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Noble, Sara E. *Developing an Onboarding Training Program for Grand Bluff Running*

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the best way to onboard and train new employees, as well as bring current employees up to speed, with the organization's goals and vision. By having a formalized onboarding program in place employees of Grand Bluff Running will have their onboarding needs met and the employees will be able to properly be integrated into the organization. Integrating an onboarding program into the organization had to the potential to increase retention and improve service to the customers.

The research conducted includes a survey to collect important onboarding data from three different organizations of various sizes and numbers of employees as well as a literature review of best practices. An onboarding training program for Grand Bluff Running, was developed.

Acknowledgments

I want to start by thanking my two sons, Tyler and Elliot, for encouraging me to return to college to work towards my MS degree. I had no intentions of delaying the submission of the final paper, but “life” happens and sometimes throws you a curve ball. In my case I have had many changes and challenges over the past four years and the idea of completing my masters was a daunting task. It may have taken me the full 7 years, but I was constantly encouraged by friends and family to complete my degree.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Chapter I: Introduction.....	6
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study	7
Assumptions of the Study	7
Definition of Terms.....	7
Limitations of the Study.....	9
Methodology.....	9
Chapter II: Literature Review	10
Onboarding	10
Differences Between Orientation and Onboarding.....	17
Table 1: Differences Between Orientation and Onboarding.....	18
Training.....	19
Gamification	21
Job Satisfaction	22
Table 2: Job Satisfaction Aspects Rates as “Very Important” by Employees.....	23
Figure 1: Employee Job Satisfaction 2002-2013	24
Employee Engagement	25
Figure 2: Research Model: Individual Factors of Employee Engagement and Work Outcomes	26
Organizational Socialization.....	28
Conclusion	30

Chapter III: Methodology	31
Instrumentation	31
Study of Best Practices	32
Data Collection Procedures.....	32
Data Analysis	32
Limitations	33
Summary	33
Chapter IV: Results.....	34
Item Analysis	34
Structure.....	34
Content and Practices.....	35
Table 3: Onboarding Practices.....	36
Delivery Method.....	36
Open-Ended Survey Questions.....	37
Summary.....	38
Chapter V: Discussion	39
Conclusions.....	39
Recommendations.....	39
References.....	41
Appendix A: Interview Questions	45
Appendix B: Compiled Interview Questions.....	47
Appendix C: Grand Bluff Running Formal Onboarding/Orientation Model	50

Chapter I: Introduction

Small businesses are growing in popularity throughout the United States and as the businesses grow, the need to hire employees and retain employees is critical. Grand Bluff Running is one of these small businesses. It is a specialty running store located in La Crosse, WI. Grand Bluff Running has an operating owner with private investors who are silent partners in the business. Initially, the day-to-day operations of the store were handled by the store owner and an intern from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. The store experienced rapid growth in the first few months and quickly needed to hire additional employees. For owner, Tyler Heinz, bringing new employees on board was done quickly and without a clear guide on how to orient or onboard them.

Unlike larger organizations that have a human resources department, the owner did not have access to formalized orientation materials, or procedures, that were helpful in bringing new employees on-board. Without the tools there was not an effective way to share the necessary information about the standard operating procedures, philosophy, mission, vision, and the overall culture. The employees were hired, trained on the point-of-sale computer system, were asked to perform in a professional manner, be respectful of all customers and assist customers with their shopping needs. By providing the new employees with a formalized onboarding training program, the new hires would become a team member who can be fully immersed in the culture and have the necessary tools to ensure their success.

Statement of the Problem

Grand Bluff Running saw rapid growth in the first months and had to hire part-time employees and a store manager. There was no onboarding program available for new-hires. Without an onboarding program, employees had difficulty in knowing and understanding the

guidelines and standard operating procedures in order to make the store and its operations successful.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive, professional, and formalized onboarding training program for their new hires. This was to ensure that all employees (current and new hires) will be consistent with their work. The training materials will have the proper content and method of delivery designed to the needs of the store.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study were that:

1. Grand Bluff Running will utilize the materials and methods of delivery for their current and new-hired employees.
2. The materials and methods of delivery will be assessed for effectiveness in the onboarding training process.
3. A review of the materials and methods of delivery will be conducted after a period of time and necessary adjustment will be made to the materials and/or methods of delivery.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used in the research paper. A definition of those terms follows:

Discretionary effort. Discretionary effort is described as “the level of effort people could give if they wanted to, but above and beyond the minimum required” (Aubry Daniel Int’l, 2015, para. 1). When an organization provides only negative consequences for the employee not fulfilling their day-to-day responsibilities, this only fosters an environment of fear, causing the

employee to do only what is necessary to complete their jobs. However, if the organization were to reward and recognize the efforts of the employee, that employee may feel the desire to go the extra mile and provide more than is required of them; discretionary effort.

Employee engagement. Employee engagement is “the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals” (Kruse, 2012, para. 3). Employee engagement does not necessarily mean employee satisfaction. In order for an employee to be engaged, they must actually “care” about the work that they are doing and believe in the value of their work.

Gamification. The application of typical elements of game playing (e.g., point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service: “gamification is exciting because it promises to make the hard stuff in life fun” (Oxford Dictionary, 2014, para 1). In the world of training and development it has also been defined as “the process of making nongame activities more fun and engaging” (Leaman, 2014, p. 35).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined as “the level of contentment employees feel about their work, which can affect performance” (Boundless, 2015, para. 32). This is based on the employees’ perception of their satisfaction. There are many factors which influence job satisfaction including communication within the organization, relationship with management, and the ability to complete tasks and responsibilities on the job to name a few.

Onboarding. “Onboarding is the process by which new hires get adjusted to the social performance aspects of their jobs quickly and smoothly, and learn the attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors required to function effectively in an organization” (Bauer, 2014, p. 1).

Organizational socialization. Organizational socialization is defined as “a learning and adjustment process that enables an individual to assume an organizational role that fits both

organizational and individual needs” (Chao, 2012, para 1). Organizational socialization occurs not only when a new employee enters the organization but also when an employee changes roles in that organization.

Orientation. Orientation can be defined as a process to introduce a new employee to their job (Hall, 2014). This can include focusing on paperwork (payroll, benefits, as well as other administrative issues), reviewing the employee handbook, and an overview of the organization’s mission, and policies (Hall, 2014, para. 1).

Training. Training can be defined as an “organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient’s performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill” (Businessdictionary, 2014, para. 1).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study will be that Grand Bluff Running is a new business and the owner is the primary source for information. It will be necessary to do research with other small business owners to obtain information on the methods they are using for onboarding.

Methodology

The method used in this study consisted of surveys and personal interviews conducted with both the owner of Grand Bluff Running, as well as other business leaders who have successful onboarding processes in place. Compiling the data allowed for development of an onboarding process for use by Grand Bluff Running.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Grand Bluff Running saw rapid growth in the first months and had to hire part-time employees. There was no onboarding program available for new hires. Without an onboarding program, employees have difficulty in knowing and understanding the same guidelines and standard operating procedures in order to make the store and its operations successful.

There is a fine line between the need for hiring additional employees and the ability, time, and resources available to properly bring them on board. The need for an onboarding program becomes obvious as the business owner tries to balance the workload that they have in addition to being able to support the new hire and make sure that they are up-to-speed with the daily operations.

This chapter explores literature related to onboarding and the differences between onboarding and orientation. Also included is a review of effective methods of training new employees during the onboarding process in order for them to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to get the most out of their new position is important for the success of the process.

Onboarding

Small business owners face challenges in onboarding new employees. Unlike large organizations with an established Human Resources department they do not have the resources available to them. According to Ladimeji (2013) most small businesses with less financially stable environments typically use the sink or swim method whereby the employee must jump right in to the job with little or no formalized training. This can be effective but “it is an inherently risky and ultimately unsustainable way to hire” (Ladimeji, 2013, para. 3).

Providing employees with an effective onboarding and orientation training program is essential in the successful immersion of employees into an organization. According to Snell (2006), while it is important to find the right employees for the right position in an organization, it is also essential to have a comprehensive introductory process in place. Snell (2006) goes on to discuss the importance of the early stages of onboarding and points out that the early stages of onboarding are important for the new employee to build a strong relationship and bond with the organization.

A study by BambooHR (2014) surveyed 1,005 employed individuals over the age of 24. Results indicated that 31% of the respondents quit their jobs within six months of starting. Also, 16 to 17% of the individuals left from one week to three months of hire, meaning that, on average, companies are losing one in six new hires during that time (BambooHR, 2014).

Snell (2006) states that the “early stages of onboarding are crucial to establishing a lasting bond between employees and the company” (p.32). As a new employee enters the organization they are, in many ways, a liability before they learn how to do their jobs and become acclimated. “The more quickly employees get up to speed the sooner they can begin contributing...” (Snell, 2006, p.33).

According to Vernon (2012) it is easy to be overwhelmed by all of the options in creating an onboarding process. Managers need to be aware that the new employee can become overwhelmed by information and they should be actively involved in the onboarding process in order to guide the new-hire in the proper direction (Vernon, 2012).

Four keys to effective onboarding have been identified by Healthcare Executive (2011). The four keys are as follows:

1. Painting the picture. In organizations there are a number of subcultures that can be present in organizations. Because of this it is important for the new employee to understand the culture in the new organization. By having managers relay information regarding the culture in the organization, it allows the new employee to have a greater understanding on how things are done.
2. Sharing leadership point of view. Expectations from both the new employee and the employer should be spelled out very clearly. The new employees must be very open to a lot of information and lines of communication must be clear in order to understand. This should be done at all levels of the organization.
3. Mapping relationships. By informing the new employees of the proper channels and individuals in the organization, it will be easier for the new employee to know who to go to for guidance relating to specific issues which need to be addressed.
4. Setting people up to win. Finally, by providing new employees with the necessary tools and information to do their jobs effectively you are able to set them up for success. By spending more time with the new employee at the beginning, they are able to have clear expectations and gain an understanding of the new environment (Healthcare Executive, 2011).

The onboarding process, and the start of any new position in an organization, can be a stressful period for the new employee. Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013) indicate that the onboarding process may be tailored to assist in this period by allowing individuals to bring their own unique personalities, abilities, and talents to allow the onboarding period to be more comfortable to the new employee. Personal identity socialization is a term that is used to bring this concept of allowing one's unique internal experiences into the organization and adapt to the

new organization with their own authenticity and sense of purpose (Cable et al., 2013). Personal socialization involves the norms, values and behaviors appropriate for their social identity.

It was stated earlier that there are keys in effectively implementing an onboarding program; there are also suggested mistakes to avoid while doing so. According to Vernon (2012) there are five mistakes that should be avoided. Mistake number one is failing to engage employees on the first day. This can happen when you focus on the organization and bombard the new employee with too much information on rules and regulations. Personal engagement allows them to feel welcome and that they made a good choice in employer by making them comfortable.

The second mistake is failing to articulate clear responsibilities to the new employee (Vernon, 2012). Managers should be very direct in expressing what it is they expect from the new employee and duties should be clearly spelled out and the measure of their success should be identified and relayed to them.

Mistake number three is failing to address whether the employee is a good fit for the culture (Vernon, 2012). Culture should remain in the forefront as often as possible. Discussing culture and the vision only on day one will not keep the new employee connected, it must be talked about frequently for the employee to understand the vision of the organization.

The fourth mistake is failing to link onboarding to the desired skills of the role (Vernon, 2012). Measures of success should be clearly identified, and those skills should be worked on throughout the onboarding process. Communication needs to be a critical skill that is honed by both the new employee and the managers responsible for them.

The fifth and final mistake is failing to deliver feedback early and often (Vernon, 2012). Feedback is critical in the success of the onboarding process. The new employee needs to know

how they are doing, whether they need to change their behavior to improve their performance, and what they may be doing right. To create the culture that the organization desires, the actions must become a habit in their daily work.

Gaul (2013) states that onboarding is a process, not an event and that it should be seen as something more than a one-time event. The focus needs to be on people and not on processes for it to be successful. Gaul (2013) also goes on to say that taking a proactive approach to building strong relationships leads to connections that will keep an employee engaged and productive. It is clear to see that onboarding is an important key in indoctrinating new employees into an organization.

Having a strong onboarding program in place could make the difference between the new hire staying or leaving. In a study by BambooHR (2014) the following scenarios and respondents' comments in their shows that not all new hires are totally invested in their new role. Several reasons were given as to reasons they may leave the organization.

The newly hired employee may accept an offer at an organization while hoping to receive an offer from a different organization where they would prefer to work. If an offer from a competing organization is presented, they may leave for that other opportunity (Vernon, 2012). The new hire may still be looking for a better opportunity having doubt about the position that they have accepted. Therefore, the employee may continue to see if there are more desirable options that are being posted in other organizations (Vernon, 2012).

The new employee may still be deciding on their career path. BambooHR (2014) discovered through the study that the clear majority of people who quit jobs in the first six months left entry-level (43%) or intermediate (38%) positions, and 28% of the respondents who quit early decided that the work they were doing was something they no longer wanted to do

(BambooHR, 2014). The employee may have accepted a position but they really were not sure what they wanted to do when they said yes (Vernon, 2012).

According to BambooHR, 2014, the following items must be addressed to have a successful onboarding program. First, new hires need you to outline responsibilities and explain exactly what is expected of them (BambooHR, 2014). They need to know processes to follow before starting in their new role. The new hire should also be aware of how their performance is measured and communication is an important factor in this.

Second, for the new hire to carry out their new responsibilities, they need to be properly trained (BambooHR, 2014). Training takes time on the part of both the new hire and the manager; however, this is an important function in order to have the new hire get up to speed quickly in order to do the job that you hired them for to help with the work load.

Third, the new hire must be accepted by their co-workers (BambooHR, 2014). This can be accomplished by arranging time for the team to socialize over breaks or lunch, or by assigning the new hire to a project working with others. Ensure that all members of the team know their specific roles and how they will work together in being a successful team.

Fourth, feedback is important in any position, especially early on in a new hires position (BambooHR, 2014). By providing them feedback, whether good or corrective, you are allowing the new hire to grow in their position by letting them know that they are doing what they were hired to do. Rewards and recognition are also an important factor in keeping them motivated.

Fifth, management needs to be involved hands-on in the onboarding process (BambooHR, 2014). The manager is ultimately the person who will be monitoring the new hires' work, so they need to be directly involved in the process.

Sixth, while the manager needs to be actively involved in the onboarding process, another important factor to consider is to assign a mentor to work with the new hire (BambooHR, 2014). A mentor should be a seasoned employee who will be able to share the formal and informal processes that the new employee will need to be successful in their new role. The mentor instantly becomes someone who the new hire can go to with questions or uncertainties that may arise in the new position.

Finally, it is important to focus on the things that really matter in the new hires' role (BambooHR, 2014). A nice welcome is a good thing for the new employee, but offering treats, a meal, will not be the reason the person stays in their new position. Ensuring that they are learning how to do their job properly is the most important factor. Knowing that they are contributing and making a real difference is what's important to them (BambooHR, 2014).

Executive onboarding expert Bradt (2014) has developed the three A's of onboarding that an organization should follow. The first A is accommodating. When the new hire walks into the organization their workspace should be organized and ready for them to start to work. It is important to make sure that the new hire has everything that they need to do their job (Bradt, 2014). The leaders in the organization need to make sure the new employee knows their environment, where things are, where to go to find things they need, and a tour of the facility is essential. All the paperwork that is needed for the employee to sign should be organized and ready for them to complete.

The second A is assimilating (Bradt, 2014). Assimilation allows the employer to bring the new hire onto the team by introducing the employee to co-workers, other employees in the company, assign a mentor, share lunch with other team members, and lay out the specific job responsibilities and performance objectives. The third and final A is accelerating (Bradt, 2014).

Getting the employee up to speed quickly is important, but as Bradt (2014) suggests that too much information too quickly will only overwhelm the employee. Bradt (2014) suggests providing the employee with a flow of information that is manageable for them to absorb and remember. There are some suggestions on what to do to achieve this. Over time, on-the-job training provides department specifics for them; a clear understanding of their responsibilities, clear expectations, how their work will be measured, and the type of rewards and recognition. These steps should allow the new hire to integrate themselves in to the new environment and role for which they were hired (BambooHR, 2014).

Differences Between Orientation and Onboarding

Most established organizations have some type of formal orientation for new employees and generally lasting one day. These orientation programs are designed to bring the new employees on board, have them complete paperwork and get them the necessary information needed to start their jobs (Praino, 2012).

According to BambooHR (2014) organizations that provide a welcome celebration have an advantage in engaging that employee and making them feel that they are at a place that they belong. This celebration may be held with other new hires during the orientation phase.

According to BambooHR (2014) 75% of new hires found that the orientation process is worth the time spent.

There are differences between orientation and onboarding. Orientation is a part of the onboarding process and it is where the organization shares the mission, history, and policies as well as completing necessary paperwork and other administrative activities (Vernon, 2012). This is one small part of the onboarding process. Conversely, onboarding is developing the new

employee's behaviors in order to create a foundation for the long-term success in the organization and typically occurs over a 90-day period (Vernon, 2012).

Most onboarding programs are structured to be a long-term introduction to the organization; this process can be up to a year in length. Onboarding starts with a hiring process that is planned out to fit the right candidates to the right jobs (Praino, 2012). Table 1 describes the differences are between onboarding and orientation. Having an onboarding process in place, the new employee will be fully immersed in the culture of the organization.

Table 1

Differences Between Orientation and Onboarding

Orientation	Onboarding
One-time event	Ongoing and strategic process
Lasts one or two days	Lasts 90 days to a year
Briefly introduces employee to organization usually with a document such as a handbook and a tour of the office/store/facility	Better aligns employee with organization's culture well beyond orientation as process is ongoing and is monitored
Issuance of equipment, passwords, keys, etc.	Aligns employee with other employees through systemized mentorship, training, and teambuilding
Minimal training	Develops employee with planned learning and planned feedback
Use of equipment	Sets the stage for performance evaluations by establishing a process for scheduled and unscheduled feedback on progress
Who to call for what	Includes a defined career path to give the employee's an understanding of how they can succeed in their role and what they can attain as they grow

Note. Adapted from *Onboarding vs. Orientation*, by T. Praino, 2014.

Training

It has been established that orientation is necessary to bring the new employee into the organization (Praino, 2012). It allows them to complete necessary paperwork in order to get paid, learn about benefits, etc. Onboarding takes the orientation process further by allowing the employee to become fully immersed in the culture of the organization (Praino, 2012). The next step is to move forward and transfer the information that they need.

In order to assess the needs of the organization, the ADDIE model was used to determine the structure that will be used to define the instructional methods that will be used (Hodell 2019). The ADDIE model consists of five elements and are: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. A brief description of each of the elements in the ADDIE model follows.

Analysis is the stage where the data is gathered (Hodell 2019). During this phase research is gathered regarding the project at hand and should be reviewed before anything else is considered. To have a successful design, components are considered that will be used to create the program. The design stage is the blueprint for the project (Hodell 2019). At this stage the objectives, content, and design plan are created and put in place. Development is the phase where the materials and a test of the program are developed and any speaking points, materials, and an outline of the program starts to become a reality. This phase is used for testing and adjusting the materials and content for delivery. At this stage you are able to make necessary changes along the way to ensure the best possible delivery (Hodell 2019). Implementation is the phase where the program design is delivered to the learner (Hodell 2019). All of the work done up to this point it brought forth for the intended audience. Finally, evaluation occurs after the

program is initially rolled out, and it is in place throughout the entire process and necessary adjustments are made to the program (Hodell 2019).

There are several methods of training and delivery and finding the right fit for organizations can be identified on a case-by-case basis. What may be a good fit for one organization may not be a good fit for a different organization. Lipman (2013) states that “while I was in management I didn’t spend as much time as I should have on the development of my own employees” (para.2). This, in turn, can cause organizations to lose some of the top performers. This indicates that managers need to be an active participant in learning for all employees to learn properly and with support.

Transferring learning to adults is different than children, and with the number of cross-generational employees in the workforce it can be difficult to know the best way to transfer that knowledge in order for the new employee to understand and retain the information. According to a study done by the HR Council (2014), there are several components of a successful employee learning experience, based on adult learning styles. Those components are as follow:

- The goals of the training must be clear.
- Employee involvement in what is to be learned.
- Activities are a part of the learning process.
- Use the individual work experiences and knowledge of each participant in the process as a resource.
- Use real examples.
- New learning should be related to past learning and experience.
- Practice time should be allowed to ensure retention of material.
- The environment should be informal, safe and supportive.

- There should be respect for the employee in the process.
- The learning should promote self-esteem. (HR Council, 2014)

By having a blend of various delivery methods for training you are able to allow the employees to have access to the same information but in different delivery methods. Initially, person-to-person delivery is needed (Hewitt & Aon, 2014). One final thought regarding the importance of training is shared by Lipman (2013) “Development planning... If it’s done well, the payoff can be substantial in terms of long-term loyalty. If it’s not, the costs can be substantial in terms of long-term talent” (Lipman, 2013, para.12).

Gamification

One method that may be useful, as well as cost-effective for organizations would be to use gamification as a method of delivery. According to Leaman (2014) “gamification uses all of the best features of games that bring out personal attributes – such as our natural desire for competition, achievement, status, self-expression, altruism, and closure – without building an end-to-end learning game” (p. 35).

Gamification allows the learner to receive constant feedback whether the task is being learned successfully, or whether improvement is needed. Learning by gamification allows the learner to see that they are making progress by moving forward and that leads to a competent feeling (Deterding, 2013). When used, gamification can connect learners who may be bored and engage them in the learning. Participants will be able to use the skills learned and incorporate them into the environment immediately. The constant feedback provided by gamification allows them to adjust their behavior accordingly (Kapp, 2012).

When thinking of using gamification for the employees of an organization, it is easy to think that there would be a considerable cost to the implementation. It has been suggested that

instead of using games that require a lot of programming and planning, the organization could instead think of ways to improve employee engagement by developing a game where the user is voluntarily participating, receiving constant feedback (moving from level to level successfully), and has goals that they need to achieve in order to be successful (Zinger, 2014).

Zinger (2014) shares the SIMPLE acronym which shares six characteristics for gamification to be engaging. Those six characteristics are as follow:

S = sustainable

I = immersing

M = meaningful

P = playful/pleasurable

L = lucrative

E = engaging (p.33)

Gamification is a tool for retention of materials learned due to the repetitious behavior of the learning techniques which in turn boosts learning and can ultimately affect attitudes and values (Leaman, 2014). Working with mostly Millennials this form of delivery would be accepted very openly and the learner would benefit from the experience.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as “the level of contentment employees feel about their work, which can affect performance” (Boundless, 2015). According to a 2013 survey conducted by the SHRM, compensation is mainly the top priority in job satisfaction. However, the study also highlights the fact that relationships and communication with their co-workers and supervisors also played an important role in their satisfaction (SHRM, 2014). Communication, constant feedback on their on the job performance, and rewards and recognition were also important

factors in the satisfaction of their jobs. Table 2 shows the results of the survey which was conducted with a pool of 600 respondents. SHRM (2014) identified 25 aspects of a job and participants were asked what made their jobs satisfying.

Table 2

Job Satisfaction Aspects Rates as “Very Important” by Employees

Job Aspect	Percentage
Compensation/pay, overall (1)	60%
Job security (2)	59%
Opportunities to use your skills/abilities (2)	59%
Relationship with immediate supervisor (3)	54%
Benefits, the overall package (4)	53%
Organization’s financial stability (4)	53%
The work itself (5)	51%
Communication between employees and senior management (6)	50%
Management’s recognition of employee job performance (6)	50%
Feeling safe in the work environment (7)	49%
Autonomy and independence (8)	47%
Overall corporate culture (9)	45%
Meaningfulness of job (10)	41%
Relationships with coworkers (10)	41%
Career advancement opportunities (11)	40%
Job specific training (11)	40%
Organization’s commitment to professional development (12)	36%
Contribution of work to organization’s business goals (13)	35%
Career development opportunities (14)	33%
Variety of work (14)	33%
Organization’s commitment to corporate social responsibility (15)	31%
Organization’s commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce (16)	28%
Paid general training and tuition reimbursement programs (17)	27%
Networking (18)	26%
Organization’s commitment to a ‘green’ workplace (19)	22%

Note: Adapted from Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2014)

The third and fourth most important aspects were opportunities to use their skills/abilities, followed directly by their relationship with the immediate supervisor. This would lend itself directly to the fact that open, constant communication is of vital importance in employees work.

The 2013 survey also measured the overall job satisfaction of employees from 2002 to 2013. The results are below.

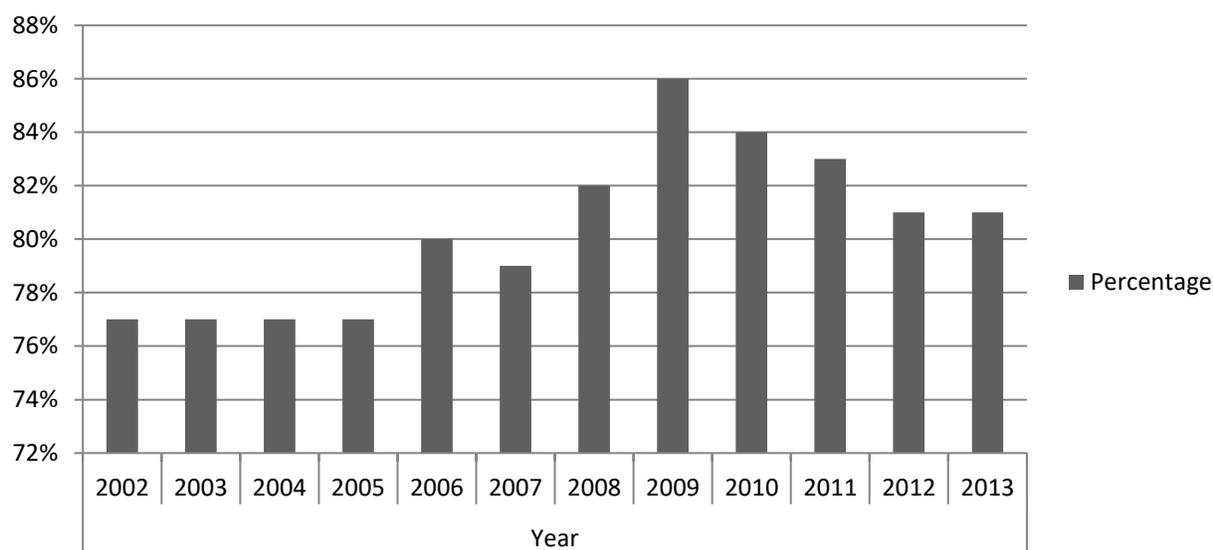


Figure 1. Employee job satisfaction 2002-2013. Adapted from employee job satisfaction and engagement (SHRM, 2014).

Compensation/pay remained at the top of the list as “very important” by 60% of employees in 2013 after being ranked sixth only a few years prior (SHRM, 2014). The post-recession response comes from frozen salaries to control costs and due to a slowing economy. During this time, job security and skills/abilities moved up the ranks to 59% in importance.

According to Baysinger, Brummel, Dalal, and LeBreton (2012), while job satisfaction is an important attitude in the workplace, it has eroded over the past few decades. It has been

overshadowed by other attitudes such as organizational commitment and most recently employee engagement.

Employee Engagement

Happy employees are much different than engaged employees. Happy employees may show up for their daily jobs and do the work they are assigned, only to be more than happy to watch the clock and punch out at precisely 5:00 p.m. (Kruse, 2012). An engaged employee will work their shift, and if needed continue to work until the daily task is done for the good of the organization as a whole. Employee engagement is the “motional commitment that an employee has to the organization and its goals (Kruse, 2012). Engaged employees use discretionary effort in order for the organizations to successfully reach their goals.

In recent years the focus in most organizations has been toward human capital and investing in employee’s needs. According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) there are three approaches to employee engagement. First, performance feedback, support and recognition from supervisors and coworkers, as well as opportunities for learning and development are all motivating factors for employee engagement. Second, the individual feels a special connection to the organization and gets satisfaction out of going beyond the expected work required. They have a vested interest in the organization and will exceed what is expected of them. Third, engagement is independent from the job; instead the employee feels a true commitment to the organization. They have a positive, motivated feeling versus facing the fear of burn-out from their work (Baker & Schaufeli, 2008).

Engaged employees help organizations attract talent while disengaged employees have a negative affect due to high absenteeism, and more frequent recruitment and training needs caused by a higher rate of turnover (Andrew & Sofian, 2012). Kahn (2012) was the first

researcher to point out that engagement means “the psychological presence of an employee when executing his organizational task” (p. 21). Another definition of employee engagement comes from Harter et al., (2002) as “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for work” (p.55).

Employees who are engaged in their work are main contributors to the positive bottom line of an organization (Andrew & Sofian, 2012). They are better able to serve clients, which generates a loyal customer base, ultimately affecting the profits of that organization. Employees will invest in and provide discretionary effort if they feel that the organization is supporting them by providing resources in order for them to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. There has to be reciprocity in the arrangement (Andrew & Sofian, 2012). Employees who are supported from coworkers and supervisors are more apt to support the organization and be more engaged in their roles. Figure 2 best describes how individual factors and work outcomes relate to one another in employee engagement.

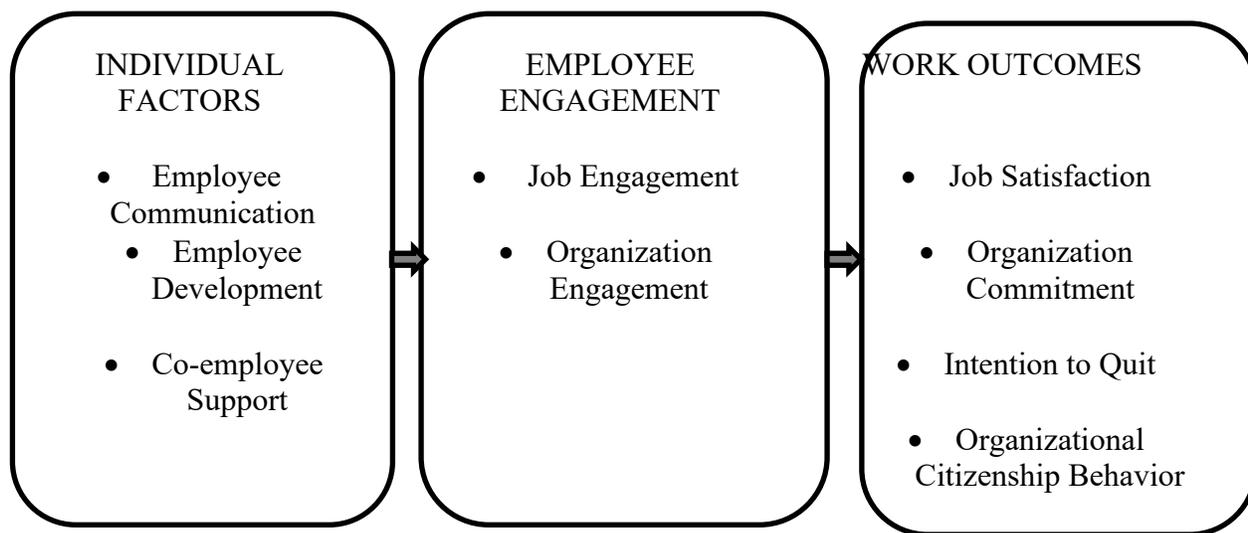


Figure 2. Research model: Individual factors of employee engagement and work outcomes.

Adapted from Aon Hewitt individual factors and work outcomes of employee engagement, 2015.

In Aon Hewitt's 2015 report, they highlight the fact that the best companies:

Build and sustain a culture of engagement, led by CEO's who understand that employee engagement is not just a 'nice to have' but critical to achieving business results. Leaders in these organizations also understand that employee engagement is primarily their responsibility (p. 1).

They point out that there are four important stakeholders involved in the process; Human Resources, people managers, the employee, and senior leadership.

Historically human resources and the individual were responsible for the employee engagement; however, from studying best practices it focuses more on the leadership of an organization. They are able to provide skills, empowerment and drive accountability for the employee's engagement (Aon Hewitt, 2015). Five ingredients to building a culture of engagement in any organization are recommended.

The first recommendation is building engaging leadership: Leaders who expect engagement to be a part of the way of life in their organization, who practice it, and require it from their employees will create the culture of engagement (Aon Hewitt, 2015). There are also several attributes of the leader which are desired in order for them to engage others. Some of those desired attributes are; positive attitude, drive, liveliness, sensitivity, and cooperativeness.

The second ingredient is to build trusting relationships with your employees: Tell employees what is expect from them and what they will receive in return for meeting their expectations (Aon Hewitt, 2015). Rewards and recognition for top performers are motivating and encourage engagement in the employee. It is important to grow talent within the organization. Each individual in the organization should be encouraged to grow and develop

themselves in the organization Aon Hewitt, 2015). This typically was the role of the direct supervisor, but the shift is moving toward the individual in seeking their own career path.

It is also key to enable engagement and performance: Aon Hewitt (2015) discovered that the trend for engagement was on the rise, but, unfortunately enabling resources and programs were on the decline. Companies need to go back to the basics and fix those things that may be broken that allow engagement to happen. Having an environment where processes and unclear expectations are present will hinder the positive growth in employee engagement.

Finally, it is important to focus on the individual (Aon Hewitt, 2015). Finally, with the support of the senior management, individuals need to be given enough autonomy to create and foster that culture of engagement. Feedback and open communication will allow this to occur (Aon Hewitt, 2015).

The bottom line in all of this is the importance of leadership support, and open lines of communication. Feedback and rewards and recognition will go a long way to foster and support a culture of engagement in an organization.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization can be described as a process where new employees learn to develop attitudes and behaviors necessary to function as a full-fledged member of an organization (Antonacopoulou, 2010). In other words, organizational socialization is really the employee working closely with others to learn the ropes of the organization. This involves both formal and informal socialization.

There are six tactics that organizations use to structure the learning experience of the new employee (van Maanen & Schein, 1979). These six tactics fall under one of two methods. The first is institutionalized socialization, more controlled by the organization and more formal. The

second is individualized socialization, more informal and controlled by the individual. A combination of the two of these would be most effective in becoming a member of the whole (van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

There are six tactics for socialization (Antonacopoulou, 2010). The first tactic is whether an employee should be socialized collectively or individually. Next, formal vs. informal looks at whether the new employee is separated from the current employees during the socialization (Antonacopoulou, 2010). Sequential vs random looks at how an employee is made aware of the sequence of socialization events. Next, the fixed vs. variable tactic addresses whether the new employee is restricted to a strict time-table to complete socialization or if it flexible (Antonacopoulou, 2010). The fifth tactic is serial vs. disjunctive which looks at whether the new employee has access to others to act as a role model for them. The final tactic is investiture vs. divestiture which looks at whether or not the new employee receives positive social support from others in the organization (Antonacopoulou, 2010).

Organizational socialization can make the transition into a new workplace full of ambiguity and uncertainty. Tang, Liu, Oh, and Weitz (2014) focused on three self-initiated tactics for the new employee to focus on when socializing themselves to an organization. The first is observation which is one of the primary ways people learn. They can improve their own performance by watching and comparing themselves to others around them. The behaviors that they are displaying will result in either reward or punishment. This tactic is more passive than the others (Tang et al., 2014). The next is inquiry which is where the new employee asks questions directly to their co-workers to get information needed to successfully fulfill their role (Tang et al., 2014). This may be considered risky since the employee may seem that they are uncertain about their jobs in front of clients or other co-workers. The final tactic is networking

which is important to the new employee because it establishes a system of information for them (Tang et al., 2014). The more networking the new employee is able to do, the more connected they feel. This tactic takes more time than the other two however. Developing relationships is a process (Tang et al., 2014).

Organizational socialization occurs not only when a new employee enters the organization but also when an employee changes roles within that organization. This is important to keep in mind, especially in larger organizations.

Conclusion

In summary, the success of an orientation/onboarding program entails much more than just filling out paperwork. The new employee is being introduced to the organization by assimilation, integration and engaging in the organization's culture and their specific role in the organization.

An effective program would entail preparation, organization, collaboration, adequate resources, effective implementation, continuous evaluation and making changes when necessary. Combining a formal orientation as well as onboarding program will give the new employee an experience where they feel welcomed, a part of the team, and an important contributor to the organization's overall goals.

Chapter III: Methodology

Grand Bluff Running had rapid growth within the first few months in business and needed to hire additional employees. There was no formalized onboarding program in place thus making it difficult for employees to have the knowledge and understanding of the guidelines and standard operating procedures in order to make the store and its operations successful. After research and studying best practices by other successful organizations who have implemented onboarding programs was determined that a formalized onboarding program was needed to provide Grand Bluff Running with a competitive advantage over other competitors. An interview with the owner, other business Human Resource employees, and a study of best practices was done in order to provide Grand Bluff Running with a program that will suit the needs of the organization. These interviews were an effective method for providing the organization with the tools necessary to develop and create an appropriate program for their needs.

Instrumentation

In order to gather the information that was necessary to fill the needs of Grand Bluff Running, the owner was interviewed. The interview questions are in Appendix A. The owner was able to identify the needs of the organization, the gaps that need to be filled, as well as the current status of their informal onboarding procedures being used currently.

As a guideline to follow, it was important to speak with and interview other Human Resource business leaders whose organizations have successfully implemented onboarding training programs for their employees. The organizations were identified by identifying organizations that are known for their effective onboarding and training programs. By researching and learning the methods of what works for these organizations, valuable

information was used in the development and implementation of the program for Grand Bluff Running. The information provided by these leaders laid the groundwork for the needs by the organization and developing an onboarding program.

Study of Best Practices

A study of best practices in the area of onboarding/orientation training programs allowed for appropriate delivery methods, as well as a guide for material creation for new employees. These best practices were researched from a variety of businesses varying in size and industry. This allowed for a comprehensive look at all best practices being used currently.

Data Collection Procedures

The Grand Bluff Running store owner was a face-to-face interview. A list of questions was emailed to the chosen organizations and the participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire. Each of the respondents was told that their information would be kept confidential and that their organizations would not be identified in the research. Results of the survey are in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

The data compiled from the interviews with both the owner of Grand Bluff Running, as well as other business leaders were compiled to create the format of an onboarding training program for Grand Bluff Running. By comparing and contrasting the best practices, and needs of Grand Bluff Running, a comprehensive onboarding program was developed. The answers to the questions were compiled and the answers were prioritized in the order of importance identified by each of the organizations. These benchmarks were instrumental in the development of the onboarding program for Grand Bluff Running.

Limitations

Due to the nature of the questions, several organizations refused to share information about their onboarding program. The two organizations that agreed to participate and shared the information they could provide for the study. The Human Resource contacts that were made were the only individuals that were able to provide information regarding their programs therefore the lack of information from actual employees did not give a complete picture of how effective the programs are in the actual work setting.

Another limitation to the study was to determine the effectiveness that leadership of each of the organizations had on the onboarding programs who participated in the survey. The leadership in each of the organizations were not willing to talk about the programs that they have in place. Therefore, the only information that was captured was given from the Human Resource representative who designed and are currently implementing the programs.

Summary

Although there were limitations to the study, it was determined that there was sufficient information that was collected and provided from the participants that it was feasible to create an initial onboarding program for Grand Bluff Running.

Chapter IV: Results

Grand Bluff Running, after seeing rapid growth in their business within the first few months in business, identified the need to create an onboarding/orientation program for new hires, as well as employees who were brought into the organization previously due to the rapid growth. After a literature review and a study of best practices from other organizations with successful onboarding programs, data was collected, and elements of those best practices were identified as being helpful in creating a program customized for Grand Bluff Running. With the implementation of a formalized onboarding program it could be determined that employee satisfaction, length of time for integration, as well as inclusion and immersion into the culture of the organization would be effective.

Item Analysis

The data that was collected from each of the questionnaires was compiled and compared to the current informal practices of Grand Bluff Running. The following is an analysis of the results. Details from the survey questions are in Appendix B.

Structure

The three organizations that were given the questionnaires as benchmark companies included Grand Bluff Running, one small family-run organization, and one large organization with multiple locations. The organizations in the study were from the retail, restaurant/hospitality, and one location of a grocery chain. The businesses provided information on their onboarding program. Specific data on demographics and information on their onboarding and orientation programs is available in Appendix B. Some of the main differences in each of the organizations was the amount of time spent on onboarding and the formality, or informality, of the programs. Grand Bluff Running had an informal orientation program that

lasted one to two weeks but there was no formal structure in place. One of the organizations in the study provided both a structured formal orientation program and onboarding program which lasted 90 days, while the other had a structured orientation program but no onboarding program in place.

Content and Practices

The results of this study showed that all three of the companies had very similar practices in place for the onboarding/orientation of their new employees. The largest of the companies surveyed had the most comprehensive and most formal program for their new hires. Resources were more readily available to them so they were able to create a more robust program. Grand Bluff Running however did not have several elements in place in order to assimilate the employees into their role effectively. Many aspects were identified and would be beneficial to add to the onboarding program for Grand Bluff Running and are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Onboarding Practices

Onboarding Practices	Frequency (n=3)	Best Practice for Consideration	Include in Grand Bluff Running program
<i>Welcome and Introductions</i>			
Greeting	3	Yes	Current practice
Tour	3	Yes	Current practice
Celebration	2	Yes	Current practice
General introductions	3	Yes	Current practice
<i>Company Profile</i>			
Company history	3	Yes	Current practice
Organizational culture	2	Yes	Yes
Describe products, services	3	Yes	Current practice
<i>Administrative Tasks</i>			
Equipment	3	Yes	Yes
Essential resources	3	Yes	Yes
<i>Legal Requirements</i>			
Forms	3	Yes	Current practice
Company policies	3	Yes	Current practice
<i>Workplace Competencies</i>			
Job description	3	Yes	Current practice
Expectations and performance standards	2	Yes	Yes
Identify ongoing training opportunities	1	Yes	Yes
<i>Socialization</i>			
Network opportunities	2	Yes	Yes
Mentor	2	Yes	Yes

Delivery Method

As the survey of the organization's showed, a blend of delivery methods would seem appropriate for the needs of Grand Bluff Running. Storytelling, hands-on, online learning, interactive activities and role-playing would all be appropriate for the delivery of the onboarding training.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

The following open-ended questions were asked of each of the survey participants to gain more information on their current orientation/onboarding programs. The responses are summarized below.

Is your management team actively involved in the orientation/onboarding process?

All of the organizations have management personnel that are actively involved in the process at some point during the timeframe that they have set for their employees. For all of them, the management was involved within the first two days of the new employees' employment. They all stated that having management involved in the orientation/onboarding was important in the process to show the new hires the value that they bring to the organization. The management teams participate in various capacities including a welcome, employee lunches, hands-on training, and in some cases, they participated from the start to the end of the orientation/onboarding process.

What, if anything, would you like to see changes with your orientation/onboarding process? One of the respondent's stated that while management was involved, they would like them to be more involved. They all stated that technology improvements would also be beneficial in accelerating or enhancing the onboarding process. Time and resources were also a factor that all of the organizations stated as being something that they would like more of to better serve the new employees.

Do you feel that there are any barriers that need to be addressed in the orientation/onboarding process of new employees in your organization? Time and resources were common themes for all organizations wishing that they had more access to both. One organization stated that, due to their size, they would like to have the ability to have dedicated

trainers to onboard their new employees. By having dedicated trainers, it would allow management to be able to attend to day to day operations while the new employees are being integrated into the organization. Orientation/onboarding is taking place, but it tends to put a strain on the employees/management who are also running the daily operations.

Summary

The purpose of the surveys was to do a comparison of Grand Bluff Running and their current process and to benchmark against other organizations. While there are some processes in place, this research will give Grand Bluff Running the information it needs to implement new practices into their orientation/onboarding program to better serve their employees.

Chapter V: Discussion

This study was comprised of a literature review on effective onboarding and orientation programs to decide on what would be most appropriate for the employees, both new and seasoned, at Grand Bluff Running. By having an onboarding program that integrated the employees into the organization the needs of the employees can be satisfied as they enter their roles. During the literature review topics were reviewed including the difference between orientation and onboarding, training, gamification, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational socialization. A survey was created and distributed to three organizations of various sizes and the data was collected in order to develop the most appropriate onboarding program for Grand Bluff Running.

Conclusions

The survey provided valuable information for Grand Bluff Running to develop an onboarding training program that fits the needs of the incoming, as well as seasoned employees. By having a formalized training program all onboarding needs of the employees of the organization are satisfied. It was necessary to do research to identify the most appropriate training elements for the needs of the organization. The onboarding tools that are now available to the employees will provide beneficial resources as they enter and continue to acclimate to the organization.

Recommendations

The results of this study provided the most effective methods of training and delivery of the onboarding process. In comparing the information provided by the literature reviews and the results and responses from the surveys it shows that simply filling out paperwork and informal learning, a formalized onboarding program will be beneficial in integration into the organizations

culture. By incorporating initial introductions, understanding company resources, socialization, completion of necessary paperwork, learning job-specific responsibilities, company mission and vision, and all levels of employees will benefit. All of the elements combined create an onboarding experience that will engage the employees from the first day throughout their employment.

These elements were not in place initially at Grand Bluff Running but will enhance the employee experience by formalizing the onboarding training program. Based on the research and results of the survey an onboarding model was created which will incorporate all the best practices shared from other organizations and the research conducted. The onboarding model can be found in Appendix C.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Number of Employees: _____

Number of Managers/Leaders: _____

Number of locations: _____

1. In your organization, what methods of delivery are used in order to orient/onboard new employees? (Select all that apply)
 - _____ Hands on face to face training
 - _____ Unstructured orientation (materials distributed, verbal instruction)
 - _____ Structured orientation program
 - _____ Structured orientation followed by formalized onboarding program
 - _____ Other: Please explain _____

2. How soon after an employee begins in their new position are they required to attend the orientation/onboarding program?
 - _____ First day
 - _____ Within the first week
 - _____ Within the first month
 - _____ Other

3. How long is the formalized *orientation* program?
 - _____ <1 day _____ 1 day _____ 2 days _____ 3-5 days
 - _____ 1-2 weeks _____ Other

4. How long is the formalized *onboarding* program?
 - _____ <1 day _____ 1 day _____ 2 days _____ 3-5 days
 - _____ 1-2 weeks _____ Other

5. What delivery methods are used in the orientation/onboarding process? (select all that apply)
 - _____ Face-to-face class setting with an instructor
 - _____ Online – Self-paced
 - _____ Online – with facilitator/instructor
 - _____ Storytelling (stories or examples of expected behavior)
 - _____ Gamification
 - _____ One-on-one
 - _____ Mentorship
 - _____ Self-guided (Employee reviews materials/binder on their own)
 - _____ Other

6. Please select the items that are covered in the orientation/onboarding program.
 - _____ Organization history
 - _____ Organization mission/vision/core values/culture

- _____ Policies/procedures
- _____ Benefits
- _____ Customer service expectations
- _____ Facility tour
- _____ Departmental position training
- _____ Other _____

7. Is your entire management team actively involved in the orientation/onboarding process?

If so, in what ways do they participate? Please describe:

8. What, if anything, would you like to see changed with your orientation/onboarding process? Please describe:

9. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being least effective and 5 being most effective) how do you feel the orientation/onboarding process at your organization is effective in assisting the new employee?

1 2 3 4 5

10. Do you feel that there are any barriers that need to be addressed in the orientation/onboarding process of new employees in your own organization?

Appendix B: Compiled Interview Questions

Demographic Data from Grand Bluff Running and Benchmark Contacts

	<i>Number of Employees</i>	<i>Number of Managers/Leaders</i>	<i>Number of Locations</i>	<i>Type of Industry</i>
Grand Bluff Running	5	2	1	Retail
Company 1	250	20	1	Retail
Company 2	42	16	2	Restaurant

Summary of Interview Questions by Company

	<i>Grand Bluff Running</i>	<i>Company 1</i>	<i>Company 2</i>
<i>Methods of delivery to orient/onboard new employees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands on face to face training • Unstructured orientation • Structured orientation program • Structured orientation followed by formalized onboarding • Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands on face to face training • Unstructured orientation • Structured orientation program • Structured orientation followed by formalized onboarding • Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands on face to face training • Unstructured orientation • Structured orientation program • Structured orientation followed by formalized onboarding • Other:
<i>Timeframe of employee to attend orientation/onboarding program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day • Within the first week • Within the first month • Other • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day • Within the first week • Within the first month • Other • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day • Within the first week • Within the first month • Other •
<i>Length of ORIENTATION program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks

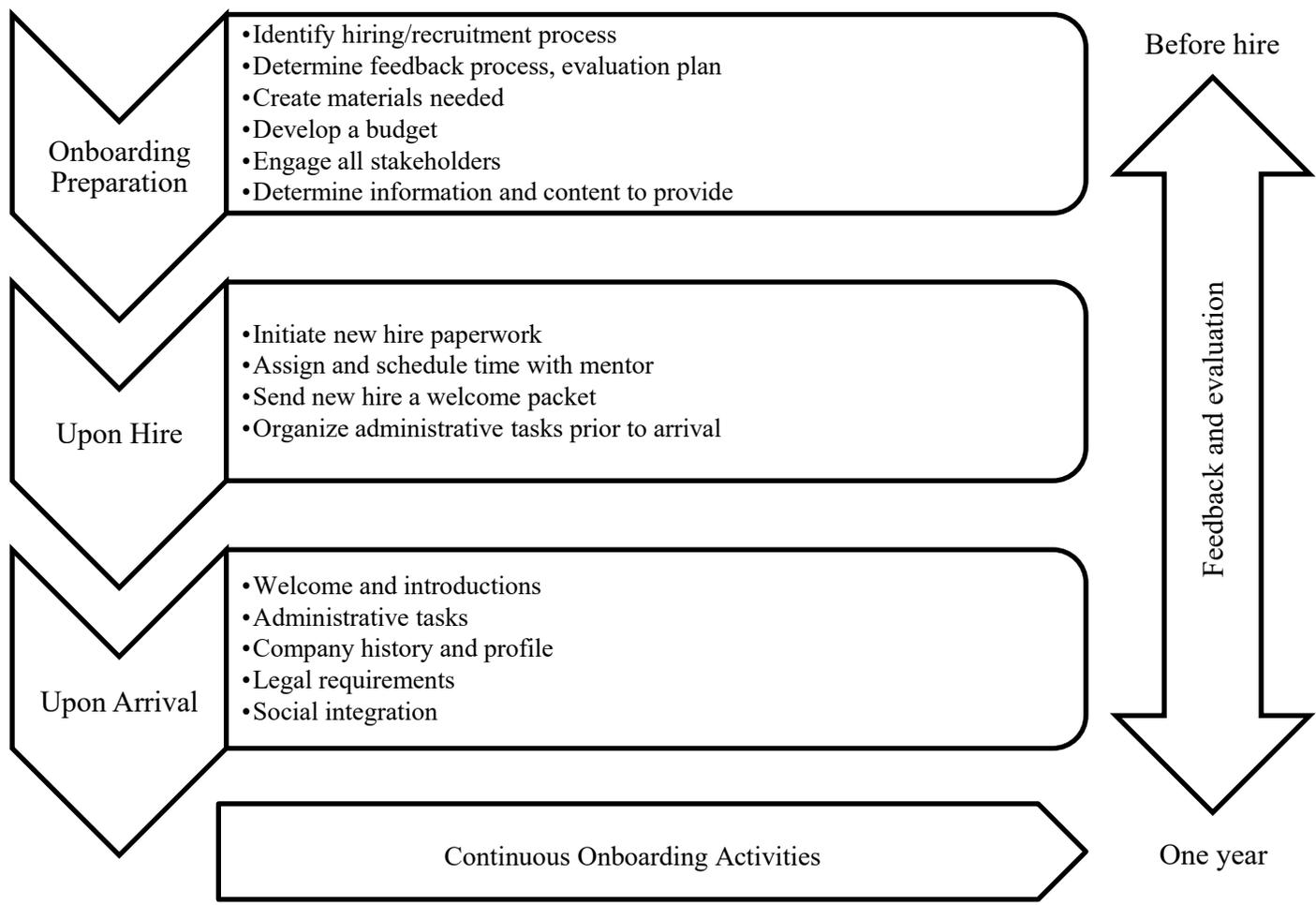
	<i>Grand Bluff Running</i>	<i>Company 1</i>	<i>Company 2</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other
<i>Length of ONBOARDING program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks • Other – none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks • Other – 90 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 1 day • 1 day • 2 days • 3 – 5 days • 1 – 2 weeks • Other - none
<i>Delivery methods used in orientation/onboard ing process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face • Online – self paced • Online – instructor • Storytelling • Gamification • One-on-one • Mentorship • Self-guided • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face • Online – self paced • Online – instructor • Storytelling • Gamification • One-on-one • Mentorship • Self-guided • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face • Online – self paced • Online – instructor • Storytelling • Gamification • One-on-one • Mentorship • Self-guided • Other
<i>Items covered in orientation/onboard ing program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization history • Organization mission/vision/core values/culture • Policies/procedures • Benefits • Customer service expectations • Facility tour • Departmental position training • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization history • Organization mission/vision/core values/culture • Policies/procedures • Benefits • Customer service expectations • Facility tour • Departmental position training • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization history • Organization mission/vision/core values/culture • Policies/procedures • Benefits • Customer service expectations • Facility tour • Departmental position training • Other

	<i>Grand Bluff Running</i>	<i>Company 1</i>	<i>Company 2</i>
<i>Is the management team actively involved in orientation/onboarding process?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
<i>If yes, in what ways do they participate</i>	Responsible for all aspects of training.	Greet employees on first day, complete training checklist by 60 days, review in 90 days.	Management is responsible for specific tasks.
<i>What changes would you make to your process. Describe.</i>	Structured onboarding handbook	Combine training checklist and 90 day review	More time for management to do one-on-one training
<i>On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-least, 5-most) how do you feel the orientation/onboarding process at your is effective?</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>Do you feel that there are any barriers that need to be addressed in the orientation/onboarding process in your organization?</i>	Time and resources available	A mentor program would be beneficial	Would like to assign specific trainers to new employees.

Appendix C: Grand Bluff Running Formal Onboarding/Orientation Model

The model below is a culmination of best practices from the organizations' studied and the evaluation of specific needs identified for the new, and current, employees of Grand Bluff Running.

Grand Bluff Running Onboarding/Orientation Model



Preparation

Many factors needed to be considered when developing the onboarding plan for Grand Bluff Running to ensure the new hires, as well as existing employees are given the best opportunity and resources to make their employment successful.

1. Identify core competencies and desired traits for new hires into the assigned role.
Work with local partners to identify qualified candidates for recruitment.
2. Determine acceptable levels of performance based off of the core competencies for each role in the organization.
3. Determine need and create all necessary materials for employees.
4. Develop a budget for the program based on staffing projections and needs. This should include, but is not limited to, all materials, uniforms, business cards, or meals which may be a part of the onboarding program.
5. Engage all stakeholders in the onboarding process. Involve current employees, partners, and investors.
6. Determine what information and content should be provided.

Upon hire

1. New hire paperwork should be prepared ahead of time as much as possible. This should include any tax documents, confidentiality agreements, or any other pertinent paperwork that will be needed to begin employment.
2. Talk with current employee(s) who will act as a mentor to the new hire. Make sure they are comfortable with the role and understand their responsibilities.

3. Before the new employee starts in their role, send them a welcome packet with important information needed before their first day. Dress code, job descriptions, parking information, and arrival time would all be included in this packet.
4. Organize any remaining administrative tasks needed before the employee's first day.

Upon arrival

Content and responsibilities for Onboarding: Day 1 through Year 1

Onboarding Content and Responsibilities	Day 1	Week 1-2	Within 30 Days	Within 60-90 Days	6-12 Months
<i>Welcome and Introductions</i>					
Greeting	Owner, all employees, customers				
Tour	Store, office, kitchen, storage, trash, restrooms				
Celebration	Lunch with owner, gift	Lunch with team members	Recognition of contributions to organization	Recognition of contributions to organization	Annual employee appreciation
General introductions	Owner, all employees, customers	Community and business partners, vendors	Community and business partners, vendors	Community and business partners, vendors	
<i>Company Profile</i>					
Company history	Storytelling and background information	Storytelling and background information			
Organizational culture	Describe "how things are" in the company, storytelling	Reinforce through examples and actions	Reinforce through examples and actions	Reinforce through examples and actions	

Onboarding Content and Responsibilities	Day 1	Week 1-2	Within 30 Days	Within 60-90 Days	Within 6-12 Months
Describe products, services	Discussion with owner, team members	Share vendor information	Continuous discussion on new products, services	Continuous discussion on new products, services	Continuous discussion on new products, services
<i>Administrative Tasks</i>					
Equipment	Register, POS system, phone	On-site training equipment			
Essential resources	Email, passwords, business cards, name tag, uniform	Location of additional resources			
<i>Legal Requirements</i>					
Forms	All tax and legal documents, new hire packet, final paperwork				
Company policies	New hire packet		Follow up on policies for understanding		
<i>Workplace Competencies</i>					
Job Description	In employee packet	Review job description with owner	Hands-on training, comfort in position	Independently working, support as needed	
Expectation and Performance standards	In employee packet	Review with manager, discuss	Establish goals and provide feedback	90 day review	Annual review

Identify ongoing training opportunities	Identify areas of need with manager	Provide training resources as identified	Review at 90 day review	Assess training success at annual review
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Socialization

Network opportunities	Introductions	Invite to key meetings	Invite to key meetings	Invite to key meetings	Invite to key meetings
Mentor	Introductions	Answer questions, give guidance	Answer questions, give guidance	Support	Support

Methods of Content Delivery

In the retail environment at Grand Bluff Running it would be best to use a blended approach to deliver the many components of the onboarding/orientation process. Following are possible methods that may be used to best integrate the employees into the organization.

- Storytelling would be an effective way to communicate the history, culture, vision, mission and values of the organization.
- Hands-on training will be valuable in product delivery and knowledge.
- Online research and discovery of products could be valuable for understanding the needs of the customers.

Evaluation of Onboarding Effectiveness

In order to measure the effectiveness of the onboarding process it is important to have a method to collect feedback on a regular basis. There are methods to measure the effectiveness of the program as stated below.

Constant feedback

- Observe and address any signs of confusion or misunderstanding of the day to day processes.
- Ask how the employee is doing and be supportive when feedback is given.
- Set up regular check-ins with the employee to ensure understanding and address any questions the employee may have.

Measurable metrics

- New hire satisfaction rates

- Average time for employee to perform at a level of independence.
- Turn-over rates of new hires.