



Onboarding Buddy Playbook



What is an onboarding buddy?

New team members want to meet people, form social ties, and learn from their colleagues. An onboarding buddy is someone who partners with a new team member during their first 3 months at your company. The buddy is the new hire's first point of contact outside of their Manager or People Operations.

While the buddy is primarily responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working at your company, the buddy's explicit goals include:

- Increase role clarity
- Convey mission of your company
- Provide inclusion for the new hire into other teams
- Provide new hire a clear point of contact to go for answers
- Troubleshoot any software or hardware issues as the new hire gets set-up
- Be an advocate for the new hire's induction into your company culture

The goal of a buddy is not to be a new hire's best friend, but to make sure that they're set up for success.

A buddy program has many benefits for the new hire, the buddy, and your organization.

New hire benefits	Buddy benefits	Organizational benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Clear point of contact and one-on-one assistance✓ Increased socialization✓ Knowledge of 'how things <i>really</i> get done'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Expanded network✓ Opportunity to enhance teaching and mentoring skills✓ A fresh perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Increased employee motivation and retention✓ Enhance employee development✓ Increase employee productivity



Buddy selection

The People Operations team is responsible for selecting a buddy for each new team member. Buddies should meet the following criteria:

- Be an experienced and seasoned employee who has been at the company for minimum of three months
- Be in the same department as new hire
- Demonstrate strong performance in their existing role, and have a basic understanding of the new hire's role
- Want to be a buddy and be accessible to the new employee
- Be at a similar level or peer group as the new team member
- Have patience, as well as strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Do not have any vacations planned during the new hires first two weeks

Buddy responsibilities

Your company's buddy program begins before the new team member's first day, and continues for three months. It should be interwoven in the new hire onboarding program through Sapling.

The expectations of the buddy are explicitly defined by the People Operations team to ensure role clarity.

Pre-start

Welcome new hires to the team before their first day:

- Email the new hire and welcome them to the team
- Set up an introductory call or virtual conference for a quick introduction

Orientation

Guide and support new hires during their first two weeks:

- Welcome team members on their first day and check in with them at the end of the day
- Provide an office tour for office-based team members
- Make introductions to the team
- Schedule a one-hour meeting to give new hires an outline of your experience at the company and be a resource to answer any initial questions
- Have a company sponsored lunch, in-person for office-based team members or via gift cards and video conferencing for remote team members
- Provide an overview of basic communication tools best practices



Momentum

Support new hires through key learning outcomes as part of their onboarding plan:

- Support new hire's social integration at your company by setting up casual meetings between the new hire and other team members across different departments
- Share what you wish you knew when you started as a new hire
- Examine work-life balance and how to improve it
- Discuss challenges around remote work and solutions to overcome them
- Review internal tools and best practices to get the most out of them

Tips for buddies

- **Be focused on new team members.** Do not be concerned about being perceived as the expert, instead focus your attention on the new employee.
- **Be patient:** It takes time to develop a relationship—don't force meetings or try to cover everything right away.
- **Be positive.** New employees will grow into their roles if given proper reinforcement. Maintain a good attitude and a teaching spirit.
- **Be flexible.** It's important to identify the new employee's personality and communication style and adapt accordingly.