

Stop the “Honeymoon is Over Blues” How to Create a Great Onboarding Experience



Jacob Schneid, The Momentum Group



David Lee, HumanNature@Work

You Will Leave Here With...

Guiding principles and language patterns...

...critical information from your new hires...

You Will Leave Here With...

Guiding principles and language patterns...

...critical information from your new hires...

...highly engaged, highly productive employees...

You Will Leave Here With...

Guiding principles and language patterns...

...critical information from your new hires...

...highly engaged, highly productive employees...

... prevent New Hire Buyer's Remorse

Poll Question

You Are....

- Supervisor or Manager
- Training Manager
- Trainer (non-manager)
- HR Manager
- Astronaut
- Other

Why You Need to Get Onboarding Right

- 50% of all hourly new hires leave in 2 months.
- 50% of senior outside hires fail within 18 months.
- Nearly 1/3 of new hires are job searching within 6 months.

The Importance of Getting It Right

Companies with “Best In Class” onboarding programs on average achieved 31% decrease in turnover.

**Source: Building the Business Case for Onboarding,
Aberdeen Group, 2009**

The Importance of Getting It Right

Human Nature and Onboarding

- **Meaning-Making Creatures**
- **Premature Cognitive Commitment**
- **No such thing as a “Little Thing”**

The Importance of Getting It Right

Human Nature and Onboarding

- **The Indelibility of First Impressions...**
- **Desire to Be Seen as Low Maintenance**

It's Easy to Get Fooled



They Show You This

It's Easy to Get Fooled



But They Are Feeling This

Don't Miss the Opportunity



“Get to know the employee when it will have the biggest beneficial impact.”

How Would You Rate the Following Where You Work?



Poll Questions

Do your managers

- Engage new hires in “How can we help you with your professional development interests?” conversations in the first month.
- Talk with new hires about what would help them perform at their best within the first few weeks of employment.
- Have adequate training and support in conversation skills and in creating an engaging work environment?

Guiding Principles

- **Emotional Safety**
- **Continual, Explicit Invitations**
- **Powerful Yet Unarticulated: Employee's Unique Recipe of Needs, Motivation Drivers, and Goals**

Guiding Principles

- **Emotional Safety**
- **Continual, Explicit Invitations**
- **Powerful Yet Unarticulated: Employee's Unique Recipe of Needs, Motivation Drivers, and Goals**
- **Paying Attention**
- **Continuing Conversation with Follow-up**

How Soon Should You Tap Into Each New Employee's Unique Recipe of Needs, Drivers, and Goals?

Asking for Feedback



Moving Beyond “Hey...how’s it goin’?”

Meaningful Feedback Requires Meaningful Questions

- What questions do you have at this point?
- What improvements would you make in our onboarding?
- What do you need from me to help make your onboarding experience as positive and useful as possible?

Meaningful Feedback Requires Meaningful Questions

Operational Issues

and...

Onboarding Experience



Meaningful Feedback Requires Meaningful Questions

What's a 'useful' question you like to ask?

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

“In the workplace, and most other places in life, candor comes by invitation only.”

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- “I took this webinar and have been thinking...”

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- “I took this webinar and have been thinking...”
- “I am constantly looking for ways to improve and need your feedback...”

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- “I took this webinar and have been thinking...”
- “I am constantly looking for ways to improve and need your feedback...”
- “What’s your take on...?”

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- **Mention the Unmentionable**

- **The Multiple Choice Opener**

These...

- **Help Remove Barriers Caused by the Power Differential**
- Explicitly Communicate... “It’s OK...”

These...

- **Help Remove Barriers Caused by the Power Differential**
- **Explicitly Communicate... “It’s OK...”**

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- **Mention the Unmentionable**
- **The Multiple Choice Opener**

**“Joanie...I have the feeling that we could have provided a whole lot more useful structure in this afternoon’s training program...
What’s your take on that?”**

“Lucretia...I’m thinking we could do a better job helping our new hires understand the Big Picture...of how the business works, how the different pieces of the puzzle fit together...that sort of stuff...

I’d love to get your thoughts on how we could do that...”

“Are you feeling like you’re getting enough feedback from me about how you’re doing?”

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- **Mention the Unmentionable**

- **The Multiple Choice Opener**

Language Patterns That Encourage Candor

- Mention the Unmentionable

- The Multiple Choice Opener

The Multiple Choice Opener Format

After Mentioning the Unmentionable....You Can Use the MCO...

“Is it A or B or C or...something else?”

An Example...



Mention the Unmentionable First

“I get the feeling that the feedback I gave you this morning might have been upsetting to you....do you want to talk about it?”

“0...0...0kay...”



Then The Multiple Choice Opener...

“Thanks for being willing to talk about it...Are you upset because it’s never pleasant to get negative feedback for any of us, or...did you feel my feedback yesterday was off base, or was it more about the way it was delivered, or....was it something else?”

Then The Multiple Choice Opener...

“Thanks for being willing to talk about it...Are you upset because it’s never pleasant to get negative feedback for any of us, **or...did you feel my feedback yesterday was off base, or was it more about the way it was delivered, or....was it something else?**”

Then The Multiple Choice Opener...

“Thanks for being willing to talk about it...Are **you upset because it’s never pleasant to get negative feedback for any of us, or...did you feel my feedback yesterday was off base, or **was it more about the way it was delivered, or....was it something else?**”**

The Multiple Choice Opener Format

After Mentioning the Unmentionable....You Can Use the MCO...

“Is it A or B or C or...something else?”

“It’s your turn...”

What does the Multiple Choice Opener format do (and communicate) that open ended like “How are things going?” Or “Is everything OK?” questions don’t?

They...

- **Explicitly communicate “It’s OK...”**
- **Communicate “I care enough...”**
- **Communicate “I don’t assume I know what’s going on or your world – and would like to...”**

The Three Conversations

1. Expectations
2. Aspirations
3. Preferences

The Three Conversations

1. Expectations

2. Aspirations

3. Preferences

The “Expectations Conversation”

“What do you need from me as your manager for me to manage you the best way?”

Safe:

- What did your last manager do that was really helpful during your onboarding process?
- What did they do that was NOT helpful?
- What did you wish they would do more often?

The “Expectations Conversation”

“What do you need from me?”

More direct:

- What have I been doing that has been most helpful to your onboarding process?
- What can I do to improve your onboarding experience?

The Three Conversations

- Expectations
- Aspirations
- Preferences

The “Aspirations Conversation”

- Taps into the employee’s goals and hopes
- Allows employee to become more clear about goals
- Lets manager know how far employee has progressed in defining career goals
- Demonstrates manager’s commitment

The “Aspirations Conversation”

“Jared...I want to make sure this job gives you lots of opportunity to grow professionally, and so I want to talk about your career interests and goals and what areas you especially want to grow in...”

The Three Conversations

1. Expectations

2. Aspirations

3. Preferences

The Preferences Conversation Identifies The Job Factors That Are Most Motivating

- **Variety**
- **Challenge**
- **Making a difference – meaningful work**
- **Chance to develop something new**
- **Freedom in getting the job done**

Language Patterns for The Preferences Conversation

“Looking at your best work experiences, what made them rewarding for you?”

“What’s an example of a project that fulfilled your desire for work with the freedom to make the most day to day decisions?”

But what happens if you can't meet some or all of their needs?



But what happens if you can't say “Yes” to their request(s)?

- “We can't move you to Accounting because they will be flat out with the system upgrade until March. How about taking an accounting course online in the mean time?”
- “We can't have you job shadow Jim now because he is focused on some sensitive accounts. Do you have ideas on what might be a suitable alternative?”
- “We can't promote you until Betty retires. Let's revisit it in 25 years...OK?”

But what happens if you can't say “Yes” to their request(s)?

- “We can't move you to Accounting because they will be flat out with the system upgrade until March. How about taking an accounting course online in the mean time?”
- “We can't have you job shadow Jim now because he is focused on some sensitive accounts. Do you have ideas on what might be a suitable alternative?”
- “We can't promote you until Betty retires. Let's revisit it in 25 years...OK?”

But what happens if you can't say “Yes” to their request(s)?

- **“We can't move you to Accounting because they will be flat out with the system upgrade until March. How about taking an accounting course online in the mean time?”**
- **“We can't have you job shadow Jim now because he is focused on some sensitive accounts. Do you have ideas on what might be a suitable alternative?”**
- **“We can't promote you until Betty retires. Let's revisit it in 25 years...OK?”**

More Conversation Guiding Principles

- No need for prolonged conversations
- Blend the three conversation types
- Short, frequent conversations integrated into the work day
- Get your Socrates on
- Follow-up is essential

For this To Work...

Cultivate a different mindset, do things differently – not more work

- **Pay attention**
- **Sensitivity**
- **Empathy**
- **Reflection**

The Three Conversations

1. Expectations
2. Aspirations
3. Preferences



Next Steps

Q&A Conference Call

Next Steps

If you are a Manager

- Use the *How to Get Useful Feedback From New Hires PDF* with your New Hires

If your are in HR or Training

Next Steps

If you are a Manager

- Use the *How to Get Useful Feedback From New Hires PDF* with your New Hires

If your are in HR or Training

- Share this webinar with your managers
- Share with them the *How to Get Useful Feedback From New Hires PDF*
- Involve a handful of your best managers in a pilot.
- Start interviewing new hires at various stages.

Next Steps

To Receive:

1. How to Facilitate Candid Conversations (key points and language patterns from the webinar)
2. How to Get Useful Feedback From New Hires: *Questions for Hiring Manager to Ask*
3. Pre-boarding Tasks to Complete Prior to the New Hire Arriving

<http://humannatureatwork.com/atd-onboarding>

Questions?



Jacob Schneid, The Momentum Group

Email: jschneid@sympatico.ca

Phone: 416-638-2050

LinkedIn: www.ca.linkedin.com/pub/jacob-schneid/1/998/a13



David Lee, HumanNature@Work

Email: david@humannatureatwork.com

Phone: 207-571-9898

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/humannatureatwork/