



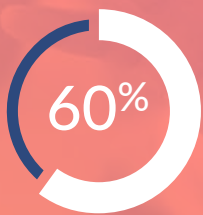
# EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING

6 top derailers of onboarding success, and how to avoid them.

# EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING

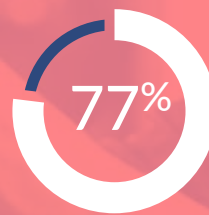
# in numbers

In our new hybrid working world, organisational agility is a must. The intimate connection between business strategy, customer service and employee experience is clearer than ever. A quick glance at the numbers reveals why employee onboarding has become a top priority for HR leaders:



60% of HR managers say onboarding employees remotely is the biggest challenge caused by the pandemic.

*Harvard Business Review*



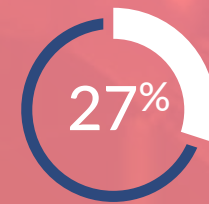
77% of companies with a formal onboarding process hit performance goals.

*FinancesOnline employment.*



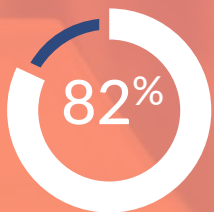
Around 20% of new hires leave within their first 45 days of employment.

*Human Capital Institute*



27% of organisations say that onboarding employees promptly is the hardest part of talent acquisition.

*Deloitte*



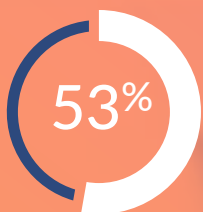
Successful employee onboarding can increase retention by 82%.

*Forbes*



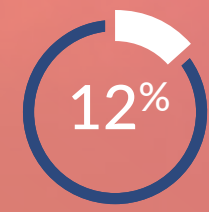
Research shows that a great onboarding experience can increase the chance of high long-term satisfaction by 2.6 times.

*SHRM*



World-class companies are 53% more likely to provide pre-boarding activities.

*Enboarder*



Only 12% of employees say their company has a great onboarding process.

*Harvard Business Review*

With the pandemic's disruption to business operations driving employee churn and business transformation, onboarding new employees has assumed a new urgency. Amid unprecedented competition for talent, HR professionals must make first impressions count.



## WHAT IS ONBOARDING?

Onboarding is the process of integrating a new employee into an organisation. But any HR professional knows there's a bit more to it than that. Onboarding begins at the recruitment stage, and typically stretches over the course of an individual's first year at a company. Recent studies indicate that new recruits typically undertake around fifty activities during their onboarding.

## WHY IS ONBOARDING IMPORTANT?

Studies show a clear statistical correlation between increases in employee engagement, improvements in customer service, and revenue growth (Medallia Institute). Great onboarding is linked with job satisfaction, efficacy and retention, and results in 18 times more committed staff (*BambooHR*).

Conversely, poor onboarding is a major cause of employee turnover, which can cost a company 100-300% of the employee's salary. One in five employees leave in their first 45 days of employment, but even if they stay, onboarding has a major impact on engagement throughout their tenure (HCI). 91% of people with an effective workplace introduction feel motivated at work, whilst only 29% of those with inadequate training feel engaged (*BambooHR*).



*Poor onboarding is a major cause of employee turnover.*

Despite its importance, we are not doing a good job at onboarding. Employee onboarding statistics show that most new hires think that their company's onboarding process was inefficient at getting them up to speed (*HBR*). According to organisational consultancy Gallup, only 12% of employees report a positive experience of their company's onboarding program.

## REAL WORLD IMPACTS OF ONBOARDING

With half the world's workforce seeking to change jobs due to the pandemic (*Microsoft*) it makes sense that 60% of HR managers say that remote onboarding is the biggest challenge they face (*TeamStage*). Onboarding programs can improve employee retention by as much as a quarter (*ClickBoarding*). However, statistics show that since the pandemic, employee satisfaction with onboarding has plummeted by 10% (*Perceptyx*).

Recent studies also reveal that as many as one in five new hires aren't satisfied with their employment due to a disappointing onboarding experience, creating problems with productivity, work culture, and engagement. To remedy this, companies are investing more in the software that supports remote onboarding. 2022 figures suggest that the market for employee onboarding software is set to expand by 2.5% a year (*VentureBeat*).

As a leader in HR, you understand the critical connection between the employee experience, your company's strategy, and customer service. To help you drive maximum value from employee onboarding, this guide looks at the 6 top derailers of onboarding success, and how to avoid them.



**Just 12% of employees report a positive experience of their company's onboarding program.**

**Good onboarding results in 18 times more committed staff.**

# 6

## 6 DERAILERS OF ONBOARDING SUCCESS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

One in five new employees will leave in the first 45 days of employment, at great expense to their new employer. As Talent Acquisition managers struggle to secure candidates for key roles amid a global labour shortage, and remote work continues to be the norm for many, firms need to upgrade their onboarding. Here's how to avoid six key derailers and catalyse your onboarding to propel your business forward.

### **1** MISALIGNED MANAGEMENT

Onboarding sets the bar for the level of motivation new recruits will feel throughout their tenure at your company. Studies show that intrinsically motivated people experience higher engagement (*Furnham*). Yet even for the most self-motivated individual, thorough onboarding is crucial to ensure that their skills and strengths are applied to business needs.

Research by Gallup shows that the effectiveness of an onboarding program is largely contingent on the line manager's active involvement in the process. When the manager participates in the new recruit's onboarding, employees are 3.4 times as likely to feel the process was successful (SHRM).

## HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR MANAGERS MOTIVATE NEW STARTERS?

You can help your managers support new starters with a Workplace Personality assessment, which measures new hires' degree of conscientiousness, among other traits. Learning how self-motivated new reports are to achieve goals and overcome difficulties equips managers to pitch onboarding activities at the right level to maximise employees' natural motivation. Connecting new hires' work with company success will also boost motivation.

Psychometric assessments also help new employees to better understand themselves in the context of their new workplace. Understanding their preferred style of communication with a Behavioural assessment for instance can contextualise employees' behaviour and help them realise their potential. Providing these insights also shows new recruits that they are not only assets for your company, but also valued as individuals with unique motivations and values.



*You can help your managers support new starters with a Workplace Personality assessment.*

**"Onboarding is a very emotional experience. It's actually more like a journey than an event. It's a series of moments of interactions."**

*Danny Lee, Learning and Development Consultant, Gallup*

## Fact File:

### HOW TO GET ONBOARDING

### RIGHT WITH THE DISC MODEL OF

### PERSONALITY AND BEHAVIOUR

Thomas International's namesake Thomas Hendrickson developed William Marston's 'DISC' model of human behaviour to reveal how an individual typically behaves in a work context.

The grid below is your cheat sheet to successful onboarding and ongoing engagement for every behavioural preference. Behavioural assessments (including Thomas' Behaviour assessment) often contain more detailed onboarding guides to help managers motivate new recruits.

HOW TO:	DOMINANCE	INFLUENCE	STEADINESS	COMPLIANCE
<b>ONBOARD</b>	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign tough projects</li> <li>• Encourage healthy competition</li> <li>• Apply time pressure</li> </ul>	Recognise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise success</li> <li>• Assign tasks that involve other people</li> <li>• Facilitate collaboration</li> </ul>	Appreciate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide stability</li> <li>• Assign methodical tasks</li> <li>• Encourage teamwork</li> </ul>	Protect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define clear objectives</li> <li>• Assign logical, analytical tasks</li> <li>• Check understanding</li> </ul>
<b>ENGAGE</b>	Focus on targets - Negotiate	Focus on people - Facilitate social cohesion	Focus on listening - Maintain open communication	Focus on facts - Be systematic
<b>MANAGE</b>	Be direct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep them challenged</li> </ul>	Be democratic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise achievements</li> </ul>	Be approachable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer sincere praise</li> </ul>	Be supportive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss improvements</li> </ul>

## 2 EXCESSIVE STRESS

Whether they are keen to please, show off their skills or attempt to build rapport, new recruits often spend the first few weeks at a new company constantly demonstrating their value. The pressure of heightened expectations on all sides can drive feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, preventing new employees from operating at their best.

A Totem survey of 1000 employees found that anxiety occupies much of the mental capacity of new joiners. 57% of new joiners felt anxious the day before starting their new role, rather than confident. 29% were most concerned about meeting expectations, and 22% were more worried about meeting new colleagues. Although some stress can boost performance, excessive stress negatively impacts performance and wellbeing.



*New recruits often spend the first few weeks at a new company constantly demonstrating their value.*

### HOW CAN YOU KEEP NEW EMPLOYEES' STRESS LEVELS OPTIMAL?

It's important for managers to understand what triggers stress when onboarding new recruits. Since everyone has a different tolerance for stress, and different triggers, a Workplace Personality assessment can add value during onboarding by revealing an employee's level of 'adjustment', or degree of resilience in stressful situations.

Further deepening these insights, an Emotional Intelligence (EI) assessment will show where an individual's stress will manifest and how they are likely to respond under pressure. Especially helpful for more senior hires and high-pressure roles, EI assessments can be invaluable tools for developing the self-awareness that builds resilience.

**"Half of the employees suffering from work-related stress said that this increased due to the pandemic." *Health and Safety Executive***



## 3 LACK OF IN-ROLE CREATIVITY

Creativity is linked with 9 of the top 10 skills that global executives say are essential for the future (*World Economic Forum*). 60% of respondents believe internal employees to be the most important partners in delivering people-powered innovation (PwC). Yet a Gallup survey of 16,500 employees found that just 35% of workers are given a chance to stay creative at work.

Though highly prized in today's fast-changing markets, disruptive ideas are discouraged by 40% of leaders due to fear of failure (*PA Consulting*). However, studies show that the opportunity to be creative increases job satisfaction (*The Economic Times*) and retention (*Bradley*). A recent Harvard Business Review report shows that when given creative freedom by their managers, employees' job satisfaction spikes by 63%, engagement by 55%, and focus by 58%.



*Whilst some new hires will be engaged by innovation, others prefer protocol.*

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT NEW RECRUITS' NEW IDEAS?

Whilst some new hires will be engaged by innovation, others prefer protocol. Knowing which an individual favours is crucial in both the recruitment and onboarding phases of the employee lifecycle. A Workplace Personality assessment can shed light on how much new information an individual likes, helping their managers to understand and meet their degree of need for novelty.

A new recruit's integration with other team members also has a major impact on engagement. Diverse teams have been shown to be more innovative and successful than homogenous ones (*HBR*), yet the anxiety of joining a new team can limit the transmission of new ideas. A Teams audit shows the distribution of personality styles in a group, helping to bridge differences and convert them into innovations that deliver value for your business.

**"Creativity is the single most important skill in the world."**

*LinkedIn Learning*

## 4 LACK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Everyone knows that companies with a culture of trust perform better (*Edmonson*). Onboarding is a challenging period during which trust is built between new recruits and existing personnel and becomes even more difficult when working remotely. A study of Slack engineers uncovered a need for greater psychological support among new recruits, who needed to overcome anxiety in order to be able to learn effectively and confidently take ownership of their new role.

Yet despite the clear need for psychological safety among new recruits, a McKinsey survey conducted during the pandemic showed that only a handful of business leaders often demonstrate the positive behaviours that create psychological safety for their workforce. Perhaps as a result, a study by Perceptyx found that new joiners in the past year are less able to cope with the pace of work (72% versus 78%) and overcome setbacks (71% versus 77%) than in previous years.

**"Transparency, openness and clarity are essential – and those come easiest when the new starter, their team and their manager keep talking."**

*Gillian Ward, Head of People, Thomas International*



*The anxiety of joining a new team can limit the transmission of new ideas.*

## HOW CAN YOU CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION?

Research by McKinsey shows that a positive team climate—in which team members value one another’s contributions—is the most important driver of a team’s psychological safety. Just 43% of employees currently report a positive climate within their team (*McKinsey*). A Teams audit can be a useful tool for mapping the behavioural styles within a team, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity. This can be even more effective for building trust in remote teams.

It is also crucial to make new hires feel welcome in their new team. Psychometric assessments can help to determine the degree and focus of an individual’s need for support. Providing Emotional Intelligence (EI) assessments for new recruits can help to tap into the value of vulnerability by making it safe to acknowledge emotional challenge. EI assessments reflect an individual’s ability to manage the emotions of themselves and others. They can then act as a guide for improved anxiety management during onboarding, helping to instil psychological safety.

**“Psychological safety is a must for any growing business. As the managing director of three fast-growing businesses, I’ve seen it with my own eyes. There’s no doubt in my mind that it’s a big factor in successful scale-ups.”**

*Dominic Monkhouse, Business coach*

## 5 MISALIGNED TASK ALLOCATION

The past few years have brought changes that were unthinkable until they disrupted business forever. Clearly, the way that we onboard employees needs to change too. Yet just as individuals have adjusted differently to the disruption, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to onboarding. Where some employees want highly structured onboarding, other roles and behavioural profiles work better within flexible, evolving processes.

Onboarding is a structured change process, and like any other business transformation, needs to be managed so that the right level of ambiguity is maintained. Leaving employees to figure things out for themselves is not advisable until both manager and employee are confident. At the same time, asking new employees about the level of support they need is a low-pressure way of encouraging them to start assuming their new responsibilities. Since tolerance for ambiguity varies, organisations also need to remain agile enough to tailor onboarding experiences to the individual.



*There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to onboarding.*

**"New employees who don't understand their role cost US and UK companies approximately £30 billion every year." IDC**

## HOW CAN YOU ALLOCATE NEW STARTERS' TASKS THAT MATCH THEIR STRENGTHS?

A Workplace Personality assessment provides detailed insights into a new hire's preferred approach to, and likely performance in, different types of tasks. Explicitly measuring an individual's tolerance for ambiguity, the assessment can help managers structure onboarding activities in the way that will be most motivational for that person. This can be especially useful for understanding how someone prefers to work when you are only seeing them on video calls or through chat windows.

At a time of acute skills shortages, you want to know which of your candidates have the potential to onboard successfully, learn the required skills quickly, and steer your organisation to greater heights. Aptitude assessments show how quickly someone can adapt to new situations, drive change and add value to your organisation. They look at speed and accuracy in areas such as problem solving, error detection, numeracy, spatial awareness and verbal reasoning, providing vital insights to enhance onboarding.

**“Employees who know what they need to accomplish are 6 times more likely to be engaged by their jobs.” *Gallup***

# 6

## INAPPROPRIATE INCENTIVISATION

People are motivated and incentivised by different things. Organisations and managers need to be able to harness the competitive drive of one employee, whilst helping more extroverted new hires to build rapport with colleagues, for instance. Alignment on the ‘psychological contract’ between employer and employee is as important as negotiating the right package, except that this negotiation takes place over the duration of an employee’s onboarding. This contract comprises the individual’s expectations, beliefs, ambitions and obligations.

The wave of resignations that followed the onset of remote working suggests that human connection is a common source of motivation at work. A Perceptyx study found that employees who onboarded during Covid were less likely to feel part of a team. Companies that encourage teamwork report 19% higher sales and a 7% increase in customer engagement (*Gallup*). Beyond financial incentives and personal attainment, joining a new company is in large part about forging connections with a new social group. Facilitating these connections is core to successful onboarding.



***You want to know which of your candidates have the potential to onboard successfully.***

## HOW CAN YOU ENSURE YOUR NEW RECRUITS ARE PROPERLY INCENTIVISED?

Familiarise new hires with the formal performance incentive model and the path to earning these rewards. Behavioural assessments can be useful tools for predicting and optimising team fit, and also reveal what kind of incentives will be most motivational for the individual. For instance, someone who has a high degree of 'Influence' in their profile will seek public praise, while more dominant types typically seek power and promotions.


An Employee Engagement assessment can help you to understand trends and patterns of engagement, along with the spread of management styles in your organisation. This can be a useful starting point for re-evaluating employee recognition and reward schemes. Engagement assessments also identify issues that may be impacting productivity and wellbeing that could contribute to employee churn. These insights can be vital for organisations looking to incentivise their people in the wake of the pandemic.



*Behavioural assessments can be useful tools for predicting and optimising team fit.*

**"The 'purpose' element of onboarding is where you begin to lay the foundation of success for your new team member."**

*Mitch Gray, How to Hire and Keep Great People*



# EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING IN THE REAL WORLD

*"We've deployed something like twenty thousand psychometric tests across the business and it's meant that we've been able to scale from 500 people to around 750 through Covid. We see a strong correlation between someone who is in an above average percentile of the Aptitude assessment and performance at interview. It is a strong indicator that an individual has the competence to be able to move through the process."*

**Iain Kendrick**

**PEOPLE DIRECTOR**

**CANONICAL**

*"Thomas' Behaviour assessment helped us to understand better the unique values, strengths and limitations of each team member. We understand [each individual's] character and focus behaviour accordingly!"*

**George Georgoulas**

**HEAD OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**METRO AEBE**

*"Thomas' PPA and Teams helped us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our members and identify new potential leaders within the team. It allowed us to develop and grow the team in a sustainable and efficient manner."*

**Aleksandra Popivoda**

**MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**TELESIGN**

# OUR ASSESSMENTS

Psychometric assessments provide an objective source of rich information about how to maximise an individual's performance at work. They can help to inform hiring and development decisions, and provide a means of increasing self-awareness within your organisation. Start onboarding your people successfully today.



## PERSONALITY

Our Personality Assessment is grounded in the 'Big 5' model, assessing traits that predict professional success and risk for derailment. With their personality profile, you can onboard new hires to maximise their potential for workplace success and achievement.



## GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

The General Intelligence or Aptitude Assessment (GIA) provides an objective picture of a candidate or employee's speed of cognition and leadership potential. The assessment can also assist in removing bias from recruitment processes and widening your talent pool.



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Our Emotional Intelligence Assessment measures 15 emotional traits concerning wellbeing, self-control, emotionality and sociability. These traits will help you to provide targeted support that will enhance your highfliers' ability to deliver organisational outcomes.



## BEHAVIOUR

Our Behavioural Assessment provides deep insights into a person's behavioural preferences, strengths, limitations and communication style. This helps to increase self-awareness and provides a vocabulary for discussing nuanced behavioural dynamics.



## ENGAGE

Our Employee Engagement Assessment establishes the level of engagement within your organisation, and identifies strategies to improve employee wellbeing, motivation and productivity. This helps to identify the areas in which to focus engagement initiatives.

Visit [Thomas.co](https://www.thomas.co) now for more information.



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Look out for our other 10-Minute Takeaway guides to HR's most pressing challenges, including:

- employee **Engagement and Motivation** post-pandemic
- building and nurturing **High Performing Teams** in a hybrid environment
- employee **Retention** during during 'The Great Resignation'
- delivering on your **Diversity and Inclusion** goals
- **Leadership** in a complex and changing environment
- **Recruiting for Potential** in a skill shortage
- **Succession Planning** for an uncertain future
- **Recruiting Leaders** in a labour shortage.
- **Beating Bias** in recruitment.

Alternatively, we'd love to hear from you. So get in touch for a one-to-one chat on **01628 470980** or **info@thomas.co.uk**.

You can learn more about our **psychometric assessments**

[here →](#)

You can also explore the new-and-improved **Thomas Perform**

[here →](#)

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