

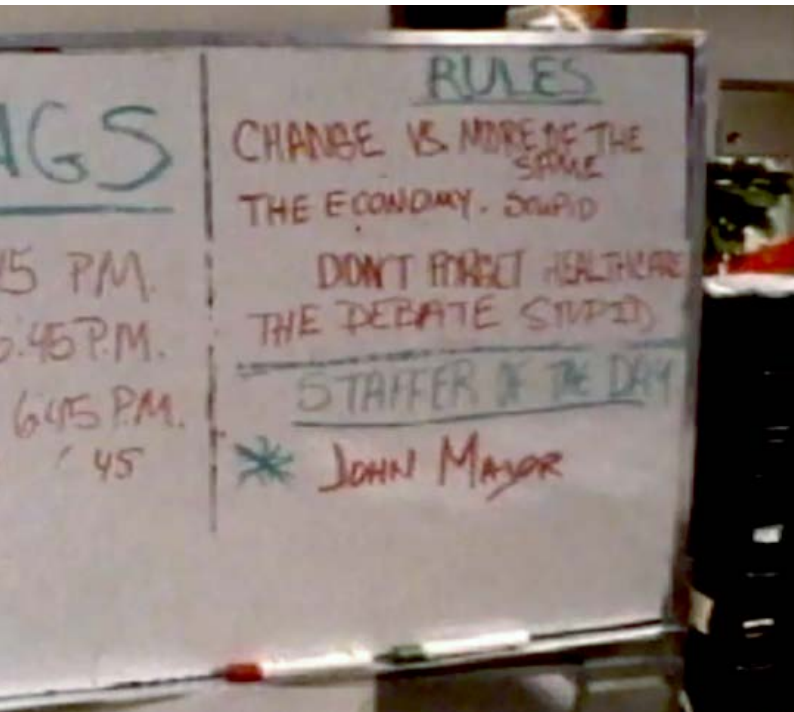
Forget What You
Think You Know



**5 Steps to
Effective
Onboarding**

Onboarding Matters

This is a non-political white paper, I assure you, but perhaps you've heard the old mantra from Bill Clinton's original presidential campaign, attributed to James Carville, "It's the economy, stupid?"



A now-famous "onboarding" document

Well, turns out they said that in order to remind themselves what was important in a presidential campaign where, like all campaigns, a lot was going on and distraction or focus on the unimportant was going to 'lose the war' for them. Onboarding is actually a lot like that.

Onboarding can make or break a company's effective utilization of a new hire. Most managers just take it for granted that new hires will be stumbling around for weeks and won't be truly effective until they reach the six month mark. Along the way, untold thousands are lost, per hire, companywide. Along the way to that "fully up and running" point people may get fired because they made mistakes a veteran in their position wouldn't make, or their boss thinks they're moving along too slowly, or the employee feels inadequate to the job and quits out of frustration or fear of being fired.

More than Administrivia

So let's get back to that "it's the economy, stupid" thing. The issue is that when most people say "onboarding", as in "we have a great onboarding" process, they mean onboarding administration. Onboarding administration is the nitty gritty of telling people how to use the lunchroom and that they need their keycard to access the building on weekends, along with getting them up on benefits, 401k plans, etc.. Now truly that's important stuff, but it's not going to bring success to that new hire. If you brought on a new financial analyst

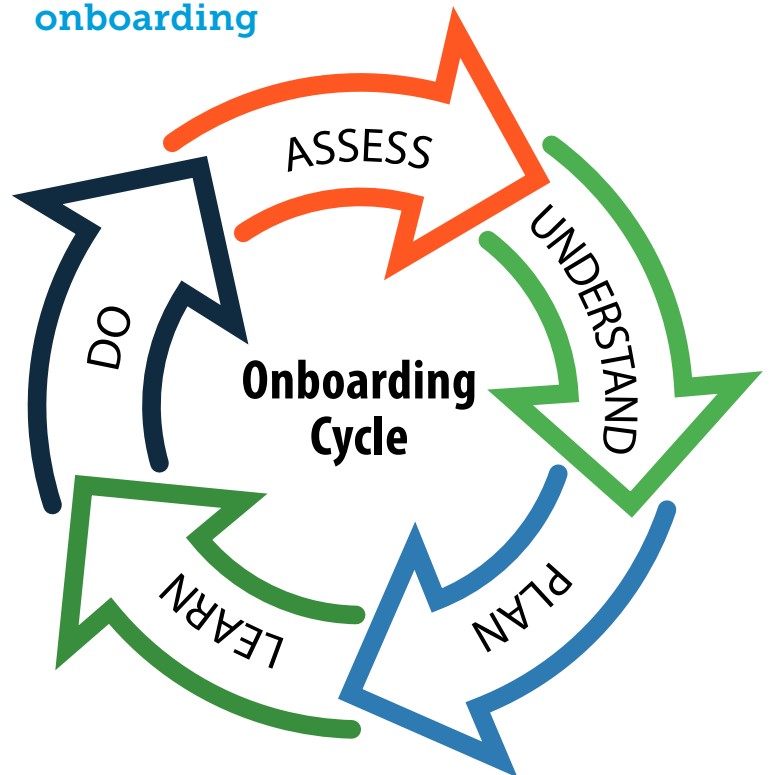




It's Job-specific Skills That Count

So the equivalent to “It’s the economy, stupid” in this context is, “It’s job-specific skills onboarding” (we’ll drop the “stupid”) that counts. The goal should be getting that skilled person up to speed as fast as possible in their particular job, and not only providing learning randomly, when the manager has time. You need a system for this – and not just technology. The system needs to do 5 things really well: Assess, Understand, Plan, Learn, Do “(and “Repeat”, but we didn’t want to add a 6th thing).

Onboarding Cycle: 5 simple steps to effective onboarding

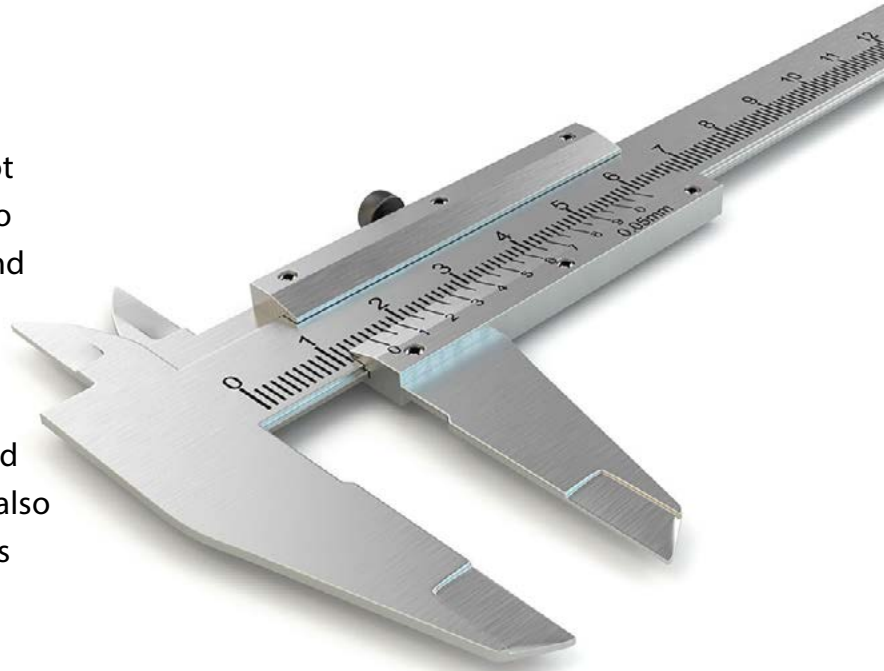


or marketing manager or sales exec, their administrative onboarding is not going to make a significant difference to their job performance.

If you want to move the needle on a new hire’s business impact, the focus needs to be on “job-specific-skills” onboarding. Forgotten between the ‘6 month ramp’ expectation and the idea that someone’s been onboarded once they get onto payroll is the fact that you just hired a really smart person who already knows how to do a lot of stuff, but will still struggle for six months learning “how we do it here.” Most people are hired with skills. In fact, you hired them because they have skills. But those skills don’t work for your company yet. You need to augment them, provide context, show how things are done. And invariably it happens, over the course of six months, with untold wasted time by the new employee, and untold wasted time from their manager training yet another new employee.

Step 1: Assess

Every new employee should have a competency assessment built around a competency model that fits their specific job. We all hire people based on a resume and some interviews, but how deeply do you know what they know? Not very. A competency-based assessment leads to better understanding for both the manager and the employee, at the same time as it uncovers knowledge gaps and provides direction for professional development. The assessment platform itself needs to be fast, easy to use, and simple to interpret or it just won't get used. It also needs to be scalable so that this process jumps out quickly.



Step 2: Understand

Professional development must be a collaborative process. After all, you're not just helping an employee reach their career goals – you're helping them to help you reach your team's goals. Thus, after assessment comes a face-to-face conversation about where are they now, and where both you and they want them to be in month 1, month 6 and one and two years out. That really gets you on the same page with regards to where both parties want to go, along with finding shared goals and effective learning to best accelerate getting to those goals. This is a process of alignment and it increases engagement and effectiveness of development plans.

Step 3: Plan

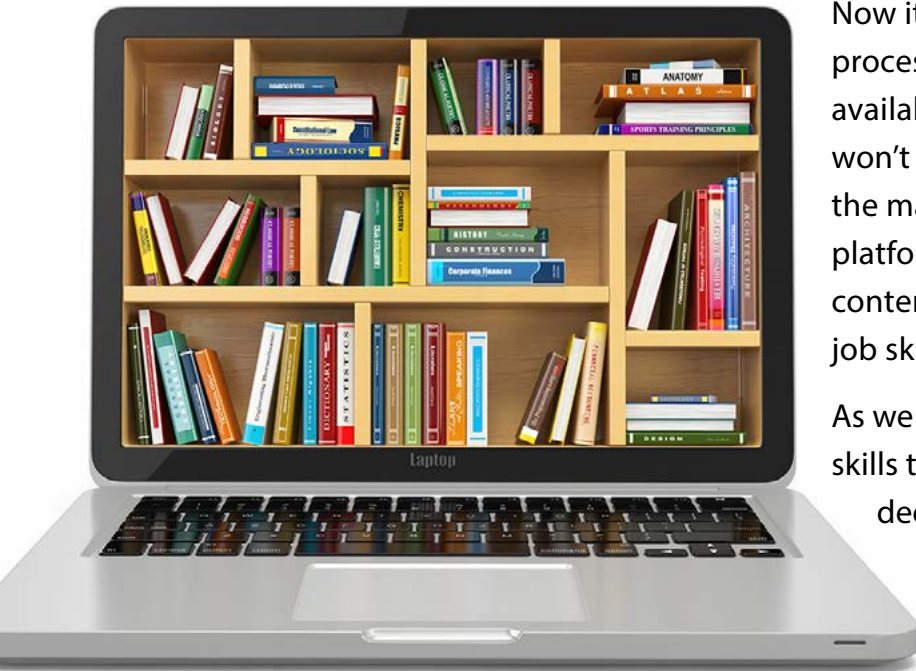
Next up, build a plan. Understanding is not useful if it doesn't lead to concrete action. When it comes to onboarding, that plan needs to center around learning because the entire purpose of the onboarding process is to accelerate learning, and thus accelerate time to productivity. Your learning platform needs to accommodate simple planning, along with simple measurement and reporting, as a goal not measured is a goal that won't be met. Time to learn must be scheduled in – literally written into the new hire's calendar (app) so that time is set aside for the learning to happen. Taking the time now pays back many times down the road. The plan needs to be bought into by both the manager and the employee and should be part of the employee's goals for their first 90 days.



Step 4: Learn

Now it's time to learn. This is the crux of the entire process. If you don't have learning materials available anytime, anywhere, any device, it won't get consumed. And since neither HR nor the manager has any spare time, the learning platform needs to have incredible depth of content that is directly applicable to the specific job skills needed for the new employee.

As we said before, the goal is job-specific-skills training, generic skills won't do. You need deep finance courses for the finance hires; marketing 'how-to' for the marketing hires; selling skills for sales and OD, L&D and the full range of HR skills for human resources.



Most LMS' and course libraries have tons of generic business courses – the kind you can just as easily find on YouTube. What they typically, glaringly lack - and this is why job-specific-skills onboarding rarely happens – is honest to goodness 'how-to' skills training for corporate professionals. Make sure yours does or find it elsewhere. Without that you're dead in the water.

You need to supplement that with internally-built courses that are specific to your company. "Flip the classroom" by having your internal SMEs build core courses in how things are done at your company, and allow the manager to stop wasting time teaching the same old thing again, and instead spend that time answering meaningful, contextual questions of the new hire after they have consumed the training courses, and allow the manager to teach critical institutional knowledge. Your learning platform needs to make the capture and dissemination of in-house courses easy or again, it won't get done.



Step 5: Do

"Do" means the manager needs to back up the on demand learning with job activities that internalize and cement that learning. Without "do", the knowledge will be lost. With "do", it quickly becomes a reliable skill. The "do's" need to become part of the employee's measured goals and tracked just as the on demand learning is.

Sorta Step 6: Repeat

Sure, this paper is focused on "onboarding", but the fact is, this is a learning cycle that should never stop. Employees and managers should continually be assessing, understanding, planning, learning and doing. If you make that happen for yourself, for your organization or for the company as a whole, you will be probably be creating more value than anyone else and driving your own career forward, as well as that of everyone following this program.



If you have other questions about onboarding, let Illumeo help answer them by emailing info@illumeo.com. Learn more about [Illumeo's onboarding solutions here](#).

About Illumeo

The leading online provider of Expertise Management solutions, Illumeo works with corporate professionals and organizations to build the skills and capabilities that help everyone be an expert at their job.

Based in Silicon Valley, CA, Illumeo serves corporate professionals across Finance, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing. The platform offers competency assessment, hundreds of expert-developed courses, collaborative tools for building and reporting on personalized learning plans, and the ability to self-publish internal courses that promote institutional knowledge.

Illumeo is the place for expertise management. We are dedicated to the proposition that everyone can be an expert at their job.

Illumeo, Inc.
(408) 400-3993
info@illumeo.com
www.illumeo.com