

ins with your employee throughout the first year. Check-ins could be done at 60-, 90- or 100-day intervals.

Upskilling benefits

Once your new employees are settled into their positions, add to their skillset. Upskilling benefits both your company and your team. Employees can gain additional education or training through an academic degree or certification program. Augmenting knowledge and skills improves employee morale and makes them feel appreciated. Training employees so they have mastered the latest and greatest skillsets makes the company more efficient. As employees build knowledge and skills, their value and importance to the company's success grows.

Not all employees, however, will want to take advantage of company-sponsored education programs. A Level 1 welder, for example, may be happy doing his job and might not be interested in advancing to a higher level of welding.

I was fortunate to have a mentor early in my career who encouraged me to earn a degree. I took courses at night and obtained a degree, which enabled me to advance in the companies where I worked. Success depends not only on the individual, but on the work environment, too.

Spending time, effort and money on employee development is a win-win. In the community and a competitive marketplace, your investment in employees will be perceived as taking pride in developing the workforce and valuing their professional growth.

Training assessments

Selecting the appropriate training program for your employees requires assessments to determine whether an employee's competencies meet the standard for their position and which skills to enhance first. Assessment tools can help with succession planning and may be used after hiring, during performance reviews or when there is a change at the company that might affect employees' jobs.

Though development can be expensive, companies can start out with local training and certification programs or on-site training. Some examples of training include:

- Project management
- Performance management
- Leadership training
- Communication
- Team building.

Human Resource professionals are responsible for ensuring their company has a successful onboarding program and subsequent training and development plans. HR management must work with company leaders and hiring managers to be certain they understand each stage of the process. They also must identify which departments need to be involved in the onboarding process.

How can you ascertain whether your onboarding program is working or how it could be improved? Ask your employees! You can create employee surveys through email using

platforms such as Survey Monkey and MailChimp, or you can ask for feedback from the participants in onboarding. You can find out if employees are happy during performance reviews or exit interviews. Over time, make changes based on the feedback. It all goes back to the importance of communication.

If you would like more information on onboarding, training topics or assessment tools, reach out to Melody Beach Consulting Group at melody@melodybeachconsulting.com.

Connections Count podcast launched last month! You can listen to our guest episodes on our *Facebook* **business page**

50+ Job Seekers workshops

The 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group's workshops are free and virtual on Zoom, with some held in person.

The group has returned to in-person events the first and third Tuesdays of the month at the Natick Community-Senior Center in Natick and the first and third Wednesdays of the month at the Worcester Senior Center in Worcester. Registrations for those workshops are limited to the first 20 people who sign up.

Remaining workshops and job fairs this month are:

- Thursday, May 11, 4 to 7 p.m.: In-person job fair for educators.

PreK-12 educators and support staff are invited to meet representatives from several North Central School Districts to learn about their job opportunities. The job fair is at 9 Oakmont Drive, Ashburnham.

- Monday, May 15, 10 to 11:30 a.m.: Interview practice with Ed Lawrence.

For good or bad, first impressions matter. When interviewing, you need to put your best foot forward and that takes practice.

- Do you have an interview coming up?
- Do you know how to respond to behavioral questions?
- Do you need suggestions on how to address gaps in employment?

Join us for answers to your questions about interviews and learn how to respond to a variety of questions that may be presented to you in an interview.

Register [here](#).

- Tuesday, May 16, 2 to 3:30 p.m., in-person, Natick Community-Senior Center, 117 E. Central St., Natick: LinkedIn with Ed Lawrence.

Registration is limited to the first 20 people who sign up.

Register [here](#).

- Tuesday, May 16, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: MassHire Central Job Fair, DCU Center, 50 Foster St., Worcester.