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By Trixie Ortiz

“Onboarding – A Journey to Staff Retention”

The onboarding of a new employee is much more than just learning where to park, where to clock in, and where to sit. Onboarding is a journey—an important piece of your employee experience.

It's about social connection. It's about helping new employees become productive team members. And it's about fulfilling the promises you made when you recruited them. When the onboarding process goes smoothly, employees will feel a sense of belonging and understand their role within your organization's success.

According to Gallup.com -- 70% of employees who had exceptional onboarding experiences say they have "the best possible job." These employees are also 2.6 times as likely to be extremely satisfied with their workplace -- and consequently, far more likely to stay. Simply put, to get exceptional employee outcomes, you need exceptional onboarding.

A few tips to consider when developing a successful onboarding process, which should include a checklist that you can use to guide you through the process:

PRE-ONBOARDING

Step 1: Send a welcome email for your new employee. Letter should include:

- Starting day information (date, time and location)
- First-day schedule
- Documents to bring (for example: social security, bank account details, etc.)
- Instructions on how and where to arrive (for example: best route, parking etc.)
- Dress code
- Contact person (in case they have any questions prior to their start date).
- Attach HR documents, etc.

Step 2: Prepare new employees' office, supplies, staffing support, and equipment.

Step 3: Begin the credentialing process (at least 6-months prior to start date, if possible).

ORIENTATION

During their first week on the job, new employees will need your support to learn all the basics of their new role and your company culture. This is typically a one-to-three-day event:

- Focuses on organization's mission, structure and policies
- Includes review of employee handbook
- Tour facility, office space, etc.
- Facilitates completion of any outstanding payroll/benefits paperwork
- Includes scheduled time for software training

ONBOARDING

This is a systemic process that can last three to 12-months, depending on the organization. A long-term onboarding program will cultivate a long-term relationship and foster a feeling of belonging.

- Consider assigning a mentor or buddy
- Ask for feedback on orientation/onboarding process (SurveyMonkey)
- Check with your employee at 3-6-12 month intervals.

“Remember, when you show you're interested in and care about the people you hire, they will have a higher engagement than if you ignore them or assume they're doing OK. It is important to periodically touch base with your new hires, asking about their experience, or even just remembering their name and saying hi when you pass in the hallway may help with retention and engagement, which is the whole point of creating a high-quality onboarding experience.”

As always, please feel free to reach out to Trixie Ortiz, Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH), Program Manager – Recruitment & Retention at ortizt@ohsu.edu or (971) 235-6827 for assistance with recruitment and retention program.