

THE IMPORTANCE OF OFFBOARDING

Guide

EXECUTIVE
NETWORK
GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Much has already been said about the importance of onboarding procedures. The crucial act of creating an environment where new talent to an organisation can thrive, reach their full potential and settle into a new role can not be understated. It is a key HR practice that is sworn by human resource practitioners up and down the UK.

However, the same can't be said for offboarding.

The same attention to detail for incoming talent is not put into practice for outgoing talent and we feel that is a detriment to organisations themselves. According to Humaans - "A proper offboarding process enables a company to manage employee turnover efficiently and successfully, leading to positive outcomes for both sides".

In this guide, we will be looking into why an effective offboarding process is imperative to company growth and the steps that can be implemented to improve these practices.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS

PROFESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE

It's never nice to see talented people leave an organisation. Many friendships and working relationships are formed in the workplace so nobody wants to see people who bring value walk out the door.

However, this also breeds an opportunity to learn more about your workplace from an employee's viewpoint.

Why did they leave? Was it for a better opportunity? Did they feel undervalued?

According to Enterprise Alumni, business leaders can "use the interview to get honest feedback about the business and be frank about the fact that you value the leaver's opinion. This can reveal what's working or not in the organization. It can also highlight hidden challenges and opportunities while generating valuable competitive intelligence".

Gathering this professional intelligence can help increase employee retention and move the company's relationship with its staff forward.

INCREASED STAFF RETENTION

Conducting exit interviews has been proved to improve the amount of retained staff. Engaging with departing employees and gaining knowledge of the reasons that they have decided to move on to pastures new - can help leaders put measures in play to ensure that this feedback is implemented to improve talent engagement and happiness in their roles.

A valuable quote from Work Institute reads: " The truth is that former employees have valuable information to share to help improve workplace conditions. In an analysis of over 17,000 exit interviews, 63% of former employees rated their employer as very good or excellent. In that same study, after departure, 66% of former employees rated their supervisor as very good or excellent. Clearly, these aren't just disgruntled employees and should be viewed as former employees with valuable feedback".

REVIEWING OBLIGATIONS

In certain lines of work, employees may be entitled to financial incentives ranging from bonuses to commission payments. Engaging with employees on their way out of the company is paramount to ensure no obligations are overlooked.

Sitting down with outgoing talent to go over targets, numbers and payments is a great way to iron out details and ensure that the individual does not leave the workplace believing that they may be overpaid or underpaid for their services and financial obligations as per their employment contract. This allows for a clean break with both sides parting ways happily.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Having talented staff suddenly hand in their notice can be a stressful time for hiring managers, heads of recruitment, and leaders within an organisation.

The mass panic that can ensue - finding a replacement that is up to company standard can be difficult. However, sitting down with the member of the team who is departing, can help leaders and decision-makers create a succession plan to find the ideal candidate.

"A talent matrix will help to identify potential successors. By having a clear understanding of your employees' knowledge and skills, you can identify who could be suitable to step into someone's shoes." - Reed



OPINIONS MATTER

Brand reputation is so important when attracting and retaining talent. By providing a smooth offboarding process and transition from employee to alumni - outgoing talent can leave with positive feelings towards the organisation. This can be huge when hiring a replacement for the role.

This is echoed by Benify, who states: "How your employee's last days go at your company can be just as important as what came before. It could influence how they speak about your company to their future colleagues and industry contacts. And who knows, under the right circumstances, you may even lure them back into a new role down the line".

BOOMERANG EMPLOYEES

Goodbyes can be temporary. A new HR practice has emerged that targets company alumni for upcoming roles.

There are many upsides to hiring previous talent, such as a faster onboarding process, pre-existing relationships, confidence over compatibility, familiarity with the work culture and savings on recruiting costs.

According to Wired, "In June 2021, researchers interviewed 39 boomerang employees in IT and found that the majority were more satisfied with their jobs when they returned because their working conditions improved when they negotiated their return".

There is a concern that boomerang employees can harm diversity initiatives if a full inclusive recruitment search isn't utilised. This must be kept in mind when bringing talent back into the fold.

A successful offboarding process is imperative to winning back alumni employees, as bad experiences can leave a sour taste and put off any chances of a return.

CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE OFFBOARDING

HELPING THE TALENT FEEL COMFORTABLE

The exit interview itself is the most important aspect of the offboarding process. It allows the outgoing talent a platform to engage with a member of the HR department on the role they are leaving behind.

It enables them to speak about the reasons for leaving the organisation, if they would ever think of re-joining further down the line, where they believe the company can improve, and the good and bad aspects of their employment.

It is beneficial to conduct these exit interviews in confidence. If the departing talent has to sit in front of their line manager, they may withhold crucial information that could make that role better for the next person who takes the position. Making the individual feel confident enough to speak openly about the job, the environment and the people they work with is key to collecting this vital professional intelligence.

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Maintaining healthy and positive relationships with company alumni is advantageous to an organisation from a talent attraction and brand perception standpoint.

Having outgoing talent singing the praises of the company for its culture and offboarding procedures can be of huge value.

"Even when this is the case, do your best to create a positive atmosphere. Point out the employee's strengths instead of their weaknesses. If they have any unresolved conflicts with a coworker [sic], try to help them make amends. You don't want an employee leaving the company feeling wronged and bitter. Even if they keep their opinions to themselves." - [eLearning Industry](#)





COMPANY ASSETS

When a member of staff is leaving an organisation, there will have to be a handover of equipment. This can range depending on the industry and nature of work that the company specialises in.

This equipment can be anything from computers, company phones, employee social media accounts, tools for on-site use etc.

Service Now explains - "When an employee leaves an organization or moves to a different role, retrieving the assets assigned to the employee necessitates extensive coordination between the Human Resources department and the asset manager. You can create an off-boarding catalog [sic] request, which initiates a prescriptive workflow to efficiently retrieve assets and restock them in the inventory, reassign them, send them for repair, or dispose as required".

A lot of these assets, especially the online assets such as laptops and accounts, contain confidential information that a company will not want falling into the hands of a competitor, therefore a handover of these properties are paramount.

HANDOVERS

Finding a replacement for the vacant role can take time. Therefore, a handover to another member of the team or the most suitable employee is the best way to ensure that the quality of work produced doesn't diminish when the individual has left the company.

Of course, this may vary depending on the role or the work. However, a handover of responsibility can then mean that when the new talent begins their onboarding, the transition of knowledge can move on to them.

OVERSEE A GOOD SEND OFF

Regardless of the introduction of working from home in the past two years and not being in the office as much - our work colleagues can quite quickly become good friends, and watching our friends depart for new ventures and experiences can be a difficult thing. As happy as you are for them - you're going to miss them.

That's why organising a send-off for them can be a wonderful thing and put a cherry on top of the offboarding process. This can be anything from a goodbye meal to the whole office meeting up for drinks at the end of their last day.

It also allows for people to swap personal contact details and make plans to see each other in the future away from the work environment.

SUMMARY

In summary, offboarding is just as important as onboarding, and more care and diligence to the effect a bad offboarding experience can have on an organisation needs to occur.

According to TransitionHR, "Employee offboarding through modern outplacement services will demonstrate your commitment to current and former staff. As a company, you provide the tools employees need for success no matter what stage of their career they may be faced with".

The professional intelligence and insight into a specific role within the company can help make that, and other roles, better for the individuals who take it on. This will help create less staff turnover and a company culture that will persuade potential candidates that your organisation is the place for them.

