Onboarding guide

Tips to a fantastic onboarding that retains and

creates results

learningbank

Table of content

What is **onboarding** and why spend time on it?

In short

- Close to the first year of a new employee's employment

- Covers practical, personal, and relational factors

- An introduction to a company's vision, mission, culture, and values

- The process where a new employee goes from being an outsider to being an insider

- A thorough introduction to the work assignments

What is important for great onboarding

- That the employee is the center of attention in the onboarding process

- That the employee gets a sense of belonging

- That the employee receives a thorough training in the tasks

- That every employee is involved in the onboarding strategy

Source: Ann-Katrine Schepler, Learning & Implementation Consultant and onboarding specialist at Learningbank

Why onboarding?

The number of Danes who have changed job until September 2018 is the highest number in ten years (**649.944**), and that means that 2018 is going to set the record for the most job changes ever. This is because more people are working and that more people find a completely new job. It is especially young people under 35 that enter the labor market who often change jobs, in which approx. one in eight changed job in the third quarter of 2018.

Structured and engaging onboarding is a way for you to retain new employees better. At the same time, onboarding reduce time-to-performance and creates results for your company more quickly.

Do you need to persuade your manager? Or are you in a department filled with skeptics who can't see the true value in structured onboarding? Here's a couple of facts that can motivate your company to invest in engaging onboarding and bring your company ahead of competitors:

Facts about onboarding

4% of all newly hired employees quit after a catastrophical first day

4%

25% of all new employees quit within in the first year

25%

Half of all externally hired senior managers leave the company within **a year and a half**

18 months

It costs a company about **75.000 USD** if a salaried employee quits after 4-6 months

75. 000 USD

The risk of an employee leaving the company during the first 12 months is **87 % less if the employee is engaged**

87%

When newly hired employees experience a high service level from colleagues and their man-ager **during the first 90 days**, they will put in a bigger work effort and have a more positive attitude in regards to their new job. On the other hand, If newly hired employees do not receive feedback and support, there is a greater risk of their resignation early on in the hiring process.

90 days

Effective onboarding increase employee engagement with **more than 20 %**

20+%

Companies that invest in their talent recruitment and make sure that new talents are matured to perform their best, bring in **18 %** more revenue than other companies

18%

Onboarding programs can minimize time-to-performance with **60 %**

60%

90,3% of those employees who received an onboarding program are satisfied or very sat-isfied with how they started the job. This only applies to 20% of the employees who begin directly without an onboarding program

90,3%

58%

82,6%

10%

37%

Only **37 %** of organizations continue their on-boarding process after one month and only 15% continue the process after the first day

New employees are **58 %** more likely to stay in the company for more than three years if they have been through a structured onboarding

82,6 % of employees who went through a structured onboarding program experience that their job training is very effective, contrary to employees who did not receive a structured onboarding (64,7%)

10 % of all organizations don't have any onboard-ing processes, while only 58% have clear job de-scriptions and expectations to the new employee. At the same time, only 39% of all organizations are setting goals for the new employee

5

In short, a structured and engaging onboarding plays a part in attracting talents, retaining employees and making them effective faster. If the onboarding is not proper, people rarely stay with the company for long. Especially the talented employees are likely to leave, perhaps because they have been offered several positions before they said yes to you.

Structured onboarding also gives the new employee a sense of belonging to the workplace quickly, as well as a sense of **commitment** to the company. Also, maturing your new talented employees, so they are able to perform their very best for you in the company, creates more opportunity for extra revenue.

In the following chapters, you will learn more about why one single intro day, followed by a stack of papers, are not enough onboarding. You will also learn how you create an unforgettable welcome for the employee. More specifically, how you should do it in practice, when it comes to the new employee and the colleagues plus how you create a vivid, digital onboarding universe that everyone in the company can easily access.

Lastly, you will at the end read about how McDonald's incorporate the employee journey in their onboarding program, which shows the new recruits the development possibilities, so they feel like staying with the company for a long time.

Enjoy your reading and onboarding of your new excited employees.

Best regards,
Sidsel Kaae Nørgaard
Content Manager
Learningbank

Create an unforgettable welcome

Tip Create a buddy program for the new employee with both a social buddy for the casual stuff and a professional buddy who can help with the work assignments.

It's always exciting for a new employee to step through the door on the first day. But a wrong start can end with a bad hire, and it can be expensive for both the team's morale and for the company's bank account.

Learningbank's Learning & Implementation Consultant and onboarding specialist, Ann-Katrine Schepler knows all about that. Here she give you the best pieces of advice on how you can make a new employee's first time impressive and unforgettable, which makes the employees want to stay with the company – for a long time.

Have you experienced on your first work day that you were just placed in front of your work station with the words: "Well, we better find something for you to do."?

If you have, it was likely not a positive experience, and perhaps you already began to miss your former workplace.

That's why structured onboarding is an extremely important factor when it comes to happy employees that are engaged in the company. In additon, the right kind of onboarding increases the productivity in the end.

"Great onboarding is definitely not a waste of time. The new employee will perform much faster if the employee has had a successful onboarding process", says Ann-Katrine Schepler, Learning & Implementation Consultant and onboarding specialist at Learningbank.

7

Buddy program

The sense of security needs to be in focus. The sooner an employee feels safe at the new workplace, the sooner the employee can focus on work tasks.

"A way to do that is to make sure that the new employee gets a professional and social buddy who can take the person's hand, so the person knows where to go if he or she has questions about the work," elaborates Ann-Katrine Schepler.

In this case, it's actually not the professional buddy who is most important.

"The social buddy is by far the most important one of the two buddies. When you as a new employee begin, you want to both perform and fit in, and the social buddy can make sure that you become part of the social community together with you not needing to live up to certain professional expectations," says Ann-Katrine Schepler.

To exemplify; if you need to present a case to a colleague, the pressure will not be as high, if you can just concentrate on the presentation, instead of having to think about whether the colleague accepts your personality.

The importance of the buddy program is further highlighted in a **study from 2017** which showed that among the respondents, the most popular 'Best Practice' element in a structured onboarding process was a well laid-out buddy program.

buddies

Professional buddy

- Makes sure that you are trained in concrete work tasks
- Is always available if you have questions about the work tasks
- Is from the same department

Social buddy

- Makes sure that you are thriving in the new workplace
- Goes on a walk with you, coffee breaks, etc.
- Comes from a different department

What onboarding is NOT:

- A checklist
- 10 practical things that needs to be done before the first day
- Employee-to-employee training
- A flower on the table
- Onboarding is not onboarding — if it doesn't exist in practice in every employee
- Onboarding is not onboarding — if the new employee doesn't feel like a part of the company

Skip the checklist and get everyone in the organization on board

Something you shouldn't do for sure, besides having the new employee working from the first second, is to see onboarding as a checklist like you can with preboarding.

"A really bad habit is that you mark on a checklist without relating to whether that is really going on. You can't just think about it, you actually have to implement and carry out what you have sat you mind on to do in regards to the onboarding," says Ann-Katrine Schepler and adds:

"Onboarding is not just a managerial task; it is also a common task to make sure that the new employee feels safe. A piece of good advice is therefore that you as a manager send an e-mail out to every employee where you tell them that a new employee will begin, so you can make sure that every employee plays a part in onboarding the new employee. It's the employees set the social setting and if they are not forthcoming, there will never be created a sense of security for the new one".

Also, remember to get existing employees to understand the pur-

pose of the onboarding. It helps with the well-being of the employee if he/she has been welcomed, but at the same time, it is important to get the employees to understand that with onboarding, people are also becoming productive more quickly so they can create results for the team and the company.

Clean the stairs from the top as well. It is just as important that the managers have gone through your onboarding program and understand the purpose. The digital part of the onboarding program can here be used as a support tool, so every manager has a shared basis to start from when he/she have to onboard new employees.

You will learn more about the digital part of the onboarding in the chapter "The technical, digital, and practical."

Use the new employees' competencies and how they can contribute to the company – not the other way around as a point of departure.

Tip

The employee is the focus point

You need to have the new employee as the starting point and you should focus on how he/she can contribute to the organization and not the other way around. You need to make it clear how the new employee can contribute to the culture in the organization, the concrete work tasks, and to reach the goals in the organization based on their competences.

So how can you do that? Remember to present the new colleague to the company's mission, preferably in a digital universe that the employee can return to. This way it can be clear for the new employee how he or she can contribute his/her competences, in order to reach the goal with the company's mission. It also create a meaningful job which today's employees are seeking, especially the **millennial generation**.

facts

Onboarding that is based on the employee creates better retainment

If you make sure that the employee is the focus of the onboarding and create the best framework for the employee to express his/her personality, authentical self and wishes, the employee will feel safe and at home more quickly.

It creates a better retainment **after the first six months** as opposed to if the onboarding process only focuses on the company and the work tasks.

Ann-Katrine Schepler explains that it is also a good idea to use the new employee's individual wishes and needs as a point of departure:

"If you have the freedom to have a say in the solution of the tasks, you are usually more willing to give more of yourself, if you believe that you are given something. That also applies to the planning of work hours as it is very much individual whether the employee works best within a time frame the person has planned him-or herself or within a specific time frame that is planned for you."

"The results of this is therefore that if I as a new employee feel that me, and how I can develop myself in the best possible way, have been used as a starting point, then I'm going to stay an hour longer when it is needed. And then it is just an extra bonus if the new employee sells the company twice as good publicly because he/she light up with excitement when talking about it."

Ann-Katrine Schepler
is a Learning & Implementation Consultant in Learningbank's Customer Success team. She has specialized in onboarding and organizational learning and use her theoretical knowledge about learning and education in practice. Ann-Katrine plays a crucial role in getting the customers the best treatment, implementation, and support at Learningbank.

The technical, digital, and practical

Make sure to have all the simple stuff in order and to get both the new employee and everyone else in the organization on board the onboarding train from the beginning – also with the right technology.

Who should be in charge of our onboarding?

If you don't have a HR department in your organization, then make sure that the onboarding is managed by a person who is used to train new employees. Alternatively, it can be one who has worked closely with many types of employees and who has a good insight into the working procedures in the company.

So, it shouldn't just be one manager who is in charge of the onboarding. If the manager doesn't have a HR mindset, and hasn't understood how difficult it can be to be a new employee, it can easily be about fast results and that the employee just have to get started with delivering right away.

It is a good idea to let the HR employee ask how things are going — just a 15-minute weekly catch up in the beginning.
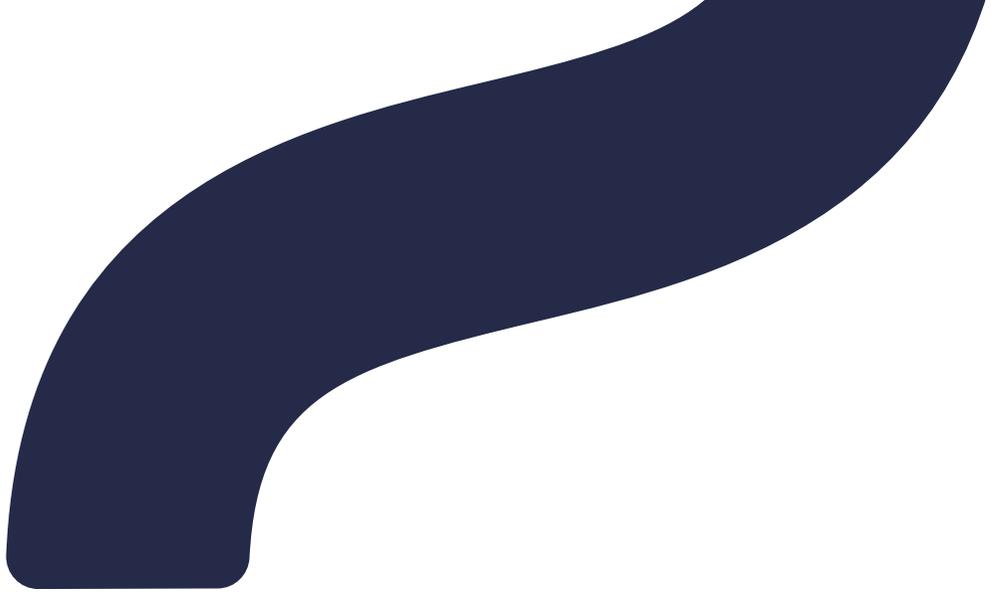
Some employees feel that if they do not meet their goals, then they are not good enough. Instead, it can feel more secure to confide anonymously to the HR employee, and at the same time, it is easier for that person to see the warning signs, if he/she ask about what the new employee precisely has understood of his/her work tasks and new role.

Even though we would often like to keep people for more than three years, it is possible that the recruiting was a mistake. For example, if the employee has a hard time communicating and often gets misunderstood. Then they need to get feedback on that from the start, and if it gets better after that, you can then praise yourself that you did something at the right time. If things aren't getting better, you stand stronger as a company if you need to go separate ways before the trial period is over.

Tip

Remember to include the other employees in the onboarding process to create a sense of security for the new employee.

This has to be included in the onboarding

You may know the psychologist Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). The pyramid covers the needs we humans have. You start with getting your physical needs (hunger, sleep, thirst, etc.) fulfilled in the bottom of the pyramid. You thereafter move on up the pyramid to get the other needs fulfilled (safety, love/belonging, esteem) for in the end to realize yourself.

A similar pyramid can also be drawn when it comes to onboarding of new employees. It has three steps: Administration � Assimilation ➤ Acceleration (**Lever, 2019**). All three steps are important to have if you want a successful onboarding of new employees.
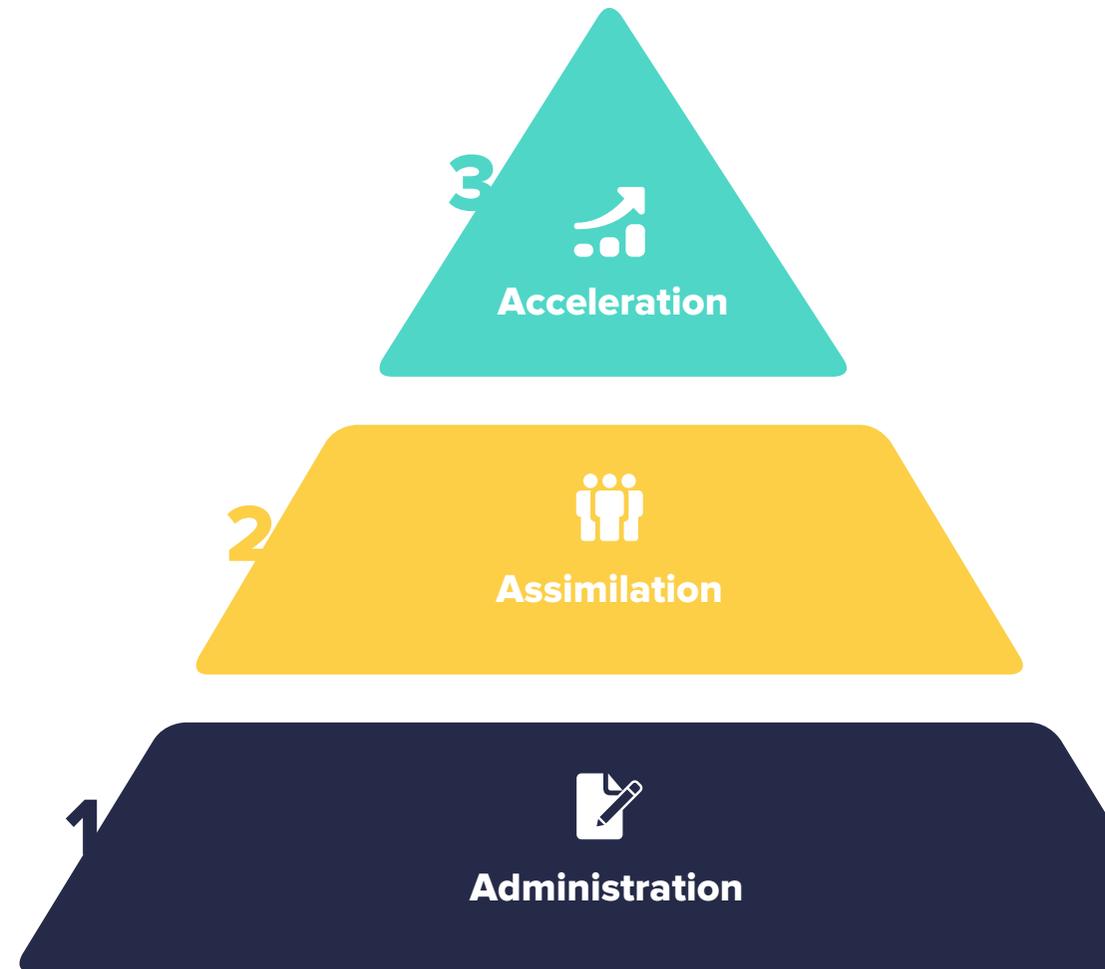
Tip

Make sure that existing employees and managers have been through the on-boarding program and know the strategy behind

The onboarding pyramid

3 Acceleration

2 Assimilation

1 Administration

13

Tip

Onboarding already begins when the employee applies for the job. Which impressions do they get when they get a response from you? Think about it and consider whether you should give your auto-mails a spring cleaning. Do you follow up quickly? And how do you communicate when you call potential candidates?

The first step: **Administration**

Everything that needs to be signed is in the administration step. It is employment contracts, NDAs, etc. In addition, you need to make sure that everything is ready for the new employee in practice. Is the desk ready to be used or is the uniform ordered in the right size? Has the new employee gotten access to your learning platform? Is the employee handbook accessible? What employee benefits come with the job, and have the special programs that are going to be used in the work been downloaded?

In short: In the onboarding pyramid, the administration step is the most basic step that gets all the formal stuff in order and creates the starting point for the continuing onboarding.

The second step: Assimilation

On the assimilation step, the new employees must be included in the social life in the workplace and learn about the culture. In addition, it is important that they are trained in your internal policies (compliance training), get well into the work tasks and at last but not least be aware which expectations there are to them and their work effort.

The assimilation step contains quite a lot. For the social part it's about assigning a professional and a social buddy (read p. 8) and involving the rest of the employees in the onboarding process (read p. 9). In addition, a common question from new talented employees is that "Is it possible to meet the team before I start?" (SpongeUK, 2018)" and if it hasn't been possible during the **preboarding phase**, e.g. at a lunch meeting or over Skype, then make sure that there is an introduction to the different team members in your digital on-boarding.

This applies to both their professionalism and work tasks, but also the more personal information like which movies have they seen 117 times, what are their favorite martial arts or perhaps favorite cocktail. In that way, the new employee is not just learning about the team, but also starts to feel like a part of it.

Read more about what should be included in your digital onboarding, including compliance training and how you adapt the digital learning modules to the individual employee on p. 18.

As an introduction to the company culture, it is also important to give a guided tour of the facilities. It can be the manager, the HR manager, or the new social buddy that gives the employee a guided tour. It is also natural that the buddy also takes the new employee around the local area and show, e.g. where to get the best cup of coffee, sandwich, hidden havens, etc. Remember that the buddy also has to continue making plans with the new employee and preferably get them to book several appointments in the calendar in the future, so it's not just going to be one single cup of coffee on the first day.

Introduce the new employee in an e-mail to the team and organization before the first day. In that way, it will be easy for the colleagues to start a conversation with the new employee without it getting awkward

Tip

The senior managers in the company should also be introduced. Who are they? What do they stand for and what kind of ambitions do they have on the company's behalf? If there are several new employees that start at the same time, you can with great advantage book the senior management for an overall session, where they answer the questions in front of the new people. Another way is to make the information available as part of your digital onboarding just like with the introduction to the different team members.

The new employees should have plenty of time to familiarize themselves with the new work tasks. Therefore, make sure to give them the right materials for that purpose and preferably digitally, so they can access the information when it suits them.

As a last part of the assimilation step, it is as mentioned important that they become aware of which expectations there are to them and their work efforts.

A study from **Gallup (2015)** shows that only 15% of all employees strongly agree that they know what is expected of them at the job.

And if they are not aware of what is expected of them, how can they then live up to the goals and create results in your company?

If you are a manager, you have to set clear expectations for the employee about the future. Besides concrete KPIs, it is also important to align expectations about the basics. For example: "I need you to be here every day at 8 o'clock because you need to follow up on data from the day before..." or "It's fine that you're first here at 8.15." And the opposite – also ask which expectations the new employee has to you as a manager.

When the employees know which expectations and goals they need to live up to, they can right away move on the third and final step in the onboarding pyramid.

In short: The assimilation step is about making the employees comfortable in their new roles and make them feel like home in the workplace.

The third step: Acceleration

When the employees are safe and can express their personal, authentical self (read more p. 10), they can accelerate their role and create results for your company. When they are safe and can be the best version of themselves at work, they will automatically be able to place a complete focus on the work tasks without having to worry about whether they fit in.

On this step, they also understand what is expected of them and what it takes for them to meet the goals. That's why it is a good idea to be open to giving them training so they can develop and manage work tasks better and create even more beautiful results for your company.

Read more about why onboarding should use the employee as a point of departure and not the company in order to create the best results on p. 10.

In short: The acceleration step is about getting the employees to accelerate in their roles so they can create success and results for your company. They have to be able to express their authentical self without concerns and have the opportunity to develop in the workplace.

Tip

Give a gift certificate to the local coffee shop, so the new employee gets the opportunity to invite the colleagues out on coffee walks so they can get to know each other better

This has to be included in digital onboarding

If you haven't already given digital material to the new employee in the **preboarding phase**, the company's mission, vision, and history should always be in your digital onboarding to begin with.

In addition, it is a good idea to bring the silent knowledge to light. What do you usually do when you welcome new employees? Either you figure it out internally in the company, or you can invite a learning consultant to come by and help you find the most important information to build into your onboarding program.

Remember also to include digital learning modules in compliance training, if you have certain rules you have to comply with. It can be legal rules, like how the GDPR regulation fits into your work environment, but it can also be an internal set of rules like IT security or ethical guidelines (Code of Conduct).

Release the different learning modules continuously to the new employee and keep the motivation for learning something new running. In that way, the employee doesn't get overwhelmed by the large amount of learning being pushed out all at once. It is also pivotal

that they only get the learning that fits them and their job profile. The new employee will then avoid wasted time if she or he doesn't also have to complete learning that is irrelevant to his/her area of work.

Accessible when it suits the individual
The digital onboarding program should also be accessible in more ways than just on a stationary work computer. Today, more people use their phones on the go, so theres is a greater chance that your onboarding becomes a success if they get the option to take the onboarding when it suits them – in the bus on the way to work or in the couch when the kids are at sleep.

Choose the technology that suits your target group. Then remember to think about the medium that you deliver your onboarding content through. If you, for example, provide an old-fashion, heavy system to 16-20 year old people, the likelihood for success is minimal as it quite simply doesn't live up to the standards they are used to. On the other hand, if you use a technology that is accessible via their smartphone when it suits them, you have a greater chance of success.

The digital onboarding cannot stand alone, and it must not replace human interaction, when the employee has to be trained in his/her work tasks. In turn, it is an important element in the overall onboarding package that is involved in ensuring retainment and minimizing time-to-performance.

You can hereafter think about how the digital onboarding presents itself visually. Should the new employees receive it all in PDFs or should your digital onboarding be part of a learning universe? You can read more about that in the chapter:
Create onboarding that excites.

Tip

Use a DISC tool to find out how new employees can use their strengths and how to fit well into the rest of the team

More inspiration to create your onboarding program

Make your values interactive

Values are often a bit abstract, and they can be difficult to remember and learn. So how do we ensure that it is much easier for new employees to understand and remember the values? One idea is that you internally in the company interview a small group of employees and e.g. ask them about: "What does it mean to you 'to be there for all customers' that can be an example of a core value? Experience shows that the answers that come are more interesting than the actual value.

From here you can insert a quiz in the onboarding where the new employee is presented for one of the employees' statements. After that, the person has to guess which core value the employee is talking about. It gives more reflection and better anchoring of what has been learned. And then it is a more fun and engaging way to learn.

Source: Allisa Reichert, former COO & Senior Consultant at Learningbank

Case
Fewer heavy PPTs and focus on the craftmanship

An international retail chain wanted to give all employees the same in-depth knowledge of their products. Usually, the training took place psychically in the stores, and only the full-time employees made it to the training at the company's physical academy. It meant that the level was uneven and not always satisfying.

Today the retail chain instead has a digital onboarding solution which means that the basic knowledge is in order when the employees have their first day. As they get the opportunity to complete their digital learning training modules from home when it fits into their schedule.

Instead of trying to hammer a lot of heavy-knowledge PPTs into the participants, they can now instead focus on the practical and case-oriented tasks with the participants and thereby train their soft skills in the management of customers.

Internal onboarding and freelancers

There is often a big focus on the new employees beginning in the company. But what about those employees who are assigned a new job role internally in the company, maybe in a completely different department? They are often forgotten. When people move to new positions internally, there are several onboarding and learning elements that should be considered. Do they need a special introduction to the environment in the department, the colleagues and the way things are done? Or do they need training in new competencies – both technical, soft skills, or something else?

The same applies if you have some from **the growing group of freelancers** working for you from time to time. They should also be included in your learning program on the same terms as the other employees. In that way, they will also be able to handle work tasks for you in the best way if they know your way of doing things beforehand. And that also applies to everything from company culture to data protection, where especially the latter can have financial consequences for you if the legislation is not complied with.
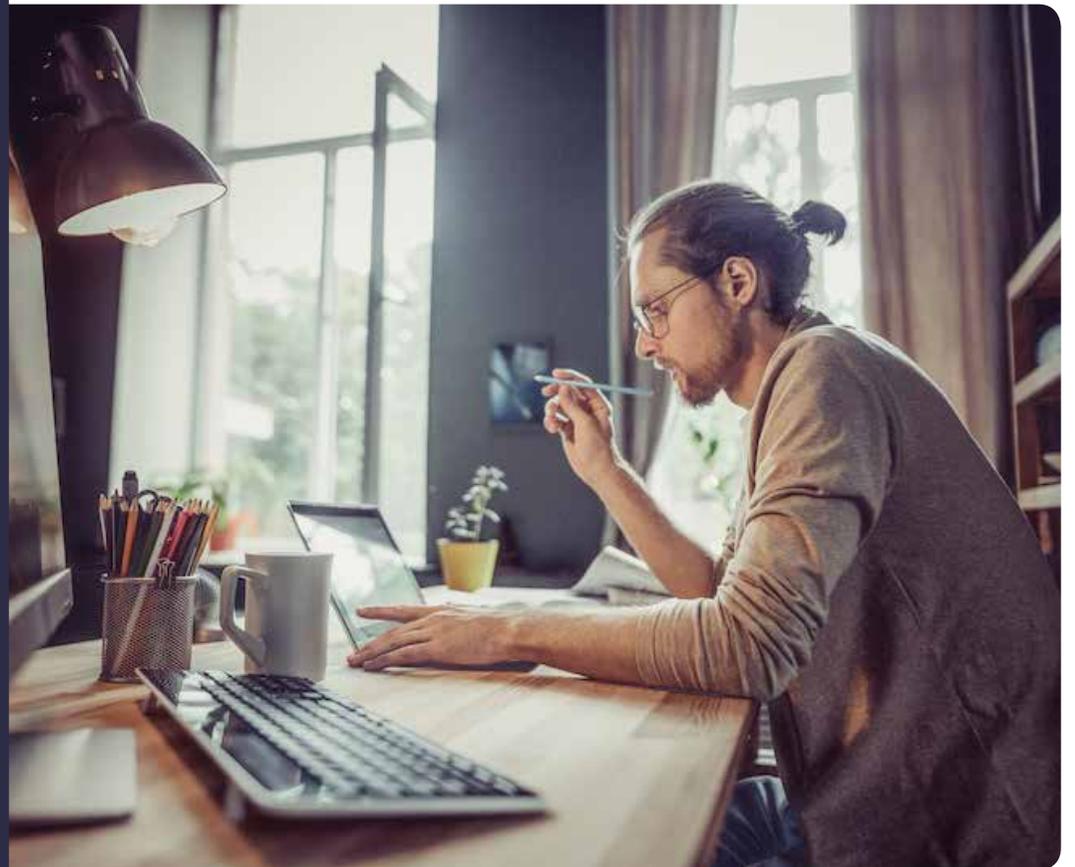
Create a digital club house for new employees

A growing trend is also that big companies like HSBC creates online forums for new employees or Graduates. With digital havens like these, new employees can build new networks and feel stronger attached to the community. They can also share their experiences, ask questions, and find support from some of the others who may have had the same experiences.
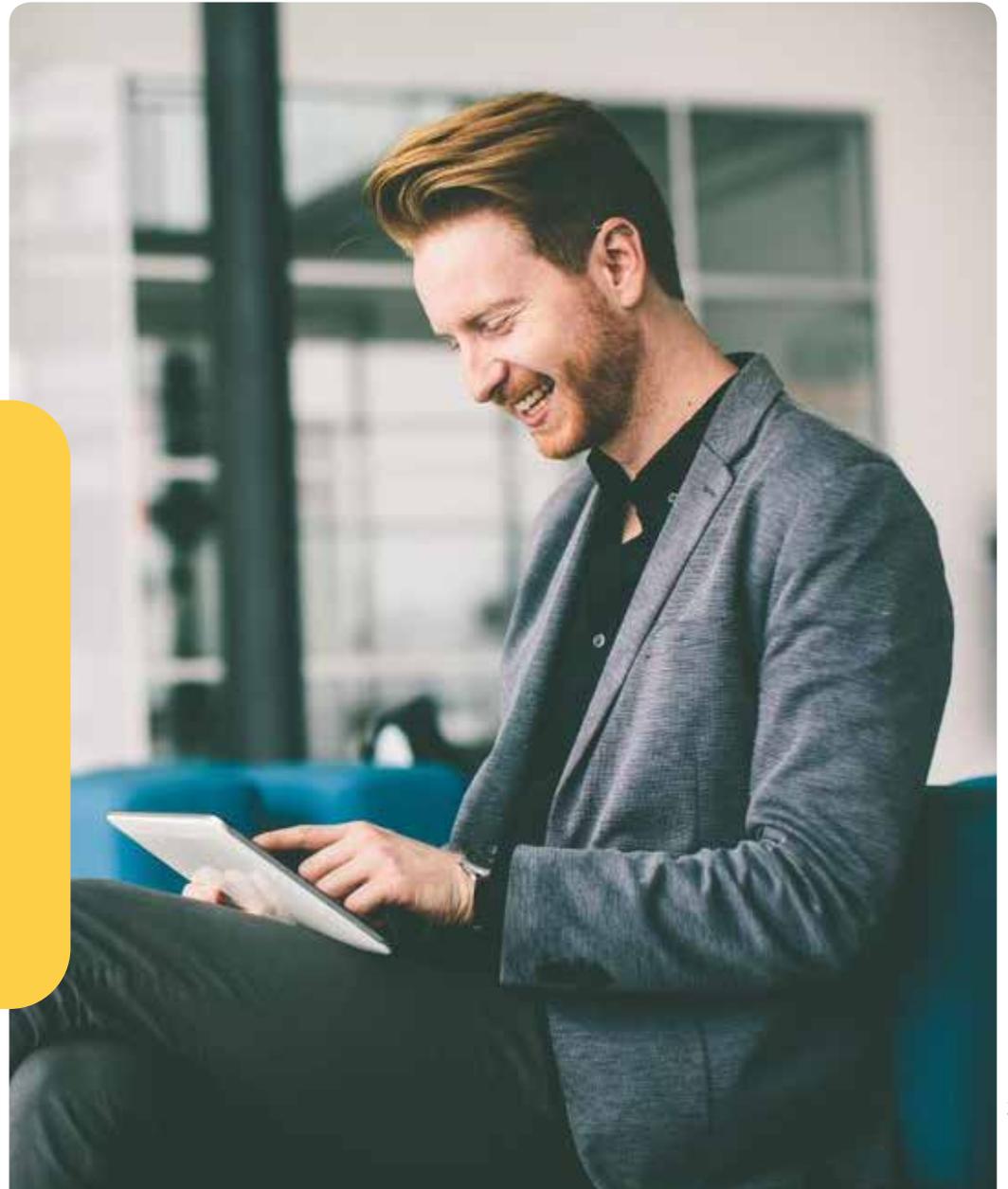
Create onboarding that excites

When Anders and the Learningbank team create digital onboarding with gamification and fantastic details from computer games, it increases the learning results and gives a 'wow' effect that few people have seen before. Be familiar with the determining factors that can substantiate your business case.

If you would like to onboard new employees in a new and better way, gamification can be the way to go. Many studies show that gamification improves almost every parameter in regards to learning.

"Even though it cost a bit more, you save a lot of the costs to translation when you use gamification, as it is a less text-heavy form of learning compared to traditional e-learning." Says Anders who has worked hands-on with a number of big gamification productions.

Gamification?

Gamification is when we use elements from computer games or board games to increase the motivation and intensity and thus the learning results.

Here are some of the most popular gamification elements in digital learning:

- The user can earn points

- The user can visually follow his/her progress

- The user can achieve virtual diplomas/cups

- The user is sent on a mission through storytelling

- The user gets real-time feedback

Three facts that can support your business case for gamification

80%

Better completion:
80% determine that more employees compete their training when they are offered gamification.

84%

Greater user satisfaction:
84% have determined an increase in user satisfaction after implementing gamification.

71%

Better results in tests:
71% have been able to be pleased about better results in tests when employees have received gamified learning.

Case

Our salespeople have to both understand the product and how to sell it!

Anders recently had a visit from a Training Manager from a big Danish retail and production company that for example was responsible for ensuring effective training to salespeople in more than 30 countries. The target is that salespeople around the world quickly learn to understand the products so well that they know both 'how it works' and 'how to sell it'. Anders and the Learningbank team have helped a lot of companies solving these kinds of problems:

"When you sell your products in a lot of countries, there is a lot of knowledge that your salespeople need to have. And it cannot take six months before they are ready to sell. So it is natural to level up their 'know how' through onboarding in a digital universe where they can see, experience, and understand how the products work," Anders says.

Know how!

to sell...
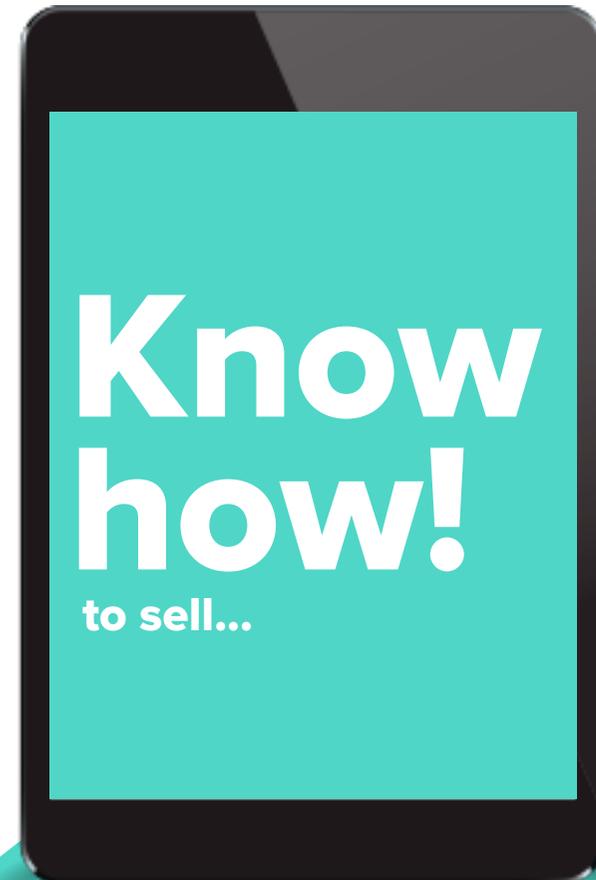
But how does my company get started with gamification?

1. A short and effective workshop kickstarts the learning production

The majority of gamification productions begin with a workshop in which Anders together with the company adjust expectations and create the first learning draft:

Many companies have a pretty good grip on their information package to new employees. The content is typical a PDF with text. It can be an employee handbook and checklist as well as a lot of product data sheets. In short, companies provide the content, and we convert it to learning games that lift the entire experience to a whole new level. A workshop takes about 4 hours, and it is an advantage to have a HR manager or product trainer present at the workshop. "

2. A learning universe takes form

The typical production plan follows, for the most part, these steps: "We begin with a workshop. Then we send a graphical universe for approval. The company feels secure when we have hit the right graphical style that fits into their design manual (also called CVI). It gives continuity and a sense of professionalism that shows who the

sender is. At the same time, we analyze the company's materials like the employee handbook, product data sheets. Hereafter, we typically begin implementing the content into the graphical universe. And at last we collaborate in iterative production rounds to get everything done," Anders explains.

3. When the employees give thumbs up

What makes Anders most happy is getting positive feedback from the users:

"I love to hear from my customers when they get feedback from their employees. Usually, the employees think that it's great when something exciting is happening. And HR is happy about the users thinking that it is future-proof. I experience that more and more companies have the courage to try something new. And they are happy about the security we give them as we have tried it before."

Proud like an Oscar winner

"I really like the lift we give the companies' training. I like when the HR manager proudly can go into his/her chief executive and show what he/she has managed together with us. It almost feels as if you have been part of instructing an Oscar winner for the best leading role. And when we at the same time can see that the new learning platform gives better results, and a lot of times even better sales numbers because the salespeople have been properly prepared for the task, then it is an advantage for the whole company and not just for HR," Anders emphasize.

Anders Juul
VP of Learning at Learningbank. Anders has designed onboarding to, e.g., McDonald's, Change Lingerie, Red Cross, Sinatur, Synoptik, Pharmacosmos, and Novo Nordisk. Anders has 7 years of experience with creating gamification solutions to big international companies. He is educated in Experience Design and Medialogy from Aalborg University in 2011.

27

Evaluation of your onboarding

"What can we do if our onboarding needs to be updated later on?
And are we sure to get everyone on board from the start?"
You can find the answers to these questions right here:

Improvements to ineffective onboarding

Be prepared - it can take a longer time than you think to create and implement an effective onboarding program. The rest of the organization have to have time to embrace the new modernized onboarding processes, and it can be more difficult for some than others.

Make sure that the everyone in the organization is on board with why you make more out of your onboarding and that they have had the opportunity to complete your digital onboarding – and that applies both the accounting and the CEO (read more or reread p. 9)

Many are also worried about their onboarding program becoming outdated or irrelevant.

When your company's onboarding program has been launched and has been live for about a year, it's usually time to give it a service check. Remember therefore to evaluate your onboarding internally, and if you use an LMS system, you can easily measure the results.

If you don't have experience with setting up surveys in your LMS, then get a learning expert to help you. In that way can the employees can quickly evaluate their onboarding experiences. If you haven't been good enough to a make an adequate onboarding, you have to accept that the feedback can be negative, so you can do something about it and improve the onboarding program for the next group of employees.

If you're the one responsible for onboarding new employees remember to ask the new employees after some time about what could be made better and whether they felt that they were missing something in their onboarding process.

It can differ how much needs to be changed in your onboarding ongoingly, depending on if you are a big or small company.

If you are a small company, where a lot of new exciting changes can occur often, you must be ready to optimize your onboarding more often. That applies in particular to the digital part of the onboarding, if for example, details in the company's mission need to be changed, if the CVI needs to be updated or if there are new team members that have to be introduced to the new employee.

If you are part of a big company, it can be easier to adapt the onboarding program continuously as big changes rarely come suddenly and you can, therefore, better plan the changes.

Feedback on digital onboarding

When you have the very first version of your digital onboarding ready, put together a test group and let them go through it. Create the test group, so you have the extremities in it. This way you get the questions that you may not have considered to begin with. These are the questions that make your content better.

Also, make sure to have employees in the test group who both have worked in the company for a long and a short time. It is healthy to get feedback on your onboarding program — and preferably with different perspectives.

Source: Michael Comvalius,
former HR Director & Senior Consultant at Learningbank.

Onboarding never stops

Onboarding always has a start line but never a finishing line. Onboarding should be part of a permanent learning cycle that ensures that the individual learns and performs even better in accordance with your organization's goals. An upward learning curve for both employees and employers will give everyone the best changes for reaching their full potential. Always remember to have a focus on constant development of the employees.

Think about the whole employee journey

Besides its golden French fries, McDonald's is known for its unique approach to people development which constitutes a cornerstone in the company's global success. Here, Senior HR Consultant Katrine Schelbli gives a rare insight into how commercial success goes hand in hand with learning and development of people. It begins with a good training where the focus is on the individual's possibilities.

Employee and employer: It's a mutual investment

Katrine has a rule of thumb: "When you hire a new employee, you need to be aware of that not everyone has a plan about making a career in the company in the long run. Be realistic about who you can retain. But as long as you are hired, there is talk about a mutual investment. You invest your time in us, and we invest in you through knowledge, education, and community," explains Katrine.

"At McDonalds we know that developing the employees is worth it. The young people today are very aware of what they spend their time on. They think what's in it for me and that is also all right," says she.

McDonald's has launched a new digital learning concept to train all new employees in the authorities' rules for food safety. Training that has to be completed within the first 30 days of employment. And now the restaurant chain has decided to invest even more massively in the digital onboarding of new employees. It is a decision that Katrine is proud of.

On the interface between digital and analogue employee development

"We put a lot of emphasis on that our employees understand and know the opportunities they have here at us. Regardless of they have just been hired or have been with us for several years. But a piece of paper with oh so many fine diagrams and schemes just doesn't have the same effect as it had for just five years ago. It has to be digital. Or you lose the young," highlights Katrine.

She has been given the task of project managing McDonald's big digital onboarding project. And it is crucial for her that the digital learning designers understand their target group. Which is why she has invited the whole project group to the start meeting for new employees at McDonald's. But Katrine warns against believing that everything can be done digitally.

"For example, take something so ordinary as your training plan. When do you have to meet? And when do you have to be at training? We also hand-out this sort of information on paper. As it engages the young people when it hangs on mom and dad's fridge. And especially for the young people who choose a career at McDonald's. We need to signal to mom and dad that this is a serious and attractive career path. So, it is a very fine interplay between digitally and analogously."
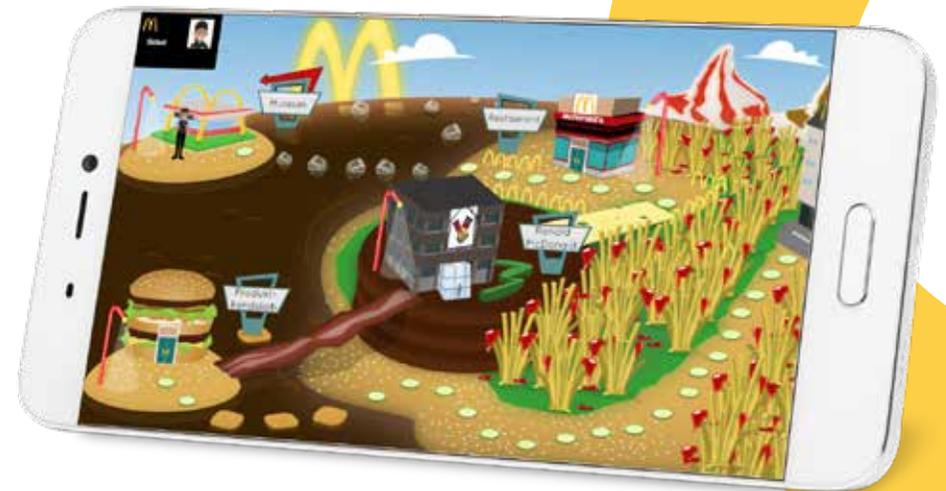
Apprenticeship: Back to the future?

In recent years talking about apprenticeship has become popular again. We know the term from small craftsman's businesses where you have to work as an apprentice in order to be good at your trade.

What's new is that big organizations are talking about apprenticeship too. Professor Lene Tanggard from Aalborg University is leading the trend: her research has shown that talent management and competence development all too often have been reserved for a minority, whereby you lose a lot of ordinary employees. But their talents are also important for companies.

That is why Lene Tangaard suggests that you promote a management style where there is prestige in taking good care of new employees. And that you should 'celebrate' those managers who take pride in giving proper training. The apprenticeship thought has a lot in common with Katrine's description of how they do it at McDonald's.

"If you, for example, choose to study to be a trainer at us, it means a special responsibility for welcoming new employees. And that is something we emphasize a lot. As a trainer, you have to both be an expert and a role model. If you study to be a hostess, you have to be good at throwing children's birthday parties and ensure that every guest gets an amazing experience. But the responsibility for training new employees applies to everyone who has been with us for a bit longer time and can a bit more.

As a hostess, you then have to be ready to take a new employee under your wing as a form of shoulder to shoulder training, regardless if you are busy with your own work tasks that day. It takes time to guide new employees and introduce them to our processes. But the time is well-invested when the new employee feels appreciated and adequately prepared for the work tasks – 'I'm needed.' And I'm 100 percent convinced that it will all come back in the form of engagement and competences. And that is basically what every company would like to have," Katrine explains.

Up the ladder? Make the individual's possibilities visible digitally

It is clear that Katrine is enthusiastic about giving other employees the same opportunities that she had when climbing to the top and getting to work with what excites her the most: "We have a flat hierarchy in the way that the restaurant chief also services the guests and wipes the tables," tells Katrine.

But no one should be in doubt about the distribution of tasks and responsibility:

"Our hierarchy is visual as we wear uniforms. This is, of course, practical and hygienic. But it also has another function: When the young employees can see that 'her over there, she is allowed to throw children's birthday parties' then they think: 'How can I also get to that?' Which is why we use resources on visualizing the career paths at McDonald's in a clever way. Everyone should know their possibilities at us. We reward our employees with possibilities," Katrine concludes.

Katrine Schelbli
Senior HR Konsulent at McDonald's. Katrine has hired more than 100 employees through her career at McDonald's. She has trained even more. Katrine began her career in the restaurants and has since 2009 worked at the headquarter on Frederiksberg – the recent years with a focus on HR. She holds a Graduate Certificate from Copenhagen Business School.

Here is Katrine's 4 most important experiences in regards to having a successful onboarding:

- Onboarding begins the moment the employee is hired and continues several months further forward.

- Remember that even though onboarding takes time, it creates engagement.

- Everyone should be part of welcoming the new employees.

- Remember to get some effective digital tools incorporated in your onboarding.

Summary

Create an unforgettable welcome

- Arrange for a professional and social buddy for the new employee
- Skip the checklist and make sure that everyone in the organization is on board with the onboarding and get them to go through your onboarding program.
- The employee must be the focal point for the onboarding and not the company.

The technical, digital, and practical

- Let a person with a HR mindset be in charge of the onboarding together with the manager. Remember also to let a HR person check in with the employee in the beginning in order to e.g. discover warning signs that can lead to a bad hire.
- Follow the Onboarding pyramid and create the best point of departure for the new employee in three steps:
  Administration ➜ Assimilation ➜ Acceleration
- The digital onboarding should include an introduction to the company's history, mission, and vision - but it should also include compliance training.
- Make sure to adapt the digital onboarding to your target group, so it is available to them, when it suits them, for example on their smartphone.

Create onboarding that excites

- You can choose to get gamified learning content with elements from computer games made, which increases the learning results. Even though the production costs are a bit higher it pays off as this type of learning generates even better completion and higher results in tests.

Evaluation of your onboarding

- Remember that it takes time to get everyone in organization on board with the modernized onboarding.
- Make sure to get feedback on your onboarding from different places in the organization — and preferably set up a survey in your LMS.
- After a year, it is time for an inspection of your onboarding.
- Remember that onboarding never ends but that you constantly have to make sure that the employees develop and perhaps adapt to new roles in the organization.

Think about the whole employee journey

- Commercial success goes hand in hand with learning and development of people. It all begins with a good training, where the focus is on the individual's possibilities, as stated by Katrine Schelbli, Senior HR Consultant at McDonald's in Denmark.

Create the best learning experiences for your employees

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