

Learning Quarterly

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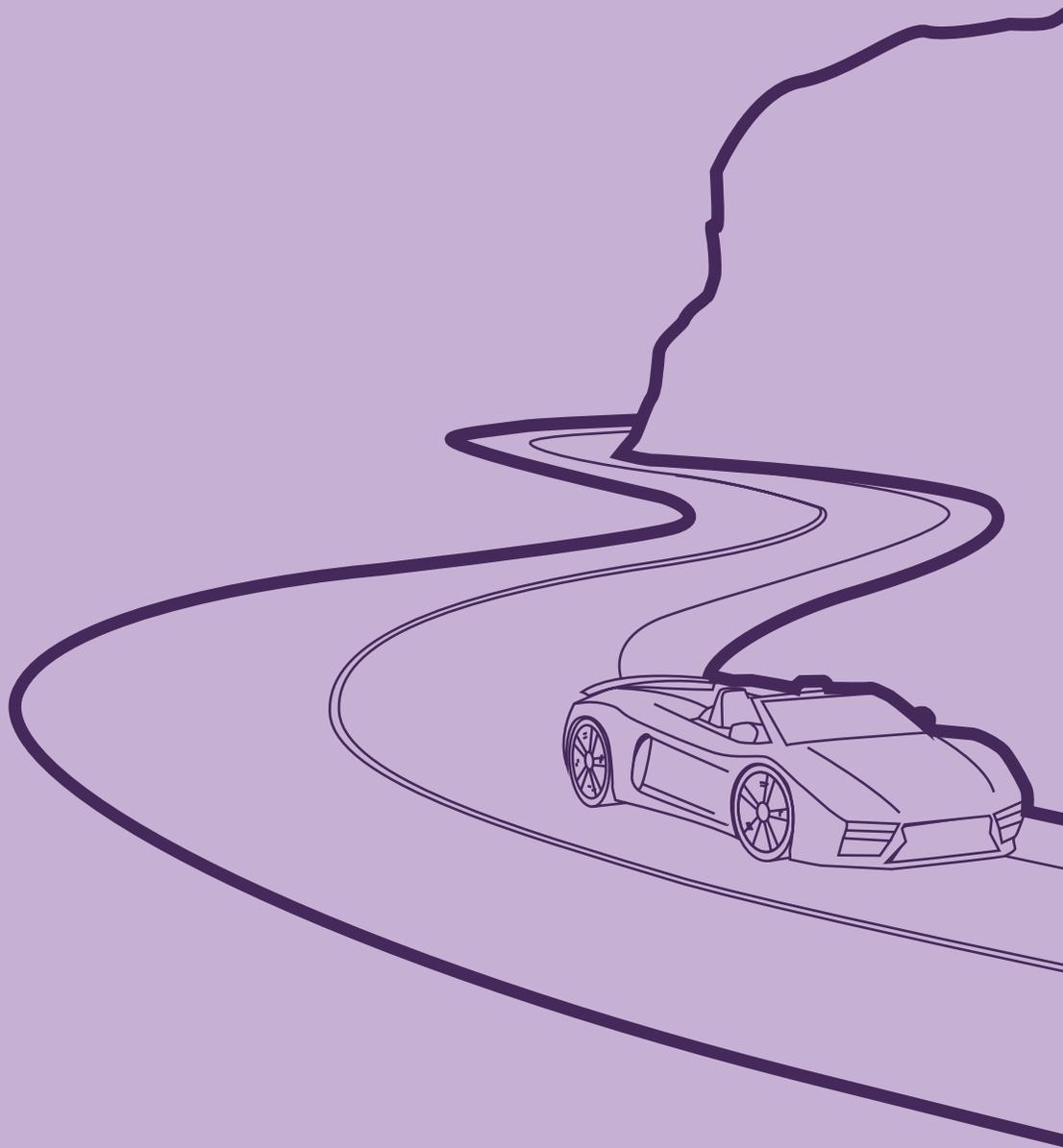
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Keys to Onboarding Today

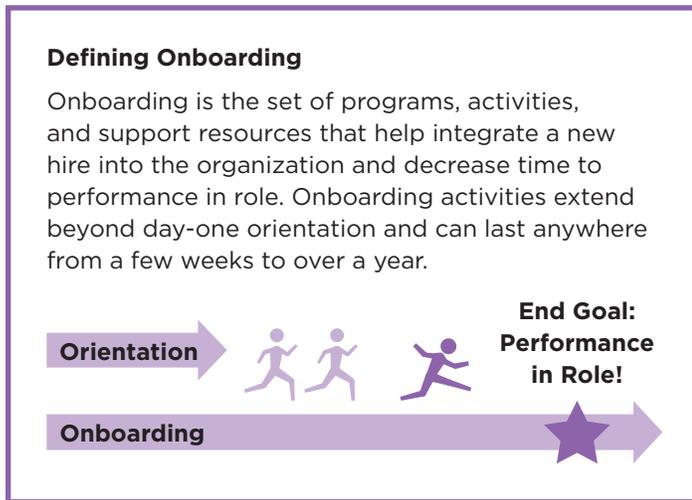
Making Your Employees' First Days Count



We've all heard about the many perks of working in the tech industry today: unlimited free food; nap pods; and of course, the energizing, activity-packed, months-long onboarding programs. Articles about these unique onboarding programs highlight L'Oréal's two-year onboarding experience or Zappos's policy to pay new hires a lump sum to leave if they think the firm is a poor fit.¹

There is no denying these practices are intriguing. But do they actually enable better performance from new hires? While these glamorous and intensive onboarding programs can be inspirational and fun, they're not necessarily effective or realistic for every organization. Onboarding as most of us know it starts with a few hours in a conference room covering logistical and technical information, then moves to some introductory guidance from hiring managers and often a peer buddy who sits a few desks over to guide us for the first few weeks.

Although 82% of organizations have invested time, money, and energy in creating onboarding programs, only 25% believe their onboarding programs are effective. In other words, L&D functions face an opportunity to vastly improve new hires' onboarding experiences.



The Traditional Approach

The top three onboarding goals are to strengthen alignment with company culture, inform new hires about formal and informal policies and procedures, and increase engagement and retention. To achieve these goals, today's onboarding programs are characterized by three traits:

- **Event Based**—For the vast majority of organizations, at least 50% of onboarding activities are done in person.
- **Standardized**—Two-thirds of HR staff report onboarding is meant to give new hires a standardized experience.
- **Manager Funneled**—Managers spend over twice as much time as HR staff on onboarding.

It makes sense to organize onboarding programs this way, but according to our survey of HR professionals, these classroom-based, standardized, and manager-funneled programs are not working out

so well. Only 48% of HR professionals think onboarding actually helps pave the way for new hire success. So it's probably not surprising that only 55% of HR executives believe onboarding helps new hires perform in their jobs.

Meeting New Hires' Needs in the Digital Era

Our research finds that the traditional approach to onboarding is no longer relevant in light of all the changes in the work and learning landscapes. Instead, L&D must make three key shifts in onboarding programs (figure 1):

1. Onboarding must shift from being event based and largely occurring in a classroom to being "just in time," designed to happen where and when employees need it.
2. L&D must shift from a standardized onboarding approach that is formal and linear to a more personalized one crafted to meet each employee's role and skill needs.
3. L&D must stop relying exclusively on managers to execute onboarding activities and take a community-driven approach, using a broader network of individuals to help new hires acclimate to the organization and their teams.

Right now, only 7% of new hires benefit from onboarding that is just in time, personalized, and community driven. L&D functions can increase this number, and some surprisingly simple and effective changes can help them get started.

Figure 1: Key Shifts in Onboarding

Traditional Onboarding

- ✗ **Event Based:** Organization-wide onboarding occurs in a classroom setting over a series of live events.
- ✗ **Standardized:** Onboarding happens in a standardized and linear sequence.
- ✗ **Manager Funneled:** Job-specific onboarding is pushed down to managers and relies on their willingness to direct employees to the right tasks at the right times.

Onboarding in the Digital Era

- ✓ **Just in Time:** Organization-wide onboarding happens where and when each employee needs it.
- ✓ **Personalized:** Onboarding is designed to meet each new employee's individual role and skill needs.
- ✓ **Community Driven:** Onboarding occurs through a broader network of individuals to acclimate the new hire to his or her team and the organization.

Source: CEB analysis.

1. From Event Based to Just in Time

Our survey of HR staff showed 75% of organizations conduct at least half their onboarding programs in person. This makes sense, as

classroom settings are familiar to L&D and can help new employees build their networks. But this approach has some major downsides as well:

- Bringing employees to the classroom is costly, as it requires employees to leave their work.
- This method relies on new hires translating learning from the classroom back into their work.
- The results are not very compelling. While one of the main objectives of onboarding is to help employees build connections, only 50% of new hires think onboarding in a classroom actually helps them build their networks.
- Even worse, less than 1 in 10 new hires has found networking with his or her cohort important to success on the job.

An event-based approach to onboarding may have been successful in the past, but because of changes in the work and learner landscapes, new hires need more specific and accessible support. In particular, L&D can no longer think of new hires as a homogenous group that can be served as one. Instead, L&D must deliver onboarding support to new hires in the moments that matter to them.

These moments are dependent on the contexts in which employees work; for example, a customer care representative will need different support—at different moments in onboarding—from a store manager or a knowledge worker. For customer care representatives, you might consider desktop alerts or in-app reminders. For store managers, perhaps mobile learning, microlearning, and virtual learning are best. For knowledge workers, consider virtual online learning as well as mobile learning (figure 2).

2. From Standardized to Personalized

Beyond transforming onboarding into just-in-time learning, L&D functions must also personalize the experience. But what's the best way to embed meaningful personalization into the onboarding experience at scale with limited resources?

L&D has a spectrum of opportunities for personalizing, but it will have to work with new hires. L&D has access to a great deal of data (e.g., a new hire's geographic location, education and background, role in the organization, manager), but this information is just a start. New hires know what they need and when they need it better than L&D ever could. The best organizations tailor new hires' learning using some variables while making it clear and easy for learners to tailor their onboarding experience further.

With this shared responsibility in mind, personalization can take many forms. For a less technologically involved approach, L&D can base its onboarding checklists for managers and new hires on new hire location, customizing the checklists to meet cultural priorities or laws. The new hire's role is then to discuss with his or her manager which items make sense to complete.

Alternatively, L&D functions that have capacity to make larger technological investments might build learning portals to house all relevant onboarding content and tag that content based on learning outcomes. In this case, it's up to new hires to use those tags to search for relevant content in the moment.

Regardless of what resources L&D can invest, the key to personalization is the partnership between L&D and new hires.

Figure 2: Examples of Onboarding in Context

	 Customer Care Representative	 Store Manager	 Knowledge Worker
Work Environment	Loud; many phone calls	Customer traffic in peaks and lulls	Quiet, self-paced individual work; some meetings
Job Focus	Relationship based, task oriented	Service based, task oriented	Knowledge and skill based, project oriented
Potential Onboarding Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop alerts or in-app reminders • Feedback from manager or peers • Dedicated classroom sessions, where applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile channels for computer-free learning • Microlearning for quick breaks in the day • Virtual learning to bridge the distances between employees in remote stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual online learning for easy access (at risk for multitasking) • Mobile learning for travel-intensive roles

Source: CEB analysis.

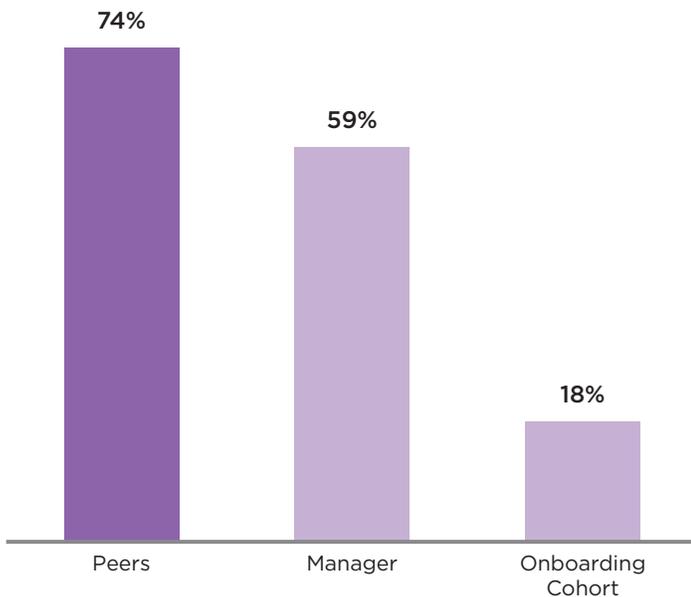
3. From Manager Funneled to Community Driven

By now, most of us are very aware of how stretched and overwhelmed managers are. With an average of nine direct reports, many managers have little to no insight into their employees' work, let alone time to give new hires thorough guidance through onboarding.

But there's hope. With the amount of collaboration necessary today, it's no surprise employees learn quite a bit from their peers. In fact, nearly one-quarter of the coaching and development employees receive is from colleagues. Moreover, our global survey of over 1,800 employees showed that peers are the most helpful support for new hires during onboarding—better than both managers and onboarding cohorts (figure 3).

Relieving managers of some onboarding responsibility and shifting it to peers is not only a practical choice but also yields greater results. This is the epitome of a win-win solution.

Figure 3: Most Helpful Onboarding Support Sources
Percentage of Employees Selecting in Top Two



n = 1,897.

Source: CEB 2017 Global Labor Market Survey.

Many organizations have already realized this, resulting in the near-ubiquitous onboarding “peer buddy.” However, as L&D staff work to connect new hires with their colleagues, they must think beyond colleagues in the office or cube next door (figure 4). Fifty-nine percent of organizations report connecting new hires with peer mentors using proximity as the main filter, but this approach limits new hires' chances of connecting with peers in other parts of the organization—peers who may be instrumental in helping new hires get familiar with their roles and the company.

Figure 4: Challenges with Proximity-Based Connections

- ✗ Connections have limited organizational perspective.
- ✗ Connections may be professionally but not personally relevant.
- ✗ Connections feel too close to the work, making new hires feel uncomfortable asking questions or sharing challenges.
- ✗ Connections often stray from set timing and structure when they are close enough to always be “on call.”

Source: CEB analysis.

Realizing it needed to start connecting its new hires across a large, matrixed organization, Time Inc.'s L&D team created a program called Connectors@Time Inc. This program pairs new hires with colleagues—called Connectors—who are at the same level as the new hire but in a different part of the organization. Connectors are a resource new hires can approach with questions they may not feel comfortable taking to their manager or HR. Unlike most peer mentoring programs, Connectors also provide feedback to L&D, which is used to improve the onboarding program overall.²

To learn more about Time Inc.'s approach to onboarding, see p. 15 for our L&D Innovators interview with members of the team who put the program together.

Conclusion

For most organizations, creating extravagant or flashy onboarding is not only unrealistic but also, ultimately, not worth the cost. By taking small steps to achieve each of the three key characteristics of successful onboarding, L&D can significantly improve employees' early productivity and experience at the organization. Making onboarding just in time, personalized, and community driven may seem like unfamiliar territory, but these shifts are key to bringing your onboarding into the digital era.

For more resources about onboarding:

- Watch the replay of our webinar, *Onboarding in the Digital Era*;
- Read our research, *Onboarding Tactics: 30 Examples from Leading Organizations*; and
- Use the CEB Ignition™ Guide on *Designing an Onboarding Experience*.

Note: To access the tools and resources in this article, visit our website or contact your account manager.

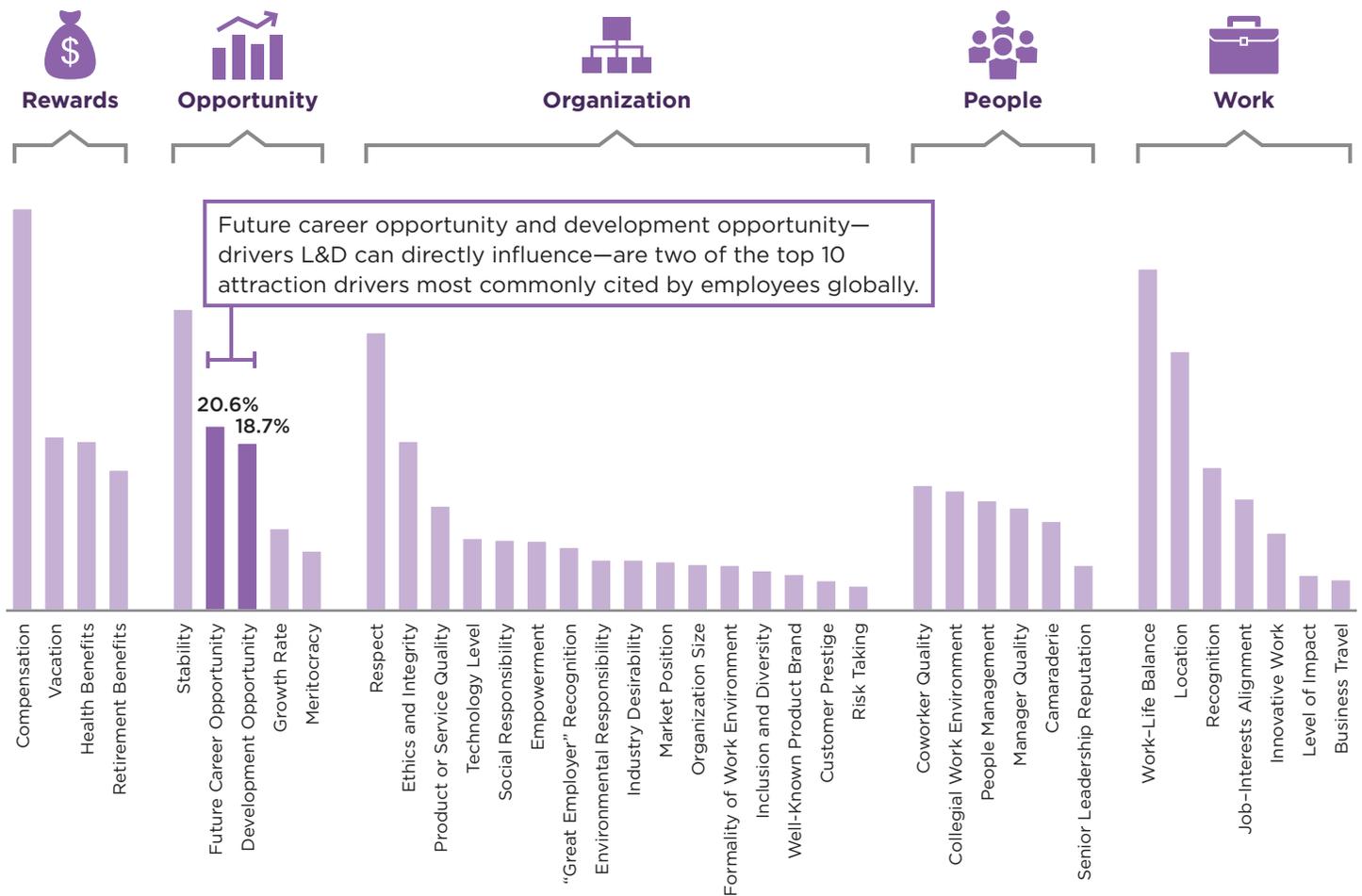
¹ Page Up, “Onboarding to Learning: Keeping New Hires on the Highway to Success,” 25 July 2017, <https://www.pageuppeople.com/en-us/2017/07/25/onboarding-to-learning-keep-new-hires-on-the-highway-to-success-lea001/>. Joseph A. Michelli, *The Zappos Experience: 5 Principles to Inspire, Engage, and Wow* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012).

² Time Inc.; CEB analysis.

Insights from the Global Talent Monitor

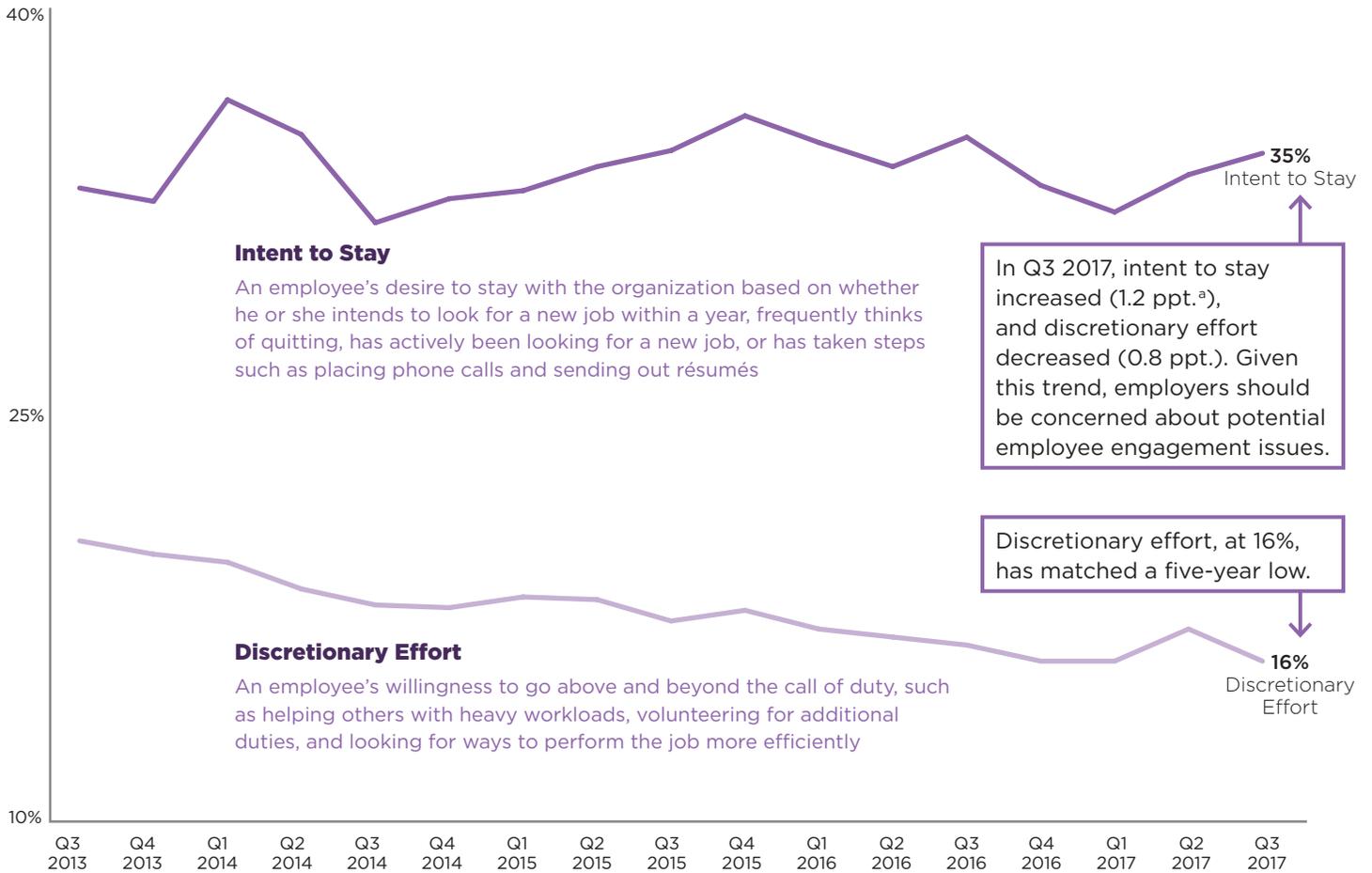
Each quarter, we collect data from more than 22,000 employees in over 40 countries to determine what attracts, engages, and retains talent over time. Keep track of the latest on employee sentiments in this quarterly highlight.

Ranking of Attributes That Influence Employer Selection
Percentage of Employees Selecting in Top Five, Q3 2017



n = 21,179.
Source: CEB 2017 Global Labor Market Survey.

Percentage of Employees Reporting High Levels of Intent to Stay and Discretionary Effort



n = 21,179 (Q3 2017).

Source: CEB 2013-2017 Global Labor Market Surveys.

^a Percentage points.

Learning Technology Spotlight

Artificial Intelligence

Learning technology can speed up processes, uncover new information, and enhance the employee learning experience. Each quarter, we'll focus on one trending learning technology—and how L&D functions today can take advantage.

We have all heard the buzz around artificial intelligence (AI) and its proposed benefits to how employees learn and work. But can AI truly deliver on its promise? The creators of the world's most advanced robot, ASIMO, say that even its intelligence is no greater than an insect's.¹ With so far to go in AI development, are organizations and L&D functions waiting to invest in AI?

The answer is no. Our research shows that over 90% of L&D professionals plan to increase or maintain investment in AI for L&D over the next two years. Strikingly, almost three in five L&D professionals say they already use AI to some degree in their organizations.²

Over 90% of L&D professionals plan to increase or maintain investment in AI for L&D over the next two years.

But what do we really mean when we say “AI,” and what are its implications for L&D?

Quite simply, **AI is a machine's ability to learn and make choices on its own.** From L&D's perspective, AI can help employees and the function:

- Choose the right learning paths,
- Measure learning's impact, and
- Analyze unforeseen learning experiences.

Choose the Right Learning Paths

The proliferation of technology is not only making learners more aware of development opportunities but also expanding L&D's potential with new delivery channels and methods. Unfortunately, the resulting myriad of choices and preferences makes it hard for both learners and L&D to make the right decisions.

Artificially intelligent machines today, like IBM's Watson, can already analyze immense volumes of past data to make future predictions. In the future, L&D will rely on AI to analyze employee learning behaviors by using historical data from learning management systems (LMSs), learning portals, web searches, and more to predict when employees need development, what they need development on, and where they can find it.

Measure Learning's Impact

Measuring learning and reporting the ROI of learning investment have historically been L&D's Achilles' heel. L&D professionals look to their LMS to help them solve this problem. Our research shows L&D professionals believe enabling learning evaluation is the LMS feature with the most impact on employee performance.³

As today's disjointed HR datasets from performance management systems, recruitment platforms, LMSs, and compensation and benefit platforms become centralized and interconnected, organizations are beginning to get a complete view of an employee's life cycle. LMSs with AI will be able to track an employee's learning patterns and directly correlate them with quantifiable metrics, such as performance evaluation scores.

But the possibilities do not stop there. As HR systems integrate with broader organizational records, such as CRM systems, AI can help

L&D find direct links between employee learning and business metrics.

Analyze Unforeseen Learning Experiences

Machines can never truly learn unless they can understand and assess unforeseen learning experiences and use them to make future recommendations. Unfortunately, this is where AI technology is weakest. AI machines can't handle uncertainties unless they're implicitly programmed with the variables and logic to classify and measure them.

However, AI technology is breaking away from rule-based programming with innovative techniques, such as building neural networks and rapidly boosting processing capability with technologies such as quantum computing. These inventions are gradually recreating the functions of the human brain. When AI becomes truly “smart,” it will not only independently identify when learners go through a new learning experience but also analyze the learner’s experience and build that information into future recommendations.

Even in its nascent state today, 43% of L&D professionals believe AI significantly affects employee performance.⁴ Even if AI is currently a fringe technology, its potential benefits are immense. The question is no longer how AI will revolutionize L&D but when.

Interested in more information about the latest in L&D technologies and innovations?

- Visit our Learning Technology Center, a library of research, tools, webinars, and more on various learning technologies.
- See our 2018 Innovations Bullseye report for an objective map of how L&D professionals use learning channels, learning methods, and LMS features at their organizations.

Note: To access the tools and resources in this article, visit our website or contact your account manager.

¹ Michio Kaku, *Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100* (New York: Anchor Books, 2011).

² CEB 2018 Learning Innovations Survey. *n* = 305 L&D professionals.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

When AI becomes truly “smart,” it will not only independently identify when learners go through a new learning experience but also analyze the learner’s experience and build that information into future recommendations.

Enterprise Issue

Creating a Culture That Performs

“This is just our latest effort to strengthen our culture; we’ve invested in everything from external consultants to employee training. But when we look at where we were before these efforts and where our culture is now, it’s as if nothing has happened, and we are back to square one.”

VP of HR
Energy Organization

Organizational culture is not a new issue, but lately it has drawn an unprecedented level of attention and scrutiny. Culture is by far the most discussed talent issue in earnings calls since 2010, and mentions have increased by 12% annually (figure 1). Frequent appearances of organizational cultures in headlines are also spurring more public discussion of the critical role culture plays in shaping a firm’s reputation and, ultimately, its success.

HR has responded to this scrutiny by investing more time and resources in managing culture. These efforts tend to be people focused, the main activities being:

1. Generating buy-in among current employees, and
2. Bringing in new employees who fit well with the culture.

Over 80% of organizations currently use these two traditional activities and, by our conservative estimate, devote an average of over \$2,200 per employee each year to support their culture-management strategy.

Despite all this time and investment, only 31% of HR leaders agree their organizations have the necessary culture to drive future business performance. So what’s holding us back?

Identifying the Culture Challenge

We found the key differentiator that underlies cultural performance is not choosing a particular culture but learning how to get employees to demonstrate the culture you need—whatever that might be.

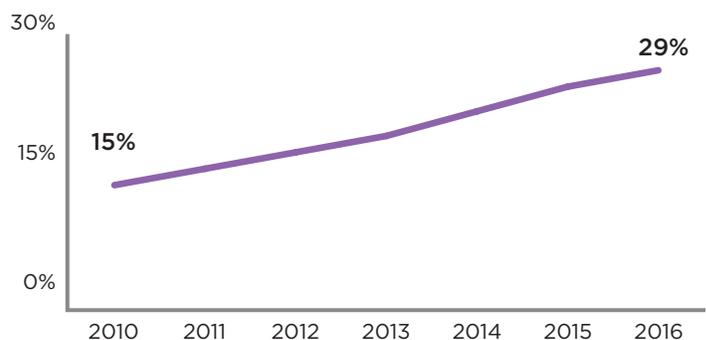
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Our Definition of Culture

Culture is the set of behavioral norms and unwritten rules that shape the organizational environment and how individuals interact and get work done.

Figure 1: Percentage of Companies Talking About Culture in Earnings Calls



Source: CEB analysis; AlphaSense (accessed January 2017), <https://research.alpha-sense.com>.

Note: Searches were limited to the use of terms in a talent management context and included synonyms and synonymous phrases of the terms, with an updated methodology as of 15 October 2017. Search parameters were limited to earnings calls released from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2016 from publicly listed companies in the S&P Global 1200 and S&P MidCap 400 indices as of 31 December 2016.

There are three key culture-related workforce gaps:

- Knowledge Gap—Employees aren't aware of the culture the organization needs (69% of organizations experience this).
- Mind-Set Gap—Employees do not believe in the culture the organization needs (87% of organizations experience this).
- Behavior Gap—Employees do not engage in behaviors related to the culture the organization needs (90% of organizations experience this).

In studying these gaps, we uncovered two important facts that are fundamental to how HR should approach culture management:

1. **We must improve knowledge, mind-set, and behavior simultaneously.** Organizations with low scores on these factors that increase just one of them will see no improvement in financial performance.
2. **We can't focus only on particular segments.** Organizations with higher levels of dispersion (i.e., widely varying levels of knowledge, mind-set, and behavior among employees) have lower employee performance than those with low dispersion.

Modeling a Culture That Performs

Workforce–culture alignment (WCA) is the combination of employee knowledge of the culture the organization needs, an employee mind-set that is supportive of the culture, and employee behavior that is in line with the needed culture (figure 2). Our study found that organizations with high WCA achieve higher performance against revenue goals and hiring and retention targets, increased employee performance, and improved public reputations.

Figure 2: Workforce–Culture Alignment



Source: CEB analysis.

Organizations face three common challenges in trying to increase WCA, each of which affects knowledge, mind-set, and behavior:

- Few organizations really understand their culture.
- Leaders aren't driving the culture.
- Employees can't operationalize the culture.

Addressing these three challenges for the entire workforce requires organizations to take a broader approach. Rather than using the two traditional activities of the people-focused approach, organizations should focus on changing enterprise-wide systems and processes to enable cultural alignment.

Three activities can help organizations truly increase their WCA:

1. Gain actionable culture intelligence through employee-led diagnosis.

To create a culture that performs, it's not enough for organizations to know what culture they need; they must also clearly understand the current culture and whether it needs to change to support

future growth. However, only 10% of HR leaders are confident their organizations have this knowledge.

Typical approaches to culture measurement—periodic data gathering on cultural satisfaction and HR or business leader interpretation—fail to give organizations the insight they need. These approaches have three limitations:

- Insufficient Data—A narrow focus on satisfaction with the culture fails to capture important details of what the culture actually looks like.
- Outdated Data—Most organizations (85%) assess culture annually or less frequently, leaving many heads of HR with out-of-date information.
- Easy-to-Misinterpret Data—Mechanisms like surveys leave little room for context, nuance, or clarification, so leaders who lack insight on lower levels or who feel pressured to craft a particular culture narrative can easily misinterpret results.

To address these limitations, the best organizations are shifting to employee-led culture diagnosis by monitoring how employees experience the culture and involving employees directly in interpreting culture input.

L&D may not have a direct role in measuring culture, but existing metrics typically used by L&D (e.g., feedback on learning content) can be critical. While broader engagement data can clarify where culture is or is not working in the organization, sentiment analysis of feedback and comments related to L&D solutions may provide a more qualitative view.

Unilever is one organization making this shift. Inspired by Marketing's consumer-listening success, Unilever's HR is experimenting with ongoing "cultural listening"—tapping into publicly available data to get more rapid and ongoing feedback about the culture. Its talent analytics team analyzes the data and projects it in real time to viewing screens in the office of the CHRO, Leena Nair.¹

2. Expand leader role modeling to include remodeling of business processes.

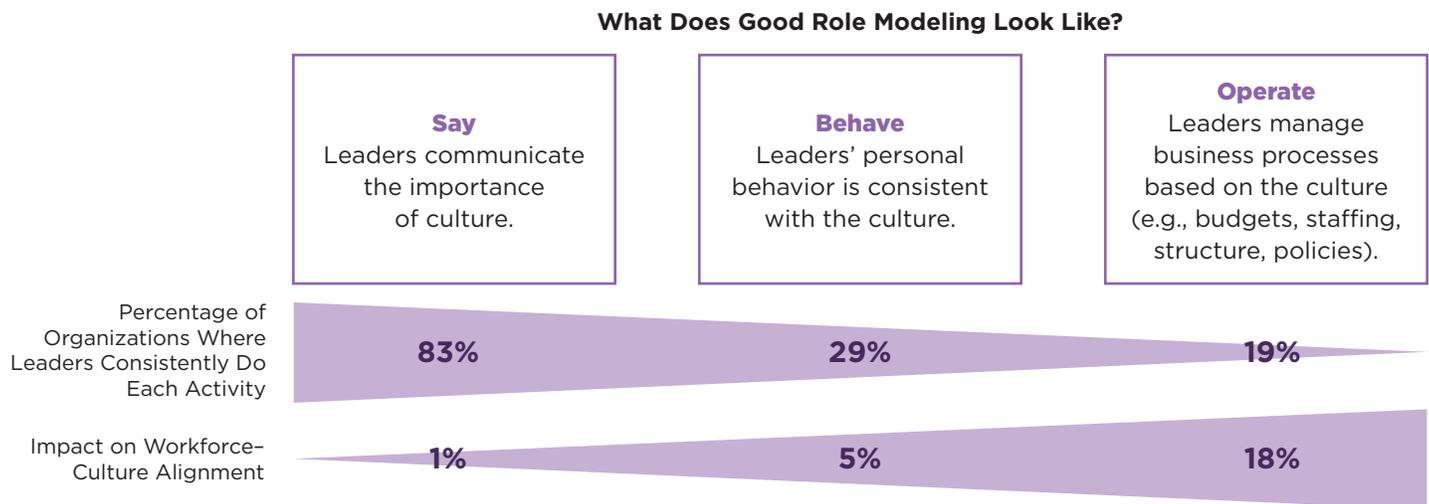
Although 78% of organizations rely on leaders to model the culture as a key component of their strategies, few are confident this approach is having the desired effect. Our research has identified three key elements of effective leader role modeling:

1. Say—What leaders communicate about culture
2. Behave—How leaders personally demonstrate the culture
3. Operate—How leaders manage business operations (e.g., budgets, processes, policies) in line with the culture

The average organization may be disappointed in their investments in leader role modeling. This is often because they miss the last element—how leaders instill the culture in business operations. The key is to go beyond simply focusing on what leaders say and do. It's not enough for leaders to espouse the culture; they must also create an environment that enables everyone to live the culture (figure 3).

RTI, for example, tackles the challenge through its Maximize Impact culture team. Tasked with removing process- and budget-related barriers to the culture, this team gets dedicated time and money, including its own budget code. In addition, the team has the authority and expertise to make those changes happen: the VP of FP&A and SVP of HR chair the team, lending their influence, credibility, and decision-making authority.²

Figure 3: Prevalence and Impact of the Elements of Leader Role Modeling



n = 7,502 employees; 190 HR leaders.

Source: CEB 2017 Culture Workforce Survey; CEB 2017 Culture Benchmarking Survey.

L&D functions can directly support this initiative through their existing channels for leadership development. By embedding consideration of how to operationalize the organizational culture into its existing leadership development programs, L&D can support HR's cultural initiative. L&D is already well positioned to provide leaders the necessary resources to address systemic barriers to desired cultural norms.

3. Equip employees to apply culture in their day-to-day work.

Finally, organizations must help employees operationalize the culture day to day. We know organizations invest in a high volume and variety of culture communication, but that investment has failed to remove two employee-cited barriers to living the culture:

- Translation Barrier—Employees struggle to translate the culture into the specific context of their day-to-day role.
- Tensions Barrier—Employees frequently encounter cultural tensions they don't know how to address.

Unsurprisingly, the number of employees who struggle with each of these barriers increases significantly as you move deeper into organizations' lower levels. If communication efforts haven't addressed these challenges, what will?

The best organizations remove the translation barrier by transferring ownership of context-specific translation to employees themselves.

Removing the tensions barrier does not necessarily mean removing tensions; instead, organizations should ensure employees are equipped to manage any tensions they may encounter in their work. They can do this by:

- Gathering information on tensions as part of culture diagnosis,
- Determining which tensions are intentional (i.e., necessary to support the organization's strategy and not a result of misinterpretation or miscommunication), and
- Providing training and project-planning resources to help individuals and teams reconcile cultural tensions in their work.

Again, L&D involvement here is instrumental to success. L&D staff's expertise in how employees learn will be key to ensuring employees understand how the culture applies to their day-to-day roles. L&D also plays a significant role in showing employees how to identify and address cultural tensions when they arise.

Conclusion

Organizations' best bet for creating a culture that performs is to align employees' knowledge, mind-set, and behavior with the culture the organization needs. To support this initiative, L&D has a clear mandate to enable the shift from a people-focused culture strategy to a process-focused strategy. L&D can:

- Provide new ways of understanding the culture,
- Develop leaders to manage the business in line with the culture, and
- Help employees apply culturally aligned behavior in their day-to-day work.

At the best organizations, L&D also helps remove the translation and tension barriers by moving ownership of context-specific translation to employees themselves and helping employees learn to identify and address cultural tensions.

Following are some resources to help you get started:

- See our quick answer, Common Metrics Tracked by L&D Functions.
- Use the CEB Ignition™ Guide to Designing a Leadership Development Program.
- Read our case study, Cisco's Career Connect, to learn how Cisco's solution helps employees see how skills apply to their careers.

This article was adapted from the CHRO Quarterly Q4 2017 article, "Creating a Culture That Performs."

Note: To access the tools and resources in this article, visit our website or contact your account manager.

¹ Unilever; CEB analysis.

² RTI International; CEB analysis.

From Talent Daily

Facebook, Apple Expand Digital Training Initiatives in Europe

Talent Daily is our blog, updated multiple times daily, featuring news and commentary for executives who care about talent. Coverage includes learning and development, diversity and inclusion, recruiting, rewards, management, and technology.

To help you keep up with the latest in talent news, each *Learning Quarterly* will adapt one recent article from Talent Daily.

Apple announced late last week it was bringing its Everyone Can Code program to 70 more colleges and universities throughout Europe, reported Sarah Perez from TechCrunch:¹

The program, which Apple designed to help students learn how to build apps, launched in May 2017 but was initially limited to the United States before expanding to other markets, including Australia and select institutions in Europe last November.

The expansion brings the full-year curriculum to institutions in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, and Portugal.

Facebook, too, is growing its digital skill-building initiatives in Europe, as reported by Reuters. Facebook is opening “community skills hubs” in Spain, Poland, and Italy and investing €10 million in France through its artificial intelligence research facility:²

The community hubs will offer training in digital skills, media literacy, and online safety to groups with limited access to technology, including old people, the young, and refugees.

Facebook also committed to having trained one million people and business owners by 2020.

In addition, Facebook committed to help small businesses and startups grow and hire through its Community Boost program in the European Union. The program’s goal is to help 100,000 small and mid-sized businesses by 2020.

These tech giants’ European community engagement programs are partly an effort to burnish their public relations on the continent

as EU regulators increasingly pressure them over suspected tax avoidance, privacy, and antitrust concerns. The programs are likely a long-term talent play as well, similar to Google’s recently announced partnership with Coursera to offer its internal IT training curriculum to the public as a certificate program.

In addition to generating goodwill and good press by addressing digital skills gaps and improving the employability of the entire workforce, these initiatives will create new pools of tech talent whose first choice of employer will often be the company that trained them. In this way, these companies strengthen their own long-term talent pipelines even as they train people who may end up working for their competitors.

If Facebook actually manages to train one million people through its community skills hubs in the next two years, even if only a fraction of those trainees ultimately take jobs at Facebook, that’s still a big direct payoff for a company where each high-performing employee can generate an enormous amount of value.

Want more of the latest in talent news? Visit and bookmark www.talentedaily.com.

¹ Sarah Perez, “Apple’s ‘Everyone Can Code’ Program Expands More Broadly in Europe,” TechCrunch, 19 January 2018, <https://techcrunch.com/2018/01/19/apples-everyone-can-code-program-expands-more-broadly-in-europe/>.

² Julia Fioretti, “Facebook to Open Digital Training Hubs in Europe,” Reuters, 21 January 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-facebook-europe/facebook-to-open-digital-training-hubs-in-europe-idUSKBN1FA179>.

L&D Innovators

Interview with Amanda Pacitti
and Bradley Dungca of Time Inc.



Amanda Pacitti

VP, Learning and Development

Amanda Pacitti is Vice President of Learning at Time Inc., where she leads a progressive, collaborative team that connects media people at brands like TIME, PEOPLE, and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED to new skills, ideas, and one another. Key learning programs include Managing@Time Inc. (a leadership program for managers), sales development training, digital skills workshops, and events. Before joining Time Inc., Amanda managed consumer-facing education at Mediabistro. She started her career as a newspaper reporter in Rhode Island.



Bradley Dungca

Associate Manager, Events and Learning and Development

Bradley Dungca is Associate Manager of Events and Learning and Development at Time Inc. In his role, he leads events and programming aimed at fostering employee engagement and building company culture. Bradley has been instrumental in implementing a number of company-wide initiatives, including Connectors@Time Inc., which we've recognized as a best practice for onboarding new hires. He also manages events for the executive team and oversees the company's employee resource groups. In addition to his role on the Learning and Development team, Bradley has worked on other Time Inc. events such as the FOOD & WINE Classic in Aspen, the ESSENCE Festival, the SPORTS ILLUSTRATED Sportsperson of the Year Awards, and more.

What is the state of onboarding at Time Inc.? What does the typical employee's onboarding experience look like?

Bradley: Onboarding for us begins when the candidate gets his or her offer letter, and it can last months into the new hire's tenure. Recruiting manages the administrative side of onboarding, but when new hires come in the door, it's up to us in L&D to make sure they are settled into the company. We've been thinking about how to make sure onboarding happens similarly in all our offices, whether in New York or elsewhere.

Amanda: We have different departmental onboarding programs that bring employees up to speed on their specific jobs. So when we talk about onboarding, we truly mean getting someone set up as an employee at the company. We make sure they have a high level of awareness of the company's mission, and how their team fits into that, and then cover all the logistical things that impact their initial impression of the company, such as arriving to a desk that is all set up and technology that works.

If you had to choose one, what is the main objective of onboarding at Time Inc.?

Amanda: So much of getting set up at Time Inc. is figuring out which teams do what. We work in such a matrixed environment, where you need to understand what other teams are responsible for and who to go to when you need something. We try to make sure new hires get to know colleagues on other teams during onboarding so they have touchpoints beyond their own boss or colleagues. The goal is really to make sure new hires understand how different teams fit into the greater organization.

The fact that we have an hour-long orientation is different from other companies, which often have a three- or four-day onboarding program. With a small and mighty team, we break down the experience into digestible chunks. So we start with a short burst of information in the hour-long orientation up front and then provide access to additional bite-size bursts of information down the line through our Connectors@Time Inc. program. The goal is to ensure new hires have separate access points after the initial orientation. We want to create a feel of constant accessibility.

What drove you to create your Connectors@Time Inc. program?

Bradley: In a lot of ways, Connectors@Time Inc. functions like a version of our mentorship program—one that facilitates organic connections. We wanted to create an experience that felt organic and accessible for the new hire, so we formalized the Connectors program in 2017. While the mentor is someone more senior than the new hire who can provide career advice, the Connector is really a peer. I pair a new hire with a Connector based on level—VPs with VPs, directors with directors, etc.

We certify employees who have been here for six months or more who want to offer more support and guidance to new hires. A new hire can come to their Connector for any question, from how to use a tool to where to get food in the area. It pairs people up to offer connections across the company, which creates an outlet for nuanced logistical questions that fall outside the realm of the HR partner.

Amanda: It's almost like an ambassador. It's a buddy program that we didn't want to call a buddy program. We wanted to be more descriptive and precise with our wording. The Connectors aren't meant to just be a casual contact and sounding board; they're supposed to help new hires really build and leverage a cross-organizational network.

How does the Connector role work? How does the Connector's role differ from a traditional peer buddy's or hiring manager's?

Bradley: The Connector is meant to be an additional resource for support that feels like a friend. We take time to make sure the experience feels as warm and accessible as it does important and impressive.

There are a lot of logistics that the Connector can explain to the new hire. For example, our office is large and sprawling, so the Connector might offer to give a tour of the building. The manager may have already done that, but what I've seen is that the manager may show things like meeting rooms or the offices of people the new hire might work with a lot. On the other hand, the tours with Connectors are more focused on amenity spaces—the auditorium, the terrace, and so on. While managers might offer higher-level or more specialized support pertaining to the new hire's direct role, Connectors can offer more one-on-one or company culture-related advice, such as introducing new hires to colleagues outside their team.

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Amanda: The Connectors program also gives us eyes and ears on the ground. We have our Connectors ask new hires how things are going. We make it really clear they're there to listen to the new hire's problems and challenges.

We take what we hear from Connectors as additional input for our decisions on how to improve and upgrade the onboarding program. Because the work environment is changing so quickly, we need onboarding to keep up, and Connectors have a front-row seat to how well onboarding is working for our new hires.

Can you describe an example of a successful Connector-new hire pairing? What makes it work?

Bradley: We aim to create vibrant relationships. We pair people who we hope will feel comfortable with each other, personally and professionally, so they can bring their own personality to the connection. The relationship should feel organic, genuine, and comfortable for both parties. This is key for new hires to feel comfortable seeking advice from their Connector in the way we intended.

In terms of structure, we encourage the Connector and new hire to have an initial coffee meeting, but we let them drive it from there. This allows for personalization based on what makes sense for both parties. Some new hires will meet with their Connector once and then never reach out again. Others really want to dig deep into the company's

culture and attend culture-building events. The new hires who really take advantage of the relationship are the ones I've seen get comfortable at the company in a shorter time frame. The people who are hungrier for the culture-building events and programs and getting networked into the company quicker are the ones who have Connector relationships that flourish.

How have you used Connectors to improve the onboarding experience overall?

Bradley: We routinely ask Connectors what questions new hires bring up in their conversations and interactions. If we see trends—like new hires' work locations aren't set up or they're having a persistent tech issue—we as L&D can figure out how to address that and work toward a solution.

Amanda: For example, we heard from Connectors there was confusion about how long it took to get a work phone—logistical things like that. So we added a segment to orientation, and our technology team set up ongoing office hours.

In another instance, we were making a lot of digital sales hires, and we found out the new hires needed more department-specific onboarding. So we were able to partner with Sales to launch a new digital sales onboarding program based on that feedback.

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How has the Connectors program been received so far?

Bradley: It's been well received. Upon gathering feedback from new hires, we often find they feel supported by having someone to talk to and bring up potential challenges with, or just having a friend at the company.

Amanda: The program is also really engaging for Connectors themselves. It gives ownership of the company culture to folks outside HR. For example, a sales leader might participate in our Connectors program and end up feeling like he or she has more of a voice in influencing the direction of the company culture because of it. Our message and philosophy is that everyone owns the culture, so including people throughout the company in onboarding employees is in line with that.

How are you evaluating the success of the program?

Bradley: A week after the initial coffee meeting between the Connector and new hire, I send a survey to the participants asking what issues came up, what topics they covered, and if there is anything the new hire wished they had talked about. We use that feedback to evaluate the program, in addition to verbal communication.

Amanda: It actually led us to partner with our data team to launch an improved onboarding survey. We'll be deploying the survey to new hires when they're a month in role and asking specific questions like “Do you feel like onboarding was helpful?” and “Did you get a Connector, and was he or she helpful for you?”

What advice would you give to peers who are trying to improve their onboarding programs without significant new investment?

Amanda: It's not about spending money; it's about setting the tone. You can do that with a team of one or many.

As an L&D team—and really as an HR team—we like our events to feel really warm, simple, and human, which is a credit to my boss, Greg Giangrande. There's always an opportunity to reset the tone of events you do as a company, and orientation and onboarding matter so much to how people feel about work.

If you're looking to improve onboarding, start with something really simple: have an outsider look at your orientation slides. Do they make sense? Talk through your speaking points. Do they make people feel proud to join the company? Are there people throughout the company who need exposure or who

represent the best parts of your culture? Ask them how they'd like to participate in welcoming staff, and position it as helping drive the culture. Ask people throughout the company what they wished they had when they started. It takes people from all departments to make something feel special.

The best thing you can do is remember to constantly refresh your programs. Schedule a bimonthly audit of your orientation and onboarding so you're constantly updating and checking in on how it feels.

Quick Wins

Personalizing Employee Development

Only 32% of employees believe their managers tailor coaching and development to their actual development needs. But the best managers take the Connector Manager approach to personalize employee development. Focus on the following quick wins to help managers at your organization act like a Connector Manager:

1. Help managers use empathy mapping to align their employee development approach with employees' true needs.

- Encourage managers to understand their employees' development experience before planning coaching and development interactions.
- Give managers our Guide to Understanding Your Employees' Development Needs to help them think through what their employees think, feel, see, hear, and do when approaching development opportunities.

2. Equip managers with tools to help their direct reports prioritize development activities.

- Help managers prepare their direct reports to have effective career conversations guided by prioritized career goals and development activities.
- Advise managers to give our Development Activity Prioritization Tool to their direct reports before career conversations.

3. Make it easy for managers to conduct employee-centric development conversations.

- Help managers focus on their employees' development needs to conduct employee-centric coaching conversations.
- Enable managers to assess their employee's development readiness and plan coaching and development conversations using our Guide to Conducting Employee-Centric Development Conversations.

4. Help managers monitor and continually develop their coaching capabilities.

- Ensure managers are having productive coaching conversations with their employees over time.
- Provide managers with our Coaching Journal to help them track their development interactions with employees and ensure progress is being made.

Note: To access the tools and resources in this article, visit our website or contact your account manager.

In Case You Missed It

Suggested Reading

To access these and other publications for L&D professionals, visit our website or contact your account manager.



What's New?

- Onboarding in the Digital Era
- 2018 Leadership Development Annual Report
- 2018 HIPO Development Benchmarking Report
- Webinar Replay: Agile HIPO Development
- 2018 Learning and Development Forecast



Talent Daily: Our Latest Blog Posts

- Walmart Workers Actually Like Their New Robot Coworkers
- Why Companies Might Not Be Getting the Best Out of Data Scientists
- AI Talent Is Scarce, but Just How Scarce Is It?
- Gartner's Peter Sondergaard on Technology's Future in the Workplace
- Amazon Hires Stanford Professor to Help Lead L&D Efforts

Connector Manager Curriculum

Now more than ever, L&D relies on the manager for employee development. This means managers are increasingly expected to take an “always on” approach to coaching, developing employees more often and across a broader range of skills. But this approach is not working, as most managers today are overwhelmed and remain ineffective at coaching and developing their employees.

To drive employee performance, the best L&D functions focus on developing and supporting Connector Managers, who personalize for employee resonance, power the team for peer development, and partner for best-fit connections. Effective Connector Managers improve employee performance by up to 26% and triple the likelihood of their employees being high performers.

Access the Connector Manager Curriculum today through our Manager and Employee Development Toolbox.

Building a World-Class HR Organization

Our HR offerings enable senior HR executives and their teams to drive corporate performance through their organization's talent strategy.

CEB Corporate Leadership Council™

cebglobal.com/public/corporate-leadership-council

- Employee Engagement
- HR Strategic Planning
- Performance Management
- Employment Value Proposition (EVP)
- HR Transformation
- Succession Management
- HR Metrics and Analytics
- Organizational Design
- Talent Management
- High-Potential Employees
- Organizational Management
- Workforce Planning
- HR Business Partners

CEB Total Rewards Leadership Council

cebglobal.com/public/total-rewards

- Total Rewards Strategy, Migration, and Measurement
- Total Rewards, Pay, and Benefits Plan Design and Employee Preferences
- Total Rewards, Pay, and Benefits Communications and Manager Engagement
- Pay for Performance, Including Reward and Recognition Programs
- Health Care Cost Containment, Reform Planning, and Informed Consumerism
- Wellness and Disease Management
- Global Total Rewards
- Total Rewards Functional Management

CEB Learning & Development Leadership Council

cebglobal.com/public/learning-development

- ROI of Learning Solutions
- L&D Strategy and Structure
- Leadership Development
- Leadership Transitions
- Coaching and People Management
- Building a Productive Learning Culture

CEB Asia HR Leadership Council

cebglobal.com/public/asia-hr

- Talent Strategies in Asia
- EVP
- Leadership Development
- Employee Engagement
- Retention
- HR Effectiveness

CEB Recruiting Leadership Council

cebglobal.com/public/recruiting

- Sourcing and Building Talent Pipelines
- Recruiter Performance
- Selection and Assessment
- Employment Branding
- Hiring Manager Partnerships
- Quality of Hire

Talent Management Offerings

CEB Workforce Surveys & Analytics

- Custom Employee Surveys
- Business Performance Analytics
- Manager Development Tools
- EVP Design and Rollout
- Total Rewards Optimization

CEB Metrics That Matter™

- Product Suites for Learning, Leadership, and Onboarding
- Modules Targeted to Specialized Domains and Business Needs
- Analytics Advisor Services

CEB TalentNeuron™

- LocationNeuron
- RecruiterNeuron
- DiversityNeuron
- CompetitorNeuron
- ForecastNeuron

CEB Talent Assessment

- Talent Acquisition Strategy and Assessment
- Talent Mobility Strategy and Assessment
- Talent Analytics: Competitive and Industry Benchmarking

CEB Leadership Academies

- CEB HR Leadership Academy
- CEB HR Analytics Leadership Academy
- CEB Talent Advisor Leadership Academy

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