

## **EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING AS AN EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND MOTIVATION STRATEGY**

**MARINA BAIEȘU**

Associate Professor, PhD of Economics Sciences,  
The Department of Human Resources, Public Affairs and Communication  
Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova  
Chisinau, Moldova  
e-mail: baiesu.m@ase.md  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1274-6347

**ELVIRA JOROVLEA**

Associate Professor, PhD of Economics Sciences,  
The Department of Human Resources, Public Affairs and Communication  
Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova  
Chisinau, Moldova  
e-mail: jorovlea.elvira.leon@ase.md  
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8184-9951

**Abstract:** The integration of new employees is a critical stage in the human resources management cycle, with direct effects on retention, motivation and organizational performance. A well-structured onboarding process goes beyond the simple transmission of administrative information, transforming into a strategic mechanism for strengthening organizational culture and developing a sense of belonging. Through personalized programs, which include career guidance, mentoring, managerial support and open communication, employees manage to clarify their roles and responsibilities more quickly, develop their confidence and integrate into the team.

The article highlights the importance of effective onboarding in reducing staff turnover and preventing the costs associated with repeated recruitment, showing that organizations that invest in this stage achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction and involvement. At the same time, the article formulates a series of practical recommendations for organizations: extending integration programs up to 90 days, institutionalizing a mentoring system or "buddy system", organizing interactive activities to strengthen organizational culture, digitizing the onboarding process and integrating periodic evaluation and feedback mechanisms.

The conclusions support the idea that staff integration is not just an initial formality, but a fundamental strategy for retention, motivation and organizational development, with direct effects on performance, innovation and sustainability. Therefore, long-term organizational success is conditioned by the way in which companies build and implement their employee integration policies.

**Keywords:** Onboarding, Employee Integration, Staff Retention, Organizational Motivation, Organizational Culture, Human Resources Performance

**JEL classification:** M 12, M 54 J 24, O 15

### **Introduction**

In the current context of the labor market, marked by increased mobility, intense competition for talents and accelerated organizational changes, employee retention and motivation have become strategic priorities for any organization. One of the most effective ways in which companies can achieve these objectives is to implement well-structured onboarding programs adapted to the organizational specifics.

Onboarding is not limited to the administrative process of integrating new employees, but represents a complex strategy of introduction to the organizational culture, values and objectives of the company, facilitating the creation of a sense of belonging and involvement. International

*Annual International Scientific Conference*  
*“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”*  
*September 26-27, 2025*  
*Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

---

studies (SHRM, Deloitte, Gallup) demonstrate that employees who benefit from an efficient integration process reach their performance potential faster, show a high level of professional satisfaction and present a reduced risk of leaving the organization in the first 12 months.

At the regional level, companies in Romania and the Republic of Moldova are gradually starting to pay increased attention to these programs, but traditional approaches, focused on administrative training and technical adaptation, still prevail. Integrating motivational, cultural and digital dimensions remains a challenge, but also a major opportunity for development.

The specialized literature highlights a solid consensus according to which the integration process – namely the set of programs and activities through which organizations support the adaptation of new employees to the work environment – represents an essential factor in strengthening the long-term relationship between the employee and the organization. A well-designed onboarding directly contributes to increasing loyalty and reducing staff turnover. In contrast, the lack of a coherent onboarding program or insufficient socialization are among the main causes of premature departures from the organization. At the same time, numerous researchers emphasize that although the general impact of onboarding on retention is well documented, in-depth studies are still needed to explain the specific mechanisms through which this process influences employees' intention to leave the workplace. (Mosquera 2025).

A significant gap identified in the literature on professional integration concerns the predominant focus of research on the formal components of the onboarding process, especially on welcome sessions organized at the corporate level. In contrast, other essential dimensions of the process – such as direct interaction with managers and colleagues – have been marginally addressed, although they play a crucial role in facilitating the effective adaptation of new employees. (Cesário and Chambel 2019 ), The interpersonal relationships developed in the early stages of integration define the social context of the workplace, providing the framework in which newcomers construct their perceptions of organizational culture, form their professional identity, and develop their sense of belonging. In this regard, the literature has long recognized the importance of the social context in shaping individuals' attitudes, (Herrero and Bornay-Barrachina 2024 ), motivations, and organizational behavior, underlining the need for a more comprehensive approach to the integration process, which includes both formal and relational and cultural dimensions.. (Mosquera 2025 ).

The analysis of onboarding as a strategy for employee retention and motivation is a particularly relevant research direction for both the specialized literature and contemporary managerial practice. This approach allows the identification and valorization of international good practices, as well as their adaptation to the socio-economic and cultural specificities of organizations in Eastern Europe. In this context, this article aims to explore the theoretical foundations, conceptual models and application examples that highlight the direct impact of an effective onboarding process on organizational performance and sustainability.

#### **Definitions and delimitations of the onboarding concept**

In the specialized literature, onboarding is conceptualized as a strategic and multidimensional process through which organizations facilitate the integration of new employees from both an administrative and cultural and social perspective. Its purpose is not limited to the transmission of operational information or initial training, but aims to form a lasting relationship between the individual and the organization, based on trust, involvement and identification with institutional values.

Unlike traditional induction or professional orientation programs, which focus mainly on procedural and compliance aspects, onboarding has a strategic dimension: it aims to align new employees with the organizational culture, thus facilitating psychological and social adaptation to the work environment.

Onboarding is also often defined as a deliberate and systematic integration process through which new employees are supported to become active, competent and involved members of the team in an optimal timeframe. By familiarizing them with organizational values, policies, internal processes and objectives, this process contributes to reducing uncertainty, increasing trust and accelerating individual performance.

In essence, an effective onboarding process ensures a coherent and positive transition to the new professional role, supporting both the development of human capital and the strengthening of organizational cohesion, essential factors for the long-term success of the organization.

Employee integration plays an essential role in a company's success. An effective onboarding process is a major determinant of job satisfaction, productivity growth, and employee retention. Empirical research confirms that people who benefit from structured and consistent onboarding programs are approximately 69% more likely to remain with the organization for at least three years, compared to employees who do not benefit from such programs (Bauer, 2010).

Effective onboarding helps clarify role expectations, build functional interpersonal relationships, and develop essential skills for professional performance.

Thus, onboarding is not just an administrative step, but a strategic human resources management tool, with a direct impact on the long-term success of the organization. (Männicke 2025 ).

HR leaders who invest in onboarding processes create value for the organization. Stofkova and Sukalova (2020) emphasize that a competent workforce reflects a strategically aligned HR function that lays the foundation for employee engagement. Furthermore, developing HR competencies that invest in people demonstrates a concern for the employee, creating value for the organization and strengthening employee trust in relationships (Sharma and Stol, 2020). An essential first step for a new employee is the initial contact with the organization, which establishes a secure foundation for connection. Through effective onboarding processes, organizations can ensure that new employees have a basic understanding of goals and strategy, which can help them integrate and orient themselves to their new environment (Caldwell & Peters, 2018). In addition, effective onboarding contributes to the internalization of personal interests that translate into a dedicated workforce that supports leadership and the achievement of organizational goals (Carpenter, 2023).

### **The Importance of Onboarding for Retention and Motivation**

Onboarding is one of the most powerful tools through which organizations can influence employee retention and motivation from the very first days of activity. Recent studies confirm that the first 90 days are critical for shaping employees' perception of the company, for their level of satisfaction and for the decision whether or not to stay in the organization long-term.

Through a properly organized onboarding process, the retention rate of new employees increases, as they are no longer tempted to resign after a few days or a few months, feeling that they cannot get used to the working environment. At the same time, with the help of onboarding, new employees have the opportunity to get to know their colleagues and collaborate more closely with them - an essential aspect for creating a pleasant working environment.

Below are the key elements that describe the importance of employee integration:

#### ***Increased employee loyalty and commitment***

Employees who undergo a coherent and effective onboarding process tend to develop a higher level of organizational loyalty and commitment. Positive experiences in the early stages of the activity, characterized by support, appreciation and open communication, contribute significantly to strengthening the emotional bond between the employee and the organization. Consequently, these employees demonstrate increased involvement in the professional roles assumed and in the mission and institutional values of the company.

In the long term, well-integrated employees favor organizational stability, generating a more productive and cohesive workforce. Organizations that strategically invest in onboarding programs create a professional environment characterized by trust, involvement and motivation, determinants of sustainable performance. (Männicke, 2025)

***Reducing Turnover and Recruitment Costs***

Staff turnover is one of the most costly problems for organizations, generating additional expenses with recruitment, training, and lost productivity. Through a properly organized onboarding process, the retention rate of new employees increases, as they are no longer tempted to resign after a few days or months, feeling that they cannot get used to the work environment.

***Role Clarity and Expectations***

A well-structured and comprehensive onboarding process should provide new employees with a detailed and clear understanding of the professional role, including the duties, responsibilities and related performance standards. Role clarity significantly contributes to reducing the uncertainty, anxiety and sense of disorientation specific to the adaptation period, facilitating the rapid transition to operational efficiency. At the same time, providing an explicit perspective on organizational expectations determines employees to assume their responsibilities with confidence and autonomy, which favors the increase in the degree of involvement and job satisfaction. Consequently, this approach strengthens staff retention and supports the building of a stable and performing organizational culture, oriented towards long-term development. (Pappas, 2024)

***Enhanced Business Performance and Growth***

A well-designed onboarding process has a positive systemic impact on organizational performance. Employees who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities demonstrate higher levels of individual performance, directly contributing to increased productivity, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. As a result, these cumulative effects support the organization’s sustainable development and competitiveness in the market.

In addition, supporting new employees from the initial stage accelerates the adaptation process, significantly reducing the time to reach optimal performance and the costs associated with training. By strengthening staff retention, effective onboarding contributes to reducing recurring recruitment and training costs. Organizations that invest strategically in this process build stable, competent, and motivated teams capable of supporting an organizational culture oriented toward excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement, essential factors for long-term success. (Männicke, 2025)

***Strengthening organizational culture***

Onboarding is also a tool for transmitting organizational values, norms, and practices. Through socialization, mentoring, and cultural training, new employees quickly understand how the company works and how they can contribute to the collective success. This generates emotional involvement and strengthens the sense of belonging to the organizational community.

The structural and functional differences between different positions and organizational contexts determine the need for new employees to be systematically and intentionally familiarized with the organization's core values, mission, and social dynamics, in order to ensure a coherent, efficient, and sustainable professional transition. Since the level of identification and alignment of new members with the organizational culture may vary depending on individual and contextual factors, a well-designed and structured integration process becomes essential for facilitating the social learning process and for internalizing the norms, behaviors, and principles that regulate organizational activity.

Thus, the detailed and coherent presentation of the organization's value and cultural framework is not limited to a simple informative component, but represents a strategic tool for socialization and strengthening institutional cohesion. Through it, new employees develop a deep

understanding of the organizational identity, which favors the formation of an authentic connection between the individual and the professional environment. (Pappas, 2024)

### **Effective Onboarding Methods**

The onboarding process refers to the steps a company takes to welcome and integrate a new employee into its organization. The goals of onboarding are to quickly get new employees productive in their roles and connected to the company culture.

Onboarding is a strategic process essential for strengthening organizational involvement and commitment, fulfilling a dual complementary function: familiarizing employees with the operational attributes of the job and, simultaneously, introducing them to the culture, values, and philosophy of the organization.

The most effective onboarding programs do not separate professional training from cultural assimilation, but treat them as interdependent elements of an integrated system, based on the mission and strategic vision of the organization. This approach favors the internalization of corporate values and the development of an authentic connection between employees and the organization, from the early stages of the activity. (Milburn, 2022)

Effective integration programs promote a continuous and two-way dialogue between the employee and the company, helping to reduce uncertainty and create an environment in which new team members feel encouraged to communicate, ask questions, and actively participate in internal processes. This open climate increases the sense of belonging and personal value, stimulating individual involvement and innovation.

In addition, a well-coordinated and phased onboarding process – from pre-onboarding to long-term integration – ensures that employees clearly understand roles and expectations, adapt quickly to the work environment, and align with organizational values. Therefore, a well-implemented onboarding program contributes not only to individual performance, but also to strengthening organizational cohesion and institutional culture. (Männicke, 2025)

According to HR experts and professionals, the onboarding process needs to be done strategically – over at least a year. What a company shows in the first days and months of employment – will have a significant impact on the employee experience, determining whether a business can retain employees. Effective onboarding processes often include: (Fig.1)



**Figure 1. Effective onboarding process.**

Source: Jane Ng, (2025)

*Annual International Scientific Conference*  
*“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”*  
*September 26-27, 2025*  
*Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

---

*Digital Onboarding* - By using online platforms and dedicated apps, new employees complete paperwork, watch orientation videos, and create accounts before their start date from any location, in a fast and flexible way. This approach reduces administrative time and facilitates remote adaptation, which is especially essential in the context of hybrid work.

*Staged Start Dates* - Instead of all new employees starting on different days and being integrated individually, companies organize onboarding “waves”, in which groups of employees start together. Groups of 5-10 new employees start each week for basic onboarding sessions together, such as cultural training. This method strengthens social cohesion and reduces costs by standardizing the process.

*30-60-90 day plans* - These plans set clear goals for the first three months of activity, monitor progress and provide a structured direction for development. Managers set clear goals for understanding responsibilities, meeting with colleagues, and getting them up to speed within the first 30/60/90 days. This way, the employee has precise benchmarks and receives constant feedback on their progress.

*LMS (Learning Management System) Training* - Through digital learning platforms, new employees can access online courses, videos, and interactive tests. New employees go through mandatory compliance and product training using an online learning management system. LMS allows for personalization of training and provides detailed reports to managers, who can assess the degree of progress and the level of knowledge acquired. (Jane Ng, 2025)

*Mentoring and partnership systems* - are fundamental strategic tools in the organizational integration process, with the role of facilitating the progressive adaptation of new employees to the professional, cultural and relational environment of the organization. The implementation of these systems involves the deliberate association of each new employee with a mentor or support colleague, capable of providing guidance, constructive feedback and informational, emotional and social support in the early stages of accommodation.

*Partnership and mentoring programs* have a direct impact on employee performance and retention, as they promote active involvement, a sense of belonging and mutual trust. Thus, the integration of these systems into organizational strategies not only optimizes the onboarding process, but also supports the sustainability of human capital and long-term professional commitment. (Bremner, 2024)

*New Hire Portal* - The new employee portal is an integrated digital platform designed to facilitate centralized access to essential information regarding the organization's mission, values, policies and benefits. It functions as a strategic communication and orientation tool, providing practical guides and useful administrative resources for the first stages of professional integration. In this way, the portal contributes to optimizing the onboarding process and strengthening the information autonomy of new employees.

*First-day welcome* - The "first day" stage is a crucial moment in the organizational integration process, having a significant impact on the formation of the first impression and on the establishment of the emotional and cognitive connection between the employee and the organization. This stage represents the starting point of organizational socialization and has the role of transmitting not only operational information, but also symbolic messages regarding the identity, values, and institutional culture.

Typically, this stage includes familiarization activities with the organization's spaces, presentation of the team and relevant actors within the company, as well as symbolic welcoming gestures, such as personalized messages, integration packages with branded materials, introductory sessions or informal social events.

Through these actions, the organization creates a welcoming and motivating climate, which favors the early establishment of interpersonal relationships, the development of a sense of belonging and rapid adaptation to the internal dynamics of the team. (Pappas, 2024)

*Annual International Scientific Conference*  
*“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”*  
*September 26-27, 2025*  
*Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

---

*Social Integration* - This is accomplished through team building activities, interactive workshops, or informal meetings. The goal is to facilitate team bonding and foster a sense of belonging to the organizational community. After-work activities, lunches, and peer introductions help new employees create bonds outside of their formal work duties.

*Progress Check-ins* - Continuous monitoring of results and feedback during the first few months is crucial. Managers and HR can use reports, 30/60/90-day assessments, and satisfaction surveys to adjust the process and address specific employee needs. Scheduling weekly or biweekly 1:1 stand-ups keeps onboarding on track by flagging challenges early. (Jane Ng, 2025)

That said, it is important to keep in mind that the first impression that the newcomer will form on the organization will condition the perception of the company and the way they will carry out their work within it. It is an important moment, which requires increased attention and detailed planning from the employer. In this way, the newcomer's expectations can be met, and the image of the position held and the company they work for will be at its best.

### **Conclusion**

An effective onboarding strategy is a highly valuable strategic tool for any organization, with positive implications for individual and organizational performance. It significantly contributes to optimizing professional adaptation, increasing the sense of belonging and strengthening commitment to institutional objectives.

For new employees, a structured onboarding process provides clarity regarding the organization's role, responsibilities and expectations, increases trust and professional skills and highlights the institution's commitment to the well-being and development of staff. At the same time, it facilitates the formation of interpersonal relationships and social connections essential for a rapid and sustainable adaptation to the work environment.

At the organizational level, effective onboarding has measurable effects on reducing staff turnover and reducing recruitment and training costs, while contributing to the structural and cultural stability of the organization. Empirical studies show that replacing an employee involves an average cost of approximately 20% of their annual salary, which underlines the importance of investing in effective onboarding programs. (Milburn, 2022)

The analysis of the concept of onboarding highlights that this process goes beyond the simple administrative formality of introducing the employee to the organization. The definitions and theoretical delimitations demonstrate that onboarding is a strategic, multidimensional stage that combines professional adaptation, cultural integration and the consolidation of organizational identity.

The importance of onboarding is confirmed by its direct impact on employee retention and motivation: a well-structured process not only reduces staff turnover, but also contributes to increasing the level of commitment, satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. In a context where recruitment and training costs are high, and competition for talent is intense, investing in an effective integration program becomes a sine qua non condition for organizational success.

Effective onboarding methods – such as structured 90-day programs, mentoring, cultural integration through interactive activities, the use of digital platforms, and the implementation of regular feedback – demonstrate that the rapid and positive adaptation of new employees can be managed scientifically and strategically. In conclusion, onboarding should be seen as a key human resource management tool that, through consistent and innovative application, transforms the initial employee experience into a catalyst for individual and organizational performance. Therefore, the long-term success of a company significantly depends on how it designs and implements its personnel integration processes.

*Annual International Scientific Conference*  
*“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”*  
*September 26-27, 2025*  
*Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

---

**References:**

1. Bauer, T. N., 2010. Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success. SHRM Foundation. [online] Available at: <<https://www.shrm.org/foundation/ourwork/initiatives/resources-from-past-initiatives/Documents/Onboarding%20New%20Employees.pdf>> [Accessed 20 september 2025]
2. Bremner, M., 2024. The Impact of Effective Onboarding on Employee Retention, [online] Available at: <<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-effective-onboarding-employee-retention-qkc6f>> [Accessed 19 september 2025]
3. Caldwell, C., Peters, R., 2018. New employee onboarding—psychological contracts and ethical perspectives. *Journal of Management Development*, 37(1), 27–39. [online] Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/jmd/article-abstract/37/1/27/243409/New-employee-onboarding-psychological-contracts?redirectedFrom=fulltext>> [Accessed 15 september 2025]
4. Carpenter, M. L., 2023. Effective Onboarding Strategies to Increase Talent Retention, Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection, Walden University, [online] Available at: <<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=13356&context=dissertations>> [Accessed 20 september 2025]
5. Cesário F, Chambel MJ, 2019. *On-boarding new employees: a three-component perspective of welcoming*. *IJOA* 27:1465–1479. [online] Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/ijoa/article-abstract/27/5/1465/145636/On-boarding-new-employees-a-three-component?redirectedFrom=fulltext>> [Accessed 28 september 2025]
6. Herrero I, Bornay-Barrachina M, 2024. *Leadership in a different light: understanding co-worker exchange in a triad*. *Rev Manag Sci* 18:1253–1280. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-023-00644-x>
7. Jane Ng, 2025. Onboarding Process Examples: 4 Steps, Best Practices, Checklists & Tools in 2025, [online] Available at: <<https://ahaslides.com/ro/blog/onboarding-process-examples/>> [Accessed 12 september 2025]
8. Männicke, S., 2025. Why Employee Onboarding Matters: Boost Retention & Productivity, [online] Available at: <<https://pharmuni.com/2025/02/05/why-employee-onboarding-matters-benefits/>> [Accessed 13 september 2025]
9. Milburn, T., 2022. Why Effective Onboarding Is Critical To Employee Retention, [online] Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/12/02/why-effective-onboarding-is-critical-to-employee-retention/>> [Accessed 23 september 2025]
10. Mosquera, P., Soares, M.E., 2025. Onboarding: a key to employee retention and workplace well-being. *Rev Manag Sci*, [online] Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-025-00864-3>> [Accessed 19 september 2025]
11. Pappas, C., 2024. Understanding How Onboarding Impacts Employee Retention, [online] Available at: <<https://elearningindustry.com/how-onboarding-impacts-employee-retention>> [Accessed 21 september 2025]
12. Rotem, D., 2024. Onboarding New Hires: 9 Strategies to Improve Retention, [online] Available at: <<https://www.guidde.com/blog/onboarding-new-hires-9-strategies-to-improve-retention>> [Accessed 15 september 2025]
13. Sands Laura, 22 iunie 2022. *Why is human resources important?* [online] Available at: <<https://www.breathehr.com/en-gb/blog/topic/business-process/why-is-human-resources-important>> [Accessed 23 september 2024]
14. Sharma, G. G., Stol, K. J., 2020. *Exploring onboarding success, organizational fit, and turnover intention of software professionals*. *Journal of Systems and Software*, 159, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2019.110442>
15. Stofkova, Z., Sukalova, V. 2020. *Sustainable development of human resources in globalization period*. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187681>