ChartHop

Everything You Need to Know and Do to Create an Onboarding Buddy Program

It's your new hires' first day and you're excited to welcome them aboard! Paperwork is filled out, equipment has been set up, and meetings scheduled. What's missing to get the new team members integrated and feeling connected faster? You could try trust falls or virtual charades, but we recommend an onboarding buddy program.

An onboarding buddy program pairs a tenured employee with a new hire to help get them up to speed on day-to-day processes, familiarize them with cultural norms, and be a friendly face for the first few weeks of the onboarding journey.

Here's a checklist to create an onboarding buddy program that will engage employees from day one and beyond.

Setup

A successful onboarding buddy program lasts the duration of an employee's onboarding and is developed by the People team with buy-in from managers.

Roles

Define who will be a part of the onboarding buddy process to create the best new hire experience:

- Hiring manager
- People Ops team member
- Onboarding buddy

Before launching onboarding program

- Decide who can take on the role of onboarding buddy in your company (the criteria will vary depending on your org but some considerations: anyone who is familiar with your culture and processes, a more tenured employee, or someone from a different team to build connections beyond immediate colleagues)

- Divide onboarding responsibilities between the manager and the onboarding buddy (Spoiler alert: examples of how to do so are below)

- Define the role of onboarding buddy in an easy-to-access place (internal hub, G-Drive, Notion, Confluence)

- Create customizable message templates for People Ops or onboarding buddies to use, such as:

  – Onboarding buddy's introduction message to new hire

  – Daily check-in messages

  – 30, 60, 90 days feedback questions

Checklist

With visibility into all new hires and their start dates, the People team should be responsible for sharing expectations with all involved. Use the below checklist to get started.

Before start date

Manager tasks

- Assign onboarding buddy

People Ops Manager tasks

- Share internal buddy program materials with the buddy

- Share new hire's schedule with the buddy

On start date

People Ops tasks

- Introduce onboarding buddy and new hire

- Remind onboarding buddy to check–in with new hire during their first day and continuously during their first weeks

Onboarding Buddy tasks

- Send welcome message to new hire

- Have a quick get-to-know-you session

- Set reminders to check–in regularly during the week for the first 90 days

- Help with answering questions or pointing new hire in the right direction

- Help with cross-team introductions

After onboarding

People Ops tasks

- Collect new hire feedback after one week

- Collect new hire feedback after 30 days

- Collect new hire feedback after 90 days

For more tried–and–true onboarding strategies, read how Adriana Roche, Chief People Officer at MURAL created an onboarding experience that was engaging and supportive for new hires.

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