ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ONBOARDING

flare

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Introduction

Within a business, onboarding is the introductory process used to help a client or employee get integrated into a working-relationship, understand how the business works, and frames their interaction with the business going forward. For HR professionals, employee onboarding is one of the most effective ways to increase employee retention. According to O.C. Tanner, 60% of employees are more likely to stay with a company for at least three years if they have a great onboarding experience.

Employees have less tolerance for unfulfillment and almost 90% decide to stay or leave within their first six months on the job. Onboarding plays a key role in setting expectations and goals for employees, as well as streamlining the tedious part of the new hire process — the paperwork. This ebook will help you uncover how you can improve your employee onboarding in the retail and hospitality industry, creating a seamless experience for new hires

ONBOARDING IN THE RETAIL & HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Within the retail and hospitality industry, employee onboarding directly affects the customer's experience, unlike other industries. Most employees have to interface with tens of customers daily. Each of these customers will form an opinion about the business, including if they will make a repeat purchase. If employees don't deliver superior customer service the business will take a hit. Compared to other industries, employees in retail and hospitality are expected to be a direct reflection of the company's image.

Onboarding in the retail and hospitality industry has to include the creation of a positive customer experience, especially in today's digital age where consumers heavily research every purchase that they make. They want more than just access to the product they desire, customers want to feel appreciated and valued during their purchasing experience. However, this begs the question, *how can businesses create a positive customer experience with a workforce that is transient, seasonal and is growing younger each year?*

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER MOST

The answer lies in the first impressions you create during your employee onboarding process. A positive onboarding experience will lead to a positive and motivated workforce, something that will save your business money in the long run. Each year in the US and UK, approximately $37 billion is spent to keep employees who don't understand their job.

What can your business do to make a positive first impression on employees during the onboarding process? Here are a few tips:

- Be efficient
  Ensure that everything is in place so that new hires can actually start working on the first day, instead of loitering. This would include company email addresses, ID cards and anything else they would need. Additionally, the best in class companies actually begin onboarding before the first day — emails that communicate what they should expect in their first week on the job are a great way to do this.

- Be friendly
  New employees should feel like they're joining a family, and the best way to

do this is to make them feel welcome during the onboarding process. Match them up with seasoned employees for a day or take them out to lunch, the possibilities are endless.

◀ Be personal

Getting to know your employees outside of who they are on their resumes is critical to creating a positive onboarding experience. Allowing them to share facts and details about their lives in the form of a questionnaire can help to match them with opportunities within the company that will further their personal goals, which boosts morale.

◀ Be fun

A great onboarding experience is more than just paperwork. Making the orientation process fun and engaging is a great way to make the experience more positive. Things like games and group activities can help new hires learn more about the company without all the boring and complicated frills.

Above everything else, staying connected during the onboarding process is important. It is imperative that you follow up with new hires during the first few weeks of their employment, ensuring that they're meeting onboarding objectives and settling into their new roles within the organization.
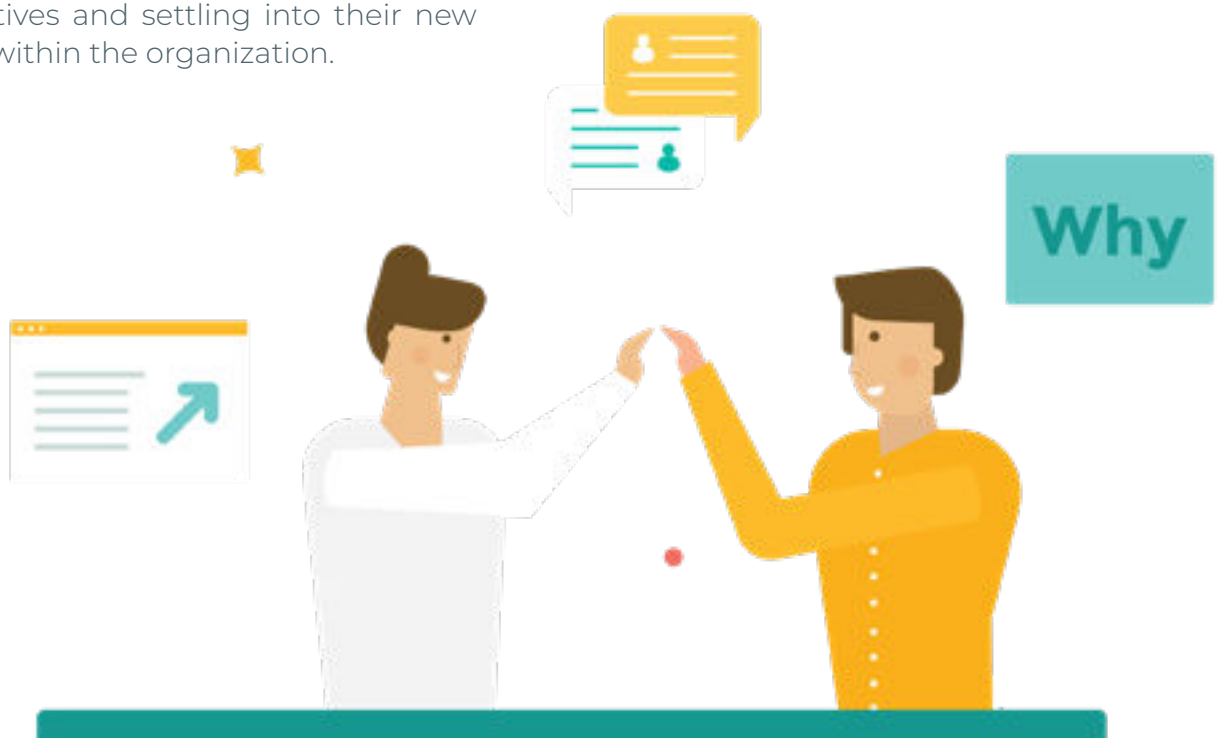
Onboarding Errors = Higher Turnover

If you take a look at companies with high turnover rates, you'll find that more often than not they all have one thing in common: key errors in their onboarding process. Some employee turnover is expected, but when it gets to critical levels, it can end up costing businesses huge sums annually.

Two statistics to consider about onboarding are:

- **22% of employee turnover happens within the first 45 days of employment.** Considering that good employee onboarding processes happen within the first 1 to 60 days of employment, it is easy to see how a failed onboarding process can lead to an uptick in employee turnover.

- **⅓ of 1000 people surveyed quit a job within just six months of being employed.** Again, with an onboarding process that is centered around the satisfaction of employees, this could easily be avoided.

Employee turnover is expensive, both in terms of financial cost as well as losing intellect. One way that an organization can eliminate onboarding errors and increase retention rates, is to focus on activities that get employees engaged from the start. Promises made during interviews should be addressed during the onboarding process, and career roadmaps should be reviewed with new employees.

With more than almost half of the workforce poised to be millennials by 2020, it is imperative to examine the onboarding process with this group in mind.

WHAT ARE RETENTION RATES AMONG MILLENNIALS LIKE?

As more and more millennials become a part of the workforce, the retention statistics are poised to change. In fact, a report by Gallup finds that 21% of the millennial workforce has changed jobs within the past year — a figure that is three times higher than their non-millennial counterparts.

The statistics get more troubling when you take into consideration that only half millennials think that they will still be working at their jobs a year from now. Undoubtedly, millennials are more prone to job-hopping than any other generation. And their job-hopping is costing businesses in the US more than $30 billion dollars annually.

Needless to say, for many millennials a lack of job fulfillment rooted in a less-than-satisfactory onboarding process is the culprit. The same Gallup report continues that, only 29% of millennials are engaged in their current jobs. Put another way, a workforce of 50 millennials will have 35 employees who are disengaged and not committed to their jobs. What causes this problem? The answer lies in the mistakes made during onboarding.

COMMON ONBOARDING MISTAKES THAT ORGANIZATIONS MAKE

Onboarding mistakes can be the death knell for your organization. Let's take a look at a few mistakes that businesses make, that have led to an downward spiral in the millennial retention rate.

They wait until the first day to begin
Onboarding definitely doesn't begin the day your new hire shows up for their first day of work. Taking that approach will millennials will lead to higher turnover because they need to feel more involved in the process than any other group. Things like a welcome email with detailed information about the orientation process, what to bring as well as providing any forms that they need to fill out electronically greatly increase the excitement for new hires.

They look at it as an event and not a process
The onboarding process is more than just a single day of orientation, instead, it is a process. New hires should be given a career roadmap that details their first few weeks or months at the company, and periodic checks should be made that allows them to communicate their concerns and follow up with their goals.

They focus on the wrong information
While the organization's policies and mission, and the employee's job description is important during the orientation process, some businesses seem to miss a key part of the equation. New hires need to know how they fit into the organization as an individual, and a good onboarding process focuses on that. Millennials especially need to be able to personally relate to their jobs to produce good work.

They don't have an end goal
Before an organization even creates an onboarding program, they need to be clear on what they want their employees and management to glean from the process. This can range from morale and enthusiasm for their job to nuances that improve the customer service experience for customers. Whatever the case, start with the end goal in mind and work backward.

There is no automation
Millennials are the most connected generation currently in the workforce. Asking them to print a form to fill it out is a big red flag to them, and a lack of automation in the onboarding process can dampen their excitement about their new job. Using onboarding software is one of the easiest ways to engaged millennials during the process.

Improve Onboarding Techniques To Improve Retention Rates

Even though millennials will make up almost half of the workforce in less than two years, improving onboarding techniques will improve the retention rate of employees all across the board. In addition to keeping new hires engaged and involved in their organization, improved onboarding techniques can also benefit managers by making their jobs easier.

How so? Let's take a look at a few mistakes that managers should avoid if they want to keep their employees interested in their jobs.

◄ Don't misrepresent the job.
In today's fast-paced world, job descriptions change quickly and so do the roles that employees are expected to fill. A big part of the onboarding process — and a function of the manager as well — is to ensure that all the expectations set during the interview process actually happens.

By choosing to accurately portray the job during the onboarding process, managers will be able to better work with new hires since they will be update and satisfied with their new roles within the organization. Additionally, employees will have a higher sense of job satisfaction if their expectations are met

◄ Provide training and support
Managers have a duty to provide training and support for new hires during the entire onboarding process and beyond. Granted, managers may have alot on their plate and may be tempted to skip training and hope that they'll be able to figure it out on their own.

However, the truth of the matter is the employee morale is directly linked to their productivity and the average em-

ployee cannot be their best without training and support.

◀ Don't isolate them

Socialization is a key part of an employee's job satisfaction, as well as how well they perform at their jobs. During the onboarding process, managers have a responsibility to facilitate socialization within the department for new hires. Introductions should not be skipped, and care should be taken to ensure that employees have sufficient opportunity to network.

If employees have a hard time fitting in, they will be more inclined to leave within the first six months to a year. Nobody likes feeling excluded.

◀ Try not to overpromise and underdeliver

As the manager, you often feel like it's your duty to "sell" new hires on how amazing their new job will be. However, be careful not set unrealistic expectations during the interview or onboarding process. Be honest about your work environment and culture, since new employees are quick to pick up on any discrepancies.

The last thing that you need is your new hires getting disgruntled because they were promised one thing and received another. With this in mind, your organization will be able to boost retention rates across the board.

HOW DO HIGHER RETENTION RATES BENEFIT AN ORGANIZATION?

Put simply, a higher retention rate will benefit companies in the way that they care about most — their bottom line. Each employee is an investment in the future of the organization, and the longer employees stay while increasing their productivity, the more valuable they are to an organization.

High retention rates also help organizations to create a company culture that attracts the best talent, since the needs of their employees are being met and their skills are nurtured. Especially in the retail and hospitality industry, higher retention rates will directly influence the experience each customer has after interacting with an employee.

Set Employees Up For Succes

Every employee needs to feel like they're contributing to a bigger purpose in order to perform their best work. This is especially true of new employees since they are figuring out if they belong within an organization, and they will decide if they want to stay within the first six months of employment.

The best way to do this is to take steps during the onboarding process that focus on the social component of their jobs and integrate them into the company culture. For example, taking the new hires out to lunch on the first day can be the first step to building rapport among team members. This is where the company's culture comes into play.

COMPANY CULTURE SHOULD BE THE CENTER OF THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

Poor fit with the company culture is the number 1 cause of new hire failure and directly contributes to an increased retention rate. Many organizations who are just beginning to scale struggle with this part of the onboarding process. Company culture varies greatly across the board, especially within the retail and hospitality industry.

The components of a company's culture include the behaviors of the employees and management, the relationships forged between employees and management, the model attitudes and values each employee should have, and the environment that each individual works in. It is important that organizations have

guidelines that outline each part of this culture, and is embodied by each interaction between management and employees alike.

Within the retail and hospitality industry, it becomes harder to maintain a company culture when the organization grows too big for the founders to know everyone personally. The onboarding process is how these values are preserved and communicated to new hires.

New employees need to understand where they fit into a company, what attitudes are expected of them, how they ought to communicate with coworkers and carry themselves, and — in the case of retail and hospitality workers — they need to know how to treat customers. How can an organization do this?

HOW TO INTEGRATE A NEW EMPLOYEE INTO COMPANY CULTURE

If employees have never experienced working at an organization like yours before, or have never been a part of an organization with a strong company culture, it can be a culture shock when they are hired by your organization. The onboarding process gives companies the opportunity to help mitigate this culture shock, and instead help employees acclimate well.

Appoint an ambassador
Without a familiar face, new hires can feel isolated. Appointing a capable member of staff during the onboarding process to serve as an 'ambassador,' who will help them get acclimated during their first few weeks on the job. The role of this ambassador will be to introduce them to new members of staff, give them a tour of the office building and work side-by-side with them until they have adjusted.

Host after-work events
Social events give new employees the chance to interact with existing members of the team, as well as observe the company culture. Group dinners are a great way to give everyone the oppor-

tunity to get to know each other, and being invited to these events will give them a feeling of inclusion.

Teach them the lingo
Each organization has a set of words and phrases unique to them, and this constitutes part of their company culture. Since communication is a key part of bonding a group together, by teaching new hires the company lingo they'll begin to feel like a part of the team and not like an outsider. As a bonus, a cheat sheet of phrases and words can be included in the orientation process.

Create a welcome kit
A welcome kit can be a group of items that will give the new hire's cubicle a more personal feel, like desk plants, a photo frame, calendars, and other items that might be used within the office. Additionally, providing a catalog of employee contact numbers and fun facts about them will also help to make new employees feel welcome.

Match them with mentors
This is a key way to integrate new hires into the company culture. After finding out more about them during the onboarding process, they can be matched with mentors within the organization with similar personalities and who have achieved similar goals within the company. These mentors will help them to learn more about the company culture, as well as show them that their personal aspirations can be achieved within the organization.

Addressing The Needs of Your Employees

You cannot address the needs of your staff without training them during the onboarding process. Each new hire is more than just an insurance form and a handshake, instead, they will eventually become key members of your team who will be responsible for pivotal projects within the company. Treating them as such during the training process is essential. But, how can you effectively train your staff without making the onboarding process tedious and difficult?

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY TRAIN STAFF DURING THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

Training staff during the onboarding process can be difficult. For example, for every new hire, there are stacks of paperwork to be done to assimilate them into the organization. There's no easy way to get all of this done, but there is a way you can streamline the process as best as possible.

Using an effective onboarding software can drastically improve the simplicity of things. For example, the Trello team uses a Trello board that guides management and other members of the department that they new hire will be a part of on how to interact with the new employee — even including outreach before their first day on the job.

However, a Trello board isn't the only option available to you. In fact, there is more robust onboarding software that your HR team can use to seamlessly integrate new hires into your organization.

FLARE HR — THE EASIEST WAY TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION

Disseminating information is key to any training program, and pivotal in the onboarding process. With Flare HR, automating the manual part of the employee onboarding process becomes easy, giving management and HR the opportunity to focus on developing the new hire's talents, instead of boring paperwork.

The onboarding process takes minutes with Flare HR, not days. With automated templates, as well as bulk upload and the ability to sync from your ATS, onboarding will become something fun and not the tedious process most organizations are used to. With Flare HR you can:

- Automatically generate personalized contracts for new hires.

- Automatically policy documents like workplace safety and anti-discrimination policies, ready for the new employee to read and sign.

- Take your onboarding process digital, catering to the growing millennial workforce.

- Automatically send data captured to where it needs to go, as well as to the new employees.

With a software like Flare HR, that simplifies gathering data it is easy to see why it is a key part of any good onboarding process.

BEST PRACTICES FOR GATHERING DATA DURING THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

Collecting information is an important part of the onboarding process, and if you don't collect data about your new hires, what's the point? Things like payroll information, taxes and other benefits would be impossible. However, there are still do's and don'ts when it comes to gathering data during this process.

- Don't burden new hires with tedious paperwork.

- Do automate the intake process, with onboarding software.

- Don't gather irrelevant information, or use long-winded questions.

- Do be succinct and make the questions fun and easy to answer.

- Don't make the data gathering process boring.

- Do include other forms of gathering information, like through group games and assignments for new hires during the orientation process.

- Don't store information gathered in areas that can be easily compromised.

- Do use a dedicated secure server for storing sensitive information.

By keeping these best practices in mind during the onboarding process, you'll be able to sufficiently meet the needs of your new hires, in a way that actually furthers the interests of the organization.

How The Best Businesses Onboard New Employees
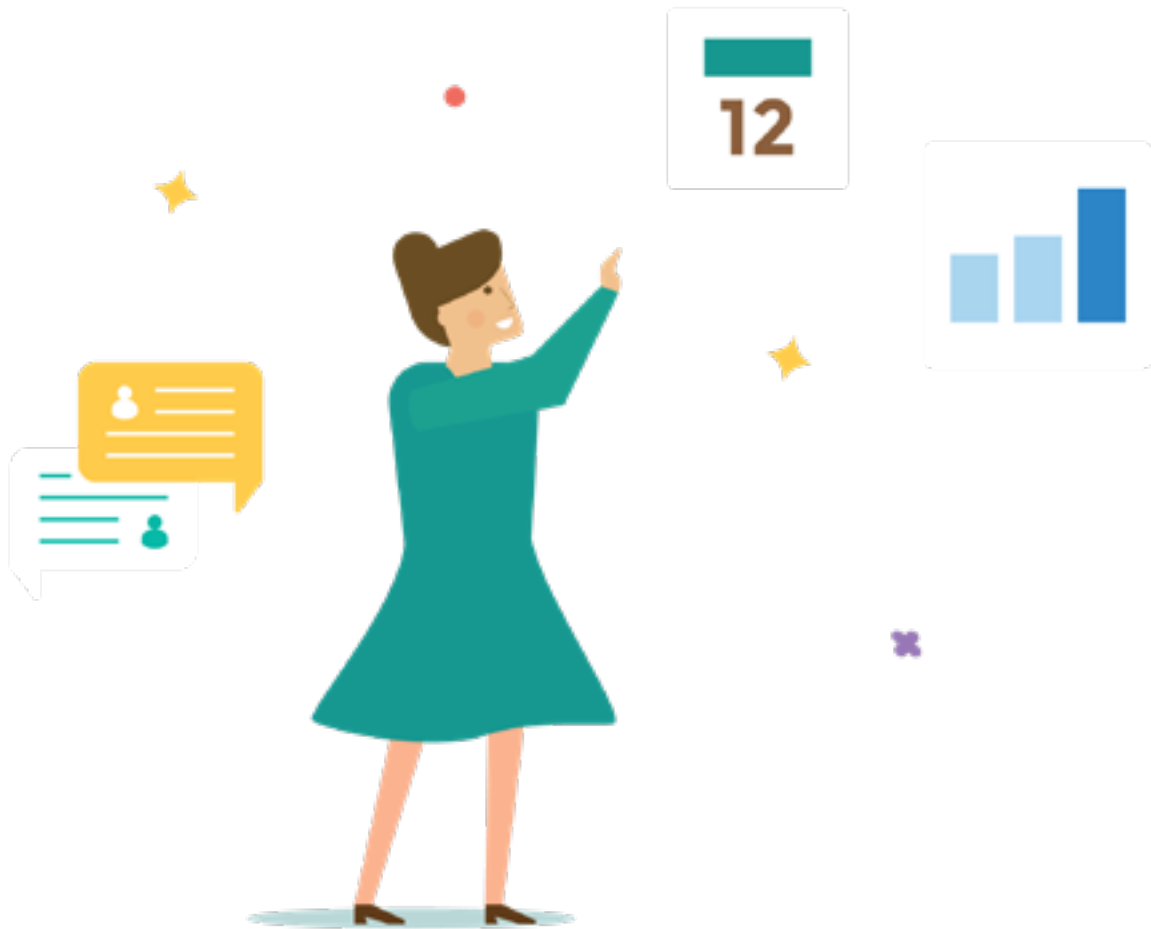
With all that we've covered in this ebook so far, we know that you'll want case studies of how a seamless onboarding experience driven by automation and the needs of the new hires can help an organization to grow. Let's take a look at just that.

EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING TECHNIQUES

The best businesses employ well-thought out onboarding flows long before they onboard the first new hire. There are a few different kinds of onboarding techniques that can be used, like:

◀ Benefit-Focused Onboarding
This kind of onboarding flow is centered about the benefits that the employee will gain from working at the organization. This works well at organizations who incentivize work, whether through health benefits, employee discounts or bonuses.

◀ Function-Focused Onboarding
A function-focused onboarding flow revolves around the new hire's function at the organization. Employees are helped to understand how their role within the organization affects the bigger picture, which boosts morale.

◀ Doing-Focused Onboarding
This onboarding flow walks new hires through a set of typical actions and tasks that they will need to accomplish in their role. In technical fields, this works well since it will give new hires the chance to settle into their roles before the first day.

◀ Combination Onboarding
Most common within the retail and hospitality industry, this kind of onboarding is a combination of all three flows mentioned above. The elements depend on the needs of the organization, as well as the needs of the new hires. Combination onboarding is the method of choice for most of Australia's leading businesses.

A case study of combination onboarding was published by the company Fresh Tilled Soil, who helped a client to create a new software to be used in educational institutions. From their results we learn:

◀ Teachers needed onboarding more than the students since they were the ones who would onboard the students, and the students would already have their assignments populated within the app.

◀ Combination onboarding worked best for this software because teachers needed to understand the benefits of the software to motivate them to use it, discern their role in helping students and how this software would help them to achieve it, and also wanted the software to reflect how they already used the technical aspects of teaching in real life.

Essentially, onboarding is valuable because without it users would not be able to use software or acclimate to their role within an organization well. With this in mind, what onboarding methods can be used to reduce turnover, and with what results?

ONBOARDING FLOWS THAT REDUCE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Most of the ways to reduce employee turnover happens within the onboarding process and isn't accomplished on the first day or even within the first week. Here are a few onboarding flows that successful companies have used to reduce employee turnover:

◀ Track the results of new hires and use the data when filling future positions. Most organizations take a simplistic ap-proach to fill positions. They search for the best person and hire them, when the process should be much longer. After hiring the best person for the job, the onboarding process should include following up with them and collecting data on how well they handle their job. If they do so successfully, the reasons why should be recorded. This data can then be used to locate ideal candidates quicker, as well as refine the onboarding process and equip new hires with what they need.

◀ Listen to employees and reward them before there is a problem.
One of the pros of a great onboarding process is an open line of communication. You always want to be on the same page with the new hire, even when it comes to any dissatisfaction they may feel with their new job. By following up with them, rewarding them when necessary and working to fix any problems they may have before it pushes them to leave.

◀ Reaffirm the reason why they work with the organization.
The best teams are united by a single motivation, cause or goal. Creating a "why" that motivates each team member is one of the best ways to reduce employee turnover. This mantra should be communicated to them during the onboarding process, as well as be evident in the company culture. An employee connected to the organization by more than just a paycheck is an invaluable asset.

Implementing these onboarding techniques within your business will reap rich rewards

Case Study: How A New Onboarding Process Helped Bondi Pizza

Bondi Pizza opened its doors in 2009, with a mission to service delicious pizzas to the Australian public. After enjoying large casual dining restaurants in the US, Bondi Pizza's Chief Executive Officer Jeff Fisher and Chief Financial Officer Glen Lees opened their restaurant chain to address the gap in the market. Soon, their chain grew to nine locations dotted around Australia.

As the business and staff numbers grew, they began experiencing typical growing pains in relation to manual processes and resources. In an effort to address this, Bondi Pizza began using different types of technology to assist them with things like online training, rostering packages, fingerprint scanning and online ordering. Operating in a customer service focused environment, Bondi Pizza was aware of how important the relationship between overall experience and operating efficiency is.

But, they faced a few problems within their organization. Because of the nature of the hospitality industry in there were a number of employees on various work and working holiday visas at the Bondi Pizza locations. As such, it was incredibly important for them to make sure their employees are compliant with Australian employment laws and work permits.

This meant going through staff files monthly, in each restaurant, to ensure visa information and compliance was up-to-date. And whilst Bondi Pizza pride themselves on compliance around the working rights of their employees, the associated admin costs caused by this manual process was significant.

To put it into perspective, each of the 400 employees had roughly 20 pages of information in their staff file. Combine this with a seasonally fluctuating workforce in the hospitality space

which, in general, sees high employee turnover, and the hard costs from an administration perspective were too restrictive to be ignored.

Branch managers were sifting through 8,000 pages per month, taking up to half a day for each restaurant. Across the group this meant a week lost in administration and paperwork, not including time spent chasing employees up on missing or updated paperwork. Handling this manually left them exposed to human error across the group. Errors which if left unnoticed with put a strain on the business in terms of time, resources and even legal issues.

Lastly, Bondi Pizza does not have a centralised HR department. Since HR is handled by each individual branch it presented a number of problems from an administrative and compliance point of view.

Even though they outsourced their payroll, it remained a time consuming process for branch managers because of the amount of paperwork it involved. Making sure the business remains compliant in training, policies during onboarding and the associated administration, took up a large slice of management's time.

HOW A NEW, AUTOMATED ONBOARDING PROCESS HELPED BONDI PIZZA

Bondi Pizza turned to Flare HR to help them tackle these problems. Glen Lees previously worked with Flare's Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer Saul Kaplan, and felt confident Flare could deliver a great employee experience built around the nuances of the hospitality industry. The main aim was to centralize HR across all the restaurants.

Here is what using Flare has helped them to accomplish:

◄ Flare has also been able to build an integration with their online training provider which would allow new employees to enroll in training through the Flare platform, reducing the need for employees to jump between multiple systems.

◄ Flare activated the visa tracking feature to specifically cater for their needs. Through the onboarding process, Flare helped Bondi Pizza ensure it is now mandatory to upload current visa information. Notifications were set up to notify Bondi Pizza 60 days before any visa expiry. Also, Bondi Pizza is notified every three months to double check visa validity through VEVO (Visa Entitlement Verification Online).

◄ Manual processes have been eliminated through automation on Flare. All documentation from onboarding, contracts, policies and compliance, through to offboarding are entirely automated on the platform.

◄ The time savings associated with onboarding automation has enabled the restaurant managers who previously undertook this task to focus on what they do best: creating a beautiful customer dining experience for Bondi Pizza's growing clientele.

◄ Through the Flare HR platform, Bondi Pizza has been able to include a rewards program for their employees that increased their morale. Through the platform employees gain access to discounts and vouchers for approximately 500 different retail companies such as supermarkets, retailers, as well as 40% off cinema tickets and much more. This made staff members more engaged and increased retention rates dramatically.

Clearly, the best onboarding processes are automated and are created with the new hires in mind. With all that we've covered in this Ebook on your mind, it begs the question, "What can you do to implement this information?"

Onboarding Practices Matter

Despite what may have been working for your organization the past few years, taking a keen look at your onboarding process matters. Whereas things may be fine now, the effects of a poor onboarding process could be costing your organization millions, unbeknownst to you.

In review, here are a few key points to consider that must be included in your organization's onboarding process:

◀ **First impressions matter most.**
Be efficient, friendly, personal and fun during the onboarding process. 22% of employee turnover happens within the first 45 days of employment.

◀ **Don't look at as a one-day event.**
Think of onboarding as a process that can span week, months or even a year.

◀ **Include functional training.**
Without training and mentorship, the best new hire will struggle to do well at your organization.

◀ **Have an end goal and a big why.**
The best teams are united by a single motivation, cause or goal. This is a critical part of onboarding.

◀ **Include social events in the onboarding process.**
A great way to communicate company culture is to host social events that give them a chance to get to know each other.

◀ **Automate the process and design it with the new hires in mind.**
Automation is the way of the future, and with a great onboarding software you'll be able to make onboarding both easy and intuitive for management and new hires alike.

Finding an onboarding software that can assist your organization in creating an onboarding process that reduces turnover and improves new employee morale can be difficult. However, with Flare HR the process is simplified to an easy-to-use interface.

Click here to learn more about how Flare HR's Onboarding Software can benefit your organization.

Automate your manual HR & payroll processes

Flare's integrated suite of products automates your manual HR & payroll processes, freeing you up to focus more on people and less on paper.

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