New hires need

CULTURE-FOCUSED ONBOARDING

Introduction

Hiring for a cultural fit has been a trending theme in HR over the past few years, but this outlook is falling out of favor. Instead, it's more popular to take the approach of finding excellent candidates and implementing an onboarding process that trains new hires in company culture.

We can't expect employees to be in step with our unique cultures from day one. To get them involved, we need to put in the effort. It's HR's responsibility to onboard new hires into the company culture. HR leaders need to develop a process for helping new hires fit in. Onboarding new employees into the culture, and implementing ongoing cultural training for incumbent employees, is an important way to keep your organization's values front and center.

What is your company's culture?

Organizational norms, core values, and goals form the basis for the company's culture. Essentially, culture is the character and personality of an organization. But this does not only articulate the ethos of a company, it also outlines how people interact, collaborate, and produce within the workplace.

While many companies cultivate their culture, for other organizations this is the result of organic development over time. Regardless, the importance of culture shouldn't be underestimated—a healthy culture is associated with significant benefits for employees, employers, and the company's bottom line.

Before your organization can onboard new hires into the culture, it first needs to distill what this culture is.

Identify your organization's core values. First and foremost, take some time to identify the underlying principles that inform company policies and operations. This should answer both the "why" and the "how" of what your company does: Why are we doing what we do? How are we getting it done? These two questions go to the heart of culture.
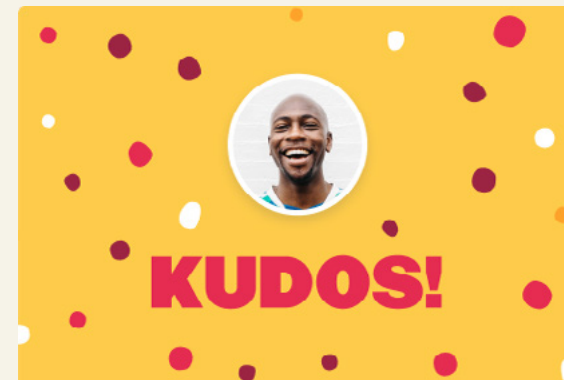
Look in the mirror. While your organization may have an articulated culture, you need to make sure this culture is doing what it's supposed to. For example, if diversity and inclusion are high up on the priority list (which they should be), make sure that your company isn't just talking the talk. Ask yourselves:

- How many POC have been hired or promoted recently?
- How many non-cis men occupy senior-level positions?
- Where is there room for improvement?

This kind of self-examination is vital to keeping your company culture healthy and making it more concrete and communicable to new and current employees.

Get executive buy-in. Culture cascades from the top down. If managers and supervisors aren't entrenched in the culture, it won't impact how teams function or how individual employees fit into the organization. Furthermore, if your executives aren't on board, onboarding for culture won't be possible.

For example, fostering a healthy culture focused on DE&I requires collaboration across departments and roles, so when designing an onboarding process take the opportunity to bring the people in charge to the table.

Talk to your people. Find out what employees are thinking and feeling with an anonymous survey. These insights can help inform efforts to create culture and will clarify what is required when onboarding new personnel into the culture.

Keeping communication open will ensure that any gaps or failures are swiftly identified and resolved before they impact the overall culture.

Hire fair. This should be self-evident. Hiring, firing, or promoting people for any reason other than merit and performance is discriminatory. It's not only the right thing to do, though. Fair hiring and promotion practices also boost productivity and revenue. In fact, studies have found that diverse management teams actually generate 19x more revenue than homogeneous ones.

If doing good wasn't enough motivation for building healthy culture, these numbers deliver an added incentive.

Keep talking and learning. Create opportunities to air any concerns about culture. This is an ongoing process that requires ongoing auditing, so to keep on top of your company's culture, schedule regular sensitivity training. This will keep employees aligned with company values and facilitate open communication. Additional training for managers and supervisors will promote the cascade effect of culture and ensure that employees are benefiting from culturally safe management practices.

Culture's connection to employee engagement

If you needed another reason to prioritize culture, studies show that healthy culture boosts productivity and revenue. Furthermore, employees that are satisfied with the culture in their workplace are less likely to seek new employment.

Companies that don't actively manage culture will struggle with employee engagement and retention. As Hibob CEO Ronni Zehavi said, "Poor culture and employee dissatisfaction are driving away more than two-thirds of candidates. In order to thrive in today's quitting economy, companies must create workplace experiences designed to retain today's workforce by promoting a clear work/life balance. While popular trends in perks have come and gone, culture and opportunity are key drivers of employee happiness and support collaboration and productivity."

One important way to cultivate culture is to start from the beginning. Helping your new hires understand company culture will help them fit in, and employees that feel like they fit are more likely to stay. Companies that focus on developing and maintaining a healthy culture have been found to enjoy 40% higher employee retention. Employees that relate to and believe in their company's mission and value will not only be happier, but more productive as well.

Plus, good culture is an important factor in attracting top talent. According to one LinkedIn survey, 66% of job seekers think that culture is a vital consideration when deciding on career opportunities. Once a new hire is onboarded, the work isn't over. Keeping high-performing employees engaged and invested has a direct impact on performance, and the key to engagement is culture. Engaged teams drive growth and outperform their less-engaged peers by 21% in productivity and 22% in profitability.

Good organizational culture has plenty of benefits. Getting off on the right foot with culture-focused onboarding is not only about discussing values and missions, it is also an opportunity for setting clear expectations, fostering engagement, and opening lines of communication—from the start.

8 🙌

15 ✨

COMPANY SHOUTOUT

Kudos to all!
Great teamwork for launch across New York, London, and San Francisco!

22 😍

Focus on soft skills

It's pretty straightforward to assess and set expectations of technical skills when onboarding a candidate. But it can take time before an individual's full spectrum of abilities are expressed. Furthermore, while many employees come into their roles already well equipped with soft skills, these can also be developed over time.

During hiring and onboarding, be sure to emphasize how things like diversity and inclusion, empathy, punctuality, and agility are just as vital as hitting targets. This will demonstrate the centrality of culture to your organization. But talking about soft skills shouldn't end there.

Reskilling for intangible soft skills is more difficult and complex than training for hard skills. But there are some ways that organizations can help employees develop soft skills in a systematic way—from onboarding and beyond.

For example, employees can take a digital soft skill self assessment to help them identify their own strengths and areas for improvement. With the assessment results, employees can then access skill-specific training addressing these areas.

Another way to develop soft skills is to initiate regular situational judgment training. These sessions involve asking candidates to respond to hypothetical scenarios. While situational judgment tests are frequently used during recruitment, incorporating these exercises at other junctures in the employee journey provides an additional way to develop soft skills.

Soft skills may be harder to learn, but they are also hard to identify during recruitment and onboarding. While letting new hires know what kind of culture they are joining and what expectations are is important, hiring for soft skills is short-sighted.

Instead, developing soft skills over time is a better way to foster continued employee development and foster deeper engagement, loyalty, and productivity.

Make culture about collaboration

The buy-in and support of managers, team members, and other stakeholders is necessary both to develop company culture and to facilitate the onboarding experience. A unified onboarding team ensures that new hires get a full picture of how culture informs operations and processes, from across departments and roles.

While silos in organizations are necessary to a certain extent in order to delineate responsibilities, centralize functions, and galvanize teams, larger and more long term organizational goals rely on strategic, cross-functional collaboration.

Making fast, smart decisions, and gaining new skills requires stepping out of one's lane and drawing on a wider pool of expertise. From individuals to departments, the key to successful operational culture is collaboration.

By introducing employees to a range of people from across the company during onboarding, the process will be richer, more diverse, and give new hires a more complete understanding of organizational structure and culture. This will have the added benefit of fostering deeper connection between the various organizational units and departments for ongoing company-wide collaboration and cooperation.
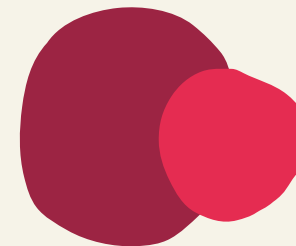
How HR leaders can design culture-focused onboarding

HR professionals are responsible for any organization's most valuable asset: its people. From hiring to firing, creating culture is impossible without an agile, engaged, and empowered HR department.

Long before onboarding, HR should make sure that recruitment and hiring are aligned with culture. This means being clear about diversity and inclusion, compensation, and expectations.

Once prospective employees accept a job offer, onboarding begins.

Like recruitment and hiring, HR is integral to creating a successful and enriching onboarding journey. Here are some of the main ways that HR leaders contribute to onboarding:

Developing processes. HR professionals have the most integral role in any organization's hiring and onboarding process. Successful onboarding goes way beyond filling out forms and office tours—HR develops the processes and standards of onboarding, and ensures that all relevant stakeholders take an active role in its execution. This may include developing supplemental training sessions for managers and supervisors dealing specifically with onboarding new employees, implementing onboarding checklists, or creating fun shoutouts for introducing new hires.

Communicating culture. As important as HR is to creating and implementing processes, it is just as important in establishing and communicating organizational culture. From basic health and safety standards to unique mission statements, from payroll documentation to swag, HR leaders are empowered to bring together processes and culture for successful onboarding. These materials are a great medium for communicating culture at every stage of the employee journey. Getting a nice care package along with your contract is the kind of feel good moment that builds loyalty and sense of belonging, so make an effort to channel organizational culture into onboarding and other processes.

Supporting new hires. Starting a new job is stressful. Another important way that HR professionals contribute to onboarding (and culture) is by providing assistance to employees as they get settled in. New hires may be intimidated, or their coworkers may feel threatened. Managers and supervisors may have different management styles that take getting used to.

HR is there to support and guide employees, teams, and managers throughout the onboarding process and ensure that culture takes center stage.

Five actionable ways to integrate culture into the onboarding process

1	Assign a buddy for ongoing support
2	Behavioral assessment and discussion
3	Provide opportunities for feedback and questions
4	Involve various stakeholders
5	Show appreciation

1. Assign a buddy for ongoing support

Having a listening ear and a knowledgeable person to ask questions to can really make a big difference in the onboarding experience. According to the Harvard Business Review, onboarding buddies can clarify organizational context, improve productivity, and enhance employee satisfaction.

Of course, it's equally important to adjust workload and discuss expectations with the mentoring employee before the buddy system gets off the ground; otherwise, it can backfire. Give mentors adequate training and carve out any necessary assets or time so they can give the right kind of assistance.

2. Behavioral assessment and discussion

Onboarding is about a lot more than getting papers signed and handing out logins. Help new hires get a better handle on culture and start modeling it every day with a behavioral assessment. This approach goes beyond the bare essentials and technical skills of the job to developing soft skills.

Borrowed from psychology, behavioral assessments evaluate and gauge an individual's culture fit and personality. While hiring for culture fit would entail performing a behavioral assessment prior to hiring and possibly dismissing applicants deemed unsuitable, making it a part of the onboarding process is more inclusive of a variety of high value candidates.

Behavioral assessment involves observing and evaluating how new employees handle specific situations. Discussing specific instances with the employee and strategizing optimal ways to handle them according to organizational policy will impart culture during onboarding and build up the new employee to succeed.

3. Provide opportunities for feedback and questions

Both onboarding buddies and behavioral assessments are opportunities for employees to ask questions as they acclimate to their new role. However, these may not be sufficient.

Initiating communication via frequent meetings with direct managers (at the beginning), online surveys to assess onboarding satisfaction, personal check-ins from HR, and other means, will keep your new hires feeling heard. Plus, when misunderstandings and uncertainties are cleared up quickly, this can prevent bigger issues down the line.

4. Involve various stakeholders

It really takes a village to properly onboard a new employee.

Getting people from various departments and different roles to participate in the onboarding journey will give hires a bigger picture of company culture, structure, and operations. When employees feel like an integral part of moving the company forward towards success, they are more likely to be satisfied at work, attain individual targets, and less likely to leave.

Don't wait to bring new people into the fold. Help them out by building an onboarding team with different perspectives but united in a common goal.

5. Show appreciation

Every person in an organization is uniquely equipped to contribute to a shared mission and making sure they know it is an important aspect of managing culture. From onboarding, let employees know how valued they are. Demonstrating appreciation is known to enhance loyalty and productivity, so investing in PDAs—public displays of appreciation— can actually benefit the bottom line.

Throughout onboarding, when a new employee accomplishes a goal or performs a task well, make sure they get a figurative pat on the back. This can begin with them simply accepting the job offer. Send over some great swag, write a personalized welcome letter, encourage others to reach out and welcome them, call a quick meeting to introduce and thank new employees, or find other creative ways to show appreciation.

Not only will this make your new hires feel welcome and wanted, but it will also teach them how to welcome others when the time comes.

Conclusion

Culture is critical.

More and more job seekers are putting culture at the top of their lists when considering potential positions, even above salary. In order to attract and keep top talent, organizations must articulate and uphold their culture—including during onboarding.

Here are some of the ways Hibob's enhanced platform can help you onboard new people, re-engage current people, and attract better people by putting your organization's culture front and center:

- Collaboration tools
- Surveys
- Checklists
- Behavioral assessments
- Appreciation tools
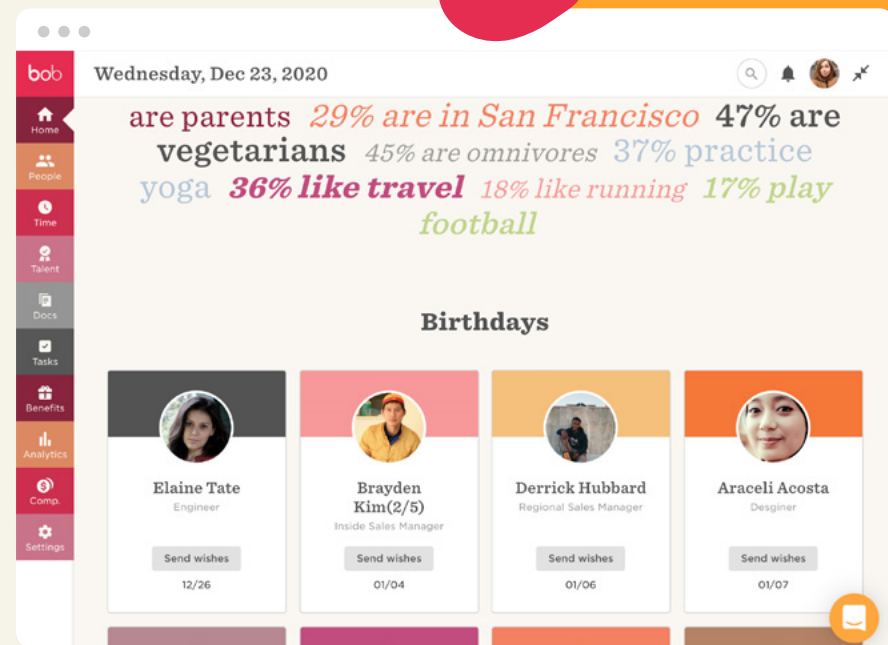
Now is the time to make smarter decisions when it comes to your people and organization.

To learn more about Hibob and our data-driven tools, get in touch with us at

contact@hibob.com

SCHEDULE A DEMO

---

bob

Hibob.com

NEW YORK
205 Hudson St.
New York, NY 10013

T: (+1) 855 426 6627

LONDON
Boundary House
91-93 Charterhouse St.
London EC1M 6HR, UK

T: (+44) 0203 006 2303

TEL AVIV
28 Ben Avigdor St.
Tel Aviv 6721848

T: (+972) 73 265 2595