



The **ULTIMATE GUIDE** To Onboarding Staff For **MAXIMUM RETENTION**

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**GOT STAFF RETENTION ISSUES?
IT'S BECAUSE YOUR ONBOARDING PROCESS SUCKS.**

**YOUR 7 STEP GUIDE TO GET AND RETAIN
AMAZING STAFF**

People

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That perpetually revolving staff door. Does your company have one? If you do, you're not alone. Not by a long shot! Securing reliable staff who are loyal and will stay is one of the biggest challenges managers face. Depending who you talk to the total employee turnover costs of replacing an employee varies from 30-150% of their salary. So it's no wonder managers like yourself are scratching their heads about how to address this costly problem. In our experience, the answers lie in... your onboarding process.

THE STATS

Before we get to the why onboarding is important for your business, let's look at some stats.

69% of employees are more likely to stay with their places of employment for at least three years after a great onboarding experience

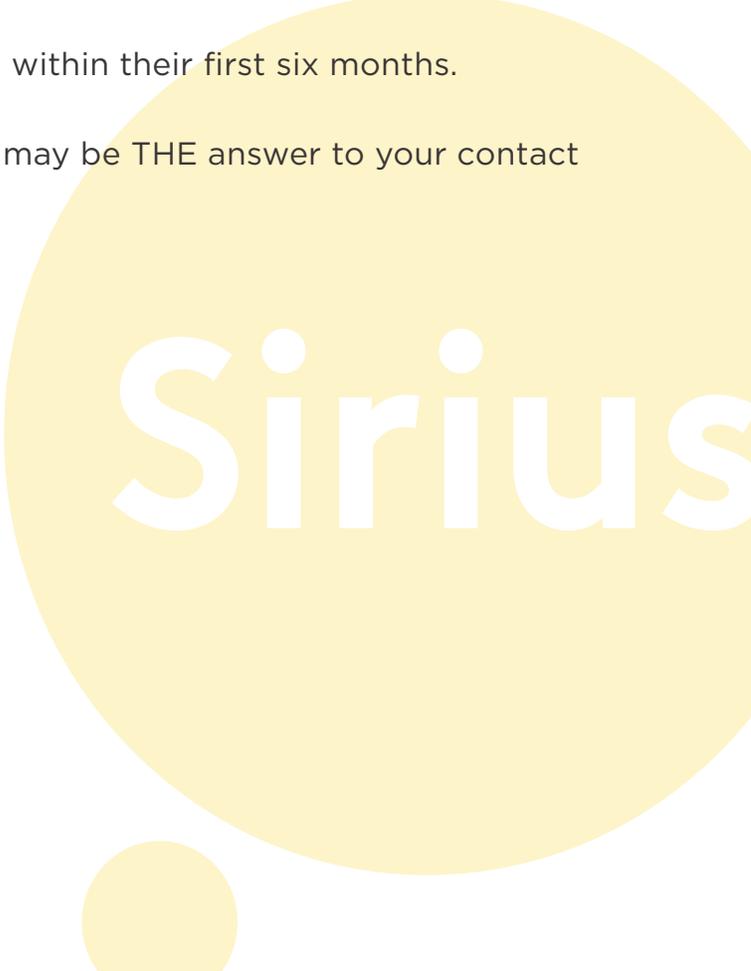
The Wynhurst Group found that 22% of employee turnover happens in the first 45 days of employment.

According to Life Work Solutions, over 50% of staff recruited into an organisation will leave within two years. Also, one in four new hires will leave within six months.

O.C. Tanner reports that 69% of employees are more likely to stay with their places of employment for at least three years after a great onboarding experience

HBR found that 33% of new hires look for a job within their first six months.

And so we get to our reasons why onboarding may be THE answer to your contact centre staff retention problems.



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WHY IS ONBOARDING IMPORTANT?

If done in the right way, the onboarding process is an essential employee engagement tool.

It can improve your:

1. New hire retention rate
2. New hire performance
3. Overall team culture
4. Customer satisfaction (happy employees = happy customers = an improved bottom line)

Your 7 step onboarding guide

So what makes a good onboarding process? Isn't it time-consuming and costly? What is the ROI? All good questions but we'll let the Boston Consulting Group answer the last one first. They **found companies that experience the highest levels of revenue growth and profit margin consistently invested in onboarding processes.**

As for the other questions, we've got answers for those too in the following step-by-step guide to onboarding your new staff. It's a handy roadmap for the first four weeks of your new hire's employment but also touches upon the 'before' stage; the time when you seek feedback from current staff. This is a crucial step in ensuring your onboarding process is on point.



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STEP

1

THE FEEDBACK STAGE

Your **current employees are a goldmine of HR information**, especially your recent hires. Their feedback about their onboarding experience is invaluable in identifying where your strengths and weaknesses lie. Compile a survey (anonymous if you feel it will garner more response) asking for feedback about the things they did and didn't like when they started. Ask for specifics, taking note of areas where employees felt confused, lost or disengaged.

For example:

- Did you have access to relevant information when you needed it? If not, provide details.
- What information would have been useful in your first week?
- What training do you think was lacking in your first few weeks?
- How would you improve the system training provided?
- How would you improve the product training provided?

Review all received input to help you build your bespoke onboarding process.

NOTE: *Be aware of your **treatment of contract temporary vs permanent staff**. Often companies give contract staff a 'watered-down' version of onboarding. This only serves to breed discontent and discord within a team. It's also really demotivating for contractors who are sometimes on long-term contracts. To overcome this, **your onboarding process should be the same for all employees — temporary vs permanent.***

STEP

2

THE INTERVIEW & OFFER STAGE

a) Before you post the job

Jobs evolve over time and so should your standard job descriptions. Carefully read it and ensure it's accurate for the 'here and now'. Are the duties and responsibilities still the same? Is the remuneration rate commensurate with industry standards etc?

One of the keys to staff retention is setting expectations during recruitment that you can meet (or hopefully exceed!). An exacting job description will do just that.

b) During the interview & offer

It's all about being clear here too; in setting job expectations and details about your company's culture. Give your prospective employee a balanced perspective of the job and your organisation; both the positives and challenges.

By being honest and transparent, you're far more likely to end up with the right person for the role – plus you won't be setting expectations you can't meet which, as we've mentioned, risks impacting your staff retention rate.

If you can, keep your recruitment timeline tight. The whole process should be as short as possible and the applicant shouldn't be required to jump through multiple hoops (several interviews, psychometric testing or drawn out medical or police checks). By drawing things out, you risk losing great candidates who will more than likely be interviewing elsewhere.

STEP 3

THE WEEK BEFORE YOUR NEW HIRE STARTS

Employees can only be as productive as their training and support system allows. If these things are not up to par, they will likely go hunting for a job somewhere else, setting that pesky staff retention revolving door spinning once again.

There are many things you can do to internally prepare for your new hire. They will require time and effort — which can be hard when you've got day-to-day work to do — but you will be rewarded down the track with your ROI.

Also remember you need only do this once as you will use the same onboarding process for all employees, albeit with a little tweak here and there for individual needs. However, if after reading our tips, you still find yourself stuck in this area, there are many affordable [onboarding software packages on the market](#).

Some 'week-before- they-start' tips:

- a) Preliminary introductions:** connect your new employee with one or two key personnel via phone or email before they start. We're all social beings and work relationships are just as important as our personal ones. An early connection will help your new hire shake off some of those 'new kid on the block' concerns.
- b) An email questionnaire:** ask your new employee to fill out a personal questionnaire detailing a few of their favourite hobbies, books, TV shows and 3 pm munchie snack (this one's really important — you'll find out why later). Be as creative as you like with the questions but avoid very sensitive areas (religion and politics). Explain you want to introduce them to their team members and will use the information they provide to do so.
- c) Set up their 'tools of the trade:** it's not a great feeling to arrive at your new desk with remnants of the previous employee still present or to sit there twiddling your thumbs as nothing is set up for you. To avoid this, ensure your new employee's workstation is set up before they arrive.

Think — phone, laptop, email, logins, desk, printers etc. You can take it a step further by loading up time-saving tools such as hyperlinks to company procedures and other onboarding materials. A nice touch is to send them a welcome email inviting them to any social stuff you've got planned for them too.

d) Pick a buddy and mentor: there are real merits in having a mentor and buddy program. Pick a mentor who is a senior team member and a buddy who is a peer within their team. Arrange a few meetings with each during their first week. They can then meet either weekly - or whatever suits - to discuss issues that may arise.

e) Training schedule: there is a lot to learn when you start at a new company - from day to day work to policies, procedures and client briefs. Alongside your HR team and with feedback from current employees, review your training schedule. Create a day by day course for your new employee for their first two weeks. If you'd like a bit more guidance on this, refer to Steps 4 and 5.

f) An agenda for day one: everyone feels like a fish out of water on their first day. But you can negate this somewhat by creating a structured agenda for their first day and if you want, beyond that. The following is an outline of what to include.

STEP

4

YOUR NEW HIRE'S FIRST DAY

a) Be a boy scout

As the hiring manager, it's wise to be prepared. As you go about your preparations for their first day, keep this question at the forefront of your mind: "What will my new hire say to their family and friends when they get home today?" Do all you can to include things to make sure that the answer is a positive one.

For starters, schedule your new starter's arrival at least an hour after yours. Use the time to check everything is in order from their workstation to their first day schedule to any social plans. Most importantly, make sure their favourite 3 pm munchie snack is sitting front and centre on their desk. Be sure to gauge their reaction when they realise you took the time to personalise their welcome. Their smile will be a thank you all in itself and it ups your engagement stakes. Win-win!

b) Schedule a meeting with them

It can be at any time during the day but early on is best. This meeting is all about clarity; about goals, objectives, accountabilities, tasks, KPIs, etc. Consider setting a recurring meeting - be it daily or weekly - to touch base on their progress too. Be clear about when they are expected to start hitting performance KPIs too.

NOTE: *New staff face a steep learning curve, so carefully consider the right time to introduce KPI's. Don't expect too much too soon as they have a lot to learn about; new products/services, company, systems and processes to name just a few.*

c) The all-important office tour

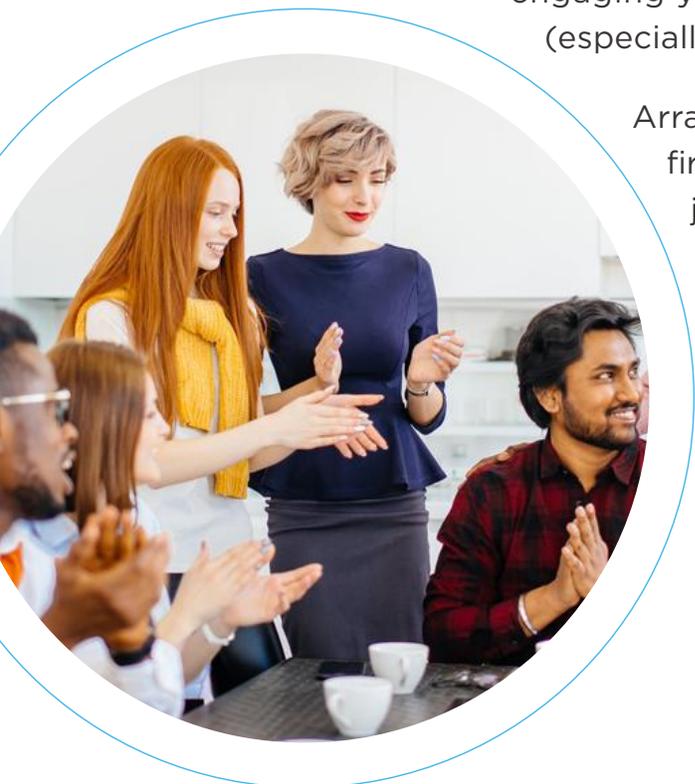
Take your new starter around the office to familiarise them with necessary facilities as well as any relevant health and safety requirements. If you'd like to up the fun level, there are companies that specialise in onboarding and induction programs.

One such company is [Enboarder](#) who have a unique 'Amazing Race' style office tour, getting new staff to go on a treasure hunt around your office space to locate key facilities and contacts, learning important information that helps them get to the next department. It's certainly a novel way to be introduced to your space! You can incorporate a social ending too by ensuring the final clue leads them to the kitchen where staff are waiting with some nibbles to welcome them.

d) The social stuff

Nothing says 'welcome, nice to have you here' more than a big slice of cake or social drink after work! While onboarding is very much about productivity, education and compliance, personally engaging your new employee is also extremely important (especially for retention purposes).

Arrange a social get-together for your employee's first day, whether it's big with all staff or smaller with just their team. Additional ideas might be to create an 'onboard swag pack' with pictures, names and titles of the people they will be working with as well as company-branded items such as stationary, pens, pencils, lanyard etc.



STEP 5

THEIR FIRST THREE WEEKS

This period is your new employee's core training time. It's when they get the chance to learn more about your company and decide whether you're a good fit for them and vice versa. It's likely they'll feel overwhelmed and slightly stressed out with all they have to learn. This is when a bi-weekly (or more) check-in can help to nurture them along and tackle any issues they encounter.

The following are some key areas to focus upon. Also, as the weeks progress, they should practise the skills learnt to consolidate their learning.

a) Buddy up!

Having someone familiar to go to when you have questions about how to deal with an irate customer or where to get help with the CRM system is really important to foster morale. Ensure the new employee gets adequate one-on-one time with both their mentor and buddy during the first week.

b) Strengthening relationships

Continue to focus on building internal relationships. Liaising with their new team, booking time with other partners in the business so they can explain their roles and small social team-building activities are all good ways.



c) Task-related training

Create a knowledge library and allocate some training time to exploring this. As the information will be quite text-heavy, short bursts in the day may be better than longer sessions. Intersperse it with company and systems related training.

The knowledge library might include:

- short 'how to' videos for specific tasks
- training booklets
- system guides

You might find e-learning products to be of benefit here. It's a burgeoning industry and can make what is often very dry material much more interactive and fun to learn.

d) Company-related training

This one's all about learning about your company. Things like:

- Products
- Positioning
- Value proposition
- Overcoming common client objections
- Handling common complaints
- Escalation process

Getting your product team involved here is crucial to the success of the onboarding process. Carefully consider what strategy is the most important for training new staff. For example, one of our valued clients – a multinational in the technology & computer consumables industry – trains new starters on a single product suite first and they only take calls related to that suite. Once they've grasped this content, they move to the next.

e) Systems-related training

This area helps your new employee learn about your internal tools, systems and processes, for example, CRM, reporting tools and so on. Many companies use their own in-house systems which of course, adds to the new hire's learning curve. To make things easier on them, set up quick access to system training materials, especially if they are expected to use multiple systems at once (and move quickly between them). For example, they may need to switch between two screens to access the phone system, CRM or order management. Cheat sheets can be useful here or easily digestible training material such as short videos on a system task they're not sure about. You can take it even further by using an e-learning environment that mimics the live system.



f) Meeting/Call shadowing

Aside from sitting in with their team on meetings or calls, get your new hire to do a few mock practices of common scenarios using scripts of role plays with their buddy or mentor to build confidence.

STEP 6

YOUR EMPLOYEE'S FOURTH WEEK

a) A review session

This week you can add in a comprehensive feedback and review meeting. It should go both ways. Provide positive reinforcement and suggestions to help them build upon their learning and encourage them to do the same with you.

b) Going further

At this point, your new hire should be feeling more confident in their role. Make sure they continue to get adequate practice time to develop the skills they will need to use on a day to day basis.



STEP 7

MOVING FORWARD

By now, the formal **onboarding process** may be over but to ensure a great retention rate it must **continue in a deeper way**.

Some steps to take:

- a)** For many staff members, a lack of career progression is one of the reasons they up and leave. Think about how you can take your new staff member from beginner to expert so they are on an upward career trajectory and thus more likely to stay. One way is to differentiate yourself from other companies by offering soft skill - or transferable skill - training within your onboarding program. Example topics might include negotiation skills, handling conflict, moving into management or time management.
- b)** Remember too that **training doesn't end in the first month**. It must be regularly scheduled for all employees to help them keep up to speed on product changes and their learning - which is also important for retention.
- c)** Apart from training, continue to foster engagement by offering incentives and nurturing a happy and fun environment. It's important to keep your staff motivated.
- d)** Just like you did at the start with your recent hires, **actively solicit feedback from your new hire about how the onboarding process** can be improved. By involving them in this discussion, you'll not only enhance your process but make them feel like a valuable contributor to your company.
- e)** On a related point, **seek their feedback about everyday processes** too. They are at the front line and the first to hear an idea or complaint. Tap into this valuable feedback and make sure they know you are using it! It's a great way for them to feel appreciated.

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So that's our seven step guide to get and retain amazing staff. Here's hoping that employing this process will enable you to hit those KPI's and ensure a stable team with low turnover along the way.

If you'd like some more help in this area or want to discuss your staffing needs, please **get in touch** with us at Sirius People. We'd love to talk to you about how we can assist.