A NEW EMPLOYEE'S FIRST STEP: WHY ONBOARDING SHAPES EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

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Abstract: This article explores the importance of the onboarding process in modern human resource management. It analyzes key theoretical approaches and practical methods for effectively integrating new employees into organizations. The article also examines onboarding practices through examples of leading international companies and local organizations. The findings highlight onboarding as a strategic tool that enhances employee performance, retention, and organizational sustainability.

Keywords: Onboarding, human resource management, HR management, employee integration, employee retention, job performance, organizational culture, mentoring, adaptation process, employee engagement, employer branding

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada onboarding jarayonining zamonaviy inson resurslarini boshqarishdagi ahamiyati yoritilgan. Maqolada yangi xodimlarni ishga tez va samarali moslashtirishning asosiy nazariy yondashuvlari hamda amaliy jihatlari tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, yirik xalqaro kompaniyalar va mahalliy tashkilotlar misolida onboarding jarayonining xodimlar samaradorligi va sadoqatiga ta'siri ko'rib chiqilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari onboarding jarayonini strategik darajada tashkil etish kompaniya barqaror rivoji uchun muhim omil ekanini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Onboarding, inson resurslarini boshqarish, HR menejment, xodimlarni moslashtirish, xodimlar sadoqati, ish samaradorligi, kompaniya madaniyati, mentorlik, ishga moslashuv, xodimlar almashinuvi, employer branding

In today's highly competitive labor market, hiring a new employee does not mark the end of the process; rather, it signals the beginning of one of the most critical stages. In practice, research shows that approximately 20–30 percent of new employees leave their organizations within the first 90 days. In many cases, this early turnover is directly linked to poorly designed or entirely absent onboarding processes. The departure of even a single employee can cost an organization between 50 and 200 percent of that employee's annual salary, reflecting not only direct financial losses but also wasted time, lost knowledge, and disruptions to team stability. Conversely, a well-structured onboarding process significantly increases the likelihood that employees will remain with the company longer and reach full productivity more quickly. Onboarding is not limited to paperwork or showing a new hire their workplace; it is a process through which employees adapt to organizational culture, gain clarity about their roles, and begin to see themselves as full members of the team. This early experience is particularly important for younger professionals and Generation Z employees, for whom the first days at work strongly shape their overall perception of the organization. For this reason, onboarding is increasingly viewed as a strategic HR tool that supports employee retention, improves business performance, and strengthens organizational reputation.

The onboarding process plays a central role in shaping a new employee's initial relationship with the organization. During this period, employees gradually develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them, the company's values and internal rules, and how collaboration within the team functions. When onboarding is well organized, it fosters a sense of confidence and clarity, enabling employees to adapt more quickly and move toward independent performance. When insufficient attention is given to this process, however, new hires are more likely to feel isolated, uncertain, and unsupported in their roles.

Poorly managed onboarding often results in early employee turnover. In many situations, new employees experience stress due to unclear responsibilities,

inadequate guidance, and a lack of regular feedback, which prevents them from fully demonstrating their potential. As a result, employees may either leave the organization or continue working at a low level of productivity for an extended period. This creates additional workload for team members and increases pressure on managers and HR departments alike.

Beyond its impact on individual employees, weak onboarding practices can negatively affect the organization's internal environment as a whole. Frequent staff turnover undermines team stability, weakens trust among employees, and damages the organization's reputation. Negative onboarding experiences not only affect new hires themselves but also harm the employer brand, making it more difficult to attract qualified talent in the future. Therefore, onboarding should be viewed not merely as a tool for individual adaptation, but as a critical factor in ensuring organizational stability and long-term development.

Onboarding refers to a planned and structured process through which a new employee is integrated into an organization. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the employee can begin working effectively from the very first day. This process goes beyond explaining job responsibilities and includes helping employees adapt to organizational culture, values, internal policies, and preferred ways of working within a team. Academic sources often describe onboarding as a process that begins even before the first working day, during the pre-onboarding stage, and continues for the first three to six months of employment [1]. The concept of onboarding became widely adopted in modern HR practices during the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, when organizations began to place greater strategic emphasis on corporate management and human resources. In earlier periods, new employees were typically introduced to their roles through brief orientations and basic documentation. However, subsequent research demonstrated that early work experiences play a decisive role in shaping long-term performance and an employee's decision to remain with an organization [2]. Today, onboarding

is widely recognized as a core component of HR management and a strategic tool for reducing employee turnover, accelerating job adaptation, and strengthening employee commitment to the organization [3].

The effectiveness of onboarding largely depends on how systematically and clearly it is designed and implemented. Research consistently shows that onboarding delivers the best results when it is carefully planned, carried out in stages, and aligned with clearly defined objectives. Bauer explains the onboarding process through four key elements: providing role clarity, building competence through the development of necessary skills and knowledge, fostering social connections within the team, and integrating employees into the organizational culture. When any of these elements is missing, the adaptation process may slow down or fail to produce the desired outcomes. For this reason, onboarding should not be limited to the first working day but should be treated as an ongoing process that covers at least the first 90 days of employment. From a theoretical perspective, this initial period is critical, as it is during this time that employees begin to develop trust in the organization and a sense of long-term commitment.

Another essential aspect of effective onboarding is the employee's psychological adjustment and the presence of a supportive work environment. New employees are required not only to learn their formal job responsibilities but also to navigate informal rules, interpersonal dynamics, and unexpected situations within the workplace. When managers and HR departments provide consistent communication, regular feedback, and mentoring support, employees are more likely to feel secure and valued. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2022), active managerial involvement during onboarding significantly increases employee motivation and organizational commitment [4]. This is because onboarding is not merely a process of transferring knowledge; it is a process through which employees develop an internal sense of belonging and confidence that they "fit" within the organization. This psychological foundation

plays a crucial role in shaping long-term performance and an employee's decision to remain with the company.

According to research conducted by the Brandon Hall Group, organizations with well-designed onboarding programs have achieved an 82 percent increase in new employee retention, while employee performance levels exceeded 70 percent. These findings demonstrate that when onboarding is implemented effectively, it creates conditions that encourage employees to remain with the organization longer and perform their roles more productively. As a result, companies are able to improve overall efficiency and achieve more sustainable organizational growth. Similar outcomes have been observed at Texas Instruments, where strengthening the onboarding system reduced the time required for new employees to fully adapt and reach effective performance by approximately two months. This accelerated transition enabled new hires to begin working independently sooner and contribute more actively to team outcomes, ultimately leading to a noticeable increase in the company's overall operational performance [5].

Broader statistical evidence further confirms the strong positive impact of effective onboarding programs on both employees and organizational outcomes. Studies indicate that well-structured onboarding initiatives can increase employee productivity by 60-62 percent, while levels of job commitment and overall job satisfaction rise by 50-53 percent. These results highlight onboarding as a critical driver not only of individual performance, but also of long-term organizational success.

The experience of large global companies clearly illustrates how onboarding can be elevated to a strategic level. Among FAANG companies, Google is widely recognized as a leader in developing onboarding as a core organizational priority. At Google, onboarding begins before the employee's first working day, during the pre-onboarding stage, and provides new hires with clear goals, initial responsibilities, and early opportunities to connect with their teams. Unlike traditional approaches

that emphasize technical training alone, Google's onboarding places greater emphasis on role clarity, psychological safety, and social integration. Following the introduction of structured "buddy systems" and clearly defined 30-60-90 day plans developed by managers, the speed of employee adaptation and overall performance improved significantly. Internal research conducted by Google's People Analytics team further shows that teams in which managers play an active role during onboarding achieve higher levels of new employee performance [6]. One of the most distinctive features of Google's onboarding approach is that it is not treated solely as an HR responsibility, but rather as a shared responsibility of managers and teams, a perspective that clearly differentiates Google from many other organizations.

After examining how leading technology companies approach onboarding at a strategic level, it is equally important to consider the experience of organizations in the financial sector. In this field, onboarding is designed not only to support rapid adaptation but also to prepare employees for high levels of responsibility and sustained work under pressure. At Goldman Sachs, a leading institution in the financial industry, onboarding is structured specifically around these demands [7]. The company places strong emphasis on its core values, ethical standards, and risk management culture as central components of the onboarding process. From the very first weeks, new employees are thoroughly introduced to internal policies, principles of client engagement, and expectations related to professional accountability. In addition, onboarding at Goldman Sachs is supported by intensive training programs, mentoring initiatives, and real-world business case analyses, enabling new hires to develop the skills and confidence required to make complex financial decisions within a relatively short period of time. What distinguishes Goldman Sachs' onboarding approach is its focus not only on role-specific preparation, but also on psychological readiness for a high-pressure professional environment—an approach that contributes directly to the firm's consistently strong performance [8].

The experience of international organizations demonstrates that a strategic approach to onboarding can be effective across different markets and cultural contexts. From this perspective, attention to onboarding and employee integration is also steadily increasing among companies in Uzbekistan. Today, HR practices in the country are no longer limited to recruitment alone but are evolving into more comprehensive systems that emphasize the integration of new employees into organizational culture and team dynamics [9]. Modern HR trends, such as strengthening open communication with employees, introducing flexible working arrangements, and implementing structured feedback and mentoring systems, are contributing to higher levels of job satisfaction and encouraging employees to remain with their organizations over the long term. In the context of Uzbekistan, these practices are becoming particularly important as organizations seek to reduce employee turnover and improve overall workforce stability.

In conclusion, onboarding has become an essential and integral component of contemporary human resource management. When implemented effectively, onboarding enables organizations to reduce employee turnover, enhance job performance, and build a strong employer brand [10]. Conversely, insufficient attention to this process may lead to financial losses, internal instability, and declining employee motivation. For this reason, the time, resources, and effort invested in onboarding should be viewed as a long-term strategic investment. Successful and committed employees are often the result of a well-structured and thoughtfully designed beginning to their professional journey.

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