

Onboarding Guide

Onboarding practices for your
commercial talents



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Intro

(...) There is a correlation between employee turnover and a well- designed onboarding process. Throughout this guide, we will go through the whole process to give you insights on where to start.

Welcoming and orienting your new employees to your company can be tricky. Your new employees' first impressions of your company will make or break your employment brand, and it will have an impact on your business outcomes.

This is why more and more HR professionals are now restructuring their onboarding processes. With the well-designed structure, defined milestones, effective stakeholder engagement, and automated processes, companies can make gains in onboarding and reduce turnover.

It hurts to lose talent. It's an even greater loss when great employees leave your company in their first two years of employment. Your company spent valuable time searching for the most remarkable talent, with a substantial amount of resources that influences the number within that fiscal year. It is undeniably frustrating when new employees decide to leave within a short period.

Several studies have suggested that there is a correlation between employee turnover and a well-designed onboarding process. Throughout this guide, we will go through the whole process to give you insights on where to start.

Why is it important?

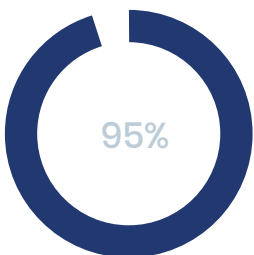
Companies are using various methods to calculate employee turnover costs

The most visible reason for companies to spend more time designing the onboarding process is the cost of a bad hire and the employee turnover cost.

Companies are using various methods to calculate employee turnover costs. Some companies allocate 15% of employees' annual salary as a turnover cost when they voluntarily leave the company.

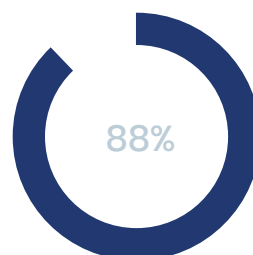
Let's imagine that you hired a sales rep for a senior-level position. Copenhagen's average salary level for a senior sales rep is around 596,142 DKK per year. This company would lose 89,421 DKK when the sales rep leaves.

When an employee has been with the company for less than one year, the percentage can increase to 33% as you can't account for the first-year ROI. You might end up spending another part of your budget on an entirely new recruitment process instead of using it in different areas of your business.



According to Brandon Hall Group's study, 95% of organisations of all sizes admit to making bad hires every year.

Another study showed that 88% of companies are not onboarding well.



Pre-Boarding process

Pre-boarding is especially vital for hires that are starting later than one month. For the candidate, this is a long period of time filled with expectations and thoughts(...)

The numbers show that 33% of fresh hires start searching for a new job within the first six months of employment. All the costs you put into the hiring process will be lost and with next to a zero return on investment. You can prevent this from happening to your business by preparing your candidates from the moment they accept your job offer until their first actual day at work.

Depending on the time between the candidate's acceptance and his first actual day, there is still a risk of him getting a different offer. Your pre-boarding process has a massive impact on your new employee's level of loyalty towards your company. You need to engage him to generate rapport and hype about your company so he'll feel more committed to hitting the ground running from day one.

Most of the new hires are excited to hear about the challenges that lie ahead of them. As the hiring manager, you can give them more details about the role to make them feel prepared.

Pre-boarding is especially vital for hires that are starting later than one month. For the candidate, this is a long period of time filled with expectations and thoughts like **What's going to happen? Do I even want this job? The job I have right now is actually pretty good. etc.** If you're not cautious, you might lose this candidate even after accepting him or her.

Strengthen your employee value proposition

Your new employee most likely accepted your job offer because they found your employee value proposition attractive. Use the time before the employee's first official day to strengthen this. It will show that your organization fulfills its promises, and it will demonstrate that managers care about their employees.

You can start by simply asking the new hires for their feedback about the hiring process. You'll get valuable information to find potential low-hanging fruits in your hiring process, and the new employee will have a stronger impression of what kind of company you are.

Tailor the process to individuals

You got to know your new employee during the hiring process. Now you're in the position where you can tailor the pre-boarding to the individual needs. You'll be able to use this data in your actual onboarding process.

Managers play an essential role in the pre-boarding process. Emailing might feel more comfortable to you but giving your new hire a phone call is more appropriate. You can have a quick conversation to get to know him or her better, ask questions, and it will help you to make more meaningful first-day introductions.

There are multiple different ways for you to tailor the process. You can schedule a lunch or video meeting, given the circumstances and your budget. You can also give an office tour that will solidify the fact that they've got the job, and it will make the first day less intimidating. An effective pre-boarding doesn't mean bombarding your new hires with emails and calls. The optimal communication frequency throughout the pre-boarding is once or twice a week, which can vary based on seniority.

Provide clear guidelines for their first day

Around 50% of new hires are anxious about the first-day agenda and being late. Lower their anxiety by giving them clear instructions for their first day.

Tell them the specific address, department, and the person they need to report to. In case their first day is remote, then, of course, give them the details to log in to your video conferencing tool and other information about how to use it, if necessary. Besides that, share with them any vital company information you have. Some relevant materials can be employee handbooks, benefits guides, employee resource groups, etc.

Pay extra attention to international hires

Depending on if your new hires need to be physically in your office, they'll need extra time for relocating. You can proactively put yourself out there and ask how you can help make their transition easier. Of course, then follow up on your promises.

If they are relocating to your country, we strongly recommend that you help them with administration. Advise them on relevant rules they should follow, or navigate them to a website where they can find all the information. You can recommend them to a bank, real estate agent, help them book a meeting to get a social security number, etc.

The whole reason for creating a pre-boarding process is to prepare your new employee for working with your team and not lose your new hire before the first official day.

Onboarding process

Your business success doesn't end with just finding the right hire. They need to stay with your company (...)

Finding and hiring new commercial talent is a long and expensive process. Your business success doesn't end with just finding the right hire. They need to stay with your company to create an optimal ROI for their hiring process and scale your business. Many companies ignore the onboarding process and do not realize that this is directly linked to the high employee turnover.

From a holistic perspective, the more startup you are, the less time you'd want to spend on onboarding. It is even more critical for early-stage startups. If you're already a more scaled company or a fully functioning enterprise, the onboarding process can take around nine months or even one year. Depending on your business, the role, and the complexity of your market. In any case, the first 14 days are immensely crucial because, in those two weeks, you'll be able to tell if there is a professional and cultural fit or not. What is even more critical for you to make those 14 days effective is to be well organized and structured during the first few days. You can make a great first impression only once, and if your new hire is not engaged within those first few days, you might lose him.

Hiring your first sales reps and taking them through a thorough onboarding process is considered one of the most challenging startup processes. Often it happens that founders tend to do the sales themselves, but when they hire their first sales team, they experience one of two problems. One problem is to get out of the sales role after leading the department

from the beginning. Another problem is to get your sales up and running on their own.

The first three days of work

The onboarding process starts on the first official day in the new job, and those first 2-3 days are vital to success.

The first thing on the agenda should be introducing your new hire to the team with which this new hire will work closely with. This should also include a mentor or personal guide that will train this new hire for most of the onboarding process.

This first day should include other official greetings to managers, direct supervisors, and other departments. Depending on your organization's size and the stage your business is at, you can consider introducing a first assignment to find out how this new hire will handle it as a member of the organization.

If you care about your new hire's success, consider a joint lunch with the team to see how well they will fit together culturally.

As with everything, you need to set up goals to know what you want to get out of those first few days. We recommend getting your new sales hire on the phone as quickly as possible, especially in a startup environment where time is money and you can't afford to delay generating revenue. Start by getting the new hire and the mentor on a practice call to see how a regular call would go. By the end of the third day, you can give the new hire some leads with a low lead score that you're not worried about burning to train your new sales rep to your company's standards.

It's okay if he doesn't know everything that there is to your product, but it's essential to get him started, and comfortable making calls with your clientele.

First 14 days

Throughout the first two weeks, the primary purpose is to determine whether this is a good fit professionally and culturally. Emphasize the company's culture and deep dive into your product, market segments, and customer behavior.

Agree upon some measurable goals by which you can evaluate if it makes sense to continue with this new hire or if you should start looking for someone new. If you feel like there is no match, then most likely, the hire can think that as well, and letting this hire go would be beneficial from an economic point of view. It means that you won't have to spend more of your resources on the employee that you're sure is not a good fit, giving you more knowledge about potential red flags to be aware of in your following hiring process.

First three months

As part of your onboarding process should be regular mutual evaluations to ensure that your hire and your company are going in the optimal direction. Those regular feedbacks are critical when the new hire is confronted with new tasks and responsibilities.

By the end of the three months, find out if this new hire achieved the set goals and reflect on the results.

In the end, you should have a clear idea if your company has growth and development opportunities that can help scale your business.

By the end of those first three months, the hire should be on a high-performance level, at this moment generating revenue at a level pre-determined earlier in the process. When not being organized, you'll end up seeing your new hire not being able to achieve the targets.

First six months

If you're a startup, you should consider the six-month milestone as the top finish line for your onboarding process. At this point, your sales rep should be a top performer generating revenue. The only time you should consider extending this period is if your sales cycle is longer than six months. At that point, you can't expect your new hire to be fully onboarded in a shorter time than what it takes for the sales cycle to be completed.

Virtual onboarding

It's simply more challenging to get the new person up to speed when no one is near to see how things are going. Therefore your virtual onboarding requires you to plan for more support.

During this raging pandemic, you probably had to improvise your virtual onboarding process if you even decided to have one. Virtual onboarding could leave you disappointed with your new hire's productivity and engagement. It's simply more challenging to get the new person up to speed when no one is near to see how things are going. Therefore your virtual onboarding requires you to plan for more support.

Start by creating an email template

When we were experiencing the first lockdown, everyone was caught off guard, and perhaps your onboarding files were scattered in different folders or platforms. At this point, you should collect all the folders and links to important documents for your new hire in one email template for quick access.

Encourage virtual coworker bonding

Since remote work can make some employees feel isolated and not part of the collective, one of the best practices is to facilitate bonding between employees. There can be many different ways to strengthen your team with your new hire, and one of them is to assign onboarding buddies. You can introduce them through planned virtual lunch, which allows them to interact less formally. Another way of encouraging virtual bonding between onboarding buddies and your new hire is to schedule joint coffee breaks.

Providing your new hire with multiple people to lean on for support can make the onboarding process quicker, allowing your team to generate revenue earlier. Finally, by assigning numerous onboarding buddies, you'll increase the chances that one of them will be a good personality match to your new hire.

Onboarding cheat sheet for your new commercial hire

One of the first steps to introducing your new hire to your selling processes is to go through the dos and don'ts of your methods

Here is an example of some of the steps we have when making the onboarding strategy for our customers. The onboarding assignments will be different based on the seniority level, which can be tricky. When your hire comes from external channels, you will first need to introduce him or her to your target group. Without knowing who he is supposed to sell to, it would be much more difficult to tailor the next steps into a comprehensive cheat sheet.

In this example, we will cover how you can proceed with onboarding for an entry-level sales rep.

Explain the do's and don'ts of your best practices

One of the first steps to introducing your new hire to your selling processes is to go through the dos and don'ts of your methods. You can go as deep as to address all of those points in each stage of your buyer's journey.

Number of questions: Based on your target group and your business, you probably noticed the number of questions required to get your prospect into the next stage of your buyer's journey. For example, it can be between 11-14 questions. Anything less, and it would be difficult to qualify this prospect or anything more, and the prospect is losing interest.

Avoid monologue: Sales are based on your prospect's pain points and goals which would be very difficult to find out if

your sales rep won't let the prospect talk about it. Of course, the rep needs to balance providing value and to listen to the prospect. A good practice is to speak no longer than 25–35 seconds per question.

Talk to listen ratio: You can split the overall conversation with your prospect into two blocks for your sales rep – talking and listening. Typically what works is to have it divided into 46% of talking and 54% of listening.

Be specific: Your new hire needs to learn to stay on point during the call but also explore possible problems that the prospect may face. On that note, a good number of problems to cover throughout a conversation is around 3–4.

Use gamification with your new hire

Make your sales pitch into a game. How many points can he get? The sales pitch, a touchy area within sales, some leaders take it upon them to control every word being said, while others let the creative juices flow from their sales reps. No matter which tactic you believe in, it's a good idea especially when hiring less experienced salespeople that they quickly get an introduction of how things are done. The sales pitch should be a part of your onboarding buddy program, where seniors will help the new hire through practice phone calls. We firmly believe that the sooner your new hire gets on the phone, the sooner he can start earning revenue for your company.

Phases	Process	Main principle	Behaviour	Points
1st phase	Gain access	Questions regarding the person	What, how, tell me more	1
2nd phase	Framing	Introduce your company	Positive use cases the customer can relate to	2
3rd phase	Clarity	Is this worth everyone's time?	Is the prospect in need of your solution within an acceptable timeline?	3
4th phase	Need	Questions regarding your prospect's company	Disclose the pains	4
5th phase	Solution	Explain how you can help	Pitch at least one potential solution the prospect would be interested in	5
6th phase	Summarize	Explain towards the person	Summarize the data that the prospect already gave you	6
7th phase	Next step	Involve the person	Get the prospect to set a timeframe	7

You can use this framework as a template for your sales pitch. Be aware that your pitch should differ based on what you're hiring for is outbound or inbound, B2B or B2C, prospects seniority level, etc.

Explore with your hire the most common objections and how to handle them

There will be plenty of situations where your new hire will need to face objections, and he needs to learn how to handle them. A sales objection is a buyer's expression of an existing barrier between the current situation and what criteria needs to be achieved before buying from you. To look further beyond this definition, it's an indication that the buyer is engaged, which is better than disinterest.

List your most common objections and play roles with your new hire to make him ready to handle them like a pro. According to Zig Ziglar, there are five obstacles in every sale, which will turn into objections if the customer doesn't understand how you will deal with these. It takes only one obstacle to block the entire deal.

To make it easier for your new hire to map out the objection handling process, you can create a simple objection framework with different scenarios.

Objections	Where in the process is the objection?	Handle the objection	Main reason for the objection
I don't want to talk.	Intro	"Okay, I understand you want to use some time on this yourself. Do you see a future where you'll be of need for (your product/service)?"	No buy/desire
I don't have time to talk right now.	Intro	That's fair, I understand that you have a lot on your plate right now. If I give you a call tomorrow at 1 pm, would that suit you better?	Lack of trust
Can't you send me something I can look at?	Data collection	Of course I can. I get that you want more information before making such an important decision. What type of information would be useful for you?	Lack of trust/Lack of hurry
It's too expensive.	Next step	Fair enough. I get that this is a big decision. What would be a fair price for you?	Lack of money/Lack of trust

Help your new hire to make a daily schedule for the next few weeks

By creating a daily schedule for the first few weeks, your new hire will have a clear idea of what's expected of him on a daily basis. Not only can it speed up his ramp-up time, but it will help you to control his onboarding process and observe his working ethics.

Here is an example of how this schedule might look like. Be aware that the schedule should differ based on B2B or B2C, also it will differ based on industry and time difference in the targeted market.

Monday -Friday

Prime time	8:30 -12:00
Desired behaviour	Calling new leads, follow-up on existing leads, call "old" leads
Off peak	12:00-13:30
Desired behaviour	Breaks, lunch, emails, meetings
Prime time	13:30-16:00
Desired behaviour	Calling new leads, follow-up on existing leads, call "old" leads
Off peak	16:00-18:00
Desired behaviour	Breaks, emails, meetings, self-reflection, prepare for the next day

Fully customisable onboarding process from yTalent

Your hire will benefit from expert's guidance and be ready to perform in top shape.

You and your new hire will enjoy a fully tailored onboarding process suitable for starting and scaling businesses. Your hire will benefit from our expert's guidance and will be ready to be a high-performer in no time.

Features of yTalent's onboarding process

- Designing the onboarding process within your budget;
- Tailoring the pre-boarding process;
- Tailoring the onboarding process of your new hire;
- Practical assignments and exercises;
- Reporting.

Hit the ground running with your new commercial hires

Support your new hires to master sales conversations, fill their pipelines, increase win rates, and drive your company's growth by signing in for yTalent's onboarding process.

About our onboarding coach

Jakob Hanssen is a founder and CEO of yTalent who helps clients unleash their sales teams' full potential. He has more than 12 years of experience in sales and sales leadership positions.

His coaching methods brought clients a 250% revenue increase, and the value of closed deals increased from 2000€ to 4500€.

Book a meeting with Jakob

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