

3 Cs OF ONBOARDING CONNECTION CONSISTENCY COMMUNITY

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I have a deck of quote cards at my desk and part of my routine is to change out the quote at the start of every week. Some of them are obscure, but some resonate. As fate would have it, I came across this one while working with a healthcare client on an employee value proposition, with onboarding as a focus:

I got to thinking about that quote. While every day is important, **some are clearly more important than others.**

When working in the world of recruitment and onboarding, a lot of focus goes into that all-important **first day.**

“There is no such thing in anyone’s life as an unimportant day.”

– Alexander Woollcott

- Do new employees have a **login and password**?
- Do they have a **desk chair**?
- Are they **feeling welcomed**?
- Has someone from the team besides their manager **greeted them**?

That first day is often fraught and full of moments of wow... or possibly even whoops.

Unfortunately, much less thought is put into the moments after that first day. Data show that it can take from six months to a year for an employee to feel truly valued and comfortable in their role, but onboarding is seen as complete when the paperwork is in and the employee is official.

They view the retention inflection point as six months when in reality, it’s **all the months before**. What are we doing at three months to get them to four? At four months to get them to five? And then at five months to get them to six? Most employees don’t make a big decision to leave a company one day and start somewhere new the next. There are moments in between where they are wavering, and an inspiring onboarding experience can make that work in your favor.

Whatever the numbers tell you, there are three key considerations for successful onboarding: connection, consistency and community.

C ONNECTION

Connection certainly happens on that first day, but it starts **before new employees even start**. Connection begins on what we call **Decision Day** which is all about new

employees asking themselves if they've made the right choice by accepting a job with your company. When employees are given a clear direction on how their first weeks will look and make a connection with their manager and someone on their team, that moment reaffirms their decision to accept the offer was the right one.

CONSISTENCY

Consistency comes **after connection**. Companies with the most success in improving retention build in multiple checkpoints and connection opportunities. The manager is typically the one tasked with connecting. And for good reason. BI WORLDWIDE's research found that **employees who are more connected to their managers are 5.7 times more likely to feel inspired at work**. However, most managers aren't given the tools and training they need to personalize their engagement with their team members.

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One important opportunity for managers is learning how and when to recognize their team.

When a new hire is reminded how they impact the mission of the company, they are 2 times more likely to want to stay with the company. Timely and consistent recognition from a manager that aligns with the mission and values builds trust and connection in both the manager and your company.

When new hires are reminded how they impact the company, they are **2X** more likely to want to stay

We have a healthcare client that wanted to increase recognition in an employee's first year and onboard employees to their mission. We helped support managers in recognizing their employees more frequently by sending out a monthly email that reminds them of the people on their team celebrating key milestones along with tips on how to recognize them along with questions to ask them and information to help assess the employee's overall engagement. By the end of the year, all managers with a new hire had recognized that person within their **first 60 days**.

Relying entirely on the manager won't deliver the strongest results. That same healthcare client didn't leave it to chance and designed a year-long new hire campaign that ensured each person received a recognition moment from a leader at least six times in their first year. They not only improved retention at every key inflection point, they also saw employees and their managers engaging with recognition earlier and more frequently in their first year.



COMMUNITY

Community is how you get your employees to stay.

Our research finds that **those who experience fair and**

consistent recognition are 7 times more likely to feel

they belong. Managers and peers can also build

community with someone newer to the organization

by sharing other areas in the organization where they

can build on the belonging provided by recognition.

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If employees are considering leaving but have a manager, team or employee group that makes them feel they belong,

the connection to community is a key factor. Programs that

build community are employee resource groups, mentorship and

community affiliation and sponsorship. A well-trained manager

can identify those that new hires might be most interested in and

share information about participating in them early and often in

their onboarding experience.

Following these **three Cs** with a strong recognition strategy and a guide for your managers is sure to build your new hires into your brand ambassadors, increasing discretionary effort, a sense of belonging and ultimately retention.

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