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Case Study of Otis: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Mattering in Onboarding Practices

by

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An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Management.

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Abstract

It was during the Summer of 2021 that I completed a sales internship at Otis Elevator Company in Nashville, Tennessee. Throughout this time, other interns and I conducted a project regarding the diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and mattering (DEIBM) aspects of onboarding. After presenting ways that their company could improve the process, I wanted to dive deeper into the many different topics that this can cover for all organizations. It is important to note just how crucial the onboarding process as well as the variety of applicants that employers should understand the pain points of is when it comes to retention as well as profitability. Becoming accustomed to a company's culture and environment plays a significant role in determining future endeavors within their organization. Based on personal experience and extensive research, many recommendations were found in order to incorporate DEIBM practices into a successful onboarding process for new employees.

Introduction

The onboarding process is a pivotal moment for new employees. Becoming accustomed to a company's culture and environment plays a significant role in determining future endeavors and experiences within their organization. It is important that diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and mattering (DEIBM) are all aspects that are considered when onboarding. Being sure to allow a sense of comfort and security for the newcomer will set them up for success. There are many different aspects of this topic that can be broken down and investigated. This could include minority applicants, those of diverse cultural backgrounds, and many other categories as well.

After reflecting on a previous hybrid sales internship in Nashville, Tennessee during the Summer of 2021 at Otis Elevator Company, I was grateful to undergo an onboarding experience that was smooth and effective. Otis Worldwide Corporation is an American company that develops, manufactures, and markets elevators, escalators, moving walkways, and related equipment. They are the world's leading company for elevator and escalator manufacturing, installation, and service. There was a certain level of DEI in my internship with Otis, however, it felt like more could be done to highlight this during our onboarding process. This is a critical analysis based on an internship where recommendations are to be made in order to emphasize the importance of an effective onboarding process incorporating DEIBM aspects. Tackling a proactive approach to this rather than reactive is the goal. The push for companies to invest in onboarding and what it could mean to the individual is more important now than ever. Focusing on the different struggles that one might face and ways to improve this is key for a business to thrive with a solid foundation. DEI begins in the hiring process.

Why Onboarding is Important

Employee orientation has taken on a whole new meaning. It is important to discuss what exactly onboarding is and what it means for different companies. Every business has their own perception of onboarding and how long this process takes. It includes the initial offer and acceptance, the waiting period before joining the team, training, and orientation, and the first quarter of putting what the new hire has learned into action. The new employee is being integrated into the company culture as well as utilizing tools to be a productive member. To

better categorize the four different phases of onboarding they can be described as pre-onboarding, welcoming new hires, role-specific training, and easing the transition into their new role (Arun).

According to Weisberg, successful onboarding involves proactively covering compliance, clarification, culture, and connection (Weisberg). Compliance is the lowest level and includes learning the basic rules and policies of the organization as well as filling out all the necessary paperwork. Clarification is designed to ensure that the newcomer really understands their roles and responsibilities. This can be described by explaining upcoming projects and how they can best contribute to the success of the company. Culture explains the norms and traditions that might be present within the organization. This is accomplished by giving a tour of the facility, explaining where the individual fits and how the company operates as a whole. Lastly, connection is the highest level and perhaps the most important. Connection bridges the gap between the new employee and their coworkers by developing relationships.

There are five different types of onboarding that should be demonstrated. These include onboarding regarding operations, knowledge, performance, social, and talent. The operations section falls within the compliance range of the four Cs. This is the most basic level where tools and equipment are provided to the new employee in order to get them up and running. Knowledge demonstrates clarification by transferring knowledge to do with the job and the means to access specific information in a smooth way. Performance onboarding is about setting the new individual up with short-term objectives and milestones that are achievable from day one on the job. Social is, of course, making those different connections and recognizing cultural norms within the organization. Finally, talent onboarding is showing that these different skills have been retained and are being utilized. At the recent CIPD Festival of Work event, delegates were asked about what onboarding processes they currently had in place and on average people were carrying out only 2 of the 5 different types ("Onboarding – The Five"). For many organizations out there, certainly more can be done. Overall, the purpose of this is to improve new hire retention and help individuals adapt to organizational practices.

When completing my internship this past summer with Otis Elevator, there was much dedication geared toward our three-month program. This is a prime of example of where one can see onboarding practices in action. Upon arrival, I received a package with Otis gear, such as a notepad and pen to get me ready and excited to start. I then was given directions on where to go and who to meet for my first day. During the first week, onboarding was filled with getting technology set up on my new work computer and phone, learning our schedule and projects for the summer, and meeting everyone in the office. Everyone was very friendly, and even took me out to lunch, which made me feel very welcome and comfortable. Although these procedures were beneficial, the lack of incorporating in DEIBM aspects was what I noticed. In such a short span of time it may be hard to highlight these areas, but it is necessary.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Mattering

DEI has shown to lead to greater creativity and innovation in the workplace (Gittens-Ottley). Having an inclusive environment allows for employees to feel more engaged with the work that they are doing as well as the people around them. DEI is not about race and gender, it is about the entire person and the many differences that they bring to the table, as well as representation of minority groups. As more inclusive considerations have evolved, belonging and mattering (BM) have also been added to this scope. Diversity itself is all the ways in which

people differ. Equity is fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. One's own identity cannot predict the outcome of their treatment. Lastly, inclusion is when a variety of people have power, a voice, and decision-making authority. While keeping these things in mind, candidate experience will be improved and their stay with the company should be prolonged. By being able to slow down, make necessary adjustments, and include your new hire, a meaningful experience will be created.

Sonja Gittens-Ottley gives many different ideas regarding this aspect of the onboarding process (Gittens-Ottley). For starters, providing the complete, overarching story is a great approach to help one feel in-the-know. Have a road map available with the team's current priorities and goals as well as the direction that the company is heading in the future. It is also important to note that each business follows a unique and personal language or form of communication. A helpful tool for this aspect might include having a handbook or glossary accessible with certain terms and acronyms that are essential to communicating with colleagues. Along with making these resources an impactful use of their time, establishing a "buddy" system would provide more support and detail. This would be having an employee who will be the committed and dedicated "buddy" for someone to call and ask questions to while showing them the ropes.

It can sometimes be hard to find the balance between giving a new hire too much responsibility to take on or not enough. Of course, they are wanting to feel included and like they are being a beneficial asset to the team while learning their roles and responsibilities. For that reason, celebrating small wins such as working on smaller projects will allow for that sense of confidence and belonging. Lastly, inclusion during the onboarding process should always be evaluated by receiving feedback. Conducting online surveys as well as having a more formal, in-person meeting to gather results will bring to light many new opportunities. Who better to get this information from than the new hires that just participated in being added to the company? This way, improvements and adjustments can be made moving forward (Gittens-Ottley).

Belonging and mattering are two newly added concepts beyond the diversity, equity, and inclusion scope. It is important to address these as they are just as valuable when it comes to employees. Belonging in the workplace means feeling valued through positive connections with others and being able to bring the authentic self to work (Wallace). People are always looking to develop a sense of connection in their personal and work lives because that is how they validate their feelings and fulfill the need of belonging. This is what allows employees to feel like they can be their authentic selves without fear of different treatment or punishment—and it has a major impact on performance and retention. A high sense of belonging means higher retention rate, reduced illness, and highly productive and innovative teams. Mattering is a feeling created by human need. It is demonstrated through self-identity, self-esteem, support, control, purpose, meaning and belonging to a team/group/organization. Supportive environments even trigger different responses in the brain, leading to better collaboration and problem solving. Belonging and mattering are the crucial pieces of the puzzle, leading to psychological safety and employee engagement. This area is important because it takes on a different point-of-view, adding more substance to the once held DEI concept (Wallace).

Empowering Diverse People

There are some powerful statistics that should be considered when it comes to analyzing the empowerment of diverse people. For example, companies that rank higher for ethnic and

cultural diversity are 35% more likely to produce above-average profits compared to those with low diversity. In addition to this, organizations that are gender diverse are 15% more likely to be profitable (Chaplin). Decision making and employee engagement are both increased when a diverse workforce is present. This data supports what every Human Resource manager already instinctively knows: that their company's culture and financial success will be better off with greater diversity. Attracting those of diverse backgrounds is not always as easy as it may seem though. Just because a company hires for variety does not mean that they will retain an equality focused group. Therefore, gearing new hires for success and approaching the process depending on their profile and specific needs is key in onboarding. This means getting started with targeted diversity efforts and empowering new employees (Chaplin).

Otis is committed to creating an environment where all employees can be themselves and share ideas openly (Diversity, Equity). All qualified applicants receive consideration for employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or veteran status, age, or any other protected class according to applicable law. At Otis, their international presence allows for a strong community that is diverse in both culture and thought. Women currently represent more than one third of Otis executives globally and 40% in the United States with Judy Marks as the current CEO. In addition to this, the Human Rights Campaign named Otis one of the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality" (Diversity, Equity). In 2020, the company launched Our Commitment to Change, a framework with different pillars to ensure all colleagues feel safe, welcome, and heard. The pillars include conducting an independent review to uncover and eliminate biases, creating advisory groups to ensure transparency and maintain accountability, volunteerism, and promoting mental health practices. Lastly, 27% of executives are ethnically and racially diverse as of 2021. Otis Elevator Company is committed to creating an inclusive culture that encourages and celebrates the diversity required to innovate, connect, and thrive (Diversity, Equity).

Groups to be Considered

The focus is the best practices for onboarding persons with differences in a proactive way. This is because the end goal of this process is the same, which is to set new employees (permanent, temporary, or interns) up for success at a company. But, since everyone is different in their own ways, coming from many cultures and backgrounds, different approaches must be taken to get there. These categories could be a wide range of things and too many to mention. Being more specific to some of these groups might include onboarding for younger employees, international transfers, those with disabilities, and tons more. This is an important challenge and concept that every single company faces, so it is crucial to be equipped with the right knowledge and tools to make this experience as beneficial as possible for both sides. Although generic onboarding has several quality and non-prescribed ways to improve point of hire from the get-go, these categorizations to be considered will take a further dive into the most effective onboarding practices for certain groups of people ranging from gender, age, and beliefs. Regarding underrepresented groups at Otis Elevator Company, some information is case sensitive as it is difficult to share certain experiences.

Onboarding for Disabled Applicants

Aimie Ye, SEO Manager at GoCo software company, takes a dive into accommodating the needs of those who face living day to day life with their conditions (Ye). This could include that of visual impairment, deafness, autism, a misunderstood community including transgender, as well as many other categories. To complete the interview process, onboard, and successfully perform job duties assistance should be provided in accordance with the ADA guidelines. If unsure about how to build ADA compliance with the onboarding process, the best thing to do is to speak to a disability access consultant. They are affordable and can vastly improve processes that might be lacking. Being able to support those with certain disabilities and differences will allow for the individual to feel welcome no matter the circumstance.

One way to address this idea would be to not solely rely on written onboarding materials for the new hire. Having information presented in multiple formats such as audio and visual as well is much more effective. This also goes for employee handbook policies, clearly outlining that Human Resources is to be contacted should you need any accommodations. Job descriptions should accurately reflect responsibilities so this should be addressed on the front end and eliminate discrepancies moving forward. Communication regarding special events, outings, or other non-normative workdays should be given at least a month in advance. It is possible that spontaneous or surprising circumstances may not be very considerate to those who value having a predictable daily schedule. At Otis, information was presented in multiple formats while job descriptions were also thoroughly explained. Understanding the pain points associated with specific disabilities and differences gives more insight for the employer.

Going straight to the source and asking for the employee's perspective on what assistance they are requesting is a wonderful way to get honest feedback and open the conversation (Ye). Partnering these new hires with an online mentor is highly recommended as well. The digital mentor can provide advice and support in relation to the work role, company culture, and any other solvable questions one might have. Existing employees should be made aware beforehand to avoid disability and difference terminology issues that might arise. Anticipating these things and their needs will set up the office to be involved and comfortable with colleague interactions. Current infrastructure should be examined for accessibility whether that be having handicapped parking available or a nice and quiet office space. Going even further, computer and communication technology accessibility is especially important as well. Alternative input devices, screen reading software, screen magnification, telephone amplification, and many more resources should be made available. At Otis, handicap parking was available, and entrances were wheelchair accessible as well. No matter the disability or difference, being prepared is the number one priority for any company (Ye).

Remote Employee Onboarding

With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping across the nation, more people are working from home now more than ever. It is essential that steps are taken to fulfill remote employees with the same positive experience that they would gain from physically being in the office. Some have returned to the workplace since then while some will permanently remain online. There has been some insight given on some of the best practices for this transition (Boyarsky).

Starting early is essential in any onboarding process, although it is even more prevalent when introducing remote employees. Up to three weeks prior to their start date, try sending different links to the business social media platforms or information about purchasing company gear to get the individual excited about joining the team. Once getting up and running, an IT

orientation should be of utmost importance. All passwords and access to different software such as video conferencing and messaging applications should be taken care of immediately. There are plenty of different technology and software platforms that should be made available. It is important to close the security and control gaps in remote work set-up. The Virtual Private Network (VPN) should be able to handle the large influx of connections as people access company software from their workspaces at home. Multi-factor authentication should be put in place to monitor what employees and customers have access to. Machines will also need properly configured firewalls as well as intrusion prevention software. Modernizing network architectures, such as shifting to iCloud storage and investing in a solid technical infrastructure, will pay off. Lastly, communication with employees regarding secure practices like encryption of home routers and Wi-Fi networks, prompt installation of updates, and the confidentiality of printed and digital information are all things to address. To reduce the risks of remote work over the long term, consider adopting these security standards and solutions (COVID-19: Making).

It is common for remote employees to feel a sense of loneliness just from being isolated at their home workspace. That is what these different tips and tricks aim to improve by encouraging employee collaboration. Another thing a remote employee seeks is one-on-one time with their manager to receive a timeline of action items that does not just end after the first week. While working a hybrid internship, I was able to work remote from home as well as be in the office. Otis provided access to a VPN connection while out of the office as well as IT help along the way. According to Katherine Boyarsky, “employees with proper support during onboarding are 54% more productive as new hires as opposed to those who do not.” She also states that those employees who experience a bad onboarding experience are twice as likely to seek out another job (Boyarsky).

Onboarding for Different Age Groups

Onboarding for different age groups includes those of both the younger and older generations. When it comes to onboarding younger employees, 1 in 3 fresh graduates quit their jobs in less than a year (Sansan). With the transition from college graduation to going out into the real world, this can be a huge step. These individuals are usually terrified and anxious when entering the workforce at the bottom of the food chain. Creating a great first impression with your onboarding process will make the new hire feel more committed to the organization and its culture. One way to do this would be to set aside a small budget in the first week for different groups of colleagues to take the individual out for lunch. This will allow themselves to become familiarized in their new location as well as build connections within the office. Another helpful tip could be to allow for younger generations to work remotely every now and then, being flexible with their schedules in and out of the office. Recent college graduates have undergone the COVID-19 pandemic and have had to shift to an online environment once before in which they have become more comfortable. Sansan also notes that showing employees that you care through recognizing a job well done, providing learning opportunities, and making leadership accessible will demonstrate a place that new hires won't want to leave.

Companies must allow these younger employees to do what they have been trained to do all their lives up to this point, study. Investing in internal learning tools and training modules that are self-conducted is going to be highly effective in setting them up for success. Give them time to listen, digest, respond, and repeat. These individuals also have tendencies to want to impress their new management team. For this reason, a coworker mentor, or some sort of outlet for them

to ask their “dumb” questions will retain confidence. Opportunities for them to be social with each other is also necessary. After just recently graduating, they may feel as though their time for social interactions with friends is officially over. Inviting team members to different mixers and events will keep up the excitement all throughout the office. “The recent college grads may be a separate breed of worker, but their needs are very basic” (Vaughn).

Younger employees also include different interns that a business may have for a short and fixed period of time. They will still need to go through a formal onboarding process which may look a tad different than usual. Interns should be contacted prior to their start day with a schedule that is clear and concise outlining their time with the company as well as the projects they will work on. Even sending some company gear and swag will get them excited for joining the team. Providing help filling out different forms would be particularly useful as the individual may not be familiar with employment terms and tax documents. The intern will need access to an email and software accounts to stay connected which is something the IT team might set up beforehand for an easy transition. Those that work with the company full-time should be made aware of the intern and prompted to introduce themselves, answer questions, and make them feel as comfortable as possible. These things will help interns adjust well to their new roles, perform their tasks effectively, and get the most out of their internships (Onboarding interns). Fitting into this specific group as a young intern, I was given many opportunities through Otis such as these which allowed for a smooth transition.

Transitioning from younger employees, onboarding elders is something we must give attention to as well. With how much technology has advanced over the years, older generations are generally perceived as not being very tech savvy compared to those that are younger. Aican Bektas, in his article, “Senior-Friendly Technology: Onboarding Elderly Users,” highlights the statistic that 17% of North America is over the age of 65 (Bektas). Four-in-ten seniors now own smartphones, and out of these, 76% use the internet several times a day. Tech companies though, do not appear to pay much attention to this demographic. Innovation should be all-inclusive and aimed to empower the aging population instead of leaving them on the sideline. The rate of elders that are becoming more familiar with participating online is consistently growing. Their ability to adopt new capabilities is impressive, even if a little guidance is needed along the way.

Keeping older generations in mind, effective communication will allow pain points and values to be better understood. By addressing the importance of the software that these employees are learning to use, it will help keep them interested and engaged. Taking it slow is somewhat of an obvious tip, but thorough walkthroughs will ensure proficiency in a progressive way. Avoiding jargon, technical terms, and using simple vocabulary instead is important to make sure that information is being understood. Templates should be provided and made readily available whenever possible, to minimize the need for extra steps and to get as close as possible to a solution. Mentioning internet safety is also vital as some elders may not be aware of the dangers that come along with using technology. This could include having a training session regarding data protection, secure payment, and privacy. Finally, being sure to include and involve them in onboarding ideation and conception will allow leaders to notice what works and what does not. This could include gathering feedback, running tests, monitoring usage, and holding focus groups. Senior users are a valuable demographic for tech companies to address (Bektas).

Onboarding for Female Executives

An important aspect that companies should consider is hiring those of the female gender. It has been reported that women tend to over-prepare and underestimate their abilities (Chaplin). To combat this, onboarding should aim to close this confidence gap as well as create competitive advantages. When it comes to confidence in the workplace, this should start before the actual work does. For this reason, many helpful manuals and opportunities should be provided for the new female hires to level with existing employees on knowledge fronts. This could also include providing some sort of counseling resource for females to take advantage of when they are having those feelings of doubt. This does not need to be an on-site session as the individual may feel uncomfortable but having an anonymous resource to contact outside of the workplace that is already covered cost-wise would be beneficial. In addition to this, having a separate quiet space that is accessible throughout the day at the actual office building could be used as a breath of fresh air.

These female executives should be paired up with someone of high respect within the organization who displays the company values well. In addition to this, goals should be explicitly outlined, although this goes for all new hires. Only about 50% of employees know what is expected of them in the workplace, which is something that needs to be reduced (Chaplin). In the first few senior leadership meetings that the individual attends, ask for insights and opinions to show that their contributions are wanted and respected. In the United States, only 16% of executive team members are women (Women on board). There is a significant gap between the benefits women want, and the benefits men think are important. For example, women rank parental leave 3rd most important while men rank it 10th when it comes to benefit programs. It is crucial to be active rather than passive in tailoring the onboarding process to adhere to women's unique wants and needs. Only 79 women are promoted to manager for every 100 men (Women on board). Female executives are underrepresented, and it is onboarding's responsibility to prevent their representation from burning out completely.

Onboarding for Single Parents

Parenting is a full-time job. For single parents, it is an even bigger challenge and responsibility. In the article "Onboarding for Empowerment: How to Create a Diverse, Thriving Workforce From Day 1," a study of more than 1,800 working parents with children younger than 18 found that more than 50% struggle to balance work and parenting (Chaplin). Creating a schedule that is adaptable for these single parents is key. Offering a work-from-home schedule at least part time shows understanding and will help attract a more engaged workforce. Having a predictable work schedule can help to reduce stress and ensure that maximum energy and effort is being put into work tasks. This needs to be handled by both parties, accommodating their flexibility and the company requirements. Family-related employee benefits should be explained on the front end. This ranges from paid parental leave, hours, health care benefits, vacation time, as well as tuition loan assistance if available. Employees of all family structures and backgrounds should feel welcome and comfortable regardless.

There are many ways companies can approach making childcare less stressful for their employees. Setting regular start and end times for meetings, such as keeping them within a 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM window, allows for these parents to ensure taking their child to and from daycare is smooth sailing. This also includes helping employees figure out better childcare service options. The cost of childcare in the United States is exceedingly high. Companies should offer the option for education on childcare Flex Spending Accounts to cover childcare costs pre-

tax. Back-up care can be implemented with a reduced rate for up to six days of emergency care at home whether that be that the child is sick, or school was canceled for the day. Going even further, on-site childcare expresses a genuine interest and concern for supporting parents in the workplace. Having a family center at the office for children to attend during the day might not be the most inexpensive option, but it is something to consider when onboarding single parents. These policies and programs show an authentic desire to relieve some of this stress that these employees may face (Beck).

Onboarding for International and In-House Company Transfers

It is important to highlight those that are transferring internationally to a new office as well as those transferring in-house within the company. When newcomers from all around the world arrive, what might be common knowledge to most here in the United States may not be something others are aware of or familiar with. International transfers could potentially be afraid to ask certain questions due to fear of feeling like they should have known the answer already. Being proactive about addressing some of these questions beforehand will make for a smoother transition. Some questions that might arise could include certain workplace norms such as when employees typically arrive and leave, the best form of communication, and even dress code. Assigning the newcomer with a mentor or a buddy to show them the ropes would be immensely helpful in this situation. In addition to this, different reminders could be sent out to make sure they are staying up to date and on task with upcoming events and projects. The individual should also be encouraged to share their culture as well and feel free to be themselves. Allow for their workspaces to be decorated, making them their own and letting their personalities shine through. Make sure that team members are made aware of an international transfer and reminded to create a comfortable and welcoming work environment while respecting any sort of cultural traditions one may have. These international employees could potentially be coming from radically diverse cultures and work environments than anyone in a particular office has ever experienced before (Chaplin).

Whether promoting an existing employee or coordinating their lateral career move, internal role transfers are a vital part of building talent and reducing turnover. Internal candidates are capable of filling hard-to-find senior roles with proven talent. Just as much thought should be put into setting an internal hire up for success during the onboarding process as one would with an external hire. Even though they are already familiar with the company culture and institutional knowledge, they will be joining a whole new group of people with a different dynamic. Formally transitioning managers along with the employee could allow for discussion regarding critical knowledge about the team member as well as changeover methods. Some of the topics to be covered between the previous and new managers should include what the employee's strengths and development areas are as well as how they can best work together. Setting new goals using the 30, 60, 90-day roadmap while conducting check-ins to figure out what is working, what is not, and adjusting would be highly effective. In addition to this, building a fresh development plan around a new position will drive engagement by helping the existing employee to visualize their continued career progression within the organization. For internal hires to quickly reach full productivity, provide the professional coaching and support of a new dedicated mentor. Finally, being intentional about an ensured cultural and social acclimation with the new development plan is an important way to onboard in-house company transfers (Hoffman). If they have stayed with the company long enough to undergo an internal

role transfer, you want to make sure to keep impressing them and not let them down when transitioning into the onboarding process again.

Religion and Spirituality in the Workplace

Spirituality in the workplace can be a tricky subject and one that is difficult to navigate. Employee spiritual wellness is how an individual feels about their ability to express their beliefs, values, and purpose. Employees should feel that their job provides opportunities for them to practice their spirituality rather than get in the way of it or challenge it (Whitelock). There are many ways that companies can address this on the front end while making the new hire aware that their values and beliefs are respected. Individuals should feel as though their differences do not ostracize them from the group, rather it helps bring unique talents, skills, and experiences to the organization. By allowing floating holidays and scheduling practices there is the recognition that not everyone celebrates the same things. In addition to this, the employee should not feel that a decision to not participate in an event or activity due to religious beliefs would cause them any disadvantage. Providing private rooms gives employees time to take a break whether that be spent praying or having a quiet moment to themselves. Most importantly, companies must ensure that policies do not inadvertently discriminate such as dress codes that do not allow for religious attire. A company can encourage employee spiritual wellness by being flexible with time off, creating a safe environment, encouraging diversity, and ensuring top-down participation. A reasonable religious accommodation is any adjustment to the work environment that allows employees to practice their religion or hold ethical or moral beliefs without causing undue hardship to the employer (Whitelock).

Politics in Organization

While focusing on the best practices for onboarding new employees, companies need to eliminate workplace politics to be successful. Learning how to properly identify and overcome these issues are dependent upon proper leadership and influence. Office politics can divide colleagues creating a tense and disruptive work environment as individuals play dirty at the expense of someone else. This starts to become a problem when personal motivations are not aligned with those of the company. To avoid potential consequences, the political behavior needs to be quickly identified and disciplinary action should be enforced fairly and as needed. Addressing this starts with the supervisors by stopping the negative behavior in its tracks, instituting firm policies that support open feedback, and avoiding office gossip and isolation. This goes along with the inclusion aspect, being able to trust all employees with company decisions and insights while squashing the “me first” mindset will go a long way. When it comes to celebrating victories as well as addressing mistakes, accountability should be demanded from all team members of the organization. Encouraging positive political behavior could include volunteering as well as complimenting and recognizing others. Likewise, when a mistake or failure occurs those who contributed should be expected to take ownership and responsibility in fixing the issue. Although these workplace politics are inevitable, this obstacle contributing to a company’s success can be effectively reduced (Schooley).

Mental Health

Mental illness is a topic that should not be taken lightly. Especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health has been very negatively affected for obvious reasons. During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 adults in the United States have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder (Panchal et al.). Prior to this study, the results concluded 1 in 10 adults reported these symptoms. As the pandemic continues, many people are prone to experiencing situations linked to poor mental health outcomes such as isolation and job loss. Clearly mental illness is on the rise more than ever and should be closely monitored.

Resources need to be made available to those privately struggling with anything ranging from anxiety or depression to PTSD. It is important to dive deeper into this question and how companies can provide support to ease the process (“How Can We Include”). Employees should feel comfortable addressing any concerns they may have regarding their mental health and capabilities, so it is important to emphasize this from the start. A quick and easy resource is an online anonymous screening to help determine what exactly it is that one is experiencing and where to go from there. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act is a stimulus bill that has allocated funding for mental health services including access to Telehealth and private insurance which is something companies can investigate acquiring at this time. Support groups and systems are also beneficial to put into place while managing the new transition and any related stress that could accompany this. Incorporating mental health in the onboarding process can ensure that new employees are aware of the available resources should they be needed.

Onboarding Points to Consider

There is no prescribed way to onboard every employee. With many distinct categories of people, the standard checklist must be customized to achieve certain needs. With that being said, here is a generic outline of different onboarding points to consider discussing when preparing a new hire.

- Strategy and Alignment: The priorities and vision for the organization are accurately explained in detail.
- Culture and Working Norms: Company norms, values, and traditions are described and displayed.
- Performance Expectations: Individual goals should be established and discussed.
- The Team: Member roles and operations in all areas is understood across the board.
- Communication: Preferences and style of communication is made clear.
- Learning and Development: Networking with colleagues and development programs within a specific role is outlined.

This is a flexible checklist based on company needs but there are vital facts and notes to make when considering developing an onboarding process (Travelers Insurance).

Conclusion

Since the emphasis on the importance of good onboarding is very prevalent, there are many challenges that can arise when poor onboarding takes place. The consequences of this could be much more damaging to an organization than one might expect. Failure to show that the managing staff cares about giving a new hire proper information leads to a lack of trust. Without

trusting the process and goals that are aiming to be succeeded, revenue targets potentially will be missed and in return profit is lost. Although some skills may come naturally, not everyone is able to just wing it without making mistakes. These mistakes could have been prevented with sufficient training, but instead the new hire will now take longer to make a positive impact for the growth of the company. Another problem would be that the managing staff is not able to fully evaluate the ability of the employee. With a lack of attentiveness in the hiring process as well as after their start date, the employee would not be the best fit for the job as opposed to others that were looked over. These potential challenges are an easy fix with a sufficient onboarding process.

In conclusion, the onboarding process at Otis effectively met the needs of belonging and cultural awareness. The technology set up, meet and greets along with the outline of next steps in the process set us up for success. Where opportunity was noted was making DEIBM more of a topic of discussion. Celebrate the diversity in the executive teams with a discussion on their history, biographies, and path within the organization. Arrange for conversations with local leaders who are diverse to talk about their experiences, celebrate the good and highlight the steps taken to make improvements. These points outlined are thoughts on how to make something good, better. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are all especially important when it comes to navigating the way for new hires in any company. There are a variety of applicants that employers should understand the pain points of ranging from those of diverse cultural backgrounds to individuals with disabilities and many more categories. Referencing Maslow's theory of human needs can be compatible in the workplace as well: physiological, safety, love and belonging needs, esteem, and self-actualization. There are standard onboarding practices that must be customized to fit the needs of persons with differences. Becoming accustomed to a company's culture and environment plays a significant role in determining future endeavors and experiences within their organization. Paraphrasing Maya Angelou, that candidates and employees will forget what we said and what we did, but they won't forget how we made them feel. The onboarding process is a major contributor to this; therefore, it is important that the voice and experience of the new hire is valuable to the company. Onboarding is a pivotal process that, if done sufficiently, will set a business and their new employees up for success.

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