

Onboarding in the Digital Age and the Increasing Role of Technology in Shaping Employee Experiences

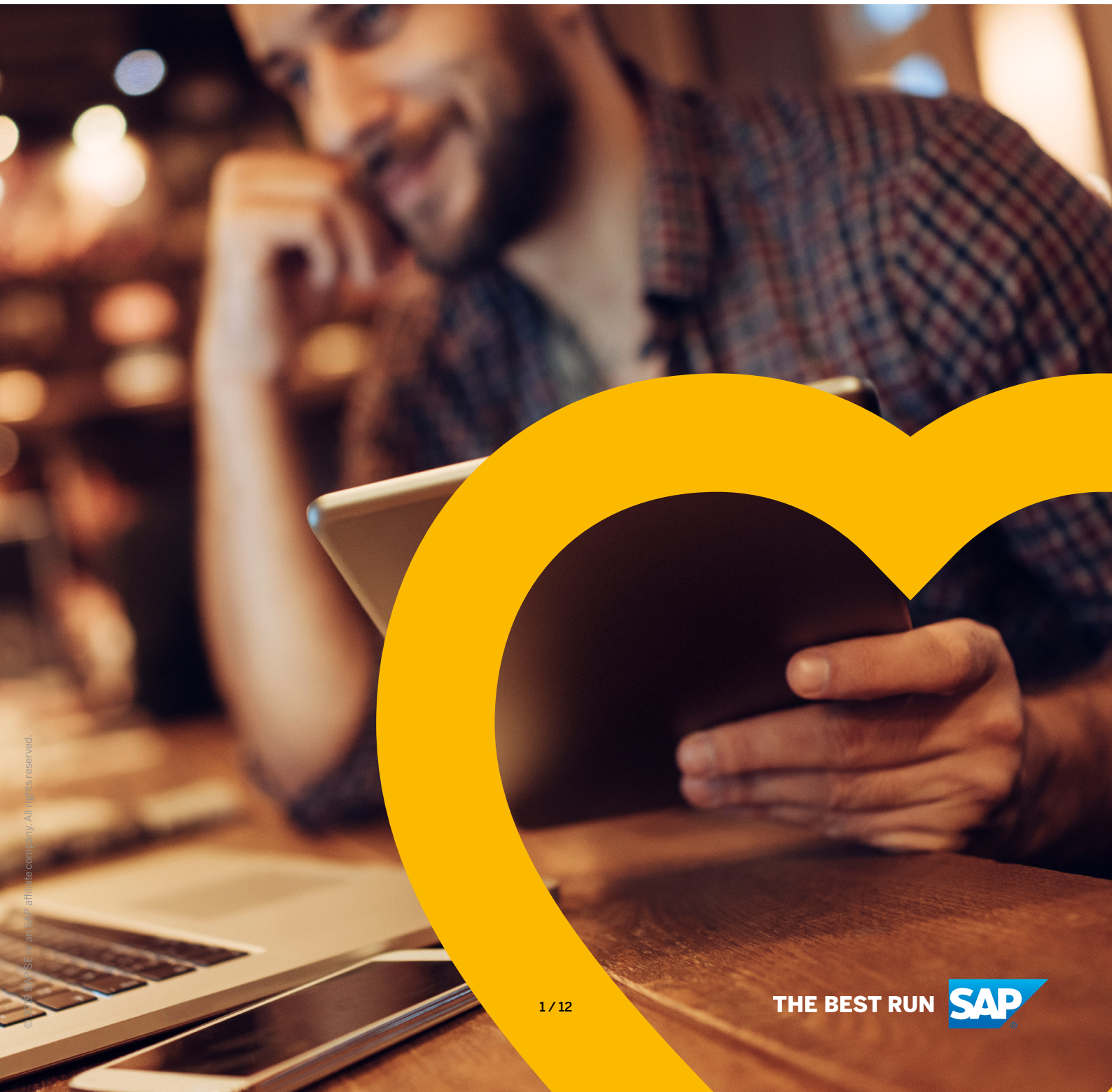


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Onboarding is one of the most critical, yet complex, HR processes a business must manage. A successful onboarding experience can increase employees' time to productivity, job satisfaction, performance levels, and career effectiveness, while an unsuccessful experience can lead to significant stress, reduced productivity, and even turnover.

Why Onboarding is so Important

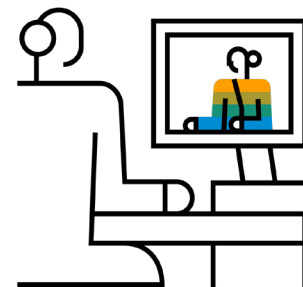
Research studies show that companies who invest time and resources into creating high quality onboarding programs experience six times better growth in profits and significant gains in employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity compared to companies who employ a less thoughtful approach to onboarding.¹ And in today's candidate-driven market, it is more important than ever to instill a sense of belonging in employees and help them feel deeply and emotionally connected to a company and its mission.

However, there are many reasons onboarding programs often fail to be as effective as possible:

- Onboarding is viewed as a 'day one' activity
- Socialization aspects are often neglected
- Inconsistent onboarding experiences
- Inability to accurately measure the effectiveness

With technology comes the opportunity for companies to rethink onboarding. Those are the seven major trends impacting the world of work today when it comes to onboarding.

However, technology today has completely transformed not only what organizations can offer, but also **what employees expect** when it comes to an onboarding experience.



1. Rainer Strack, et al., "[From Capability to Profitability: Realizing the Value of People Management](#)," The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA), July 2012.

Trend #1: The Rise of the External Workforce

In many countries including the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands, growth in freelance work has outpaced overall employment growth.² In the United States specifically, freelance workers currently represent 35% of the total working population, and estimates suggest they could represent more than half of the workforce by 2027.³ It is equally important to focus on engaging, training, and equipping these external non-permanent workers to effectively fulfill their duties. Onboarding should serve to make external workers feel welcome, enabled, and motivated to perform in their new roles, even if it is a temporary assignment.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING HELPS ORGANIZATIONS BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THE EXTERNAL WORKFORCE:

- Increased total workforce visibility during onboarding by a comprehensive view of both internal employees and external workers
- Increased compliance tracking for external workers
- Different “workflows” for external workers and based on external worker type
- Integration with permanent employees and support of onboarding activities

65%

said the external workforce is critical to their operating at full capacity and meeting market demands.

2. [“The Gig Economy Goes Global,”](#) Morgan Stanley, 2018.

3. Dimple Agarwal, et al., [“The Workforce Ecosystem: Managing Beyond the Enterprise,”](#) Deloitte Insights, March 28,

Trend #2: Increased Diversity of Working Arrangements

With more than two-thirds of people around the world now working remotely at least some of the time, companies are increasingly focused on finding ways to keep these employees connected and engaged.⁴ This effort is critical, as research shows “lack of social interaction” is considered the largest disadvantage associated with remote work.⁵ It is critical that your onboarding process facilitate a sense of collaboration and connectedness between new employees and their colleagues, even if these employees are not working in the same place or interacting face-to-face.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING HELPS COMPANIES CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR VIRTUAL EMPLOYEES THAT MATCHES THE EXPERIENCE OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN A TRADITIONAL OFFICE:

- Remove the guesswork by providing new employees with step-by-step guides and checklists of required tasks
- Support new hires with technology that fosters connections, collaboration and relationships with their manager, peers, and colleagues
- Provide employees with a consistent onboarding experience, regardless of location

Figure 1

Technology enables guidance and personalized support for new hires needs. This screen illustrates a virtual onboarding tour managing the new hire through required tasks, highlighting critical next steps as well as progress.

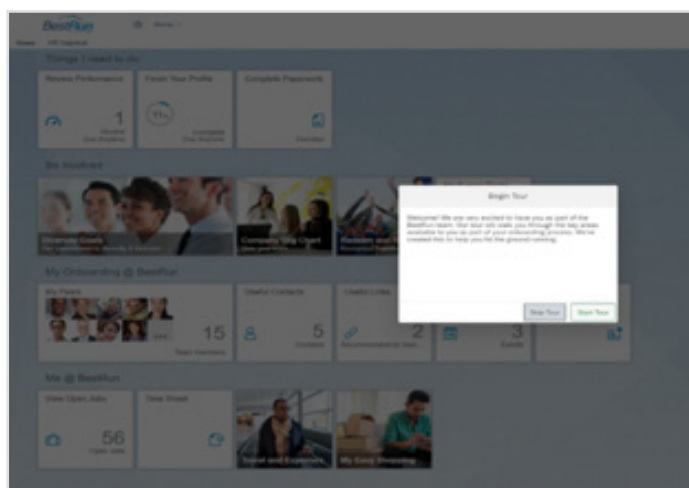
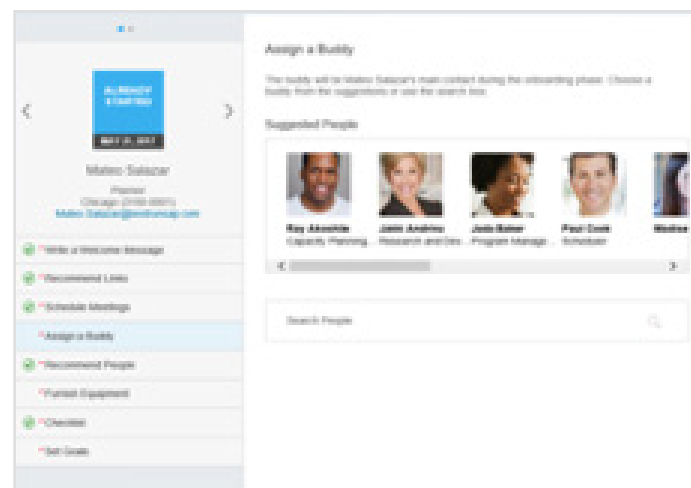


Figure 2

Technology can help foster a sense of community during onboarding, as it takes many people to contribute to the success of a new hire. Effective onboarding is about connecting people – whether mentors, peers, hiring



4. “[The Workspace Revolution: Reaching the Tipping Point](#),” Internal Workspace Group (IWG), 2018.

5. “[Remote Work Trends that Companies Can’t Overlook](#),” Remoters, 2017

Trend #3: Changing Organizational Structures

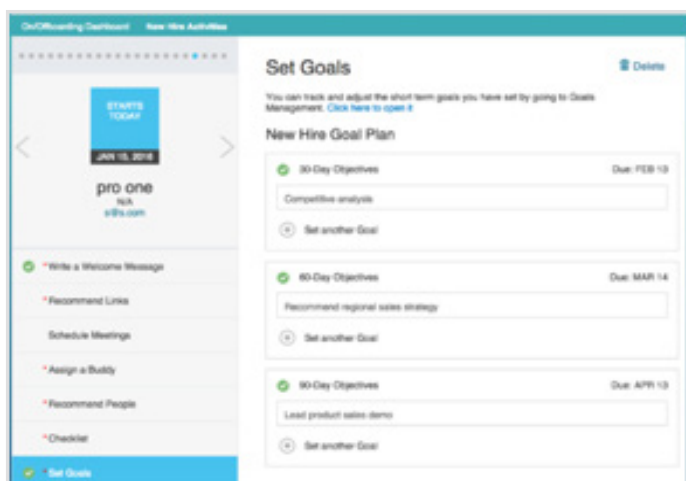
Gone are the days of traditional, hierarchical organizational structures. Today, companies are designing themselves for speed, agility, and adaptability, breaking down silos and reorganizing themselves around networks of teams.⁶ Indeed, research by Gallup suggests 84% of U.S. employees are “matrixed” to some extent today, working on multiple teams and possibly reporting to multiple managers.⁷ Whether transitioning to work in a new team or a new role entirely, it is critical that employees have clear goal alignment and role clarity, efficient knowledge transfer, and are able to get up to speed as quickly as possible.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING SUPPORTS ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY AND ENSURES SEAMLESS INTERNAL TRANSITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES:

- Enable effective goal creation and management
- Create personalized learning and development plans

Figure 3

The SAP SuccessFactors Performance & Goals solution can act as an integral part of onboarding, enabling hiring managers to define short-term (30-, 60- and 90-day) goals the new hire can tackle right away, helping create a sense of alignment and focus early on.



6. Josh Bersin, “[The Organization of the Future: Arriving Now – 2017 Global Human Capital Trends](#),” Deloitte Insights, February 28, 2017.

7. “State of the American Workforce,” Gallup, 2017.

Trend #4: Increased Focus on Employee Well-Being and Purpose

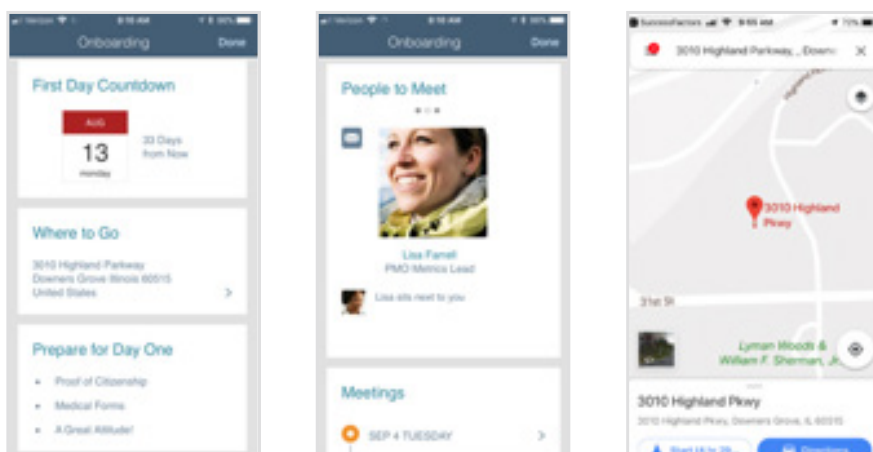
Companies are continually recognizing that employee well-being is critical to creating highly engaged and collaborative workforces, and that employees cannot be fully productive when they are not fully present, both mentally and physically. Companies can integrate well-being as a topic specifically into onboarding content and practices as a way to illustrate well-being embedded as a cultural value.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING SUPPORTS EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND PURPOSE:

- Create a sense of comfort and connectedness before “day one.”
- Provide social support and a place to ask those “silly questions.”
- Align employees’ personal goals and motivation with company purpose.

Figure 4

Technology provides new hires with easy access to pertinent information through their mobile devices. A personalized mobile experience guides new hires through what their first day will look like, allows them to connect with mentors, peers, and teammates, and enables them to gain access to key content and resources such as office location, meeting calendar, and first day expectations.



Trend #5: Treating Employees as Consumers

Companies often say that employees are their most important asset, yet companies have historically invested significantly less in their employees than they do their customers. However, this mindset is starting to shift, and today we are seeing organizations think of their current and prospective employees as customers and work towards providing them with a consumer-grade experience. Part of this experience involves giving employees technology to use at work that is as engaging and enjoyable to use as the technology they interact with in their day-to-day lives.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING SUPPORTS A CONSUMER-GRADE EXPERIENCE FOR NEW EMPLOYEES:

- Welcome messages and personalized access to relevant new hire information.
- Mobile-friendly forms and paperwork with e-signature capability.
- Additional support for questions and task completion through artificial intelligence and chatbot capabilities
- Hiring manager mobile app e.g. reporting dashboard about onboarding status, hiring manager checklist.

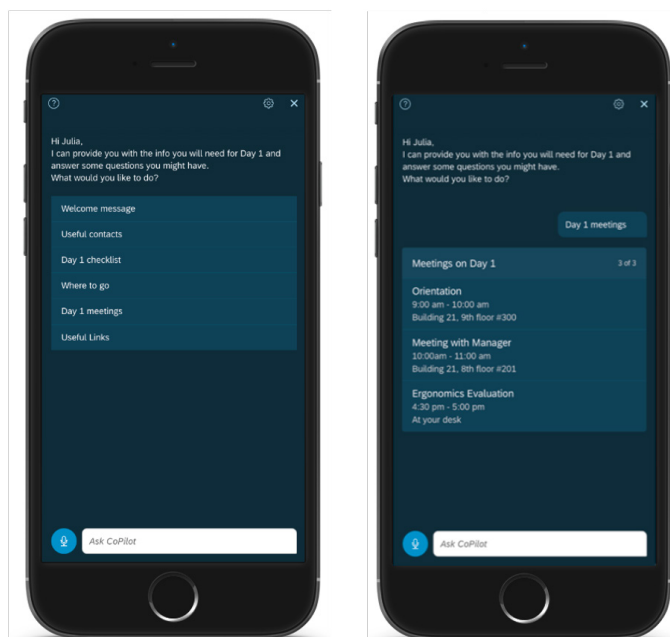
Figure 5

Required paperwork is a major component of new hire onboarding. The SAP Signature Management application by DocuSign makes completing all necessary paperwork safe, easy, and compliant. This screen illustrates how new hires are able to complete and electronically sign required paperwork on any device.

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "Enter Your Name and Social Security Number (Joan James)" under the "New Employee Step" header. The form includes a policy statement about social security numbers, a question "Do you have a social security number?" with "Yes" selected, and a field for the Social Security Number. Below this are fields for First Name (Joan), Middle Name, Last Name (James), and Suffix. A date of birth field is also present. At the bottom, there are checkboxes for "I have verified", "I acknowledge", and "I agree". A tablet in the foreground displays the "Date Your Signature" screen, showing a digital signature being applied to a document.

Figure 6

Technology offers more and more new, innovative options using artificial and chatbot capabilities. The digital assistant for SAP SuccessFactors solutions brings the personalized and people-centric chatbot experience to users to instantly, so they get the information they need. This screen illustrates how a chatbot might deliver "pre-day one" information to the new hire.





Trend #6: The End of the “Ex-employee”

Companies can no longer think of or treat offboarding as if it were just a required but inconvenient process. Faced with a war for talent and increasing transparency due to crowdsourced sites like Glassdoor or Indeed, it is more important than ever to ensure that employees have a similarly thoughtful experience when exiting your company as they did when entering it. Yet, research suggests that offboarding continues to be a neglected part of the employee lifecycle.⁸ But a strategic offboarding process protects your brand and future hires.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING SUPPORTS AN EFFECTIVE OFFBOARDING EXPERIENCE THAT ALLOWS EMPLOYEES TO EXIT A COMPANY GRACEFULLY:

- Offboarding dashboard for managers and employees with a list of tasks and a knowledge transfer plan

Figure 7
Technology enables structured and simplified offboarding processes. This screen shows how a dashboard with actionable tasks and process oversight for managers and offboardees makes it easy to follow up on tasks, processors, due dates, or workflows.

Offboarder(s)	Termination Date	Last Working Day	Reporting Manager	My tasks	Due	Assigned to others
 Oscar Lang (olang) Engineer III San Francisco, CA	1st Jun 2018 2 days ago	Friday, 1st Jul 2018 in 28 days	Mandy Roberts	Create Knowledge Transfer Plan Write Farewell Message Announce Termination To Coworkers	<div>Start in 2 days</div> <div>Start in 26 days</div> <div>Start in 26 days</div>	4 tasks (2 Overdue)
 Nicole Cartman (ncartman) Engineer III San Francisco, CA	1st May 2018 27 days ago	Friday, 1st Jun 2018 in 2 days	Mandy Roberts	Create Knowledge Transfer Plan Write Farewell Message Announce Termination To Coworkers	<div>Start Overdue</div> <div>Start in 1 day</div> <div>Start in 1 day</div>	No pending tasks

8. Talya N. Bauer, “[Best Practices for Maximizing Offboarding Success](#),” ResearchGate, June 2015.

Trend #7: A New Era of Data and Analytics

Big Data, machine learning, deep learning, data science, use of unstructured data – technology, but also the need for analytics, increased at a rapid pace in the last years and will continue to do so. In addition to collecting traditional HR data, many companies today are also making greater use of surveys (both annual and pulse) to gauge employee sentiment and engagement.

HOW SAP SUCCESSFACTORS ONBOARDING ENABLES TRACKING AND REPORTING OF ACTIVITIES AND TRUE MEASUREMENT OF ONBOARDING PROCESS:

- Reporting and analytics on onboarding activities and status but also insights across different areas such as turnover, retention, goal achievements, time to proficiency, recruiting costs and channels, and training efficiency allowing HR to focus on the strategic side of onboarding while also being able to monitor and improve the onboarding process.
- Surveys and 360-degree feedback incorporated into the onboarding process. It is critical to gain an understanding of what's working and what's not, and the best and most direct way to achieve this is through employee feedback. Surveys should be conducted at multiple points in time and be embedded into the onboarding process.

Conclusion

Organizations are experiencing dramatic changes today, from an increasingly diverse workforce and work arrangements to changing organizational structures and new expectations from employees. An effective onboarding process is critical to ensuring that all types of workers working in all types of ways have a clear sense of goals and purpose, build effective relationships with colleagues, and have the knowledge and resources they need to perform at their best.

Strategic onboarding begins the moment employees walk through a company's doors – and even before then and when they are leaving. With the advanced technology available today incorporated into SAP SuccessFactors Onboarding, companies can provide employees with an onboarding experience more effective and engaging than ever before.

LEARN MORE

Interested to find out more about the seven major trends impacting the world of work today, how these trends are transforming employees' needs and expectations from an onboarding experience, as well as how the SAP® SuccessFactors® Onboarding solution can help organizations effectively manage these changes then have a look at the extended version of our white paper [Onboarding in the Digital Age and the Increasing Role of Technology Shaping Employee Experiences](#).

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