

EDU501272

Overcoming the Seven Deadly Sins of Onboarding and Employee Upskilling

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Learning Objectives

- Learn how to identify the internal and external factors affecting employee onboarding and development.
- Learn how to overcome the common mistakes that limit the success of onboarding and upskilling employees.
- Discover strategies to avoid falling into traditional learning and development traps.
- Learn about implementing proven methods for social learning and mentoring.

Description

Are you a glutton for employee learning and upskilling? Do you lust over new employee onboarding and upskilling programs that work? Bad experiences can leave your employees full of wrath and joining the ranks of the Great Resignation. With the battle for top talent stronger than ever, there's no time to be slothful. Your employees, both new and established, will be green with envy for the outstanding learning experiences you'll learn how to provide while attending this class. Who knows, you might even find employees greedily consuming learning content versus avoiding it like the plague. Taught by two award-winning Autodesk University instructors, this session will focus on overcoming the sins of onboarding and upskilling employees, and putting your programs on righteous paths. We'll explore the process of defining program objectives, developing scalable training plans, initiating strategies for social learning and mentoring, and providing a pathway for your team to learn, grow, and lead.

Speaker(s)



Donnie Gladfelter

Design Technology Manager, Timmons Group

Donnie Gladfelter is a highly visible and respected thought leader in the CAD community. Named one of Autodesk's Top 35 Young Designers Under 35, and Autodesk Expert Elite member, he is well known for The CAD Geek Blog www.thecadgeek.com, six Autodesk Official Press books, and dozens of Autodesk University classes since 2007. An award-winning and top-rated speaker at Autodesk University and other industry events, Donnie has presented to audiences of 60,000+ people, and provided training to thousands on Autodesk design technology. As an Eagle Scout, he helps design teams be prepared for whatever their projects throw at them as the Design Technology Manager at Timmons Group an ENR Top 500 Firm, and as a former member of the Autodesk User Group International AUGI board of directors.



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From the Latin "K", meaning one thousand, and the Urdu "unkel", meaning "uncle", Jason always strives to be as helpful and all-knowing as 1,000 of your Dad's favorite brothers would be. Whether it's being a sounding board for your Revit issues, or lending you money to buy Hot Pockets and Mountain Dew for your all-night coding bender, Kunkel is there for you.

When not frightening small children with tales of dial-up speeds, Jason is the team lead for the AEC consultants at CADD Microsystems; he supports them on technical and standards development issue, helps coordinate and align skills with industry needs, and oversees staffing, scheduling, and quality control. He is also integral in application development and support team of programmers for other applications. Finally, he performs process and standards assessments for AE firms, delivers education, outreach, and training, in addition to presentations.



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The 7 Deadly Sins of Onboarding

Sin I: Expect Employees to Know What Success Looks Like

Starting a new job is both thrilling and terrifying. On the one hand, it's a brand new chapter, a new start, a new opportunity to achieve something great. But how do you start on your path to do just that?

New employees typically receive a bevy of new assignments, and maybe they do a great job completing them, or perhaps they don't. But how do they know whether they're doing a great job or not?

Maybe you've said thank you for their help on that big submittal, but did you provide feedback on their work?

Overcoming This Sin: How will you provide clear, consistent, and actionable feedback to employees - even for the small things?

Sin II: They Will Find the Experts

Remember road trips before GPS? There was a good chance you would get there – eventually. The unknown was how long it would take and how many times you would get lost along the way. There was no voice saying "recalculating" when you ventured one turn off your path. Instead, it typically took several wrong turns to realize you were lost.

Starting a new job is like taking a big road trip to a faraway place with no map or GPS. You'll probably figure out what you need to know – eventually. But how long will it take? Finding the right expert or someone who can answer your question can be like navigating to a faraway place with no map or GPS. You'll probably find the answer – eventually. But how many wrong answers will you have to navigate before finding the correct answer?

Our post-pandemic world only compounds these challenges where remote and hybrid work arrangements are now commonplace. When everyone was collocated, you could ask your office neighbor for help. In the modern workplace, remote employees often don't have a neighbor to ask.

According to the McKinsey & Company study [The Social Economy](#), the average information worker spends nearly 20% of their time searching for and gathering information.

Overcoming This Sin: How will you leverage social technologies to help connect employees to the information they need to be successful?

Sin III: They Only Need to Meet Their Team

Although employees in small firms will come to know everybody in the organization, employees at medium-sized and larger firms often do not enjoy the same luxury. In many organizations, as the company size grows, the focus and scope of onboarding narrow.

What likely started as an onboarding process whereby new employees met everyone in the company incrementally narrows to only include immediate team members. While the rapport a new employee builds with their immediate team is arguably the most critical, learning the broader scope and function of the business is just as important.

Think about your first day in the lunchroom in school. Sure, you knew some people from your class, but as for the rest of the school? They were total strangers. Even if you didn't know every person in your school, you probably came to understand its most basic cohorts.

Starting a new job is like walking into the BIG lunchroom on the first day of school and feeling alone in the crowded room. Employees don't know what they don't know, and even though you know how to navigate the metaphorical lunchroom, they don't.

Overcoming This Sin: How will you help break down barriers between different departments and other organizational cohorts of your company?

Sin IV: Onboarding Is Organic

From CAD/BIM standards to onboarding standards, it matters not what the standard is; the common refrain that standards are like toothbrushes. Everybody has one, but nobody wants to use anyone else's remains universally true.

Looking to onboarding, people find comfort in knowing what is coming. When the structure of your onboarding program is inconsistent, it is anything but predictable to your new employees. These inconsistencies only amplify any anxiety a new employee might be feeling.

Companies should determine the structure that works best for them, but whatever that structure ends up being, build it from the perspective of the new employee. Take a step back and put yourself in their shoes.

Sin V: Everyone at Every Level Knows What Our Onboarding Program Is About

What would you say if someone asked you to describe your company's onboarding program in one sentence? More importantly, how would someone with similar seniority to yours describe your onboarding program, and how would their answer vary from yours?

The best onboarding experience is provided when everyone is on the same page. Everyone, no matter their seniority, reinforces the same message in every interaction with a new employee.

Achieving such synergy starts with you, the person building and managing your company's onboarding program. The most effective onboarding programs are as effectively communicated in one sentence as they are in 100 sentences. Different audiences will require different levels of detail to internalize what your company's onboarding program means to them and how they'll eventually communicate your program to others.

Overcoming This Sin: How will you exceed your new employee's exacting needs while simultaneously being positioned to describe your program in one sentence to your firm's leadership?

Sin VI: New Employees Just Need to Know How We Do Our Work

Your onboarding is all about the how and not the why.

Fundamentally, companies need their onboarding programs to get employees up to speed and contributing to projects as quickly as possible. While getting new employees to a profitable state is important, it's more important they feel a sense of purpose and belonging. Sure, onboarding will need to focus on role specific tasks and competencies, but if that's all your onboarding program entails, then your program probably isn't as effective as you think.

Just as important as the how of your work is the why of your work. For example, it's easy to communicate the steps to link a Revit model into another or externally reference (XREF) one drawing into the other. Of course, while the steps to complete these tasks are relatively easy to communicate, the why of the project data management principles behind those concepts is far more complex.

Beyond the functional competencies of a role are the interpersonal ones. If someone doesn't know how your team functions, the chances of them finding their place within it is slim. Even the smartest guy in a room will have trouble if they don't first understand its culture. While it is easy to overlook, communicating the culture of your team is just as important as sharing the functional tasks you need a new employee to be able to complete.

Overcoming This Sin: How does your team function, and how does it get projects done? Once you know the answer, how will you communicate it to new employees?

Sin VII: People Start New Jobs All the Time

I've already onboarded twenty people this month, and this isn't the first job for most of them.

For those responsible for onboarding new employees, it's easy to think a new employee knows something just because you have shared it with dozens of new employees before them. While you are familiar with your company's onboarding materials, this is the first time the new employee has heard that information.

Although today is probably just another day in the office for you, it's the new employee you're helping first. As their first day with your company, today will likely be a day they remember with striking detail for years to come.

Why is an employee's onboarding so memorable? Because starting a new job is not something most people do every day. Most people will stay in a position for years at a time. So, the last time your new employee went through onboarding was probably years ago.

Overcoming This Sin: How will the employee you're onboarding remember their interactions with you? Will they remember you as someone who was disengaged or someone excited to welcome them to the organization?

It's about Firsts

Fundamentally, onboarding is about firsts. Think about the many first in your life.

Your first day of school. Your first date. Your first concert. Your first car accident. Your first speeding ticket. Your first time flying on an airplane.

Reflect on these or practically any other life event, and you'll probably recall a blend of both excitement and anxiety. Furthermore, digging deeper, there's probably a friend or mentor who helped bring clarity and comfort to each of these events.

As someone involved in onboarding, you have the opportunity to illuminate the way for the new employees of your firm and help bring clarity and comfort to their first days with your firm.

Why Do We Onboard

Your firm likely had employees before it ever had a formal onboarding program. So why do we onboard new employees? Why do we elevate onboarding to the state of being a program within our organization?

In a word, it's about consistency.

Consistency

Onboarding is about promoting some degree of organizational consistency. Leaving onboarding to every project team, every office location, or every other cohort within your company promotes inconsistency.

Inconsistent practices not only limit the comprehensiveness and efficiency of your program but also have a tangible impact on the new employees of your firm.

Promoting consistency isn't just about your ability to be more efficient and comprehensive; it's also about cultivating a welcoming environment for the new employees of your firm. As employees often choose whether a new company is a right fit for them within their first 90-days, onboarding is about building a culture people want to be a part of. In this way, onboarding is about employee retention.

The Four-C's of Onboarding

The fundamental goal of onboarding is to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate new employees into your organization. While there are many tangible tasks to achieving this, there's an equal number of less concrete actions. Whatever the modality, the goal is to proactively address four key challenges both new employees and the teams they join face. These challenges can be summarized by the "Four Cs," which include:

Compliance

New employees need to be informed about the benefits they'll receive at your firm, complete the necessary paperwork to enroll in such benefits, and understand the company's policies and group-specific operational norms.

Clarification

New employees need clarity about their role's responsibilities and their team's expectations about how they'll fulfill those responsibilities. Likewise, it's equally critical new employees receive clarity about things beyond the scope of their duties.

Culture

New employees need to know both the formal and informal norms of your firm and the team they've joined.

Connection

New employees need to learn how to navigate the organization at all levels to feel part of the team. This includes understanding the internal project team, departmental, division, and organization-specific structures they'll need to navigate at your company.

Onboarding vs. Orientation

The term onboarding and orientation are often used interchangeably to refer to the same procedure of welcoming a new employee to your firm. Although both share the goal of welcoming new employees to your firm, each has a distinct purpose.

So what's the difference?

	Orientation	Onboarding
Objective	Welcome and introduce new employees to your firm, their peers, and the organization.	A strategic process to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate new employees into your organization.
Scheduling	One-Time Event	A series of events executed over an extended period.
Modality	Universally completed for all new employees.	Individualized to each new employee based on their role, area of practice, and upskilling needs.
Result	The employee will be ready for further training.	The new employee will be ready to contribute to their team.

Challenges and Needs

Geographical Challenges

Most need not look far to realize the world has changed in the last several years. Organizations that once had outstanding onboarding and upskilling programs suddenly found themselves back at the drawing board.

Among the many ways the global COVID-19 pandemic changed the modern-day workplace is the geography by which work gets done. Before the pandemic, many, if not most organizations, were structured so that teams were colocated and worked synchronously. It was safe to assume a new employee or one upskilling into a new role could easily ask a neighbor for help, and there would be a nearby neighbor to ask.

While it's only been a couple of years, the workplace has changed dramatically in that time. What were safe assumptions about workplace geography before the pandemic now represents a bygone era.

It's critical that today's onboarding and upscaling programs support office-based and remote employees with the same excellence. It's no longer safe to assume someone will have a neighbor to ask questions. Recognizing this, it's imperative employees, no matter their geography, can locate the answers they need as efficiently as possible.

With everyone colocated, it was relatively easy to overcome resource gaps such as documentation. Even without a needed resource, new employees could typically get the answer they needed by asking a neighbor.

Today, colocation is no longer a given. Today, having someone to ask instantly is no longer a given. While the pandemic has illuminated many organizational gaps, perhaps none is more pronounced than the need and importance of documentation and other reference materials.

Recognizing the geographic changes ushered in by the pandemic, it's imperative to ask how your onboarding program changed to match today's workplace needs?

70/20/10 Model

An essential objective of onboarding is to help employees grow from a current state to a desired future state. While the specifics of that future state vary from role to role, the foundational question is how to cultivate that needed growth?

A common model leveraged to quantify the level of effort necessary to grow an individual from some current state to a desired one is the 70/20/10 model. A key principle of this model is that authentic learning and upskilling require three different learning modalities. These include learning from experiences, interacting with others, or traditional training.

More concretely, people will obtain 70% of their knowledge through on-the-job experiences, 20% from social interactions with coworkers, and 10% from formal learning events.

Experiential Learning (70%)

Experiential learning occurs by rolling up your sleeves completing daily tasks, resolving issues that arise with those tasks, and regular practice.

Examples of experiential learning in an onboarding program include on-the-job training, shadowing others, and even special assignments.

Social Learning (20%)

Social learning occurs through your interactions with others in the workplace.

Examples of social learning in an onboarding program include peer mentorship, connections to experts, and the ability to access user-generated content.

Formal Learning (10%)

When people think about learning, they most often think about formal learning. This is learning delivered in a structured way.

Examples of formal learning in an onboarding program include live instructor LED training, on-demand courses, and company-wide knowledge bases.

Although most can logically recognize multiple learning modalities are necessary to build and develop new competencies, firms rarely apply this logic to their learning resource allocation.

A common challenge of many learning and development programs is that the greatest (sometimes 90%) allocation of budget and resources delivers just 10% of the results. Formal learning is excellent for filling skill gaps through goal-oriented curriculums, but most will need to apply those skills in the real world before they become proper competencies.

Building a program

If you're attending this class, there's a good chance you have a rough idea of what you would like your onboarding and upskilling program to be. While that vision is excellent, translating it into action can be far more complex. So, how do you go about building an outstanding onboarding and upskilling program for your organization?

Let's explore some essential questions you should ask when building and ultimately determining the specifics of your onboarding and upskilling program.

What tools do I need?

When getting started building a program, one of the first questions many will ask is what tools are necessary to develop my program. Although tools can and will serve an essential place in creating your program, it's often not the priority many make it out to be.

When building your onboarding program, it's important to remain disciplined and focus on the problem, not the solution.

So what's the problem?

When you're first getting started building your program, the problem is not the tools you have in your tool belt; it's how you share in communicate knowledge with employees. Like most things, there's a bevy of fantastic tools to help you communicate knowledge more effectively. Still, for those tools to live up to their potential, you first need knowledge documented within your organization.

In this way, at this stage, all most organizations need are the tools they already have in their toolbox. Think about the tools you already have that can be used to capture and communicate knowledge with others.

For example, most organizations will have productivity software like Microsoft Office. Using these tools, you can quickly produce training workbooks, whitepapers with Microsoft Word, and presentations with PowerPoint. Best of all, since you're probably already familiar with these tools, the learning curve to create the learning assets your firm needs will be minimal.

Furthermore, while some program needs will likely fall outside tools you're already familiar with, don't assume you need to purchase new tools to meet these needs. For example, video hosting and distribution are common new needs for companies building their onboarding programs. While there is no lack of video hosting platforms available today, Microsoft Stream is a video hosting solution already included with Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365). Even if it doesn't have the bells and whistles of more advanced and costly solutions, it's all many organizations need to get started.

As your program evolves, there will come a time when more advanced tools are necessary. When that time comes, it will be apparent. More importantly, you'll understand what your existing tools cannot do and what you need in new, more advanced tools.

How do I get started?

So if tools are not this starting point, what is? The simple answer to that question is to focus on the substance of your program itself.

What can be challenging is recognizing everything you need your program to be and not knowing where to start.

The best thing to do at this stage is to pause and take a breath. Realize that anything you do will be an improvement over what you have currently. Although you likely have grand visions for your company's onboarding program, you don't have to achieve those today - or tomorrow.

The best way to get started is to start small. Don't try to boil the ocean. Instead of focusing on everything you want your program to be one day, focus on where you can make progress today.

Depending on your firm, this could mean focusing on a specific job role, a specific time frame of the onboarding process, or something else entirely. For example, instead of building a universal onboarding program for all positions your company hires, start by focusing on the role it fills the most in a typical year. Instead of building out a six-month program, build out a one-week program.

Of course, wherever you choose to begin, don't forget to learn from your recent new hires. These individuals have a unique perspective of your firm and valuable insights into where its onboarding program could be better. Beyond the valuable insights they can share, speaking with recent new hires helps ensure that you're working to solve the problems employees genuinely have, not just the ones you think they have.

Meanwhile, no matter how much upfront research you do, you will learn new things you never anticipated along the way. This is okay. You do not need to know all of the answers upfront. What's important is how you choose to structure your program.

With the goal of effective onboarding programs being consistency, make your program both scalable and extensible by focusing your efforts on creating a framework.

When initially building the onboarding program at Timmons Group, we certainly did not understand all the intricacies that would be necessary when we got started. Instead of trying to figure all of these out, we started by defining objectives. The objectives we defined were consistent, phased, cascading, and extensible.

Specifically, we wanted a program that could be implemented and executed consistently. Timmons Group is a fast-growing company that's not only hiring many new employees but also opening new offices. We knew our program had to be as awesome in our headquarters as in our newest branch office.

Seeing onboarding as a strategic process, we knew we wanted to define several phases for our program. Breaking down and defining the key milestones of a new employee's tenure with the firm.

Next was cascading. In building our program, we knew for it to reach its potential, we would need to be able to describe our program at the task level and the program level. Just as each task was a sentence, we had to be able to describe our entire program in one sentence as well.

Perhaps the most challenging part of building a consistent program was accounting for how it would need to be applied throughout the firm. Although a project engineer serves the same essential function in every department of the company, each practice area introduces the need for contextualization. We had to build our program with a consistent framework, but include places each department could plug in the practice-specific skills their teams needed.

When should it start?

The simple answer to when you should start onboarding is as soon as possible. Although many organizations will wait until an employee's start date, this can be a missed opportunity for increasing participation and engagement in your program by new employees.

At no point is an employee more excited about your firm than the moment after they accept their job offer. Harness and leverage this excitement. Reaffirm what a great choice they've made by choosing your firm over the others they may have considered.

There are numerous ways to achieve this. The simplest is sending some company schwag, like a t-shirt and other tchotchkes before their start date. You can take this a step further by making your company logo available to incoming employees in sizes preformatted for popular social media sites like LinkedIn.

Furthermore, think about ways you can help ease the natural anxiety of starting any new job. This could be as simple as sharing incoming employees' first-day schedules with them before their first day or as complex as a virtual office tour. The important thing is to start somewhere.

How long should it last?

Generally speaking, onboarding programs will last anywhere from a couple of weeks to several months. Six months tends to be a common duration, but a full year is often recommended to improve employee retention.

Of course, while your ultimate goal may be to build a 12-month onboarding program, that's not something you have to do all at once. If you don't yet have an onboarding program, start by building a one-week program. Leveraging the concepts already shared in this document, you can build upon an initial one-week program, scaling it to a one-month program, then a quarter, and so on.

When to schedule?

People want to make an excellent first impression when they start a job. Of course, no one feels less valuable than when they have to go around asking, "what should I do next?" or "was there anything else you needed me to do?"

Your goal should be to make onboarding as close to painting by numbers as possible for your new employee. One of the best ways to achieve this is to schedule as much as possible on a new employee's calendar.

Not only does this help get new employees in the habit of using their calendars, but it also provides a guide on what they should do next. Although meetings are almost always put on calendars, other tasks are often overlooked.

Again, while calendar invitations can be meetings, not all have to be meetings. You might need a new employee to complete your company's LMS courses. Help them understand what lessons to take and when to take them by blocking out time on their calendar.

Who should be involved?

Unlike orientation, which is a one-time event, often led by human resources (HR), onboarding is a strategic process carried out over an extended period. The goal of onboarding is to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate new employees into your organization. Although your HR department will likely play an important role in that journey, achieving that is not something they can do singlehandedly.

Although HR may lead and set the vision for onboarding within your company, Effective onboarding involves the entire organization and its people. This means every department, every project team, and every leader in your firm has a role to play in onboarding.

Defining a project as a sequence of tasks that must be completed over a specific period to attain a particular outcome, onboarding is a project and should be managed as a project. Another quality of projects is they have many stakeholders but just one project manager. Your onboarding process should be no different.

In identifying who should be involved in onboarding a specific employee, also be sure to designate a single person who will oversee and manage their onboarding. This person won't shoulder the weight of onboarding the new employee on their own, but they will help ensure an employee completes all the onboarding tasks they need to succeed within your firm.

Study your firm's culture to identify the best person to oversee the onboarding of employees. For some firms, this will be a peer coach/buddy. Giving the peer coach a stretch (experiential learning) project to develop project management skills could be a secondary goal of your onboarding program. In other organizations, this will be the person an employee reports to and is ultimately responsible for their success within your firm. There is no wrong answer as to the who. The only wrong answer is not to designate someone.

Whomever you designate, don't forget to specify the stakeholders who will directly participate in an employee's onboarding.

While an employee's manager is an obvious participant, a peer coach or buddy is another important stakeholder. Peer coaches provide a channel for employees to have more frank conversations and ask questions that many might not be comfortable asking their direct manager.

Furthermore, while getting acclimated with and integrating into their immediate project team, new employees also want to feel like they're a part of your company's overall team. Think about ways to provide opportunities for new employees to meet and interact with your firm's leadership.

Although many companies achieved this through company events before the pandemic, it's important to consider what this means for your company in our present-day world. Some firms have set up a web (Zoom/MS Teams) meet-and-greet between new employees and leadership. Let your creativity flow, but don't forget to provide opportunities for new employees to see beyond the walls of their department.

What needs to be covered?

Look back to the principal goal of onboarding being to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate new employees into your organization. How will you fill those buckets of knowledge throughout an employee's onboarding journey?

For many, onboarding programs are born out of a need to ensure the completion of compliance-focused tasks. Tasks such as reviewing and acknowledging reading the company handbook, submitting necessary tax forms, and completing compliance-oriented training on topics like sexual harassment and cybersecurity. While these are all essential elements of onboarding programs, far more is required to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate someone into your team.

How you attain these objectives can and should be contextual to your organization, work, and overall culture. It's okay to draw inspiration from other companies, but your onboarding program should be unique to your company.

Common onboarding program topics include internal procedures, compliance and legal issues, specific company workflows, role and performance expectations, and role-specific skills. When planning what you will include in your onboarding program, think about the journey you want to establish for new employees at your firm.

Many topics are too large to communicate in a single training event or interaction and will likely require multiple touchpoints across multiple onboarding phases. Consider establishing a consistent topical structure across all onboarding phases to make your program easier to navigate.

For example, to promote a consistent onboarding journey, we decided on a four-part framework when building the onboarding program at Timmons Group. For individuals in a design role, this included design technology (CAD), engineering skills, HR & corporate culture, and project submittals and client communication.

How will employees access and complete the learning?

A learning management system (LMS) is the preferred method for delivering learning to employees in a measurable manner. Of course, while an LMS is preferred, not having one is in no way a showstopper. As previously mentioned, the tools you already have can probably do more than you might initially give them credit.

Simply consolidating all learning and onboarding materials in a central place, like a network directory, will make a more significant initial impact than any learning management system. Pair this with something as simple as a checklist authored in Microsoft Word or Excel; you have the necessary foundations for success.

Fundamentally, your goal is to make information more accessible and more usable for new employees of your firm. Many organizations can achieve that with their existing intranet and network directories. As you get started, keep it simple.

Looking at Learning Management Systems, while every LMS will function a little differently, all will provide essential constructs like the ability to create and assign courses. Before selecting an LMS for your organization, you must first understand your organizational needs. Some LMSs exclusively focus on courses; others provide pathways for experiential learning. This sub-classification of LMSs is known as Learning Experience Platforms (LXP).

The 7 Steps to Righteousness

Step I: Start Doing Something

You don't need the fanciest tools to start making an impact. The tools you already have are more than good enough to get started.

Similarly, just as Rome wasn't built in a day, your onboarding program doesn't have to be built in a day. Break large topics into smaller ones, and create new materials in smaller chunks.

Don't let perfection be the enemy of progress. Anything you create, however imperfect, will be an improvement over what you have now.

Step II: Document Document Document

When workforces were entirely collocated, it was safe to assume new employees could simply ask experienced employees for help. With today's hybrid, and sometimes fully remote, workforce, that's no longer something you can assume.

Empower employees to find the answers they need on their terms. If you present something to a group of new employees, it should ideally have a complimentary resource summarizing the key points. Again, it's unlikely you'll get to this desired state overnight, but committing to creating one document at a time is all you need to begin making meaningful progress.

Step III: Look at It Like a Long-Term Ongoing Project

A project is a sequence of tasks that must be completed over a specific period to attain a particular outcome. By that definition, onboarding is a project. Treat it as such.

Identify stakeholders. Determine the phases and milestones of your project. Break those phases into tasks with estimated durations. And finally, make sure it's clear who is managing the project.

Step IV: Break Out of Your Bubble

Although employees will build the most robust rapport with the project team they are a part of, this should not define the totality of their view within your organization. Provide the opportunity for new employees to see beyond the limited extents of their department. Provide opportunities for employees to meet and interact with your firm's leadership, and learn about the different practice areas of your firm.

Step V: Be Aware of Geography

It isn't 2019 any longer. Where work gets done extends well beyond the four walls of your company's physical office. Onboarding programs must be designed to help employees succeed within your organization no matter where they are physically located.

Step VI: Make Onboarding Part of Your Culture and Make Culture Part of Your Onboarding

Whether a new employee joining your firm is a recent college graduate or someone with decades of experience, the challenges of transitioning to a new workplace are the same. Fundamentally, your workplace is different from the place they came from. People come with their own experiences. Some experiences will match how your firm does things. Some experiences will not. Either way, that's okay.

Most firms celebrate the team-oriented focus of their culture. Now is the time to live it as you welcome someone new to it.

onboarding is to physically, emotionally, and professionally integrate

Step VII: Treat It Like It's Your First Time

Like your first day of school, first date, first car, first concert, or first time flying in an airplane, each of these moments is exciting and terrifying at the same time.

Maybe this is your first time at Autodesk University. You've wanted to attend for years, and you're finally here. Of course, perhaps you've attended for years and are a pro at all things Autodesk University – except this year, we're not in Las Vegas, but instead New Orleans. All that we thought we knew has little relevance to finding our way around a conference in a completely different city.

These feelings. They're the same feelings your new employees are feeling. Think about how you feel now, and relate those emotions to how you onboard new employees at your firm.