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HR Onboarding Challenges and How Automation Provides a Solution

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INTRODUCTION

Onboarding is an important process which helps the new hires get adjusted to their jobs, learn news kills, knowledge, and attitudes, which are required to perform well within the organization. Unfortunately, very few companies take a structured, well-planned, consistent, and purposeful approach to it. Many companies are still not completely clear as to exactly why and how important it is, does it require budget and if yes, how much is the right amount to spend on the onboarding initiatives.

According to the 2012 Allied Workforce Mobility Survey[1], every year, 25% of employees change jobs and careers. It costs companies about $11,000 to fill one position and despite this, almost 30% of companies have reported that for a new employee to reach full productivity, it takes a year or longer. Companies are obviously frustrated spending such huge amount of money on hiring employees, only to have them either leave before one year or become productive only after a year. HR experts suggest that the lack of a well-thought of onboarding program and dedicated budgets for the same are some of the prime reasons behind this. A finding by Aberdeen Group[2] that a formal onboarding process helps in speeding up the productivity of new hires, seems to support this contention.

More often than not, onboarding is done in a very haphazard way. Companies wait for the new employees to ask questions, then they respond to those questions in inconsistent ways, give office tours to the new hires, have them sign the contract and ask them to get started – well, this is the most flawed model, to say the least.

The onboarding program needs to be viewed more than just a checklist or orientation paperwork. Implementing a structured onboarding program involves careful consideration of both the "big things" and the "little things". While having a well-documented orientation program and an onboarding plan as the starting points, HR experts also suggest paying attention to subtle factors such as: greeting the new employee warmly, making sure that the employee has a functioning workstation or ensuring that the new employee has a company for lunch.

It may be just another day for an established employee, but it is a very special day for the new employee and making it memorable can pay large dividends in the long run.

This whitepaper explains how automated onboarding can benefit organizations in the overall business context and why it is an important aspect of the talent management strategy.

THE CHALLENGES IN THE MANUAL PROCESS OF HR ONBOARDING

The new hire's first day is rarely filled with work. Organizations need to see to it that the onboarding process is not frustrating for the newly hired employee, and it is also not unproductive for the HR staff. In fact, it needs to be used as an opportunity to create a lasting positive impression on the new hire.

It is a well-accepted fact that onboarding is a complex process involving many people and processes across many departments. The process involves a lot of learning, networking, resource allocation and goal setting. Despite this, almost 35% of companies spend $0 on onboarding[3]. But what the organizations don't realize is that manual onboarding, with its many challenges, is actually costing them more money in terms of revenue and productivity.

Here are the challenges in the manual process of HR onboarding

▸ Difficulty in accessing required information in time
  With hundreds of forms and information pieces floating around in emails, various online systems, and files, it is a nightmare for the HR and recruitment teams to find the required information in time. Countless hours are spent in scanning through files and folders just to get a consolidated view of information about the new hires.

▸ Difficulty in prioritizing the incoming applications
  In this well-connected world, candidates get in touch with the company for the jobs through various mediums such as emails, website, walk-ins, or social media. Recruiters find it very difficult to manually keep a track of numerous incoming applications and prioritize or re-prioritize those based on the need.

In an average company, the new hire needs to read, review and sign 15 corporate policies, procedures, and forms. In addition to this, there are US federal and state forms.

‣ Inability to know and resolve bottlenecks
Madeline Laurano, Research Director, Talent Acquisition Solutions within Aberdeen's Human Capital Management research practice, notes[4] that onboarding is challenging because many organizations do not have a clear owner for the overall process. The onboarding process is shared between HR, recruiting, and learning functions – leading to non-standardization and non-accountability.
Because of this, it can get difficult to know and resolve the bottlenecks in the whole process.

‣ Inability to enforce Service Level Agreements
Productivity and engagement are the top pressures for organizations for onboarding. Clearly, organizations do realize that onboarding impacts the bottom line. However, because there cannot be defined stakeholders or any concrete ways to measure the impact, manual onboarding processes often fail in enforcing SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

‣ Time consuming and costly
Strategic onboarding primarily includes forms management (collection, tracking and management of all forms), tasks management (ensuring the completion of all the activities around onboarding) and socialization (making sure that the new hires are engaged into the company culture). Ensuring flawless execution of all these aspects manually is a very time-consuming process.

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‣ Error-prone
Manual entry of information is always error-prone. There is a possibility that the new hires enter incorrect information o r completely miss on essential details. A lot of time of HR team goes in checking the forms for errors. In case the error is missed, it can have a considerable impact in future for compliance.

THE BENEFITS OF AN AUTOMATED HR ONBOARDING SOLUTION

Acknowledging the need for automation in the onboarding process, many organizations have invested in the automation of their onboarding programs – it has helped them streamline their talent acquisition initiatives and increase the ROI.

Here are the benefits of an HR onboarding automation platform

The Benefits of an Automated HR Onboarding Solution

- Reduced cost associated with onboarding
- Greater employee engagement
- Quicker decisions
- Employee convenience
- Optimized and streamlined processes
- Great visibility on HR services
- More free time for HR
- Employee self-service

▸ Reduced cost associated with onboarding
With everything being online, companies can save a lot of time and money in onboarding the new hires. Automation cuts out the extra administrative time of the new hire as well as the HR team. Organizations don't need to mail the forms to each new hire – thereby saving a lot of money. The form filling is also automatically authenticated and checked by the software, thereby saving the checking time for the HR staff.

▸ Greater employee engagement
Based on the roles, responsibilities and locations of the new hires, automation can help the organizations in creating a personalized experience for the new employees to get them familiar with the corporate culture and procedures. With completely branded new-hire onboarding portals, a consistent communication about the company mission, vision, benefits, and objectives can be initiated which helps in getting the new employees engaged with the company.

▸ Quicker decisions
Automated onboarding helps in the quick processing of employee offer and other formalities. With no paperwork facilitated by electronic communication, organizations can roll out quick offers to the prospective employees and not lose the deserving candidates to competitive offers just because of administrative delays.

▸ Employee convenience with employee-centric experience
With the help of intuitive HR portals, employees can make requests, search knowledge, and interact with the HR teams from anywhere, anytime. This helps in increasing the employee satisfaction as they feel important and paid attention to.

▸ Optimized and streamlined processes
With automated workflow management and case management, employees are offered quick and consistent responses, which significantly streamline the overall workflow and processes.

▸ Great visibility on HR services
Automation ensures that each and every HR case is managed online and tracked properly. All the delivery metrics can be tracked by the relevant stakeholders and used to improve the HR delivery services and information.

▸ More free time for HR
With automation, the HR teams are freed up from mundane administrative tasks. It gives them more time to focus on the strategic priorities and not worry about mechanical activities.

▸ Employee self-service
With online HR knowledge management, employees can find any information quickly and easily without depending on any particular person. Such self-service can make them feel more empowered and also connected with the HR.

THE 'HOW-TO' OF AN AUTOMATED ONBOARDING SOLUTION

Implementation of an automated onboarding solution is much more than just technology implementation. Successful implementation involves collaboration with multiple teams and stakeholders, integration with multiple systems, migration of existing data and information, training, and ongoing support. HR and Recruitment teams generally are not the technology experts. Many organizations, therefore, hire specialist implementation consultants who ensure the smooth implementation.

The implementation plan typically involves :

▸ Workflows and Checklists Definition
This involves creation and management of various workflows and checklists which are very specific to the organization. Once the workflows are created, the onboarding solution needs to be configured for these workflows.

▸ Employee Adoption
Any technology system is successful only when it is widely adopted by its users. The implementation plan needs to include measures taken by various stakeholders to increase its adoption amongst the employees.

▸ Process Integration
Each organization has specific processes and some key procedures to be followed during onboarding. Implementing an automated solution does not mean getting away from the existing processes. The automation solution should be able to seamlessly integrate the existing processes and procedures. This also ensures that there is little resistance from the users in adopting the solution.

▸ Training and Support
The automation solution use starts only when the technical implementation is over. The solution provider needs to offer sufficient training and ongoing support through webinars, documentation, online support as well as on-site support to ensure that the business needs are appropriately met.

Aleks Dmitrovic, Principal, Alcor Solutions quotes," ...In today's economy, given the shrinking supply of talent and greater competition for the best talent, a great onboarding tool will make all the difference."

CONCLUSION

HR Onboarding automation undoubtedly helps in elevating the HR service levels in the organizations. It helps the HR departments in offering quick, consistent, and relevant responses to the HR questions raised by the employees. Management can easily measure the HR productivity and employee satisfaction and bring in a structured approach to the HR services within the organizations. Not only this, HR automation also helps in freeing up the HR time so that the HR staff can spend more time in their core and strategic responsibilities, rather than tactical activities.

SERVICENOW "HR" SERVICE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Organizations worldwide have chosen the HR Service Management solution by ServiceNow to enhance their HR service delivery maturity. The ServiceNow HR Service Management solution helps you focus your resources on strategic priorities. You can create a system of engagement that complements existing applications for core HR, talent and workforce management with this tool.

More information about it can be found at http://www.servicenow.com/solutions/hr-service-management.html

UNIQUE BENEFITS OF SERVICENOW "HR" SERVICE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

1. One-stop customized service portal.

2. HR automation portal to effectively handle asset allocation delay.

3. Effortless processing and follows-ups of employee performance reviews and training requests.

4. Seamless management of department changes along with allied changes across job titles and pay grades.

5. Quicker access controls without too many cycles of approvals.

6. More effective and effortless exit process.

ALCOR - A SERVICENOW IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER & RESELLER

Alcor has worked with several organizations across industry verticals and helped them implement ServiceNow solutions to their advantage.

▶ ServiceNow Expertise
To unlock the full potential of ServiceNow, you need to integrate it with other applications. We have successfully integrated many integrations including ServiceNow–Workday, ServiceNow-MuleSoft, ServiceNow –Jira, ServiceNow-Oracle, for major financial institutions, e-commerce conglomerates, retail, risk management companies, high tech companies, US counties and pharmaceutical majors.

▶ Experienced HR Consultations
Alcor team consists of experienced HR consultants and ServiceNow implementation experts who can help you exponentially increase the productivity of your HR force through ServiceNow implementation.

▶ Process Design Expertise
With our experience of working with several Fortune 500 companies, we can help you successfully implement onboarding process design modules.

▶ Technology and Domain Competence
We bring cost effective, rapid implementation of cloud solutions. We believe that balanced advice and implementation requires a multi-dimensional perspective, which we have acquired from a combination of experts in IT strategy, cloud technology as well as service governance.

Aleks Dmitrovic, Principal, Alcor Solutions quotes,

"People are an incredibly important asset. It is critical for new employees to experience a positive first interaction, and on boarding becomes a crucial tool for ensuring that new people feel part of the business and understand company culture from Day 1. The ability to introduce new employees to the organization, to make them productive and effective in the shortest possible time, and to retain them becomes a critical business issue. A good automated life cycle driven approach to on boarding will ensure all stakeholders know what is expected of them, ensures that new employees arrive ready to be productive, and provides a formal process to solicit feedback throughout the cycle. In today's economy, given the shrinking supply of talent and greater competition for the best talent, a great on boarding tool will make all the difference".

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Alcor is a technology implementation company focusing on Enterprise and Government technology needs in ITSM, systems integration, web development and mobility space. We provide a strategic ITSM implementation approach to our clients and focus on solving business problems by leveraging an integrated business process design and technology implementation capability.

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