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Unlock the power of onboarding with data

Does your onboarding experience measure up? How would you know? If you're thinking about overhauling your onboarding experience in light of COVID-19, because it's too compliance focused, or simply because it's not delivering any real business benefits, data is key. It will help you understand what works and what doesn't, add credibility to your business case, support conversations with senior stakeholders and provide a benchmark for your new experience. Unlock the power of your onboarding with data.

This document will:

- Help you understand the importance of data in onboarding
- Outline the many different forms of onboarding data available to you
- Give you actionable takeaways to improve your organisation's onboarding experience



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A successful onboarding strategy can have a huge impact on everything from engagement, performance and retention, to administrative costs and eNPS scores. But how do you measure the impact your onboarding is having when there are so many factors involved? And, how do you measure impact in a way that allows you to continuously improve your experience and drive real success?

What do we mean by success?

To some degree, this will be subjective. When you're looking to change your onboarding strategy, whether it's an entire overhaul of process and technology, or just a few important tweaks, you'll have key objectives you'll want to address. Perhaps you feel that first year retention needs to be higher. Or that there are certain areas of the business where engagement could be substantially improved. Maybe you think that employees' productivity during their first few months could be enhanced. Either way, once your objectives are set, you can devise ways to measure what success looks like.

Data, data, data - the more the merrier

The most meaningful data is comparative data. Which means **the more detailed the data, and the longer the time you have collected it for, the more useful it will be.** It will help you to pinpoint what areas need improvement and define what initiatives and/or changes in the process will have the biggest impact - all of which will help you to achieve your objectives. But what form should this data collection take?

Some HR data you may already have, such as dropout and attrition rates, performance rates, and time to competence of all new starters. Engagement surveys and eNPS surveys are also great fountains of information as long as they include the right questions. Then there is the information you need to gather from your new starters themselves - a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data is essential - to really pinpoint strengths and weaknesses.

So start by asking new starters to rate their onboarding by a number of factors. How useful was the onboarding portal, how helpful was their line manager, did they feel ready and prepared for day one, was the experience inclusive, for example. You might also want them to score things such as how engaged they felt to the likelihood they would recommend working at the company to a friend, or stay with you long-term. We'd recommend including free form answers as well, so people can make suggestions about new ways of doing things - or explain exactly why something isn't working.



Onboarding surveys – start now

Of course, onboarding surveys are the best way to get that data, enabling you to pinpoint what's working well, what needs improvement, and where there may be gaps which you've not even considered. **The most important piece of advice we can give you is start now** – the more MI you have, the more accurate your findings will be.

In a recent onboarding roundtable discussion hosted by CA3, Ascential, the specialist global information company, shared that they find their surveys invaluable for identifying themes, trends, and best practice. For example, their surveys have revealed that employees who had contact with their managers before day one, a clear induction in place, and who had 1:1 time with their brand or functional MD – no matter how junior – showed significantly higher levels of employee engagement in their first 12 months. There's no real surprise here, but having data like this to prove it means you can drive change across the rest of your business and continually improve your onboarding results.

Include a 'length of service' field in your employee surveys

Chances are you already push an employee survey out each year (or possibly more often), but can you break the results down by length or service? If not, this is an important filter to add. It will allow you to see how your new hires feel about the business and how they compare to others who have been with you longer. Pinpoint the effects your onboarding initiative has had and even track if the people (who have gone through your new onboarding experience) stay more engaged with the business over time.

AstraZeneca break down data from their bi-annual pulse survey by length of service, enabling them to see the differences between people in their first year at AZ and those who have been at the company for longer. Where this indicates big differences – for example, in an understanding of the business vision and purpose – this information can be used to improve their onboarding experience. GE Healthcare (GEHC) do the same, and in a recent global employer brand index survey they were able to see that new hires were by far and away the most engaged people in the business (over medium and long tenure employees), and it was they who had helped drive a positive shift in global engagement in the last 12 months.



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Line manager data – track everything you can and introduce onboarding KPIs

You can have the best onboarding strategy in the world, but if your line managers don't help you drive it, it can seriously hamper its success. Collecting data on retention, engagement and performance by manager can reveal those who are achieving onboarding success – and those who are struggling to engage and develop their new people. If you have the right technology, you can also track how engaged they are at key moments in your onboarding journey and help build into daily practice behaviours that help set new hires up for success.

The process shouldn't be punitive though. It should be all about supporting managers to succeed, and sharing best practice on how to do so is a great way to do that. Ascential video interview any manager who has scored above 85% in their onboarding survey, asking them one simple question "What's your recipe for being a great leader?". That film is sent to all managers for them to see. It's a great strategy, as is the practice of linking success in onboarding to line managers' KPIs and bonuses. Metrics from HR data, along with direct feedback from new starters themselves, can be used to provide the necessary data.

GEHC have a dedicated portal (powered by Eli) for their People Leaders. It supports them through the onboarding process and ensures everything runs like clockwork. GEHC track engagement at every stage, using their MI to drive continuous improvement. It's one of the main reasons why they've seen a 24% decrease in first year attrition in less than two years – that's an estimated cost avoidance of over \$8m.

Don't just compete with yourself – benchmark externally

Success, of course, means improving on your organisation's performance. But it also means benchmarking yourself against other organisations – especially direct competitors. Regularly assessing your performance against others in the market, and keeping abreast of new developments, is key to continually drive success. Both Rolls-Royce, Aviva and GE Healthcare undertook large global benchmarking exercises, running focus groups with like-minded individuals from other global organisations, before defining their onboarding experience (and choosing Eli Onboarding as their onboarding partner).



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An introduction to Eli

Eli is award-winning onboarding technology that's driven by engagement. A personalised, digital environment that new starters can explore in their own time and their own way. Tech that starts conversations, builds connections, embeds values, empowers line managers, manages tasks and ultimately sets your new starters up for success. It's very engaging onboarding, and we've got the stats to prove it.

Watch our [lockdown demo](#).

Interest peaked?

If you'd like to find out more about Eli Onboarding and how it could revolutionise your onboarding experience, please get in touch. You can also follow us on LinkedIn for advice, articles, insight and more.

Get in touch - hello@elionboarding.com

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