They said yes!

(But that doesn't mean they're joining.)



Why recruitment doesn't end at offer — and why onboarding may be the most overlooked part of the entire hiring process.

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A note from the author.



I have worked with recruitment, Talent and HR leaders for more than three decades.

During that time, I have watched recruitment change almost beyond recognition.

We have gone from classified advertising and paper application forms to careers websites, sophisticated applicant tracking systems, programmatic advertising, social recruitment, talent communities, assessment platforms and an increasingly complex collection of technology designed to help organisations find the right people.

And a great deal of that progress has been genuinely positive.

We understand candidate experience better. We think harder about employer brand. We measure applications, conversions, quality, time to hire and cost per hire. We spend enormous amounts of time, energy and money trying to attract good people and persuade them that our organisation is somewhere they should want to work.

Then they say yes.

And something rather strange happens.

The recruitment process, which may have been warm, engaging, persuasive and highly personal, suddenly becomes administrative.

The candidate gets a contract. Someone asks for their bank details. There may be a link to an HR system, a request for references and perhaps a reassuring sentence telling them that someone will be in touch before they start.

Then, quite often, silence.

I have always found this odd.

We can spend weeks persuading somebody to leave a perfectly good job, navigate several interviews, turn down other opportunities and choose us over our competitors. Yet once they finally make that decision, we behave as though the difficult bit is over.

It isn't.

The period between accepting a job and genuinely becoming part of an organisation is one of the most vulnerable parts of the entire recruitment journey.

The candidate may still be working for their previous employer. Counter-offers can arrive. Other opportunities can reappear. Initial excitement can turn into doubt. And when Day One eventually comes, the promises made during recruitment finally meet the reality of working there.

That is why I believe onboarding needs to be viewed differently.

Not simply as an HR process that happens after recruitment, but as a continuation of recruitment itself.

It is where employer brand becomes experience. Where the organisation begins proving that the things it said during the attraction phase of recruitment were true. Where relationships start being built, uncertainty is removed and somebody begins moving from candidate to colleague.

Good onboarding still needs contracts, forms, compliance and all the practical things that have to happen. But those things should support the experience rather than define it.

Because people do not join processes.

> **They join organisations.**
>
> **They join teams.**
>
> **They join other people.**

This paper explores what happens in that often-overlooked space between "You've got the job" and "Welcome to the team" — why it matters commercially as well as personally, what the research tells us, and how organisations can make joining feel every bit as considered as recruitment.

After all the work involved in finding the right person, getting them to say yes should never be the end of the story.

It should be the beginning.

Russell Dalton
Creative Founder, Genius

Job done. ...Or is it?

There is a wonderfully dangerous moment in recruitment, and it happens just after the candidate says "yes".

Everyone relaxes. The recruiter updates the ATS, the hiring manager breathes a sigh of relief, someone tells Finance, someone else closes the vacancy, and attention moves almost immediately to the next impossible role that apparently needs filling by Friday. After weeks of searching, advertising, interviewing, assessing, negotiating and persuading, there is an understandable sense that the job is done.

Except it isn't.

The person you have spent all that time and money finding has not actually joined you yet. They may have verbally accepted, signed a contract, shaken your hand, updated their LinkedIn profile and told everyone they know that they have a new job, but they are still somewhere between the organisation they know and the organisation they have chosen.

That can be a surprisingly fragile place.

Quite a lot can happen during a notice period. Their current employer may suddenly discover just how indispensable they are. A counter-offer may appear. Another recruiter may call. The organisation they interviewed with three weeks ago may come back with more money. Their partner may start asking whether changing jobs really is sensible, while their colleagues tell them how much they will be missed.

Perhaps more importantly, the initial excitement of getting the job has had time to settle. The candidate starts thinking about what the move actually means. They wonder what their new manager will really be like, whether they will fit in, whether the culture will match what they experienced during recruitment and whether, when that first morning eventually arrives, anybody will actually know they are coming.

Changing jobs is an emotional decision wrapped up in a rational process. Recruitment understandably concentrates on the rational elements — salary, role, location, skills, experience, notice period and start date — but the candidate is also making a leap into the unknown.

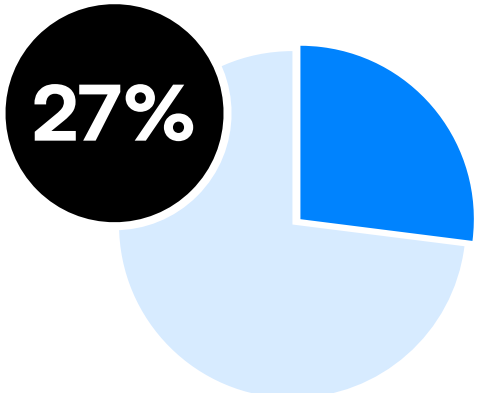
It is at this point that some organisations do something rather peculiar. Having spent weeks persuading somebody to join them, they more or less stop talking to them.

A contract arrives. There may be a request for references. Somebody asks for bank details. The candidate is perhaps given access to an HR portal and then hears relatively little until a few days before they start, when an email arrives explaining where to report on Monday morning.

Before they accepted, they were being recruited. After they accepted, they became administration.

That distinction may make perfect organisational sense internally. It makes much less sense to the person joining.

Welcome to perhaps the most overlooked part of recruitment: **onboarding.**



27% of UK employers have experienced selected candidates failing to turn up on Day One

(Source CIPD)



The bit recruitment forgot.

Recruitment has become remarkably sophisticated. Over the past two decades, employers have invested heavily in careers websites, employer brands, recruitment marketing campaigns, talent communities, social recruitment, programmatic advertising, applicant tracking systems, candidate relationship management tools, assessment platforms, psychometrics and increasingly intelligent ways of finding people who may not even be actively looking for work.

We have also become extremely good at measuring the process. Recruitment teams can tell you how many people saw an advert, how many clicked, how many reached the careers site, how many started an application, where candidates abandoned, how many completed, how many were shortlisted, how long the process took and what each eventual hire cost.

Then something odd happens. The candidate accepts the offer and, in many organisations, measurement effectively stops.

The candidate has crossed an imaginary finishing line. Recruitment passes them to HR, HR passes information to payroll, IT receives a request for equipment, the hiring manager makes a diary note, and internally a series of perfectly sensible handovers takes place.

The candidate, of course, experiences none of these handovers. To them, it is one organisation, one relationship, one brand and one decision. They do not know that the careers website sits with Talent Acquisition while the email they have just received comes from HR Operations. They do not know that employer branding belongs to one budget while onboarding belongs to another. They simply notice that the experience has changed.

That matters because an accepted offer is not the same thing as a guaranteed starter.

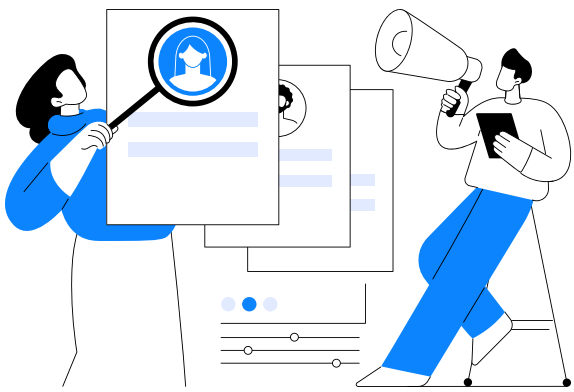
CIPD and Omni RMS research published in 2024 gives us a useful indication of how widespread the problem is. More than a quarter — 27% — of UK employers that had attempted to fill vacancies reported experiencing selected candidates failing to turn up on their first day, while 41% of employers that had recruited people reported experiencing new recruits resigning within their first 12 weeks.

Those figures need to be interpreted carefully. They do not mean that 27% of every organisation's new recruits disappear on Day One, or that 41% of all employees leave within three months. What they do tell us is that these problems are common enough to affect a very significant proportion of employers.

New-starter ghosting is not an amusing recruitment horror story that happens somewhere else. Early attrition is not a freak event. Across UK organisations, people are regularly dropping away at precisely the point where the most expensive part of the recruitment process has already taken place.

At the same time, finding good people remains difficult. The same CIPD research found that 64% of organisations that had attempted to recruit experienced difficulties attracting candidates, while 69% said competition for well-qualified talent had increased.

So recruitment teams are working harder to find people, competing harder to attract them and investing more creatively to persuade them to join. Which raises an obvious question: once we finally find the person we want, why do we so often become less attentive?



The most dangerous words in recruitment.

There are two words that create enormous relief in recruitment departments: **"offer accepted".**

They sound reassuringly final. After weeks of uncertainty, there it is — a result.

For the employer, acceptance often feels like the end of the search. For the candidate, it can feel more like the point at which a major life decision suddenly becomes real.

Changing jobs is rarely just about salary or title. Even someone leaving a role they dislike is still leaving familiarity behind. They know how their current organisation works. They understand the systems. They know which meetings matter, who gets things done, who knows everything and which manager should probably be avoided before their second coffee.

They understand the unwritten rules. They have relationships, reputation, routines and a level of competence that comes simply from knowing how the place works.

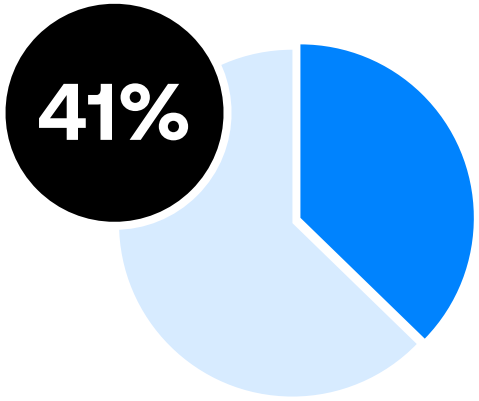
The new organisation, however exciting, is still largely imaginary. They may have met three or four people, visited the office, looked through the careers website and listened to plenty of positive things about culture and opportunity, but they have not actually experienced any of it yet.

That creates an odd situation in which the job they are leaving is completely real, while the job they are joining is still mostly a promise.

For somebody changing employer after several years, that psychological leap can be considerable. At senior level, it might mean walking away from influence and reputation that took years to build. For somebody relocating, it can involve a new home, new schools, different childcare, different transport and major changes for the rest of their family.

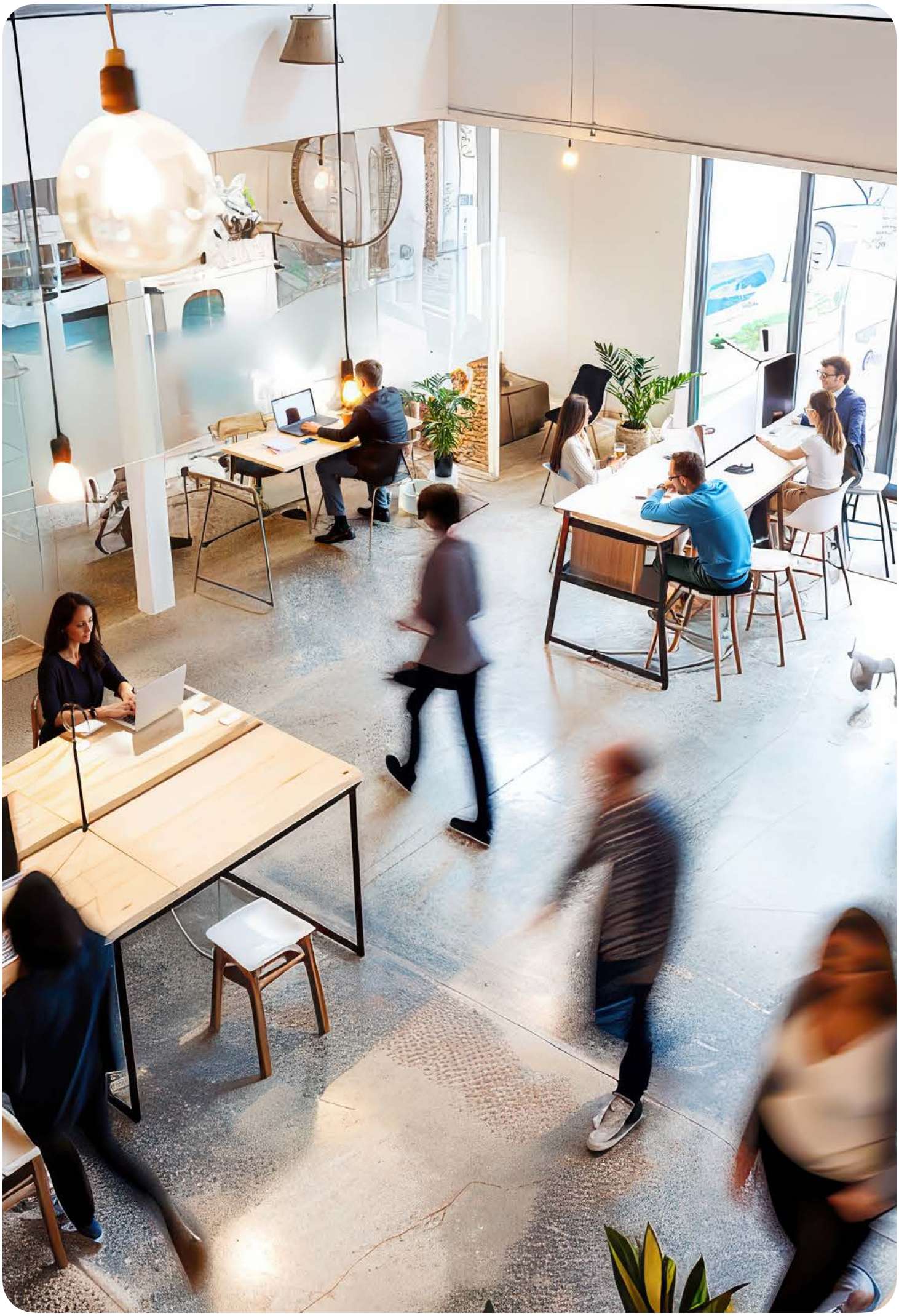
Even a relatively straightforward move can create uncertainty, and yet the moment the candidate accepts the job is traditionally the moment recruitment reduces the amount of reassurance it provides.

We almost do the **opposite** of what the psychology suggests we should do.



41% of UK employers have experienced new recruits resigning within the first 12 weeks

(Source CIPD)



The notice period is a strange place.

Notice periods are peculiar because technically the decision has already been made, but emotionally it may still be very much alive.

The candidate has said yes to you while continuing to spend most of every working day with somebody else. Their old employer still has access to them. Their old colleagues are around them. They continue using the same laptop, eating lunch with the same people and going to the same meetings. Everything about their existing working life remains reassuringly familiar, even though they have decided to leave it.

Resignation can also have a curious effect on organisations. The manager who had not discussed somebody's career for 18 months suddenly wants to talk about their future. The promotion that was not possible last month may become something that could perhaps be explored. Money appears. Flexible working can suddenly be reconsidered. A senior director who barely knew the employee existed invites them for coffee. Colleagues become sentimental and begin reminding them of everything they are leaving behind.

None of this is necessarily manipulative. Sometimes losing somebody genuinely makes an organisation realise what it had.

But imagine experiencing all of that while the organisation you are supposedly excited about joining communicates with you once every couple of weeks.

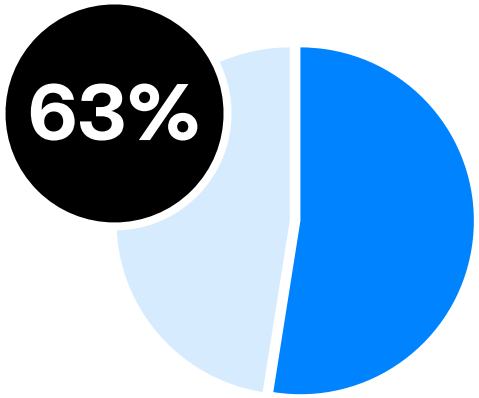
The competitive recruitment process has not ended. The competitor has simply **changed**.

CIPD research illustrates how real that continued competition can be. Employers report candidates accepting offers and subsequently declining them, as well as challenges around counter-offers and retaining people during those first weeks. In the north of England, the 2024 research found that 57% of employers had experienced candidates accepting an offer and then subsequently declining it.

There will always be people who change their minds. No onboarding platform, recruiter or hiring manager can prevent that completely, and it would be foolish to suggest otherwise. Circumstances change, better opportunities sometimes appear and occasionally a candidate simply decides they have made the wrong choice.

There is, however, a considerable difference between recognising that some attrition is inevitable and doing very little to prevent the attrition that might have been avoided.

That gap is where onboarding becomes **interesting**.



63% of employers experienced candidates accepting an offer and later declining it

(Source CIPD)

Silence is not neutral.

Recruiters spend an enormous amount of time thinking about candidate communication before the offer. We know applicants dislike disappearing into black holes, that long periods without feedback damage candidate experience and that unexplained delays create uncertainty. We have automated acknowledgements, interview reminders, status updates and carefully considered rejection communications because we understand that communication affects how candidates feel about the organisation.

Then they accept and we suddenly assume they are perfectly comfortable hearing almost nothing for the next four weeks.

It is worth asking why.

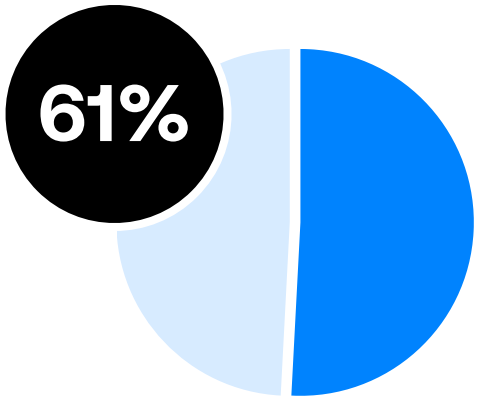
Silence does not necessarily mean anything has gone wrong, but psychologically it creates space, and that space gets filled. Perhaps the candidate's current employer fills it. Perhaps another recruiter does. Perhaps the candidate fills it themselves with questions that gradually become doubts.

When somebody is moving from something known into something unknown, communication provides reassurance that the new organisation remains interested, organised and genuinely expects them to arrive.

That does not mean bombarding a new starter every morning with another piece of corporate content. There is an enormous difference between engagement and harassment. Good onboarding is not about frequency for the sake of frequency; it is about relevance, timing and human connection.

A welcome from the manager matters. Knowing what happens next matters. Seeing the office may matter. Meeting the team matters. Understanding something about the culture matters. Being able to answer practical questions matters.

The objective is not to fill every moment between acceptance and Day One. It is simply to stop the candidate feeling that they have disappeared into a void.



61% of organisations experienced candidates renegotiating offer terms

(Source CIPD)

Paperwork is not onboarding.

This is perhaps the most important distinction in the entire conversation.

Paperwork is necessary, **but paperwork is not onboarding.**

Every employer has things it needs to get done. Contracts need signing, references may need checking, right-to-work processes need completing, payroll needs information, emergency contacts need recording, policies need acknowledging and IT needs enough notice to provide the right equipment.

All of that is important.

The problem begins when those tasks become the entire experience, because administration is fundamentally about what the organisation needs from the employee, whereas onboarding should also be about what the employee needs from the organisation.

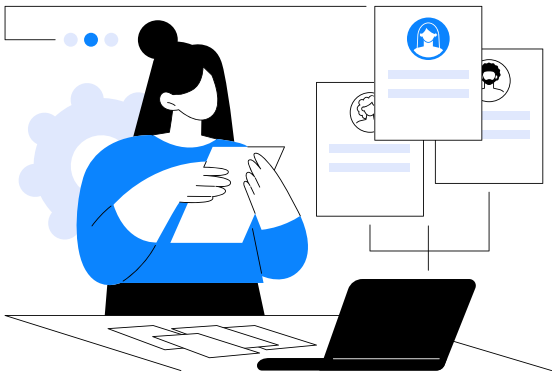
Those are not the same thing.

CIPD guidance describes effective induction in much broader terms. It is about welcoming somebody properly, helping them settle into the organisation, ensuring they understand the culture and values, introducing them to the people and relationships that matter, clarifying expectations and giving them the information and support they need to perform effectively.

That is a much richer concept than completing forms.

Of course your new employee needs to provide their bank details, but they would probably also like to know who they are going to work with. Of course they need a contract, but they may appreciate hearing from their manager. They need to understand the policies, but they also want to know what actually happens when they walk through the door on Monday morning.

The practical and the personal should not be competing versions of onboarding. Good onboarding does both, and if the technology is doing its job properly, the practical part should become so effortless that the organisation has more time for the personal one.



We spent how much attracting them?

This is where onboarding becomes particularly interesting from an employer-brand perspective.

Consider what a sophisticated organisation may invest before somebody accepts a role. There may have been EVP research, employer-brand development, photography, film, careers website content, advertising, social media, recruitment campaigns and carefully crafted candidate communications.

The objective is not merely to explain the vacancy. It is to help somebody understand the organisation. What does it feel like here? Who are the people? What do we believe? What sort of career could you build? Why would you choose us?

Done well, all of that gradually allows a candidate to picture themselves inside the business.

They apply. They meet people. They progress. They interview. They get excited. Eventually, they receive the phone call telling them that the organisation would love them to join.

Brilliant.

Then, far too often, the employer brand falls off a cliff.

A generic email arrives from HR Shared Services containing several attachments. The company that spent months demonstrating its culture communicates through a new-starter form. The warm, human recruitment experience suddenly becomes administrative.

It is an extraordinary disconnect, and it happens because employer branding is still too often considered something that exists primarily to attract candidates rather than something that should continue throughout employment.

But why would the promise stop at offer?

In fact, onboarding is one of the first opportunities an organisation has to prove that its employer-brand claims were actually true.

If you said the organisation was friendly, introduce people. If collaboration matters, help the new employee form connections before Day One. If development is important, show them what their first few months could look like. If people are genuinely your greatest asset, behave as though you have noticed another one is about to arrive.

The CIPD's current induction guidance explicitly links effective induction with employee turnover, absenteeism and employer brand. That matters because it moves onboarding away from being viewed purely as an operational task and places it firmly within the wider employee experience.

Employer brand is not simply what you tell candidates. It is what they experience after hearing it.

Recruitment makes promises. Onboarding starts **proving them.**



When expectation meets reality.

The first few weeks of employment are fascinating because they are the point where expectation starts colliding with reality.

Before joining, the employee has built a picture of the organisation from dozens of small clues: the job advert, the careers website, Glassdoor, the recruiter, the interview, the office, the hiring manager, the offer process and perhaps conversations with people they already know.

By the time they start, they have constructed a mental version of what working there will be like.

Then they arrive and begin comparing.

- Was the interview experience representative?
- Does the manager behave in the way I expected?
- Are people genuinely welcoming?
- Do the values on the wall have anything to do with how people behave?
- Does the role actually resemble the role I was sold?

Psychologists might describe some of this in terms of the psychological contract — the unwritten expectations that exist between employer and employee.

Recruiters might describe it more simply:
does the reality match the promise?

When it does, confidence grows. When it does not, people usually notice surprisingly quickly.

This is one reason onboarding cannot sensibly be treated as a one-day orientation. Gallup has repeatedly argued that organisations make a mistake when they think of onboarding as a short event rather than a longer period of integration into the role, the team and the wider organisation.

That feels intuitively right. Nobody becomes fully embedded in a company because they watched a presentation about the values on their first Tuesday morning.

Belonging takes time. Understanding takes time. Confidence takes time. Productivity takes time.

Onboarding needs to **recognise** that.



The expensive empty chair.

Now we get to the **financial** argument.

Losing somebody between offer and start date is disappointing, but it is also expensive. Some of those costs are obvious: advertising, agency fees, recruitment-team time, hiring-manager time, interviewing, assessment, background checking and administration.

Then there are the costs that are harder to see.

The vacancy remains open. Existing employees continue carrying the work. Projects may be delayed. Managers return to interviewing. A second-choice candidate may no longer be available. The recruitment campaign may need restarting and the team that thought help was arriving next Monday discovers that it is not.

Then the organisation pays for much of the process again.

If somebody actually starts and leaves shortly afterwards, additional costs appear. Salary has now been added, along with equipment, training, management time, IT setup, learning and development, and the inevitable period during which a new employee is learning rather than operating at full effectiveness.

The true cost of a failed hire therefore rarely appears neatly in one place. It is scattered around the organisation, which means businesses can significantly underestimate it.

CIPD guidance on employee turnover and retention recognises the impact that turnover can have on organisational performance and encourages employers to understand why people leave so that retention strategies can address the causes.

The maths becomes particularly interesting for organisations recruiting at scale.

Imagine a business hiring 1,000 people every year. Suppose the fully loaded cost of attracting and hiring each person is £6125. **That already represents more than £6.1 million flowing through recruitment** before we begin considering management time, lost productivity or replacement costs.

Now ask a slightly different set of questions.

How many accepted candidates fail to arrive? How many people leave within 30 days? How many are gone within 90? How many of those departures might realistically have been prevented by a better joining experience?

Even a relatively small percentage improvement suddenly has a meaningful financial value.

This is why onboarding deserves to be understood as more than an employee-engagement exercise. It is also about protecting an investment the organisation has already made.

The average recruitment cost of filling a vacancy, including associated labour costs, is £6,125, rising to £19,000 for a senior manager role

(Source Morgan McKinley)



Stop pouring candidates into a leaky bucket.

Recruitment teams understandably spend a lot of time thinking about funnels. We want more suitable candidates entering at the top, better conversion, fewer abandoned applications, improved quality, faster hiring and lower cost.

All sensible.

But imagine a bucket with a hole in the bottom. There are two ways to keep it full: continually pour more water in, or fix the hole.

Recruitment has traditionally invested enormous energy at the top of the funnel — attraction — while giving significantly less strategic attention to what happens immediately after the hire.

That deserves **challenging**.

If an organisation has a significant problem with accepted candidates failing to start, or with employees disappearing during their first few weeks or months, perhaps the answer is not simply another recruitment campaign.

Perhaps the recruitment process needs extending.

Seen this way, onboarding can become a recruitment-efficiency programme rather than merely an HR initiative. Keeping one more difficult-to-find engineer matters. Preventing one senior candidate from accepting a counter-offer matters. Reducing early attrition across a high-volume workforce matters. Helping new employees become effective sooner matters.

Scale those improvements across a large organisation and onboarding begins to look very different financially.

The question stops being
“How much does onboarding cost?”
and starts becoming
“How much is poor onboarding already costing us?”

Those are very different conversations.



The first day begins long before Day One.

There is a strange convention in employment that somebody somehow becomes real at 9am on their first day.

Before that, they are waiting in the wings.

But once somebody has accepted a role, there is no reason their relationship with the organisation needs to remain dormant until they arrive. In fact, the period immediately after the verbal offer may be one of the most valuable moments in the entire joining experience.

Think about how the candidate feels at that point. The uncertainty of interviewing is over. Somebody chose them. They are excited, relieved and probably rather proud.

This is an unusually positive emotional moment.

And in many organisations, the response is still something along the lines of, "Fantastic. HR will send you something next week."

That feels like an opportunity wasted.

What if the relationship continued immediately?
What if the recruiter could congratulate the candidate and give them instant access to somewhere that already felt like their new organisation? Somewhere they could see a welcome, understand what happens next, meet the people they are going to work with, explore the culture and complete the practical things when they become relevant.

That does more than improve administration. It changes the psychology of the period after acceptance.

The candidate is no longer waiting for the organisation to begin.

The relationship has already started.



Day One is already too late.

If onboarding begins on Day One, one of its most important outcomes has already either happened or failed.

The person arrived.

The period between offer and first day is often called preboarding, but even that term can make it sound like a smaller administrative stage before the "real" onboarding begins.

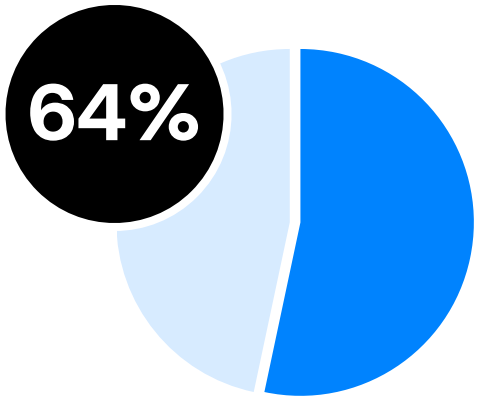
It is arguably much more important than that.

This is the period in which the candidate is moving psychologically from applicant to employee. Doubt can grow or confidence can grow. They can remain an outsider waiting to arrive or start feeling that they are already joining.

That change in thinking matters because connection does not need to wait for the paperwork.

A contract may take time to produce.

A welcome does not.



64% of recruiting organisations experienced difficulty attracting candidates

(Source CIPD)



Somebody is expecting you.

Think back to the last time you started a new job.

There is something uniquely strange about the first morning. You know nobody, while everybody else appears to know exactly what they are doing. You do not know where anything is, how people behave, what the unwritten rules are, where to go for lunch or even, in some cases, how to get into the building.

Most of these things sound trivial after you have worked somewhere for six months.

On Day One they are not.

Now imagine that three weeks earlier you received a short video message from somebody in the team. They introduced themselves, told you they would be your buddy and said they were looking forward to meeting you. They added that if you had any questions before starting, however minor they seemed, you should ask.

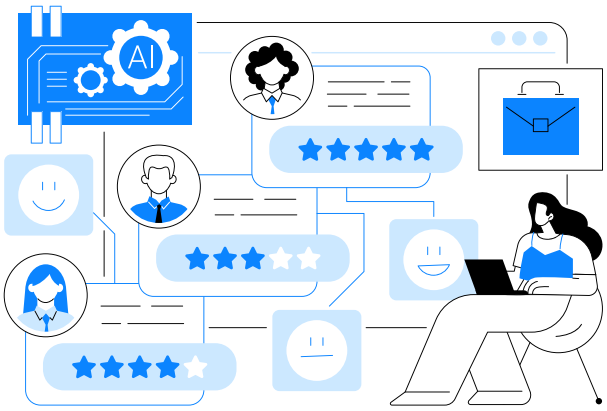
It might have taken that colleague 30 seconds to record.

But psychologically quite a lot has happened.

There is now a face, a name and a connection. Somebody knows you are coming. You do not have to walk into an entire organisation of strangers because you already know one person.

This illustrates something fundamental about onboarding: people help people join.

Technology can facilitate that brilliantly, but the objective should never be to replace human contact. It should be to make human contact easier.



The manager matters more than the portal.

There is a danger when discussing onboarding technology that the technology becomes the hero.

It should not.

The **people** are the hero, and particularly the manager.

A beautifully designed onboarding experience cannot compensate indefinitely for a manager who appears surprised when the employee turns up. Equally, even relatively modest onboarding can feel excellent when the manager is attentive, prepared and genuinely interested.

Gallup's research has repeatedly highlighted the importance of helping new employees understand their role, connect with organisational purpose, build relationships and understand what success looks like. Yet only 12% of employees in Gallup research strongly agreed that their organisation did a great job of onboarding.

That is a remarkably low number considering how much effort organisations put into attracting people in the first place.

Gallup has also found that employees who experience exceptional onboarding are considerably more likely to be extremely satisfied with their workplace.

The manager is central to that experience because new employees need clarity. They want to understand what success looks like, what they should concentrate on first, how their performance will be judged, who they can ask for help and what their manager actually expects from them.

Those are not questions an HR system can answer on its own.

Good onboarding therefore requires shared ownership. Recruitment starts the relationship, HR makes sure the infrastructure works, technology keeps the journey connected and managers bring the role itself to life.



There is a person underneath the “new starter”.

Language tells us quite a lot about how organisations think.

Once someone accepts an offer, they often become a “new starter”.

It is a useful phrase, but also a slightly revealing one.

A candidate has a name, ambitions, preferences, experience, anxieties and a story. A new starter is a **category**.

When an organisation hires hundreds or thousands of people, categories are unavoidable. HR teams need systems, payroll needs data and businesses need consistency.

But the person receiving the experience does not think of themselves as one of 600 new starters.

They think of themselves as one person changing job.

That is why **personalisation** matters.

Not fake personalisation in which a system inserts somebody’s first name into a generic email, but genuine relevance: information about their role, their manager, their team, their location, their start date, their journey and, where appropriate, their relocation or accessibility requirements.

An apprentice entering employment for the first time does not have the same questions as a senior executive joining the board. Someone moving their family to a new city does not need the same information as somebody changing employer across the road.

They all need onboarding.

They do not necessarily need **identical onboarding.**

The best technology allows organisations to create consistency without forcing everyone through exactly the same experience.



Onboarding an apprentice is not onboarding a CFO.

There is no single psychological experience called "starting a job".

For someone entering employment for the first time, almost everything may be new. They may genuinely worry about what to wear, when people take lunch, how formal meetings are, what to do if they are running late and whether it is acceptable to ask questions.

An experienced executive is likely to have very different concerns. They may want to understand the critical stakeholders, political sensitivities, board expectations, existing relationships and the things that have already been tried unsuccessfully.

An employee relocating internationally faces another set of questions altogether.

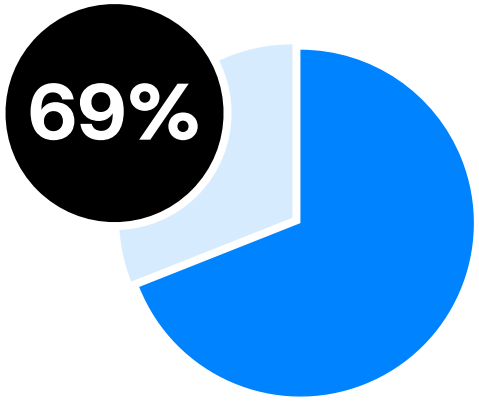
- Where should we live?
- What are the schools like?
- How does the commute work?
- Can my partner find work?
- How do we build a social life?

For that person, joining your organisation may genuinely mean changing almost every aspect of their life.

Good onboarding recognises those differences rather than simply delivering everybody the same corporate information in the same order.

Sometimes being a good employer means helping somebody join the company.

Sometimes it means helping them build the life that makes joining the company possible.



69% say competition for well-qualified talent has increased

(Source CIPD)

Hybrid working changed the rules.

Once upon a time, onboarding had one enormous advantage: **everybody was there.**

A new employee could learn almost accidentally. They overheard conversations, watched how people behaved, went for coffee with colleagues and picked up countless little pieces of information simply by being physically present.

Someone leaned across the desk and explained why a process worked in a particular way. A colleague invited them to lunch. They watched how their manager interacted with other people and gradually absorbed the organisation.

Hybrid and remote working have not removed these opportunities entirely, but they have made them much less automatic.

A remote new hire cannot overhear the conversation beside them. They cannot casually ask the person at the next desk a tiny question. Every interaction has to be initiated more deliberately.

That is an important difference.

In an office, informal integration often happens almost by accident. Remotely, much of it needs designing.

Gallup has highlighted remote onboarding as an additional challenge because organisations have to help people build relationships and understand their roles without relying on physical proximity.

That means connection needs to become intentional. Introductions need to happen. Manager contact needs planning. Buddy relationships often become more important. Culture needs to be explained and experienced in ways that do not rely on simply being physically present.

Remote onboarding does not necessarily need more information.

It often needs more **humanity.**



Please don’t give them everything on Monday morning.

There is another familiar onboarding tradition: **the information dump.**

The new employee arrives and is given almost everything they could conceivably need to know about the organisation before lunchtime. There is a welcome presentation, health and safety, cyber security, pensions, benefits, values, policies, organisation structures, data protection, expenses, brand guidelines, IT security and, somewhere around mid-afternoon, somebody asks whether they have any questions.

Usually they do not, because their brain stopped accepting new information several hours earlier.

Good onboarding recognises that people do not need everything immediately. They need the right things at the right time.

Before starting, they need reassurance and practical preparation. On Day One, they need orientation and connection. During the first week, they need clarity around their role and relationships. Over the following weeks, they need deeper understanding, feedback, learning and integration.

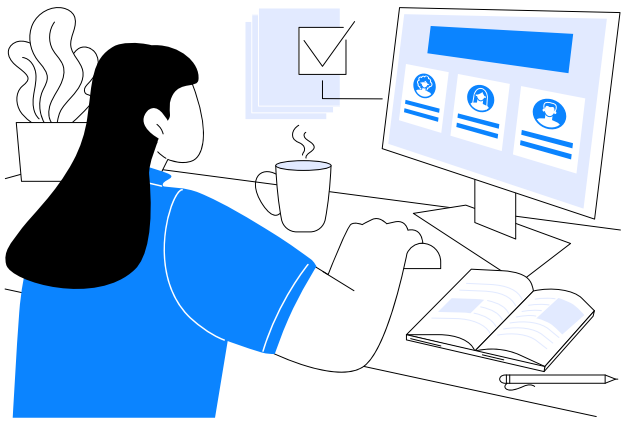
The exact timing will vary, but the principle is simple: **access to information is not the same thing as successful communication.**

An employee handbook may contain the answer. That does not mean the employee found it, understood it or remembered it.

A better onboarding journey therefore releases information progressively, at the point when it becomes useful.

Technology is extremely good at doing this.

And, paradoxically, the better the technology becomes at handling those mechanics, the more human the experience can feel.





Automation should create space for humanity.

There is understandable excitement around automating HR processes.

Good automation removes repetitive administration, reduces mistakes, makes processes more consistent, provides visibility and stops someone in HR having to remember to send the same email hundreds of times a year.

All excellent.

But onboarding exposes the weakness of automation when automation itself becomes the objective.

Imagine a programme that automatically sends 15 generic emails, prompts a candidate to complete seven forms, updates three systems and manages every administrative task perfectly without anybody in the organisation actually speaking to the new employee.

It is extremely efficient.

It is also rather bleak.

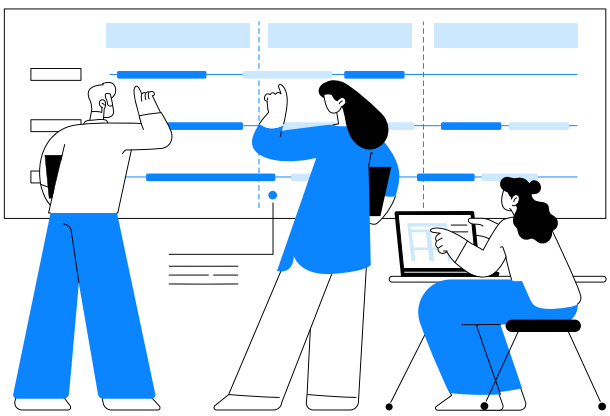
Technology should automate the mechanics of onboarding so that people can concentrate on the relationship. It should handle triggers, reminders, content, documents and integrations, while recruiters welcome, managers talk, buddies connect and teams get involved.

The objective is not less human interaction.

It is less administration getting in the way of human interaction.

That distinction is important because people do not join systems.

They join **organisations, teams and other people.**



Culture is absorbed, not downloaded.

Almost every organisation wants new employees to understand its culture, and the traditional solution is to explain it to them.

Here are our values. Here is our purpose. Here is our mission. Here are photographs of people looking collaborative.

But culture is not really learned that way.

Culture is discovered through behaviour. Who gets recognised? How do managers communicate? Can people challenge ideas? What happens when something goes wrong? Does the organisation behave like its values say it behaves? How formal are relationships? How do decisions really get made?

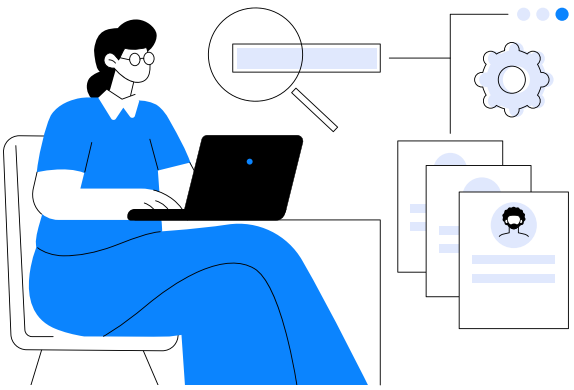
Employees gradually piece together the answers.

Onboarding cannot completely teach culture, but it can help somebody understand it much more quickly. Stories help. People help. Examples help. Short films help. Hearing employees talk naturally about what working somewhere is actually like is far more revealing than another paragraph beginning "Our values are at the heart of everything we do".

There is also an opportunity to make culture **personal.**

Instead of simply telling somebody what the organisation believes, good onboarding can help them understand where they fit inside it. Why does my job matter? Who benefits from what I do? How does my work connect to the wider organisation?

That connection is much more meaningful than memorising a list of corporate values.





Belonging begins earlier than we think.

A lot of onboarding is really about **belonging.**

Before joining, a candidate is asking themselves whether they want to work for the organisation. After accepting, the question begins to change.

Will I belong there?

That distinction is subtle but important.

Belonging is social. It depends on relationships.

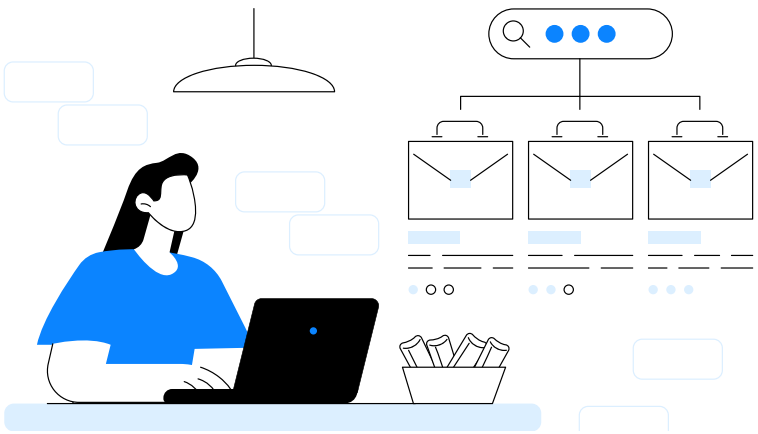
A new employee can understand their job perfectly and still feel isolated. Equally, somebody who feels welcomed and connected is often much more comfortable asking questions, admitting when they do not understand something and seeking help when they need it.

Good onboarding therefore creates permission to be new.

That sounds obvious, but organisations sometimes do the opposite. They recruit highly capable people and then unintentionally make them feel that they should already know how everything works.

The strongest onboarding says something much more reassuring: we know you do not understand this place yet. You are not supposed to. We will help you.

That is an enormously **powerful** message.



The first 30, 60 and 90 days.

If Day One is not the start of onboarding, it certainly is not the end either.

The first few months matter because the questions change.

Before joining, the employee wants reassurance. During the first week, they need orientation. After a month, they start wondering whether they are doing well. After two or three months, they understand the organisation sufficiently to form much stronger opinions about it.

This is where onboarding begins naturally to blend into performance, development and employee experience.

Was the job described accurately? Do they understand what success looks like? Do they have the tools they need? Have they formed useful relationships? Are they receiving feedback? Do they know where to get help? Does the organisation feel like the one they believed they were joining?

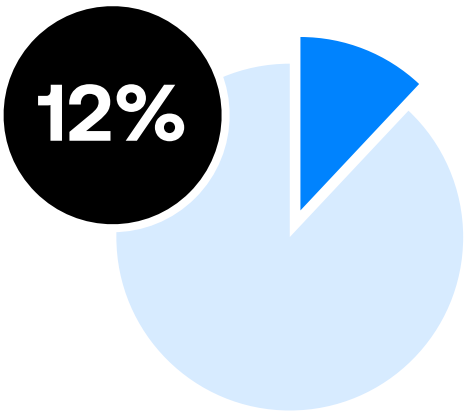
These questions matter because early attrition is often described as though it is simply a problem with the employee. They were not right. They changed their mind. They were not committed.

Sometimes that is true.

Sometimes the organisation failed to help them succeed.

CIPD's current induction guidance stresses the importance of the early employment period for integration, performance and retention. That is an important reminder that onboarding is not simply about making people feel welcome.

It is about helping somebody successfully make the transition from outsider to productive employee.



Only 12% of employees strongly agree their organisation does a great job of onboarding

(Source Gallup)

Productivity starts with clarity.

One of the more commercially interesting outcomes of good onboarding is **time to productivity.**

Organisations often talk about productivity as though it begins after onboarding.

In reality, onboarding helps **determine** it.

Imagine two people joining identical roles on the same morning.

The first has their laptop ready, already knows their manager, has met several members of the team, understands something about the organisation, has a planned first week and knows what their manager wants them to concentrate on.

The second arrives and Reception is not expecting them. Their laptop is coming tomorrow. Their manager is in a meeting. Somebody finds them a spare desk and gives them a pile of information to read.

Both started on the same day.

They did not start from the same place.

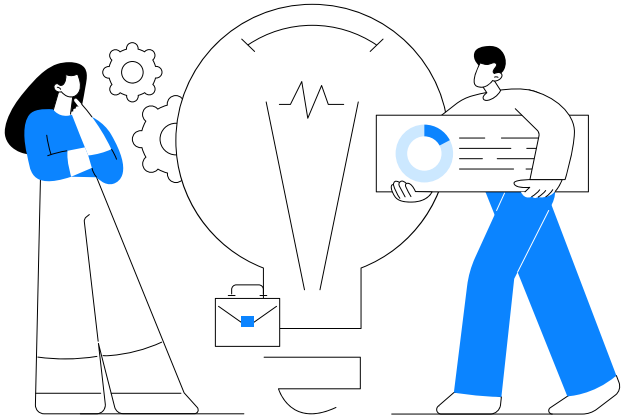
Good onboarding does not magically make somebody competent at a complex role overnight. It simply removes unnecessary friction and makes learning easier.

That matters.

Gallup describes onboarding as a period during which employers should help people understand how the organisation works, connect to purpose and values, socialise into their team and begin moving towards high performance.

Productivity is therefore not something that happens once onboarding is finished.

It is one of the reasons onboarding exists.



Who actually owns onboarding?

Recruitment teams talk about candidate experience. HR teams talk about employee experience. Onboarding sits somewhere between the two.

So who owns it?

The unhelpful answer is often "everyone".

When everyone owns something, there is always a danger that nobody quite owns it.

Recruitment may believe HR will communicate after acceptance. HR assumes the manager is keeping in touch. The manager believes HR is handling onboarding. IT thinks somebody will let them know when equipment is required.

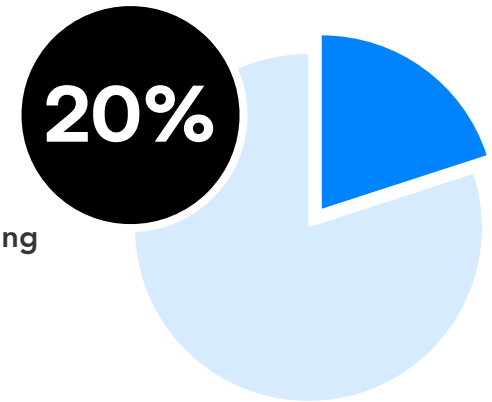
Then the employee arrives and discovers that all four functions thought somebody else was doing something.

Successful onboarding therefore needs explicit ownership and coordination. Recruitment should understand what happens after offer. Managers should know exactly what is expected of them. HR should have visibility. IT and support functions should be triggered at the right point.

Most importantly, the employee should never feel the seams between those departments.

This is another area where technology can genuinely help. A well-connected onboarding environment does not merely improve the employee experience.

It **orchestrates** the organisation behind it.



Nearly 1 in 5 employees say their latest onboarding was poor or nonexistent

(Source Gallup)

Ask the question nobody asks.

Recruitment teams frequently survey candidates.

How was your interview? How easy was the application? Would you recommend applying to us?

All useful questions.

There is another one worth asking:

Did the experience after accepting make you more or less confident that you had made the right decision?

That is a fascinating measure of onboarding because, fundamentally, that is what the period before Day One should achieve.

It should affirm the decision.

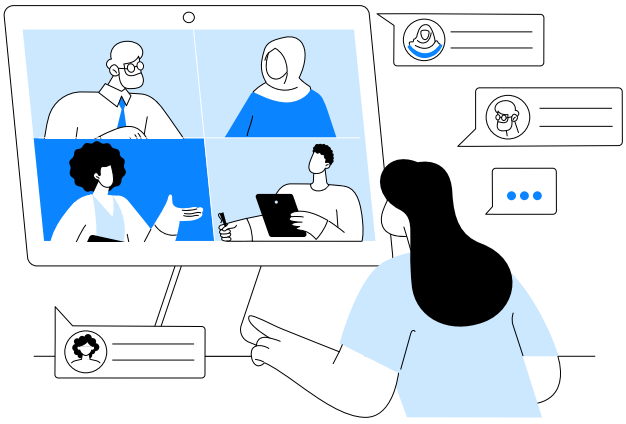
Gallup uses almost exactly that language in its employee-journey framework, describing onboarding as an opportunity to affirm the choice somebody has made to join.

It is a wonderfully simple idea.

The candidate arrives at acceptance feeling excited.

Good onboarding should make them increasingly confident.

Poor onboarding makes them wonder.



So how do we measure whether it works?

One reason onboarding has historically received less strategic attention is that the outcomes can feel difficult to quantify.

They do not have to be.

There are several straightforward measures worth considering:

- accepted offers that become starters;
- withdrawals between acceptance and Day One;
- attrition at 30, 60 and 90 days;
- completion of mandatory requirements;
- time to productivity;
- new-hire satisfaction;
- manager satisfaction and preparedness;
- HR administration time;
- onboarding-related support requests;
- engagement with onboarding content.

Then connect those measures back to recruitment.

Cost per hire without retention tells only half the story.

Imagine Recruiter A hires 100 people quickly and cheaply but loses 15 within three months, while Recruiter B spends slightly more acquiring 100 people but retains 97.

Which recruitment process actually performed better?

Traditional dashboards may reward the first.

Strategically, the second may have created considerably more value.

A mature recruitment function therefore needs to look beyond “hire” towards “successful hire”.

The moment you do that, onboarding becomes part of recruitment performance.





Perhaps the ATS should not be the finish line.

Applicant tracking systems have traditionally reflected the industry's mental model.

A candidate enters, progresses, receives an offer and is eventually marked as hired.

End of process.

The employee effectively disappears out of recruitment technology at exactly the moment their relationship with the organisation becomes most important.

That architecture made sense when recruitment systems were designed primarily to manage vacancies and applications.

It makes less sense now.

Modern recruitment is increasingly understood as one connected experience stretching from awareness and attraction through assessment, selection, offer, onboarding and ultimately retention.

The systems do not all have to be the same system.

But the experience should feel **connected.**

Recruitment data should trigger onboarding. Onboarding should already understand who the employee is, what role they are joining, where they are working and who manages them. Information should move without HR retyping it and candidates should not have to tell the same organisation the same information repeatedly.

Technology should remember.

People should connect.

That feels like a better division of labour.



What good onboarding actually feels like.

Strip away systems, terminology and process maps for a moment and imagine the experience from the new employee's point of view.

They get the call. They have the job.

Within minutes, rather than disappearing into administrative limbo, they have somewhere to go. Their new organisation is already welcoming them.

Over the following days, information appears gradually rather than all at once. They hear from their manager. They see the people they will be working with. They understand what happens next. When paperwork needs completing, it is easy. When a signature is required, it happens naturally. They can find everything again without searching through weeks of email.

As Day One approaches, practical questions are answered. They know where to go, who they will meet and what will happen when they arrive. If they are relocating, they have information about the area. If they are joining remotely, relationships have already started digitally.

Behind the scenes, their manager knows what is required, their buddy knows they are coming, IT knows what equipment is needed and HR can see what has been completed.

Nobody is chasing spreadsheets.

Then Day One arrives, and instead of feeling as though recruitment stopped several weeks earlier and employment suddenly started at 9am, it feels like the natural next chapter of one continuous journey.

That is onboarding.

The documents matter.

The portal matters.

But the **experience** is the point.



Why we created AndMe™.

This is ultimately where AndMe™ came from.

Not from a desire to create another HR system. There are already plenty of systems.

It came from looking at the recruitment journey and noticing that something did not quite make sense.

Organisations were investing enormous amounts of creativity, technology and human effort into getting somebody all the way to acceptance, only for the experience to collapse into administration at the very moment the relationship should have been strengthening.

We wanted to **extend** the experience.

We wanted the employer brand to carry on after the offer, to give recruitment and HR somewhere engaging to take the candidate immediately after acceptance and to make the important administrative things happen without allowing them to dominate.

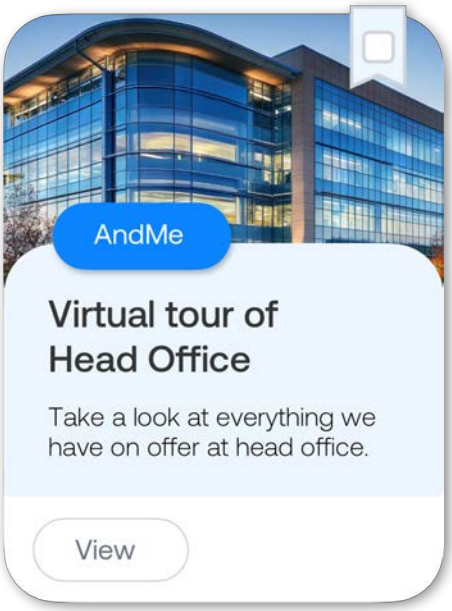
Above all, we wanted joining an organisation to feel exciting.

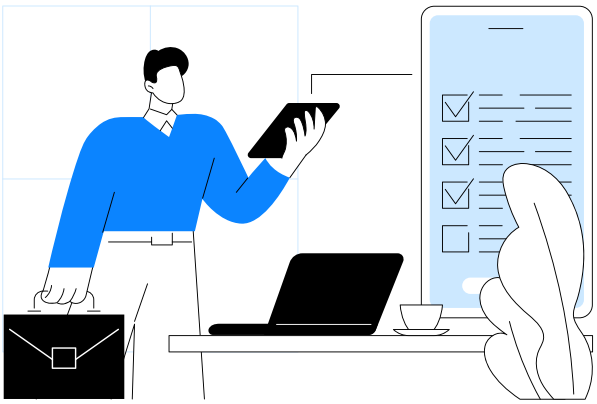
Because it should be.

AndMe™ is built around the idea that onboarding is an experience rather than merely a process.
From verbal acceptance onwards, the new employee can enter a personalised, branded environment where they can begin engaging with the organisation, understand what happens next, meet their people, discover the culture, complete documents and prepare properly for their first day.

The technology sits underneath **that experience.**

What matters is what it allows the organisation to do.





yourorg.andme.work

Even the address reflects the same thinking.

Imagine finishing the offer conversation and saying:

“Brilliant. Welcome aboard. You can get started straight away — just go to yourorg.andme.work.”

It is simple, memorable and immediately feels as though it belongs to the new employee’s relationship with the organisation.

There is no obscure HR-system address to remember, no hunting through an old email several weeks later and no sense that the candidate has been sent off into somebody else’s software.

Your organisation.

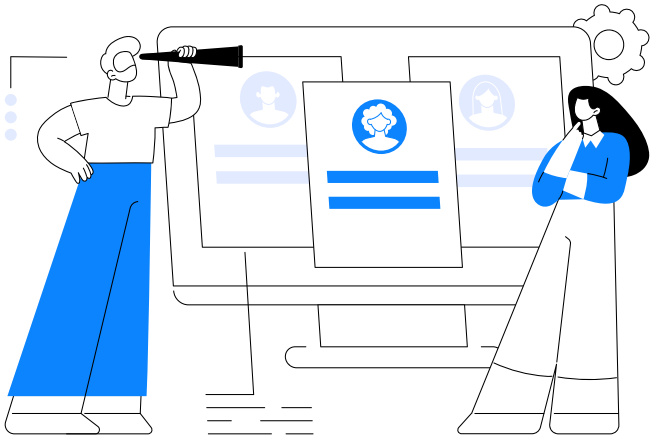
And me. Work.

Sometimes good experience design really is that simple.

The new employee gets one beautifully branded, mobile-friendly place for their journey: their information, their documents, their people, their content and their next steps.

The organisation gets automation, consistency and visibility.

The person joining gets an experience designed around them rather than a process designed around processing them.



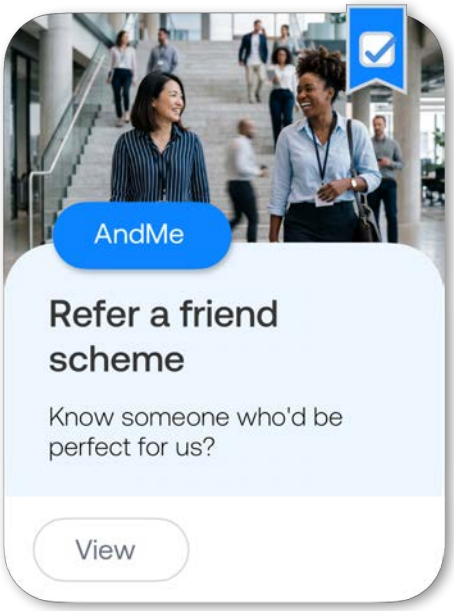
If you can imagine it, there's probably a tile for it.

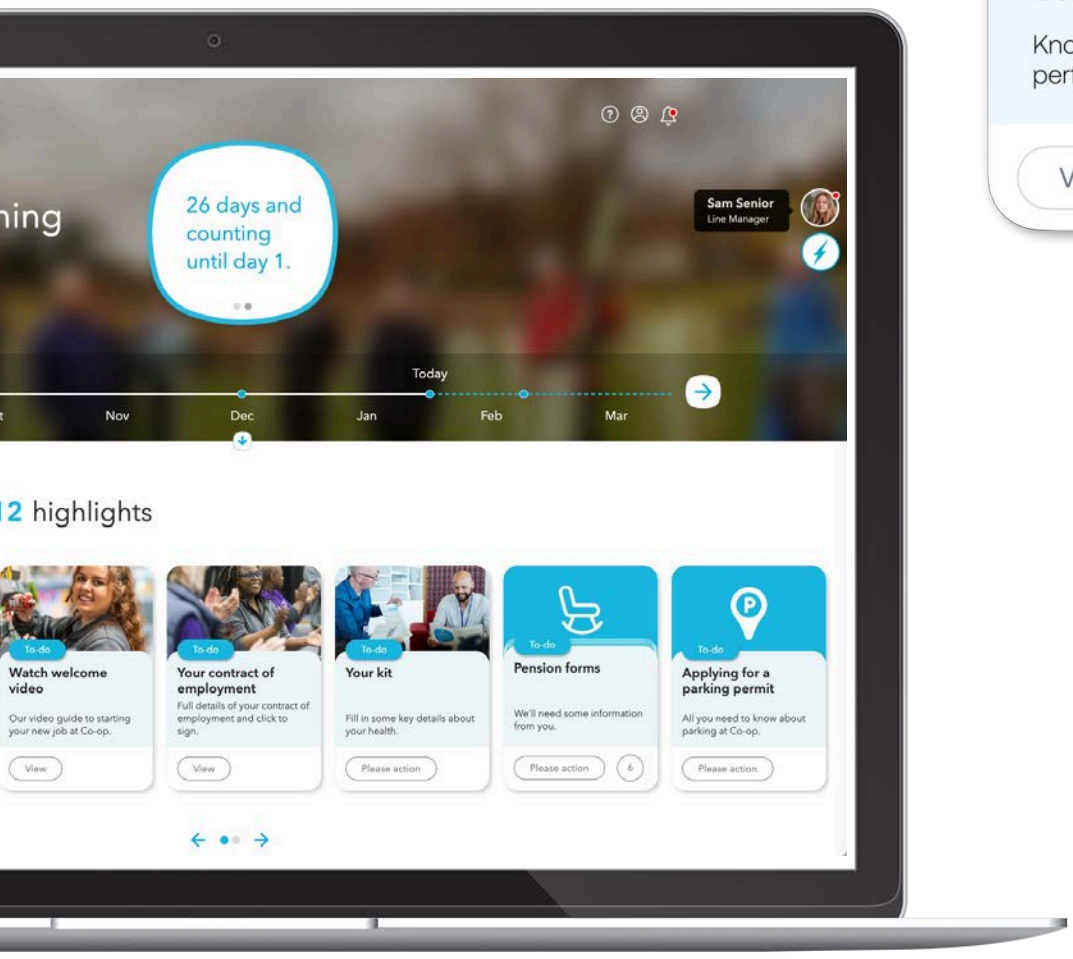
AndMe™ is built around flexible content tiles, giving you the freedom to create the onboarding journey that works for your organisation.

A tile can be almost anything: information, a form, a document, an e-signature, a video, a task, a welcome message or a piece of content introducing your culture, team or workplace.

Create them once, reuse them, template them and combine them into different journeys for different roles, locations or types of starter.

Simple building blocks. Endless possibilities.





Automated, but personal.

Large organisations obviously need **automation.**

If hundreds or thousands of people are joining every year, nobody wants an HR administrator manually remembering exactly which communication each individual should receive next.

Automation makes sense.

It can trigger content, schedule information, collect documents, issue reminders and keep the organisation informed about progress.

But automation should not mean generic.

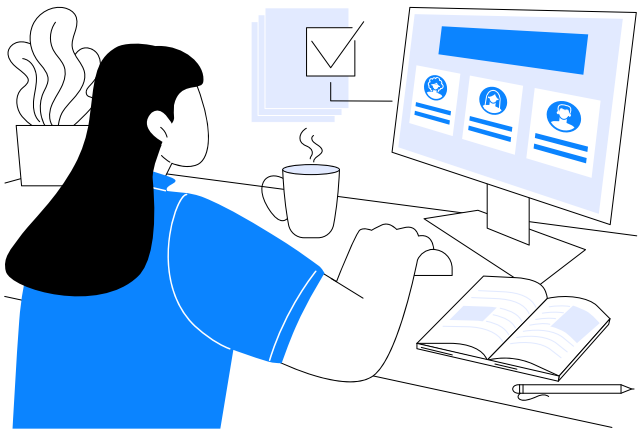
Used well, it allows personalisation to scale.

The right content can go to the right individual at the right time, while real human involvement comes from the people who matter most: the manager, the team, the buddy, HR and recruitment.

That is the balance.

Technology quietly manages the process.

The employee experiences the organisation.





One platform.
Whatever you need it to be.

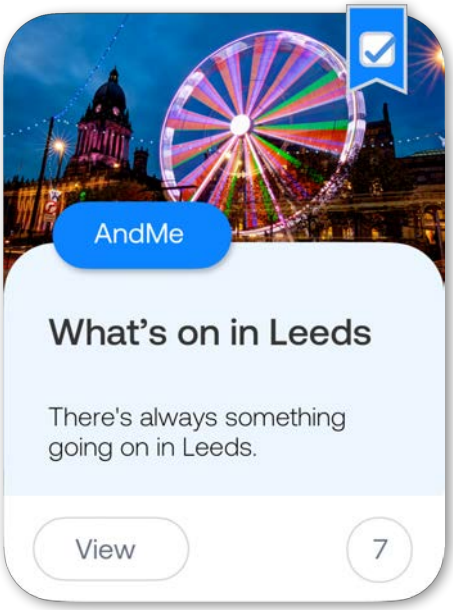
Every onboarding journey is different, which is why AndMe™ does not force you into a rigid process.

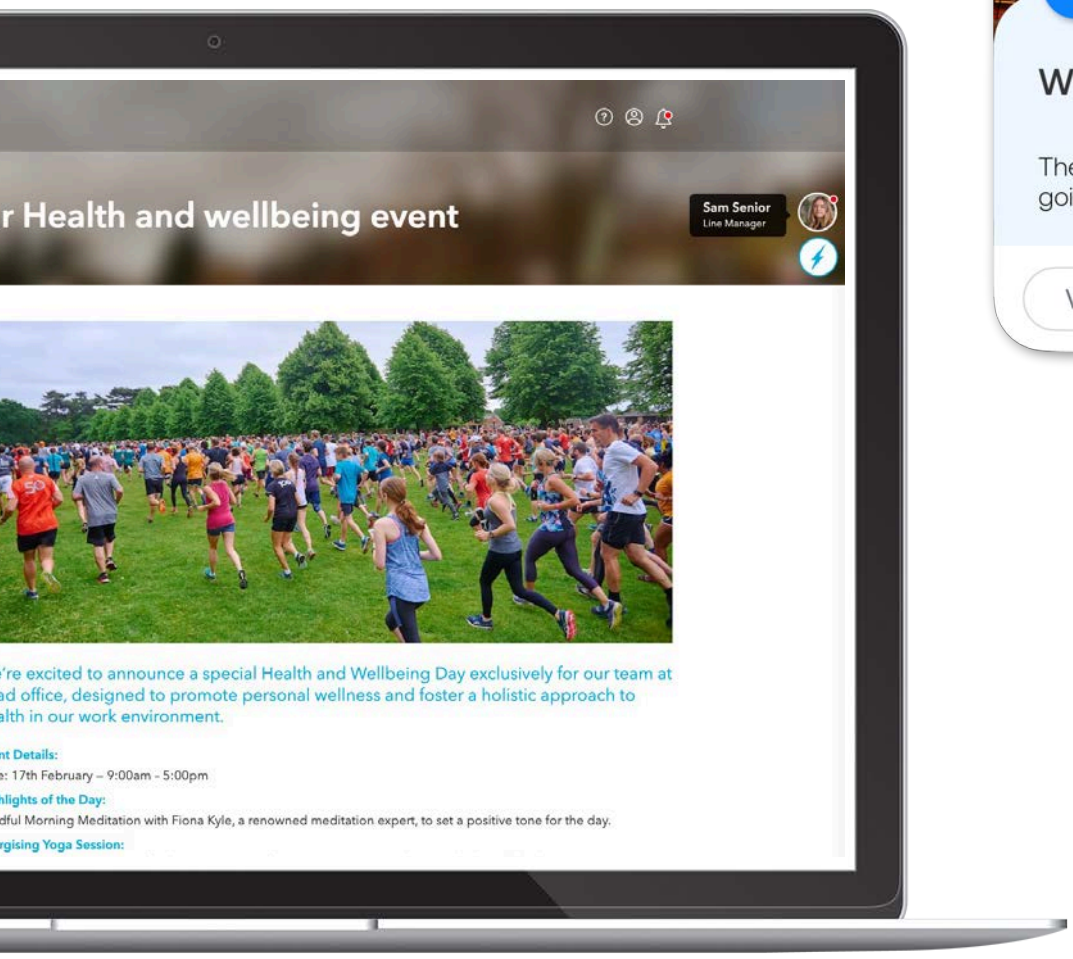
Use tiles to build everything from offer paperwork and compliance forms to manager welcomes, benefits information, first-day instructions, team introductions and internal communications.

Templates make it easy to create consistency across the organisation, while still allowing each experience to feel relevant and personal.

And because employees can continue to access AndMe™ after Day One, those same flexible tiles can support ongoing communications, updates, documents and employee content too.

Build it once. Adapt it endlessly.





Contracts belong in onboarding. They should not be onboarding.

The formal elements still matter.

Offers, contracts, documents, tasks and e-signatures all need to happen, and ideally they should happen within the same joined-up experience rather than forcing the employee to bounce between emails and disconnected systems.

The difference is one of **emphasis.**

Think of a beautifully designed hotel. Nobody chooses it because the check-in process is efficient, but if check-in is dreadful it can damage the entire stay.

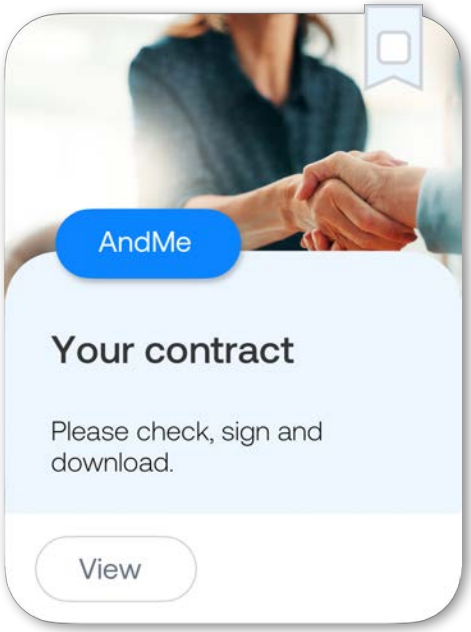
Administration works in much the same way.

It needs to be **seamless.**

You simply do not want it to become the thing people remember.

Make the paperwork easy.

Then concentrate on making the joining experience memorable.





Employer brand gets another life.

For employer-brand teams, onboarding offers a huge opportunity.

The content already exists. The stories already exist. The photography, films and employee voices already exist. Organisations have spent years capturing what makes them distinctive and trying to explain what working there feels like.

Why should all of that content stop being useful the moment someone successfully applies?

Onboarding allows the employer brand to change purpose.

Before acceptance it says:

This is why you might want to join us.

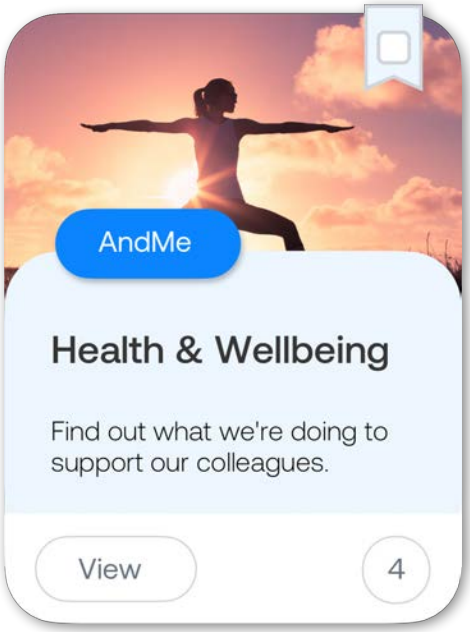
After acceptance it says:

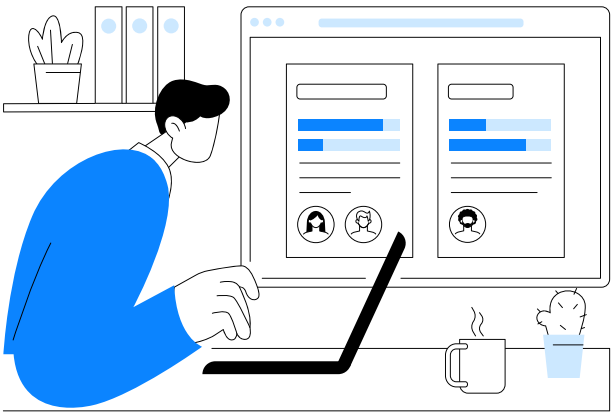
This is what you are about to become part of.

That is a subtle but powerful difference.

The candidate is no longer looking through the window.

They are about to walk through the door.





What would happen if we got this right?

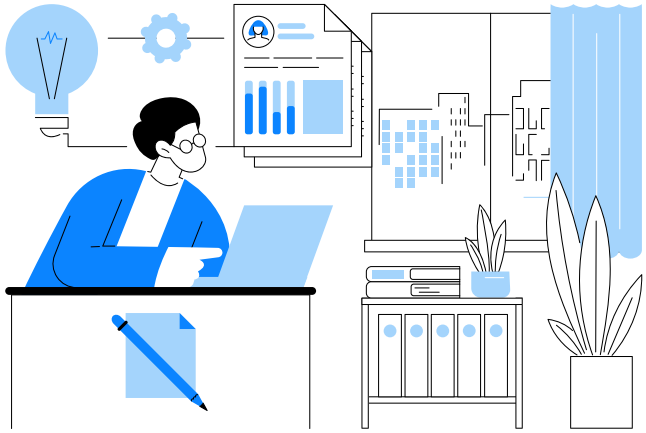
This is perhaps the most useful question for recruitment leaders.

Not simply whether an organisation needs an onboarding platform, but what might improve if onboarding were treated as part of recruitment.

- Could fewer accepted candidates disappear?
- Could counter-offers become less attractive because the new relationship had already started?
- Could people arrive better prepared?
- Could managers be more organised?
- Could HR spend less time chasing information?
- Could employees understand the culture sooner, build useful relationships faster and become productive more quickly?
- Could some early leavers simply stay?

Not every benefit is easy to isolate. Not every lost candidate can be saved and not every early resignation is caused by poor onboarding.

But when more than a quarter of recruiting employers report experiencing people failing to arrive on Day One and four in ten report experiencing resignations in the first 12 weeks, doing nothing is a strategic decision too.



Recruitment does not finish at “yes”.

We started with a recruiter closing a vacancy.

Let us go back there.

The candidate has accepted. Everyone is pleased.

And yes, something important has finished.

The search.

But the recruitment journey has not.

You still need that person to resign from their existing employer. You need them to resist the counter-offer. You need them to stay excited, arrive, settle, build relationships, understand what is expected and discover that the reality resembles the promise.

Ultimately, you need them to reach the point where they stop thinking of themselves as somebody who has taken a job with your organisation and start thinking of themselves as somebody who belongs to it.

Only then can we really say the recruitment **worked.**

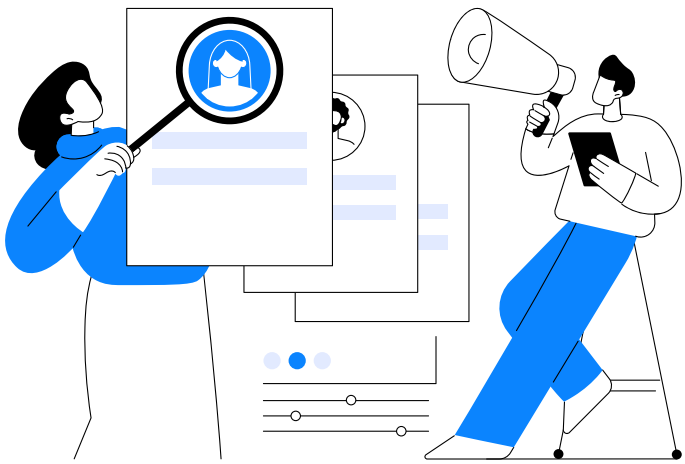
So perhaps it is time to stop thinking of onboarding as administration that happens after recruitment.

It is not after recruitment.

It is part of recruitment.

The candidate said yes.

Now make them delighted they did.



AndMe™. The bit between “You’ve got the job” and “Welcome to the team”.

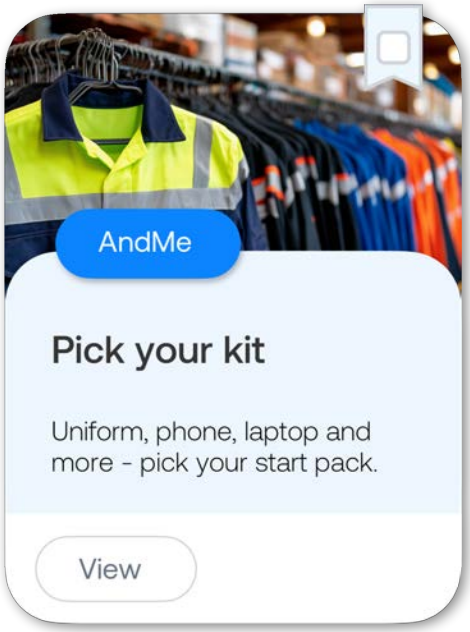
AndMe™ transforms onboarding from an administrative handover into a **personalised joining experience.**

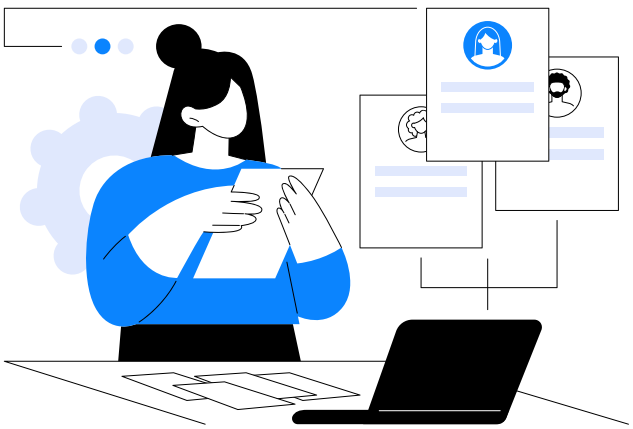
From the moment an offer is accepted, new hires can enter their own beautifully branded environment, begin engaging with the organisation, meet their people, understand the culture, complete the practical things they need to complete and prepare properly for Day One.

It is automated where automation removes friction, personal where people make the difference, connected to the wider recruitment and HR journey and designed around the individual joining rather than the process processing them.

Because after all the work involved in finding the right person, getting them to say yes should never be the end of the story.

It should be the **beginning.**





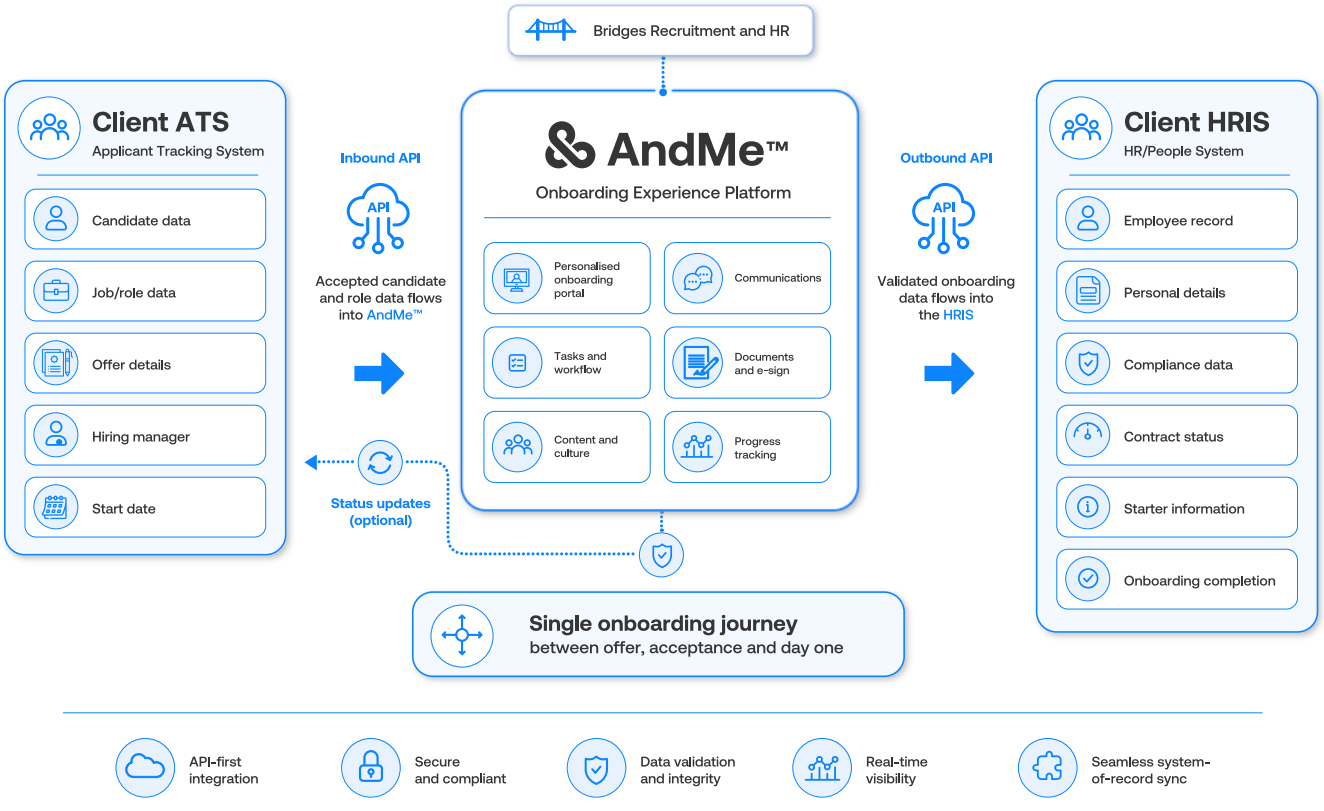
Your ATS finds them. Your HRIS employs them. AndMe™ joins the dots.

AndMe™ sits neatly between recruitment and HR, taking accepted-candidate data from your ATS and turning it into a personalised onboarding journey.

As the new starter completes documents, tasks and key information, AndMe™ keeps everything moving — then passes the right data into your HRIS via API.

And it doesn't have to stop on Day One. Employees can continue to access AndMe™ after they start, making it a versatile home for internal communications, culture, updates, documents and employee content long after onboarding is complete.

Connected systems. Better onboarding.
A platform that keeps working beyond Day One.







www.andme.work

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