suggested that this lack of

communication on the part of the temp can indicate an organization's inability to innovate and inability to effectively provide information. The authors offer suggestions for organizations to improve new-hire learning and active communication with temporary employees.

Van Vianen, A.E.M. (2000). Person-organization fit: The match between newcomers' and recruiters' preferences for organizational cultures. *Personnel Psychology, 53*, 113-149.
The authors of this study were interested in the relationship between employees and their organizations—also known as person-organization (P-O) fit. They believed that prior research on the topic was limited in its approach in that it made the assumption that individuals seek out organizations that have similar values as themselves and that mutual attraction can account for similar individuals within an organization. The current study focuses on the role of individuals' favoritism for organizational cultures. The results indicate that similar preferences for people and personality exist for individuals within an organization, but that such characteristics as motivation and conscientiousness are not as homogenous. A possible explanation might be that these characteristics are more position-specific rather than organization-specific, and so it is possible that a greater degree of preference variation exists.

Wanberg, C. R., & Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D. (2000). Predictors and outcomes of proactivity in the socialization process. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*, 373-385.
This article seeks to provide new understanding on the productivity of employees and how it is related to the socialization process. Socialization refers to how newcomers gather information, obtain feedback and create connections with co-workers and supervisors, and what their organizational outlook is. Results indicate that an individual with a proactive personality is more likely to have a positive and effective socialization experience. Personality is important in this process; a new employee who is an extrovert is more likely to seek out feedback and communicate with peers in the organization.

Waung, M. (1995). The effects of self-regulatory coping orientation on newcomer adjustment and job survival. *Personnel Psychology, 48*, 633-650.
In this study, one group of new employees (the comparison group) was given information regarding negative job features and ways to cope with those negative aspects, and another group, the experimental group, was given the same information and provided with additional training to increase self-efficacy to effectively deal with these possible negative situations. The original hypothesis said that the comparison group would demonstrate higher levels of turnover than the experimental group, but in fact, the opposite was found to be true. The additional training provided to the experimental group created a

perception of negative job information, which resulted in early entry turnover. Individuals who were part of the experimental group and who stayed in the organization beyond four weeks were found to have intentions of remaining with the organization for more than a year and felt increased levels of job satisfaction.

Wesson, M.J., & Gogus, C.I. (2005). Shaking hands with a computer: An examination of two methods of newcomer orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 1018-1026.
The authors of this study explore the effectiveness of computer-based orientation programs on the socialization process. Newcomers in the study either participated in a social-based orientation or a computer-based orientation on an individual level. Findings indicate that although information content was not negatively affected, individuals who participated in the computer-based program felt lower levels of organizational commitment and satisfaction.

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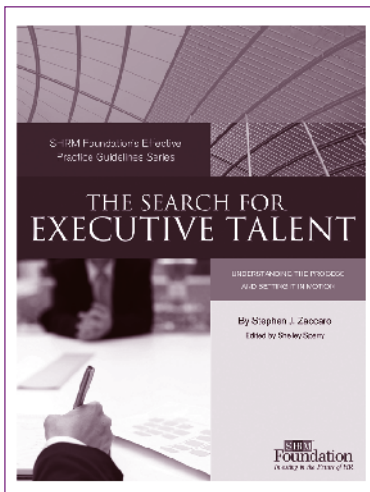
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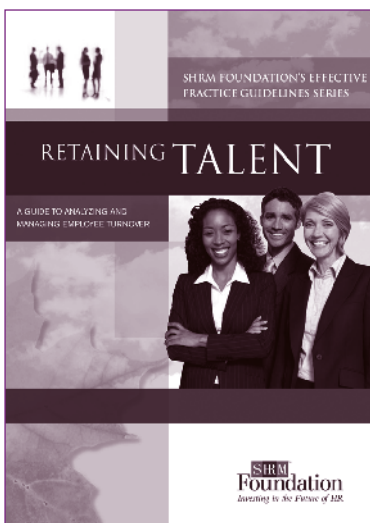
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New Leader Coaching

The performance statistics are startling. Without effective organizational support, more than 40% of new leaders fail to meet the expectations of their management. The costs to the business are substantial, from direct replacement costs of 2 to 3 times salary to less quantifiable costs related to inefficiency, opportunity costs, and poor morale.

Right Management Consultants is a premiere provider of coaching services for leaders around the world. Following our recent strategic acquisition of Manchester Consulting, we are proud to add their New Leader Coaching to the services we offer to our clients.

For over ten years, New Leader Coaching has been helping leaders make successful transitions to new or expanded leadership roles. In new leader situations, many of the rules are implied, relationships are not well developed, and teams have yet to be solidified. Experienced Right coaches help new leaders to navigate these challenges, engaging leaders, their bosses, and their teams in building a strong foundation of clear goals and solid relationships. Through these relationships, mutual respect and support are developed—two key ingredients of a successful onboarding process.

THE BENEFITS

In addition to enhancing leadership abilities in general, New Leader Coaching:

- **Solidifies** the relationship between the new leader and his/her boss by clarifying and defining key objectives, skills, and issues to focus on in the first month, the first quarter, and the first year.

- **Accelerates** the new leader's learning curve by focusing the leader on critical objectives necessary for success.

- **Improves** internal communication skills between the new leader and the organization.

- **Strengthens** the relationship building process among the new leader, his or her team, and key stakeholders in order to gain the support necessary to achieve goals.

- **Builds** a practical twelve-month roadmap that outlines clear goals and ways to achieve them, and provides ongoing coaching to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

- **Increases** the new leader's ability to make a positive impact on the organization's performance.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

New Leader Coaching has been successful with both new and experienced executives from the Manager through Chief Executive Officer levels. New Leader Coaching has proved to be particularly valuable when:

- A high level executive from outside the organization assumes a key position.

- An expatriate begins a new leadership assignment.

- A technical expert assumes a broader leadership role.

- The position being filled has historically seen high turnover (unsuccessful predecessors).

- The new leader's department presents immediate challenges (high turnover, low morale, or resentment in the organization about an incoming new leader).

- The new leader is filling a position that is just being created in the organization.

- The new leader and his or her supervisor are at different locations, or the supervisor can dedicate only limited time to supporting the new leader's assimilation.

COMPONENTS OF NEW LEADER COACHING

Bringing key people into an organization begins with the recruitment process. It ends when the executive is productive and fully integrated into the organization's culture. That takes time, skill, and well-planned effort. This is true whether the leader is new to the organization, or has just been promoted to a key position of leadership

Each coaching engagement is individualized for the coaching client and exact content will depend on the needs of the individual. Following are some examples of typical content areas that can be addressed during the coaching process:

Preparing for Onboarding

Consider the best strategies for planning and executing the leader's introduction to the organization in the new role.

Take Hold: Defining Objectives & Beginning

Focus on clarifying the new role, building relationships and paving the way for necessary changes. Complete onboarding tasks including developing an "Appointment Charter" – a document defining the key objectives of the new position

Immersion: Assessing & Learning

Focus on building awareness of the leader's and the organization's key strengths and needs and those of key stakeholders. Other onboarding tasks include learning about the organization, its systems, politics and culture.

Reshaping: Building the Future

Focus on the leader's role in creating the organization's future. Onboarding tasks include defining and addressing broader and longer-term organizational issues.

Consolidation: Finish Onboarding & Evaluate Progress

Focus on evaluation and consolidating the progress of the first year. Onboarding tasks include refocusing on stakeholder relationship, updating the leader's key objectives and mapping out a plan for ongoing success.

A PROVEN APPROACH

New Leader Coaching has been proven effective, with a very good return on investment for the organization. Here is what some leaders had to say about the New Leader Coaching process:

"It was a great structured approach. The coaching facilitated dialogue within the organization. It helped me use the group's organizational knowledge to assimilate me into the role. The support was great. The approach was "What can we do to make it work?"

—New Leader, Pharmeceuticals

"I've modified my approaches to get things done more effectively. I am aware fot he culture and I modify my behavior accordingly. I have a better understanding of the intangible issues of the organization. I've confirmed to be sure that my goals are in alignment with my manager's expectation. I was very gung ho – now I'm a little more caustious and I see that I can't do everything. Withou the coaching, I would have otherwise spread myself too thin. Instead, I focus on the things that I can make the greatest impact on."

—New Leader, Consumer Products

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employers to ask some difficult questions of their talent strategy.
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