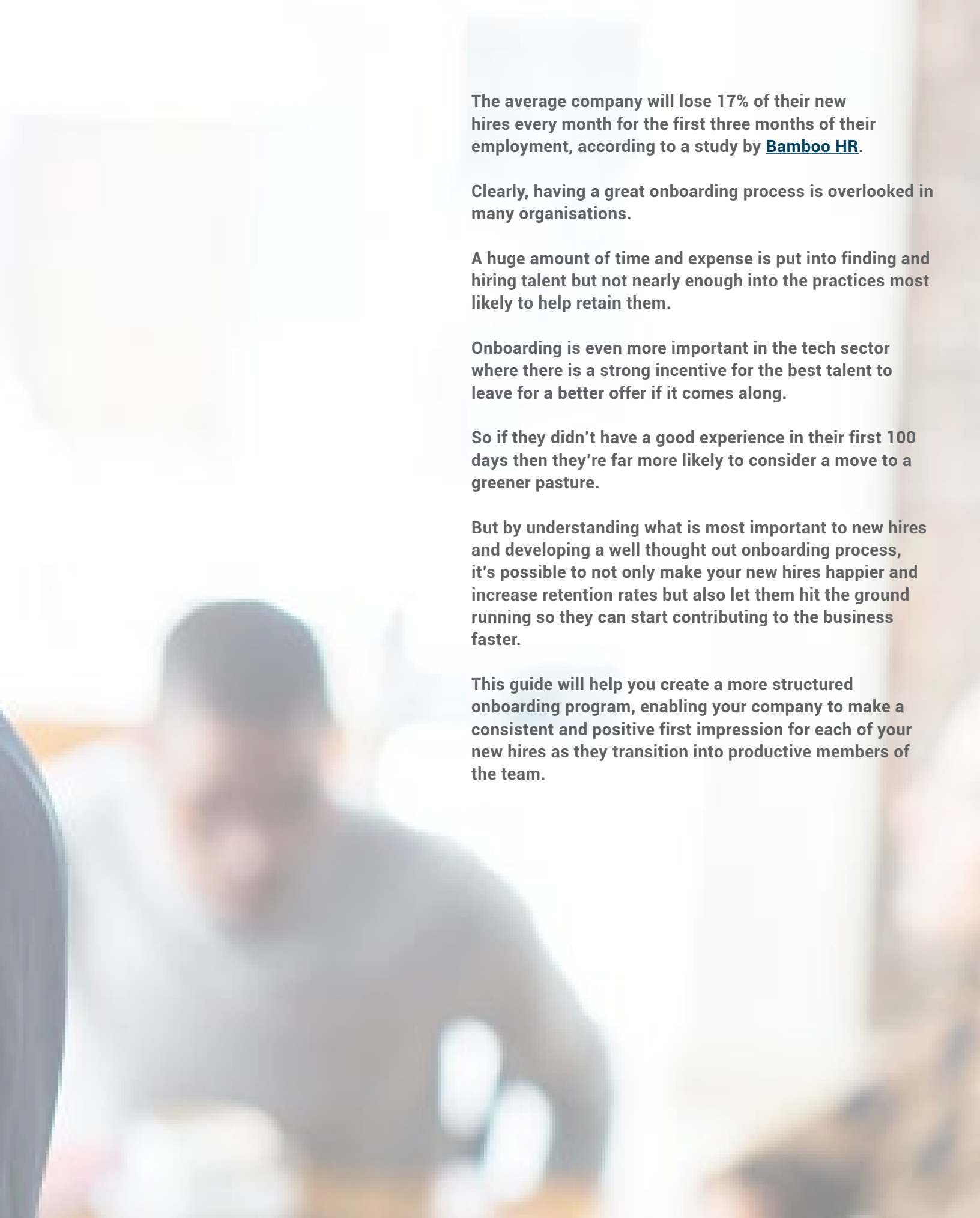




From Day 1 to 100

# An Onboarding Guide For Digital and IT Professionals

FINITE



The average company will lose 17% of their new hires every month for the first three months of their employment, according to a study by [Bamboo HR](#).

Clearly, having a great onboarding process is overlooked in many organisations.

A huge amount of time and expense is put into finding and hiring talent but not nearly enough into the practices most likely to help retain them.

Onboarding is even more important in the tech sector where there is a strong incentive for the best talent to leave for a better offer if it comes along.

So if they didn't have a good experience in their first 100 days then they're far more likely to consider a move to a greener pasture.

But by understanding what is most important to new hires and developing a well thought out onboarding process, it's possible to not only make your new hires happier and increase retention rates but also let them hit the ground running so they can start contributing to the business faster.

This guide will help you create a more structured onboarding program, enabling your company to make a consistent and positive first impression for each of your new hires as they transition into productive members of the team.

# Why onboarding is so important

The onboarding process essentially covers the transitional period as new starters take in your organisation's culture, values, and processes. It is important in every industry but is even more so in IT where talent naturally have higher expectations - they know they are in high demand.

A well planned onboarding process not only makes new hires feel welcome but makes life easier for managers and HR and helps build a great company culture. It also leads to improved performance from new hires, improved retention rates, and increased client/customer satisfaction.

Unfortunately, onboarding is rarely prioritised as much as it should be. A Gallup report found that only around 12 percent of people strongly agree their organisation does a great job of onboarding new employees.

In practice, retention starts on Day 1, but the factors leading to an organisation having strong retention rates start even before the hiring process begins. They are closely linked to brand awareness and reputation, so it's important to remember that your onboarding process forms an integral part of the company's culture and ultimately its wider reputation.

Most organisations drop the ball with onboarding because they over-prioritise the paperwork side of starting a new hire and don't focus enough attention on the more important aspects of good onboarding; accommodation, assimilation, and acceleration to their full potential.



# Preboarding

If you ask anyone what their biggest frustration about starting a new job is, they're likely to say being expected to start the job without having the tools they need in place to do it. So getting Day 1 right really starts well before then in the preboarding phase.

Netflix is a good example of a company that takes preboarding seriously. They make sure that new hires have their preferred laptop of choice configured to their preferences when they arrive on their first day. This means including the software they'll need as well as extra screens or any other workstation requirements.

Which brings us to the preboarding checklist:

- **Have great communication** - In order to get Day 1 right, you need to have a process that keeps an open line of communication with new hires before they've even started. This includes reaching out to them for any preferences or necessities they'll need for their tools of the trade to start on Day 1 as well as giving them a point of contact for any questions in the lead up to starting with the company.
- **Provision of account access** - Provision of access to all company and team accounts the new hire will need including email, [Slack](#), and other software so they are ready to go on Day 1.
- **Be informative** - in the leadup to Day 1, email your new hire with details of all the information they may need such as when and where to arrive, what time, how to get into the building, and what they can expect on the first day.
- **Make introductions** - inform the employee who they'll be working with, allowing them to reach out over email, [Slack](#), or [LinkedIn](#) before they start. Further help them acclimatise to the company by providing relevant information about the company's history, vision, values, and culture.
- **Get admin sorted** - invite your new starters to complete any necessary administrative paperwork before their start date in their own time. This means that on Day 1, they won't be spending their first few hours just reading and signing forms, which let's face it, no-one likes doing.
- **Utilise onboarding software** - to assist with streamlining the administrative and communications aspects of the onboarding process, take advantage of dedicated onboarding software such as [BambooHR](#) or [Namely](#). There is a large range of specialist onboarding software that has been developed and these can also be compared and reviewed on sites such as [Capterra](#).
- **Inform managers and co-workers** - there's no point HR knowing start dates if they aren't also communicated to the team members that a new employee will be working with. Send out reminders to managers and teammates so they are aware of when a new hire will be arriving and give them an outline of the new starter's role and place in the team.

# Day 1

The first day at a new job can be a little unsettling for most people as they know they'll feel a little out of place or overwhelmed by new systems they'll need to learn. But by following a few key tips, its possible to make Day 1 seamless and enjoyable:

Offer a late arrival time - no one wants to encourage people to turn up late to work, but one small thing you can do to help ease someone into a new role is offer a later start time on Day 1. It means they won't be travelling in peak hour, will have a little extra time to get ready, and it also gives you the chance to double check that morning that their equipment and anything else they might need has been properly set up.

- **Schedule an early morning coffee** - once the new hire arrives, help them feel at ease by setting up a tea or coffee catch up with their manager, team mates, mentor or buddy. This allows them to ask any questions they might have and get to know a few important people they'll be working with in a relaxed setting.
- **Give the tour** - organise to give your new starter a proper tour of the office to point out where they can locate their team members as well as the important locations such as the kitchen, bathrooms, printers, and supplies are located.
- **Have a team lunch** - let's be honest, many tech people lean more towards being introverted than extroverted, so it's natural that new tech hires can be a little reserved until they feel they fit into the team. Having a team lunch is a great way to help new starters break the ice and get to know their teammates.
- **Ensure you have an end of day catch up** - the new hire should meet with their manager briefly at the end of Day 1 to see how everything went. This can be an opportunity to clarify anything and review role responsibilities and goals.

# The first week

The first week is the time your new hire will really be trying to find their feet. The first day is often a bit of a blur but the first week is when they will really try to start working out how things work:

- **Have a project ready to go** - give the new starter a project they can work on from the get go, ideally one they can be actively involved in but isn't overly complex so they feel like they are getting an early win.
- **Don't forget the social** - don't ignore the social aspect of the role. Introduce senior tech/IT people and if your company has a mentor program, introduce them to their mentor early on.
- **Share company and key information** - sharing key information over the course of the first week is far more effective than trying to cram it all into Day 1. This helps the new hire retain information better on important topics such as major products and services, market and competitor reviews, and customer pain points.
- **Offer training** - provide new starters early on with some department-level training. Go over the tools and systems they will need in their role, including any unique ways these are used in the company, and offer training in any areas they feel they're not up to speed.
- **Request feedback** - new hires should be encouraged to voice their thoughts by specifically requesting direct feedback from them. This feedback should cover their own experiences as well as feedback on the onboarding program itself so you can continually improve it. Also ensure that anything that was promised in the interview or in the job offer has been delivered so their role is in alignment with their expectations.

# The first month

During the first month, new starters will be focused on making connections with team members, learning the ropes and company culture, and setting goals:

- **Build connections** - especially in larger organisations, it's not always possible for new hires to meet everyone they need to know in the first days or weeks. Continue building connections with other employees throughout the first month. Their mentor or buddy can be vital to help establish these connections.
- **Create a development plan and career path** - new hires like to know exactly what is expected of them so sitting down with a manager to establish clear, measurable, and achievable goals is a key part of accelerating them towards peak productivity. This is an opportunity to discuss where they have room for development, what can be done to support them, and the roles they'd eventually like to work towards.
- **Set review timelines** - timelines should be set for all deliverables as well as establishing when check-ins will occur to communicate and review progress. This should be a regular event, it should be far more frequent than just occurring at an annual performance or salary review.

# The first 100 days

A good onboarding program should extend out to around 100 days so make sure there is a formal process well beyond the first month. During this period, the new starter should be starting to feel like they are an integral part of the team and making meaningful contributions while continuing to be supported by a mentor or buddy and manager.

- **Encourage greater contributions** - Encourage new employees to volunteer new ideas. Sometimes a fresh set of eyes can be invaluable. They should also be encouraged to take a larger role in projects and take on the full set of responsibilities that the role entails.
- **Set check-ins** - create set check-ins such as the last day of each of the first three months to identify where additional help may be required or to recognise successes.
- **Request final feedback** - after Day 100, the new hire shouldn't be feeling like a new hire anymore. Now that they have been integrated into their team, take the opportunity to request their feedback on the entire onboarding process and recommendations on how things could be streamlined for future hires. Remember that the onboarding process should be formalised but not static. It should continue to be improved over time.

## Last thoughts

Having a great employee onboarding program involves far more than just having a streamlined administrative process. Instead, it looks to maximise the benefits that come from having strong employee engagement and a high retention rate. These in turn form part of any great company's strategic advantage over the competition. Why waste money and time on high employee turnover when you could be saving money and investing in building a strong company culture and happy staff?

At the end of the day, the quality of your organisation's employees will determine its future level of success. Especially in tech, it is often difficult to find and attract the best talent so it's absolutely vital that when you do get them onboard that you can also hold onto them. And the strength of the onboarding process plays a huge role in that.





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## Sydney

Level 23, Angel Place, 123 Pitt Street,  
Sydney, NSW 2000

T +61 2 8243 6868 E [sydney@finite.com.au](mailto:sydney@finite.com.au)

## Brisbane

Level 20, 307 Queen Street, Brisbane, QLD 4000

T +61 7 3232 2300 E [brisbane@finite.com.au](mailto:brisbane@finite.com.au)

## Melbourne

Level 33, 140 William Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000

T +61 3 9617 3900 E [melbourne@finite.com.au](mailto:melbourne@finite.com.au)

## Canberra

Level 2, 14 Moore Street, Canberra, ACT 2601

T +61 2 6243 6400 E [canberra@finite.com.au](mailto:canberra@finite.com.au)

## Adelaide

Level 12, 25 Grenfell Street, Adelaide, SA 5000

T +61 8 8224 3800 E [adelaide@finite.com.au](mailto:adelaide@finite.com.au)

## Perth

Mezzanine, BGC Centre, 28 The Esplanade,  
Perth, WA 6000

T +61 8 9219 3500 E [perth@finite.com.au](mailto:perth@finite.com.au)

## Auckland

Level 10, AIG Building, 41 Shortland Street,  
Auckland, NZ

T +64 9 300 3095 E [auckland@finitegroup.co.nz](mailto:auckland@finitegroup.co.nz)

## Wellington

Level 14, ASB Tower, 2 Hunter Street,  
Wellington 6011, New Zealand

T +64 4 978 1888 E [wellington@finitegroup.co.nz](mailto:wellington@finitegroup.co.nz)