3 Things to Keep in Mind When Onboarding New Employees

For employers, turnover isn't just annoying; it's expensive. You need to go through the trouble of replacing the new hires you lost, and the replacements could be flight risks as well.

Your onboarding process can go a long way towards helping you retain employees. Since turnover can cost 30 to 50 percent of an entry-level position's annual salary—an eye-opening HR statistic—investing in onboarding makes sense.

Here are three things to keep in mind when you're onboarding new employees.

1. Start Onboarding before New Hires Start Work

At some companies, the onboarding process doesn't start until new hires arrive for their first day at work. New hires may need to wait for their offices or workstations to be set up. They may not have a login for the computers or phones. They may not see an employee handbook or fill out any HR paperwork. How an employee is onboarded links directly to "the degree of value an organization places in its employee." It is the employees' first indication post-decision to join in the company culture.

Start onboarding new employees before they arrive for their first day. Employees should be able to fill out paperwork online so it's out of the way for their first day. They should also receive their employee handbook ahead of time. Information about the dress code, where to park, or other relevant information should also be provided ahead of time. This provides a level of confidence that the employee is there to "learn their role on the team" vs. losing time to administrative onboarding, which may ultimately mean delays in payroll, etc.

2. Automate the Onboarding Process

When the onboarding process is handled on paper, it can be slow. Your HR manager needs to send candidates a paper job offer, and candidates need to fill it out and send it back. Then employees need to fill out paperwork with their personal information and

send it to HR. At this point, HR needs to scan those documents and input the information in spreadsheets. Then, there's even more paperwork to enroll in the benefits plan.

To eliminate this hassle, automate your onboarding process. This can be done through your human resource information system. Use the platform's automated workflows to quickly complete your onboarding tasks. Since the onboarding information is directly inputted into the HRIS, your HR manager won't need to waste time working with spreadsheets.

Automating the onboarding process also ensures no important paperwork is forgotten about. For example, if onboarding is done on paper, some employees could forget to fill out their benefits forms. They could forget to give you their personal information. These types of omissions can cause big problems for HR later.

3. Create a Welcoming Atmosphere

One of the reasons new hires quit is because they didn't feel welcome at their new jobs. Seventeen percent of employees who quit their jobs within the first six months said a helpful coworker or even a friendly smile would've made a difference. To avoid losing talented new hires, create a welcoming atmosphere from the start.

A buddy program is a great way to make your new hires feel welcome. During the onboarding process, match your new hires to long-term employees at your business. The long-term employees can then help new hires with day-to-day questions or operational issues. This helps new hires get settled and makes them feel more welcome.

Onboarding new employees isn't a one-day process, so buddies can help their new hires for as long as six months. By the end of that time, the new hires should feel comfortable and welcome.