Enhance Your Onboarding with a Blended Learning Experience

Presented By:

Staffing e Trainer

The 'Onboarding' Dilemma

You just hired a full time staff member and realize he/she needs to be trained on your company's culture, mission, and way of conducting business along with every day skills needed for success. How on earth will you have time for that? You are focused on client retention and new client acquisition, recruiting is overwhelming, and the staff in your office is already stretched to the limits.

Sound familiar? Training in the staffing industry has been especially challenging due to the nature of our business coupled with the erratic business environment. It used to be the new hire would start the first day with someone from corporate to get a brief company orientation and fill out paperwork. Then he/she would learn on-the-job until an instructor-led training class was available. The training usually required the new hire to be out of the office for three to five days. The teacher-centric training pulled staff out of the office incurring expense for travel, hotel, and loss of revenue Some companies would allow the branch manager to train the new team member which led to inconsistent corporate brand/messages and processes. This was a cost that many staffing companies felt was a necessary evil.

Create a Best-in-Class Onboarding Program

In recent research by the Aberdeen Group (Onboarding 2011, the Path to Productivity), they found that those companies with best in class onboarding programs increased first year retention 78% more than those companies with poor onboarding programs. If a company is not focused on the way they hire, introduce, guide, motivate, train and

engage their team, they are probably spending a great deal of time recruiting and hiring versus growing internal momentum.

Every company should review their new hire experience and how the onboarding program impacts employee engagement. The trick to this review is being brutally honest with your current program. Are you giving the team member everything they need to be successful? Are you onboarding different than you did 5 years ago? Or even 1 year ago?

Most new hire orientations will include:

➢ New Employee Forms
➢ Benefit Enrollment
➢ Payroll Processes
➢ Company History
➢ Email Address and System Log Ins
➢ Distribution of company property (keys, laptop, phones, etc)
➢ CSR/ATS System Training

These tactical topics are necessary but do not describe to the new hire expectations of business acumen, networking, ethics, brand image, etc. These, and many more, are the most critical areas to a new hire's success and should be in every onboarding program. The key areas to address are those which will impact the organizational goals and how the new hire can impact those goals.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for a company to have one dedicated employee guide the new hire from the first minute they arrive on day one through his/her first 30 days. To enhance the onboarding take advantage of the blended learning approach which will engage the new hire and allow for different types of learning.

Blended Learning Proves Effective for Onboarding

The training profession has proven there are many alternatives for cost effective and impactful learning techniques to improve the new hire onboarding process. Blended learning is one of those techniques and is defined as utilizing various methods of training for efficiency, variety and increased retention of material.

The various training methods can be used in any combination. For example, you could use instructor-led training with one or more of the following:

- ➢ web-based courses
- ➢ webinars
- ➢ mentoring/coaching
- ➢ self paced study guides
- ➢ telephone or Skype training
- ➢ iPods, iPhone Apps
- ➢ social networking sites
- ➢ virtual worlds
- ➢ speed mentoring

Blended learning is the normal education process used by most Fortune 500 companies. Some Fortune 500 companies are using iPod's to educate their field staff on current company policy updates and point-of-need training. Research conducted by several secondary education institutions regarding the success of blended learning (web based courses coupled with interactive coaching and/or training) showed an increase in material retention rates of between 20% to 50%.

By enhancing the onboarding process using blended learning the new hire can reach full productivity much quicker. Some companies have found a strong onboarding program can help employees reach full productivity two months sooner than those without a strong onboarding program. Imagine the impact on a company if a new team member could be fully productive much quicker while following the company mission and vision.

Successful Programs Have Buy In

The overall blended learning philosophy is easy to understand but the main component needs to be commitment. To have a successful training program, management needs to commit to the importance of education. When management realizes and communicates that quality onboarding improves long term profitability, everyone will benefit.

Employees become more accountable when they see management believes in the importance of training and its impact on bottom line success. This commitment needs to be driven from senior management to all employees. Commitment is shown by actions such as allowing dedicated time for learning or restricting ability to work until after all appropriate learning has taken place.

The key to any successful education program is to remember that learning, blended or otherwise, is a process not a one time event.

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