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HIRE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **30**

Chapter 9 | **Getting the New Employee
On-boarded Successfully**

Getting the New Employee On-boarded Successfully

Have you ever had the experience of going through the process of finding, interviewing, negotiating with, getting approvals, and more to find the right candidate – and then, when it comes time to start, there is no show and no word? Did you discover later that he took another job offer, a counter offer, or just got tired of waiting to hear from you?

This scenario of not showing up at the appointed date probably occurs all too often. It clearly reveals that the sale is not fully completed at that time. In fact, you really do not want to count on a successful hire until the candidate has been working with your organization for at least 90 days.

Instead of continuing to see no-shows, there are a number of tactics you can use that will ensure the success you want during the first 90 days– and satisfied new employees. By using these tactics, you can ensure that your new talent hits the ground running and begins making valuable contributions quickly.

How to Remove Contingency Offers Quickly

Job offers today frequently have contingencies attached to them. These have to be removed before employment can begin, and they usually have to do with reference checks, background checks, drug screens, and/or physicals. It is in your best interest that they be performed quickly and then they are out of the way.

Candidates will often not resign from their current position until they are sure that they have a job – that is – when all of the contingencies are out of the way. This means that there is more time for a counter offer to be made by their present employer, or for a competitor to make a competing offer. In either case, it is a threat to the completion of your deal.

When you have a job opening, you need to be aware of all possible contingencies that will be required for completion and be prepared to eliminate them as quickly as possible after an offer's been made. The process and paperwork needs to be well organized and ready to execute so that great talent is not lost due to a lack of it.

Probably the best way to do this is to create a checklist that reveals what the contingencies are and how they will be removed - do this before you start interviewing. Then, give the checklist to the potential new hire part of the way through your hiring process and let them become a part of the contingency removal process. This way, the candidate understands what is going on and what is involved in each of them.



A Checklist Lets You See What Needs to Be Done Quickly

Common Offer Contingencies:

- Receipt of the Candidate's Signed Offer Letter
- Receipt of the Candidate's Signed Employer Secrecy/Non-Compete Agreement
- Receipt of the Candidate's Signed Release of Personal Information Agreement
- Confirmation of Immigration, Visa, and Work Permit Information

- Signature on the Drug and Alcohol Consent Form
- Successfully passing a Drug and Alcohol Screening
- Successfully passing a Physical/Health Screening
- Completed Background Checks
- Completed Reference Checks
- Completed Educational Verifications

Common Follow Up Items:

(To be included in the offer package)

- The Offer Letter - signed by the Hiring Manager
- Detailed Bonus Program Information
- Awards & Recognition Information
- Benefits Program Details & Contacts for Help
- Benefits Program Costs & Sign Up Forms
- Relocation Program Highlights & Contacts for Help
- Employer Secrecy/Non-Compete Agreement Form
- The Release of Personal Information Agreement Form
- Request for EEO Data Form

Additional Common Follow Up items:

(To be included in the offer package)

- A Fax Transmission Cover Sheet for the candidate to use to send back the signed offer package documents:
- Candidate Signed Offer Letter
- Candidate Signed Employer Secrecy/Non-Compete Agreement
- Candidate Signed Release of Personal Information Agreement (for background checks and physical and drug screen results)
- Candidate Signed Request for EEO Data

Other Items (Please Specify):

- Pre Placement Health Questionnaire Form
- Pre Placement Health Instructions for where to go for Health Screen (drug, alcohol and physical)
- Pre Placement Drug and Alcohol Consent Form
- Organizations Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Information sheet describing Career Portal
- Misc. information on organization's website

- Policy on Business Conduct
- Website, Email, and Digital Information Policy
- Personal Information Protection Notice
- Information Sheet describing Access to Technology & Contacts for help
- Phone System
- Voice Mail System
- Fax Machine
- Laptop, Desktop, & Printer use
- Intranet or Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Immigration, Visa and Work Permit Information & Contacts for help
- I-9 Form
- Payroll direct deposit form

Tips for Making Sure That the Start Date Is Kept

It is important that selection and offer decisions be made quickly. Being slow in this area usually results in the loss of too many good candidates. One Fortune 500 company believes during a one-year period it lost between 25 and 30 percent of all candidates that it gave job offers to due to a slow-moving and cumbersome approval process and because of poor follow up.



Speeding Up the Process Can Help You Keep More New Hires

Candidates can be lost for many reasons. It may be something as simple as changing their minds about leaving their current job, or they may have received a raise. If some time has elapsed, they may think you are no longer interested, which also means they will probably have forgotten what they liked about your company. You need to show them that you are as interested in them as you want them to be about working for your company.

Another reason some candidates are lost in the process is due to over-negotiating the job offer. You can do this by squeezing every last penny out of their employee compensation package. Even if they do not realize it at first, it may result in a no-show on the start date. It could also result in a short employment period with your organization.

Candidates usually are not comfortable about haggling over their own worth, but they probably have a good idea of what is fair and reasonable. If you try to get them for as little as possible, such as the fewest possible stock options, or perks that are not very attractive, they are apt to keep their eyes open for better offers somewhere else – even if they do come and work for you. This also applies to how you present yourself and your organization during the interview process and thereby what the candidate should expect during their first 90-days.

Communication with the candidate after the hire is just as important as moving quickly. By staying in touch, you can make sure that new questions have not arisen to derail the whole start date process. Continuing contact can enable you to answer their concerns quickly before they get blown out of proportion or assumed impossible to fix and still show that you are very much interested in them while the contingencies are being worked through. Transitions into your company work best when you communicate with the new employee frequently, and when you are honest and open with them. This will also help to establish a strong relationship between you and the new employee.

Ensuring a Right Start

When the new employee comes to work, everything possible ought to be done to make it a positive start. The new employee will certainly check everything out and will notice when there



It's Always A Good Idea to Keep the Channels Open

are problems and lack of preparation. Problems will cause doubts about your company to increase – but a strong positive effort to help the new employee to adjust will help to create feelings of belonging – and longevity.

Instead of a smooth and prepared transition, this is all too often what many new employees find:

“Well, I guess we’ll have to find a place for you to sit.”

“Take these manuals and procedures and read them for the rest of the week.”

“We still need to order a phone for you.”

“Didn’t your new boss tell you? She’ll be on vacation all this week.”

You can make the transition smooth by planning the first 30 days carefully. This should include some training, a manageable work load, and opportunities to build a deeper relationship with you and with coworkers. Be careful not to overload them with work so that she becomes overwhelmed. Easing her in and allowing her to make contributions will help to ensure successful onboarding and longevity.

Refining the Onboarding Process

Bringing a new employee in used to mean that they were put through an “orientation” presentation followed by a tour – and then they would hope for the best. Today, it lasts much longer and is now called onboarding.

The present term of onboarding implies that you have a strategy in place in which you enable the new hire to become

smoothly adjusted to your organization. The individual involved in aiding the onboarding process needs to exemplify your company's goals, department, and position.

In his article, "Accelerating On-boarding," the Managing VP and Chief Learning Officer for Capital One, Ted Forbes declares that four elements are "essential to the strategy of aligning new associates around the goals of the organization:

- **Educating:** Teaching the new associate about the organization, its business goals and its expectations of the associate's contribution to the firm's success.
- **Training:** Providing the tools and information necessary for a proficient associate from the beginning.
- **Acculturating:** Immersing the associate in the company culture, its language, and values.
- **Assimilating:** Creating a comfort zone, enabling the associate to perform appropriately in the organization's workplace and culture.

Five Effective On-boarding Practices

1. Create a specific plan for each new hire.

After just being hired, a nurse reports to her job for her first day's work – only to find that IT does not have a computer set up for her, HR is scrambling around gathering paperwork, and management is too busy to meet with or take her around the company to introduce her to the different departments. Unfortunately, this happens all too often – and can quickly destroy any enthusiasm toward your company a new employee may have had.

When a company is unprepared for a new hire, it not only wastes her time, but it also wastes the time of other people or departments who are expecting the new hire to do her job – as soon as possible. In more extreme cases, this type of situation could cause her to lose trust altogether in your company and could lead to unexpected turnover.

Your organization can be prepared by first re-reviewing the new hire's responsibilities and duties. Find out what they need to know about your company's goals, departmental objectives,

policies and procedures, organizational norms, and team dynamics. You will also need to make sure that any short and long-term responsibilities or expectations are defined clearly.



Create a Specific Plan for Each Employee to Ensure Smooth Onboarding

This can easily be implemented by making a detailed orientation plan for each day of the new hire's first week. It should include meeting, or interviewing, key people that they will need to interact with in the performance of his duty.

2. Introduce them to all relevant departments.

Although the HR department will typically oversee the onboarding process, it may actually be other departments that will have a more critical role in their future success. As you make the plans for a smooth onboarding process, you should also include other departments that may also have a role, such as engineering or IT, the lab, legal, R&D, customer service, marketing and sales, operations, administrative support, and possibly even housekeeping. Make it a joint effort for greater success and a higher level of familiarity.

Ted Forbes reveals why it should be this extensive: "HR's control of on-boarding frequently results from management's underestimating the importance of the process. It's just not viewed as a business lever, which is why on-boarding might become little more than a checklist exercise to meet those basic HR requirements." You can expand the success rate of onboarding by enlarging the process.

3. Clarify your expectations from the first day.

It is true that vague goals produce vague results. If you really want to have a high performance level, then you must also have clear and realistic goals in place – from the very start. Set specific objectives and milestones for development, at the first month, third month, sixth month, and end of year. Explain how you will do a performance evaluation. You could also mention what other employees have accomplished and possibly how they were rewarded. Cover what is necessary for the next promotion. By carefully detailing each of these things at the start, you can avoid the possibility of misunderstandings later.

As you explain the details, be careful not to sugarcoat possible problems. You need to be realistic about any pressures that may come from the organization, the team, customers, and from the competition. Also warn him or her of possible roadblocks and challenges. Being honest will help prevent the new hire from becoming shell-shocked when problems do come along.

4. Add technology to the on-boarding process.

You can make the typical on-boarding process more exciting, and also make the new hire more prepared to start work if you add technology. Ted Forbes reveals what one company did: “Capital One designed a series of e-learning modules that new hires can access on a website. . . this site provides information on culture, values and business lines, and it includes PDF versions of essential forms to download in advance of the on-site onboarding class.” This type of situation enables the new hire to feel more prepared, and also have knowledge of the company’s policies on the first day.



Prepare Them Faster With Online Programs

The Shell oil company also uses a follow-up onboarding workshop. This occurs two- or three-months into the job, and they meet to discuss and brainstorm problems they’ve encountered, as well as challenges and goals. The clear advantage here is that networking is occurring early on which could lead to future collaboration later.

5. Give frequent feedback.

Many large companies use a formal appraisal process to inform the new employee about their progress. Capital One and GE use it after an employee has been there three months. The meeting is used to provide positive feedback and insight as to where extra effort may be needed. This situation can greatly reduce low performance, keep a strong focus on right priorities, and will keep bad habits from getting started. If you make it a two-way conversation, you may also get some valuable tips for improvement.

There is no doubt that this process is more involved than what some companies do for on-boarding. By using it, you will certainly find that this method can help you attain high levels of excellence, get better performance out of your new employees, and get them started right from the very first day. Ted Forbes adds, “When on-boarding becomes a strategic process, it creates an atmosphere in which employees are engaged, productive, and excited about their jobs, brightening everyone’s prospects, especially the organization’s.” This sounds like a win-win for any company.

THE RIGHT HIRE

“The most important decisions that business people make are not *what* decisions, but *who* decisions.”

- Jim Collins, Author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't*



In most organizations, making the right hire means the difference between success and failure. This book helps you recruit great people and keep them loyal to the organization by helping you understand, assimilate and execute today's best processes, programs and practices for Sourcing and Marketing to potential candidates, Assessing and Recruiting top talent, Retaining & Training employees and Transforming your organization for the better.

What you will learn from this book

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- What techniques to use to screen and assess talent using proven tools
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Patrick B. Ropella is Chairman & CEO of the Ropella Group, a 25-year-old international Executive Search, Leadership Transformation, and Corporate Consulting firm in Florida with clients among the world's most prestigious corporations. The Ropella Group focuses on working with mid-level management and executive-level leaders regarding their search, leadership, and/or consulting needs across most roles and functions. Patrick authored the book and web based training program, *The Right Hire – Mastering the Art of SMART Talent Management*. The SMART Talent Management System covers Sourcing, Marketing, Assessing, Recruiting, Retention, Training and Transforming top talent. Patrick's status as a thought expert, and writer on talent management & leadership has been promoted, featured and published in a wide variety of trade magazines and business publications, and leadership and executive search industry blogs and journals. Patrick regularly speaks at webinars, career fairs, conferences, trades shows and more. For more information about Growing Your Great Company through Ropella services, visit www.ropella.com, or call Patrick Ropella at (850) 983 - 4777.