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**INSIGHT REPORT**

# Infusing Culture Throughout the New Employee Journey

**BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING A MORE CULTURE-CENTRIC EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING PROCESS**

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August 2017

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A company's culture reflects the attitudes and behaviors of its employees and influences almost every aspect of the employee journey and experience. However, despite its importance, many companies fail to orient new employees to their culture during onboarding. Rather than helping new hires form long-term connections with the organization and its values, companies often use this time to teach new hires about the organization's processes. Companies instead should use their culture as a focal point during recruiting, hiring, and onboarding and then continue to emphasize it as employees acclimate to their roles. This report:

■ Explores how companies can align new employees with their culture.

■ Describes how companies can infuse culture throughout the four stages of the new hire journey: *Establish Cultural Fit, Set Behavioral Expectations, Reinforce Positive Performance,* and *Prioritize Sustaining Culture*.

■ Shares examples of best practices from a number of companies, including Adobe, Crowe Horwath, LexisNexis, Oxford Properties, Touchpoint Support Services, and Safelite Autoglass.

■ Provides a checklist companies can use to execute their culture-focused onboarding program effectively.

**NEW EMPLOYEES NEED MORE CORPORATE CULTURAL ONBOARDING**

The success of an organization comes down to the actions of its employees, and these actions are heavily influenced by the company's culture. Temkin Group defines culture as *how employees think, what they believe is important, and how they act when no one is looking* (see Figure 1). A strong culture contributes to organizational success by:

- **Attracting and retaining talent.** A company's culture – and the mission it supports – can be a powerful magnet for both attracting people to and for keeping them with a company. A Temkin Group survey of 10,000 U.S. consumers revealed that employees are more than twice as likely to look for a job with an inspiring mission than a job with above average pay or a great boss.[1] Furthermore, employees who do not feel good about their work or are not proud of their company – two elements that reflect the company culture – say they are more likely to look for a new job in the coming months.[2]

- **Aligning employees with what's important.** It's easier for employees to connect, both cognitively and emotionally, to a company when they recognize exactly what the

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[1] From the Customer Experience Matters blog, "An Inspiring Mission Is An Employee Magnet." (March 2, 2017).
[2] From the Customer Experience Matters blog, "What Drives Employee Turnover? Not Compensation." (August 24, 2015).

company stands for, as well as its business and brand objectives. And when employees understand what's important to the company, they make better day-to-day decisions that support the company's overarching goals. When it comes to achieving customer experience excellence specifically, Temkin Group has found that companies with customer-centric cultures are most likely to be CX leaders, while those with profit-centric cultures are most likely to be CX laggards (see Figure 2).

- **Creating a productive workforce.** A strong culture encourages employees to act in concert with the organization's objectives, reducing the need for mechanisms to control their behaviors. Temkin Group research found that compared with other employees, employees who feel inspired by the mission of their company are nearly twice as likely to stay late at work if something needs to be done and are more than twice as likely to make a recommendation for an improvement at the company or do something good that's not expected of them.[3]

### New Hire Programs Fall Short on Culture

Despite culture's crucial role in connecting employees with what's important to the organization, few companies successfully incorporate culture into their new hire onboarding efforts. Temkin Group surveyed 300 human resources (HR) professionals at large organizations and found that only 32% of them identified creating and supporting the desired corporate culture as a critical focus on their organization, while only 29% labeled employee onboarding as a top priority.[4] As a result of this inattention to onboarding and culture, companies create onboarding programs that fail to deliver integrated, "bought-in" employees. Because they often neglect their onboarding programs, companies tend to:

- **Put processes over connection-building.** Onboarding programs that focus on forms and rules rather than on the company's unique cultural aspects fail to expose new hires to the more implicit components of the company culture. This is a problem as it is often the implicit cultural components that inspire and engage new hires and connect them to current employees through a shared base of knowledge. New employees who don't fully understand what their organization stands for will find it difficult to draw a direct line from their role to the company's purpose and from their values to the values of the organization. They will also struggle to connect the messages they're receiving from their company to the actual behaviors displayed around them at work.

- **View onboarding as an event.** When organizations design onboarding programs as a scheduled day or two of activities for new employees, they run the risk of imparting too much information at one time, causing important details and nuances about the company to be lost or misunderstood. The idea that a company has one shot to communicate its culture on a new hire's first day is outdated, and the resulting strain from attempting to take in all that information in a short amount of time can be detrimental to that employees' outlook for her new job. Instead, companies' efforts to align new employees with their culture should be both sustained and intentional and should require the entire company's involvement.

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[3] See Customer Experience Matters blog, "Guide to Organizational Culture Change," (October 19, 2016).
[4] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Benchmarking HR's Support of CX and Employee Engagement," (February 2016).

- **Skip the "why" and emphasize the "what."** Culture can't be mandated –employees must actually believe in and support what the company says is important. Companies that simply describe what the culture is and how they expect employees to act miss a vital opportunity to engage their employees in conversations that foster an understanding about *why* the culture is the way it is. Companies that are leaders in customer experience and employee engagement are able to engender loyalty by appealing to employees' shared values and intrinsic motivators and translating brand promises into employee behaviors to ensure consistency and understanding.[5]

- **Treat all new hires the same.** Not every employee who starts at a company is the same – some are new to the working-world, while others are arriving from another company by choice or as part of a merger or acquisition. Employees also join companies in different roles; they might come in as part of senior leadership, on a management team, or as an individual contributor. Therefore, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to onboarding culture. A company needs to be mindful about which elements of its culture need the most emphasis depending on where a new hire is coming from and the role she is to play. In some cases, a company should focus more on "reorienting" a new hire to its culture compared to the previous culture(s) they've experienced, whereas in other cases the company needs to instill an understanding of what company culture even means from scratch.

## COMPANIES SHOULD INFUSE CULTURE ACROSS THE ENTIRE NEW HIRE JOURNEY

Connecting employees with an organization's culture takes more than short-term action. Companies instead need to extend their focus on culture across the *entire* new hire journey. We researched what influences the beliefs and behaviors of new employees the most over time and identified four distinctive stages (see Figures 3 and 4):[6]

- **Stage 1: Establish Cultural Fit.** Both the company and the prospective employee consider if each is a good fit for the other through the recruiting and hiring process.

- **Stage 2: Set Behavioral Expectations.** The new hire is introduced to the specifics of the company, the team, and the job and starts to understand the company culture in context.

- **Stage 3: Reinforce Positive Performance.** The employee formally learns the best ways of completing their job assignments, starts to find their place on their individual teams, and comes to understand that the company's culture is demonstrated through everyone's day-to-day activities.

- **Stage 4: Prioritize Sustaining Culture**. After the new employee is fully integrated into the company, they gain confidence, share in successes, and continue to adjust their own behaviors to align with what's important to the company.

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[5] See Temkin Group eBook, "People-Centric Experience Design," (March 2014).

[6] Companies interviewed for this report include Advanced Group, ATB Financial, Confirmit, Crowe Horwath, Culture Factors, Hagerty, LexisNexis, Oxford Properties, Pure Resourcing Solutions, Root Inc, Safelite Autoglass, Talent Function, and TouchPoint Support Services.

**Stage 1: Establish Cultural Fit**

Attracting and interviewing prospective employees are the critical first steps for finding candidates who will compliment and help cultivate the company culture. Companies need to keep in mind that these processes also provide an opportunity for the candidate to learn about and assess the company as well. To ensure there is a cultural "match" between themselves and potential employees, companies should:

- **Identify individuals who share their values.** The recruiting process provides both companies and candidates with the chance for a "first look," but whereas the candidates have already considered if they would be a good fit for the company, the company hasn't yet had the chance to do the same. Crowe Horwath, a large accounting, consulting, and technology firm, checks for fit by comparing potential candidates' actions – as depicted through answers to interview questions – with a pre-determined list of characteristics that the company wants its employees to possess. SoulCycle's *Culture of "Yes"* has a significant influence on its hiring process. To ensure consistency across the organization, SoulCycle hires instructors based on behavioral principles instead of past work experiences. By explicitly hiring instructors with a natural "glass half full" outlook on life, the company has created a workforce made up of people who are compatible both in their attitudes and how they make decisions.[7]

- **Prominently showcase their culture.** Companies put themselves at a disadvantage when they just assume that candidates will naturally get a clear and accurate picture of their culture during interviews, even if they don't directly address it. Instead, organizations should line up the expectations of potential new hires to the realities of working within the company as this shows candidates early on that culture is taken just as seriously as the more technical aspects of any individual position. Emanuel Medical Center uses a video at the beginning of the interview process to emphasize their expectations and "non-negotiable standards of patient care." The message encourages candidates to proceed with the application process only if they connect with Emanuel's philosophy and mission.[8] Safelite Autoglass uses job preview videos during the hiring process to show how embedded culture is in employees' daily routines and actions. These videos, which feature Safelite employees in their natural work environments, help candidates visually and emotionally connect to the culture, making it more accessible than if the candidate had simply read descriptions of Safelite's customer-centric culture on a website or handout.

- **Stay in touch with a thorough communication plan.** When it comes to conveying company culture, there's no such thing as too much communication – whether it's to existing or prospective employees. Companies that clearly and succinctly articulate details about the hiring process help candidates feel prepared and supported while reducing their anxieties about starting a new job. These communications are an important step towards building the new employees' intellectual understanding of the company's culture, and when they are consistent with brand identity and purpose, they demonstrate the company's authenticity. Crowe Horwath delivers a steady

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[7] Lee Yohn, D. (November 30, 2016). SoulCycle Uses A Freedom Within A Framework Approach To Flourish. Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/deniselyohn/2016/11/30/soulcycle-uses-a-freedom-within-a-framework-approach-to-flourish/#5ceae493e76d

[8] Press Ganey Associates, Inc., "Emanuel Medical Center," 2001 Finalist Success Stories. Retrieved from www.pressganey.com/client_recognition/success_stories/contest_finalist_2001/emanuel.php

stream of information throughout each of the stages that the prospective employee goes through, which allows the firm to craft the tone and delivery of its culture through these various documents. These communications continue through hiring – including reference documents that essentially provide new hires with a study guide covering topics that will help the employee get settled in on her first day.

▪ **Foster engagement with an effective internship program.** For many organizations, the battle to attract top talent starts on the college campus. Internship programs give prospects a close-up view of the culture and work environment of a potential employer and can therefore influence which organizations they choose to work for after graduation. LexisNexis offers a 10-week summer internship program where interns are integrated into full-time employee teams, and they participate alongside these other employees in activities like goal setting, program reviews, community service, and social events (see Figure 5). Interns receive coaching and guidance from appointed mentors and line-of-business leaders and present the final results of their work to key leaders – including the business unit CEO – at the end of the summer. Program coordinators also stay in touch with interns to share updates about LexisNexis and discuss future internship or employment opportunities.[9]

## Stage 2: Set Behavioral Expectations

To help individuals contextualize the culture and understand how implementing it puts them in the best position to succeed, companies should continue the flow of information, support, and excitement that began during the *Establish Cultural Fit* stage. Here's how companies can infuse culture and set expectations during the new employee's first days:

▪ **Help new hires feel like part of the team.** The first days of work can be filled with uncertainty, leaving the new employee awash in negative emotions. Companies should counteract this anxiety by reassuring the new hire that they're joining a company that shares their values and is genuinely excited to welcome them. Pure Resourcing Solutions highlights new employees on its social network, complete with headshots and Q&A's covering both personal and professional questions. These profiles help break the ice and give current employees the chance to learn about their new colleague before meeting her in person.[10] Wheatsville, an Austin-based food co-op, knows that free food and the act of giving and receiving items are fast tracks to establishing and building relationships. The company gives new employees two small food items, such as oranges, and asks them to complete an exercise where they keep (and eat) the first orange and have to give away the second before the end of the day. Bonobos involves the entire company in its first day welcoming tradition – a game of new hire *Fact and Fiction*. The hiring manager emails all employees three biographical details about the new hire before they arrive, only two of which are true facts. Current employees must meet the new hire to figure out which is the fictional detail. The first person to spot the "fiction" after meeting and learning about the new hire wins a $25 store credit.[11]

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[9] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Engaging Millennials in the Workplace," (March 2015).

[10] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Social Employee Engagement," (August, 2014).

[11] Lamb Jr., D. (September 20, 2016). Master the Game of Onboarding. Sterling Talent Solutions. Retrieved from http://www.sterlingtalentsolutions.com/blog/2016/september/master-the-game-of-onboarding/

- **Ensure a smooth transition between hiring and onboarding.** When multiple departments are involved in introducing culture across the journey stages, companies must establish strong cooperation and communication between them. This ensures the new employee gets consistent information and attention up to and including when she steps in the door. When Safelite extends a job offer, both the recruiter and hiring manager meet to start the official onboarding process by going over the cross-functional onboarding plan, which was developed by the people (HR) department with input from relevant leaders. The departments continue to work together to set up a new workspace, create the corresponding manager and new employee workbooks, and identify the first people who are going to impact the new employee's ability to meet her objectives.

- **Reinforce important topics with technology-based training.** Many companies are now using computer-based training and online platforms to bring their culture and strategy to life. This gives companies flexibility so they can deliver their content in interactive or more digestible formats. Adobe's online, interactive orientation session takes place on a new hire's second day of employment and incorporates real-time digital and recorded activities that range from 90 minutes to 2 hours. Once a new employee accesses these sessions through a mobile app or laptop, she can then participate in collaborative exercises with other new hires. These exercises center on Adobe's core values, which are *innovative, exceptional, genuine,* and *involved*. The platform's chat room function allows new hires to begin connecting with each other and to the company as they discuss which of the core values resonates most with them and summarize what they've learned about the company's history, founders, and products.[12] To ensure consistency and an excellent customer experience across the company, Oxford Properties reached out to employees for their input about which topics would help them deliver on the company's *Oxford Commitment* (see Figure 6). Based on their feedback, the company created the *Dialogue Series* program. Originally an in-person training for all employees, Oxford then converted the *Series'* sessions into a shorter, interactive eLearning program called *Dialogue Series Revisited*, which it uses in its onboarding programs to bring new workers up to speed on the basics and provide a deep dive into the content gathered in the *Dialogue Series*.[13]

- **Elaborate on expectations for employees.** Companies must expand upon the behavioral standards that they introduced during the earlier onboarding phases to reinforce the ways in which employees support the company's culture and goals. When Safelite rolled out the *People Powered, Customer Driven* pledge in 2012, it made a concerted effort to clearly define expectations and put mechanisms in place to hold all employees accountable for delivering on the company's promises (see Figure 7). The company identified core competencies, like, "*Have Passion for Creating Customer Delight*," that outline the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required by each level of employee to deliver the company's desired results. All associates received a roadmap brochure describing the competencies and the corresponding expectations specific to their role and level. Employees can further develop their understanding of the competencies through monthly eLearning courses.[14] Ritz-Carlton splits up its

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[12]  Aquino, J. (July 28, 2014). This is Not Your Father's Onboarding Program. 1to1media. Retrieved from http://www.1to1media.com/employee-engagement-strategies/not-your-fathers-onboarding-program

[13] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Engaging A Tethered Workforce," (January, 2017).

[14] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Creating and Sustaining a Customer-Centric Culture," (September, 2015).

onboarding into three phases, each crafted to build the new hire's understanding of the company's key cornerstones by "seeing" it, "believing" it, and "living" it. So, for example, in the first phase, "See it," new hires learn about the culture through their physical surroundings, like a pyramid on their desks that shows the hotel's annual goals, vision, mission, and motto. Employees also see the culture demonstrated in daily team "huddles," where leaders model ideal behaviors and promote a general team atmosphere.[15]

### Stage 3: Reinforce Positive Performance

It is impossible for employees to acquire all of the knowledge and skills they need to be productive contributors on their first day. Instead, companies need to recognize that it takes time for new hires to learn about company culture and adjust their expectations and behaviors accordingly. To successfully lead new employees through this learning curve, companies should:

- **Deliver knowledge through multifaceted processes.** Onboarding programs that disseminate information in only one way – be it electronically or through lecture-style classes – are at risk of providing an incomplete education to new hires. Just as companies need to be mindful of new hires' diverse backgrounds and corporate experiences, they must also consider differences in how individuals take in and process information. Programs that present company culture through different mediums and delivery styles are able to create a more holistic picture of what's expected from employees. Touchpoint Support Services employees – who provide catering, cleaning, and other services inside hospitals – complete two separate in-person orientations, one from the hospital and one from Touchpoint. To maintain and reinforce understanding of its culture, TouchPoint uses daily *LineUp Meetings* that stress its *Go BEYOND service standards* and other job-specific information to continuously emphasize its training objectives, even when its employees are working solely within the hospital environment (see Figure 8). The company also actively shares patient feedback with employees on "back of the house" bulletin boards and recognizes employees whose behaviors represent and strengthen the company's culture.[16] JAMF Software uses part of its three-week *Zero Month Orientation* program to host a series of conversations with founders and key managers at the corporate headquarters. These conversations help new hires learn how the senior leaders think about the company and its culture. The company supplements these conversations with lessons on JAMF's enterprise management solutions, as well as individual role training, to give every employee a better understanding of what exactly the company does for customers and how each role contributes to the company's success. Every employee at the company, even those who clean the building, goes through this orientation program, and as a result, JAMF has seen a 90%+ retention of employees.[17]

- **Create a support system.** There's nothing like learning about the company and culture from an established employee who can offer guidance, encouragement, and

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[15] Retrieved from http://ritzcarltonleadershipcenter.com/2015/12/culture-and-onboarding/

[16] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Engaging a Tethered Workforce," (January 2017).

[17] Bradt, G. (October 28, 2015). Why You Must Make Culture The Centerpiece Of Your Onboarding Program. Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgebradt/2015/10/28/why-you-must-make-culture-the-centerpiece-of-your-onboarding-program/#59387ef61f90

feedback. At MailChimp, an email marketing platform, new hires are paired with a seasoned MailChimp employee, called a "Chimpanion," from another department. Apart from being a friendly face around the company, the Chimpanion is available for any questions or concerns the new hire has and gathers feedback from the new hire after she settles in, which MailChimp then uses to tweak the next round of onboarding.[18] At Safelite, the hiring manager and the new employee take the first 90 days of the employee's journey to go through corresponding workbooks so they both have clarity on what the new hire needs to learn, who they need to meet, and how they affect people upstream and downstream of the workflow. Such support systems not only promote professional development and inspire new hires to understand and live out their company cultures, they also increase the self-efficacy of new hires, giving them the confidence they need to continue to develop their own skill sets.

▪ **Actively emphasize values.** While it's imperative to teach new hires about company values, these values will ultimately seem inauthentic if employees don't see them followed during everyday life at the company. REI's employees learn very early on that the company is passionate about adventures and a life lived outdoors. The co-op giant makes sure employees get their hands dirty with an outdoor service project during orientation.[19] Oxford Properties created its *oPositive* intranet site as a space for employees to share and celebrate customer success stories. These are then translated into best practices that managers and employees discuss during site meetings and other sessions to emphasize what *The Oxford Commitment* looks like in action.[20] Software provider Red Hat brings its employees to its headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina for an intensive, multi-day program. There, new hires learn about the company's brand and values through a book it refers to as the "cultural bible." Red Hat sets aside several days to allow new hires to get acquainted with managers and to learn about the company's values and beliefs. It then introduces them to employee ambassadors and, at the end of the program, it awards them with its iconic red fedora to "claim" the new hires as employees.[21]

## Stage 4: Prioritize Sustaining Culture

Once new employees have completed the official onboarding program, companies must continue to reinforce their values, culture, and desired behaviors and make sure that each employee is comfortable and confident in what they've learned. To sustain these efforts, companies should:

▪ **Improve cultural understanding through ongoing training.** Providing opportunities for a deeper dive into an organization's culture, beyond a formal onboarding program, can have far-reaching effects on employee engagement and alignment, both of which are essential to an employee's success. Crowe Horwath introduced *Crowe University* and *One Crowe* to promote employee collaboration across business units and create

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[18] Retrieved from https://blog.mailchimp.com/maintaining-company-culture-through-onboarding/

[19] Lamb Jr., D. (September 20, 2016). Master the Game of Onboarding. Sterling Talent Solutions. Retrieved from http://www.sterlingtalentsolutions.com/blog/2016/september/master-the-game-of-onboarding/

[20] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Creating and Sustaining a Customer-Centric Culture," (September, 2015).

[21] Biro, M. (June 1, 2014). The Onboarding Experience Matters To Your Future Employees. Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2014/06/01/the-onboarding-experience-matters-to-your-future-employees/#657b3c892c46

opportunities for employees to specialize in topics surrounding customer experience. The company also demonstrates its commitment to learning and development by offering continuing education credits to employees who participate in CX Day – a celebration of the companies and professionals that create great experiences for their customers.[22] Employees at Hagerty, a classic car insurance company, attend *Hagerty University* to better understand classic cars and the passion of classic vehicle owners. The insurer pairs courses like "Automotive History" and "Engine Guts and Glam" with 30-minute "Collector and the Car" workshops, during which actual customers showcase their cars for employees at Hagerty's headquarters.[23] Hagerty employees also participate in restoration projects to learn first-hand the work and skills that go into each restoration while enhancing their appreciation for the classic vehicles that the company strives to protect.[24] Their deepened understanding of customers' passion around their classic cars enables employees to truly make Hagerty's culture come to life.

▪ **Recognize and celebrate employees who embody the culture.** One of Temkin Group's *Six Laws of Customer Experience* states that, "Employees do what is measured, incented, and celebrated."[25] Therefore, to sustain culture-aligned behaviors after orientation "ends," companies must first define and then recognize employees who exemplify key aspects of the company culture (see Figure 9). SoulCycle's *Culture of "Yes"* revolves around 10 core values that summarize the expected behaviors and attitudes that employees learn during orientation. The company gives every staff member one pin for each of the 10 values, and employees then hand the pins out to colleagues who they feel embody each of the ideals.[26] Every month, Regions Bank presents the *Better Life Award* to associates who epitomize the company's values: *Put People First, Do What Is Right, Focus On Your Customer, Reach Higher,* and *Enjoy Life*. The bank honors recipients – who are nominated by their managers and colleagues – during a meeting at the company's headquarters in Birmingham, Alabama, and this meeting is broadcast live to offices in the 16 states Regions serves. Regions also gives the associates who earn this award an additional week of vacation, a crystal award, and a $1,000 donation in their name to a charity of their choosing.[27]

▪ **Reorient employees as roles change.** Companies need to be mindful of employees whose roles and responsibilities change, taking into account the employees' new behavioral expectations and perspective on what it means to live the culture. Because it knows middle managers are essential to its success, TouchPoint Support Services created a three-part training program for those individuals who advance into management positions (see Figure 10). This program emphasizes collaboration and includes new supervisor training, presentations by the CEO, and strategies for employee retention – an important element of its culture.[28] When ATB Financial

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[22] Retrieved from http://cxday.org/

[23] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Lessons in CX Excellence, 2016," (January, 2016).

[24] Retrieved from https://www.hagerty.com/corporate

[25] See Temkin Group eBook, "The 6 Laws of Customer Experience," (July, 2008).

[26] Lee Yohn, D. (November 30, 2016). SoulCycle Uses A Freedom Within A Framework Approach To Flourish. Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/deniselyohn/2016/11/30/soulcycle-uses-a-freedom-within-a-framework-approach-to-flourish/#5ceae493e76d

[27] Retrieved from http://ir.regions.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=839360

[28] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Engaging a Tethered Workforce," (January 2017).

updated its brand to become more customer-focused, its branch managers were one of the earliest audiences to be exposed to the company's new brand promises. When the time came to launch its new brand and culture to all employees, ATB Financial charged middle managers with leading local discussions with their teams immediately following a bank-wide livestream broadcast. To help them do this, the company provided managers with a launch kit built around a series of questions to ask their teams. The questions included queries like, "What does the story mean to us? How are we already doing some of the things the brand story talks about? What does this change for us?"[29]

- **Listen, learn, and improve.** By the end of the onboarding process, companies have used any number of resources to influence how employees think, what they believe, and how they act in order to get them settled into their day-to-day roles. To reliably measure the impact and effectiveness of the resources they dedicated to their onboarding programs, organizations must engage in some form of employee listening (see Figure 11). By using channels such as employee surveys and online forums, companies can identify which cultural and onboarding-related elements have most impacted the company's overall business goals and can then collect relevant data at intervals throughout each employee's journey. For example, companies can gather and analyze quantitative data from employee surveys about employees' satisfaction with the recruiting, hiring, and onboarding processes along with their early perceptions of the company's culture. They can also tap into enterprise systems for metrics like employee performance, voluntary retention rates, time to productivity, and ongoing employee satisfaction and engagement with the company. Companies should also use qualitative insights to understand the connections the new hire has made between her role and the company's goals, and explore the emotional aspects associated with joining a new company and acclimating to its culture. Collectively, these insights will help to create a more complete picture of the effectiveness of a company's onboarding program and will point to areas where it needs one-on-one employee attention or broader program improvements.

## THE PATH TOWARD A CULTURE-FOCUSED ONBOARDING PROGRAM

To help companies execute an effective, culture-focused onboarding program, Temkin Group has created a set of recommendations for immediate, near-term, and long-term actions. These recommendations will help companies focus organizational efforts across the four stages of the employee journey (see Figure 12).

- **Immediate Actions:** Evaluating how well your onboarding program reflects your organizational culture is a commitment, but it doesn't automatically mean that you're in for a long and difficult culture overhaul. Start with the basics, like reviewing the existing training curriculum and communications, to create a balance between job-related and culture-related information. Consider introducing structured action plans to help employees and managers set concrete goals, which will increase employees' self-confidence and their understanding of the culture. As you adjust how you talk

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[29] See Temkin Group Insight Report, "Translating Brand Promises into Employee Behaviors," (October 2016).

about and explain culture, be sure to share those changes or updated materials with the entire company in addition to embedding them in role-specific training at all levels.

- **Near-term Actions:** Organizational culture is a reflection of the internal environment, so make it a top priority to involve all employees in creating a positive, supportive, and culture-aligned atmosphere. For example, engage the entire community in a new hire's transition by asking existing employees to specifically highlight why your culture is important to them, both as individuals and as team members. You should also share success stories of your culture in action. Additionally, you should clearly define which behaviors support your cultural objectives and then create rewards or recognition programs that celebrate the employees who display these behaviors.

- **Long-term Actions:** Focusing on higher-level changes in the long-term will help to optimize these efforts and demonstrate an authentic commitment to building and sustaining cultural alignment. Take the time to integrate cultural aspects into your branding messages and change hiring practices to emphasize your company's culture. To get your current employees meaningfully involved with and supporting your new onboarding strategy, create special opportunities and tools, such as "buddy" or new hire ambassador programs. You should also invest in ways to gather consistent feedback and track how connected employees feel to the culture by doing things like incorporating a Culture Index metric into employee engagement surveys. Maintain an attitude of learning while measuring progress and make changes to the program as needed over time.
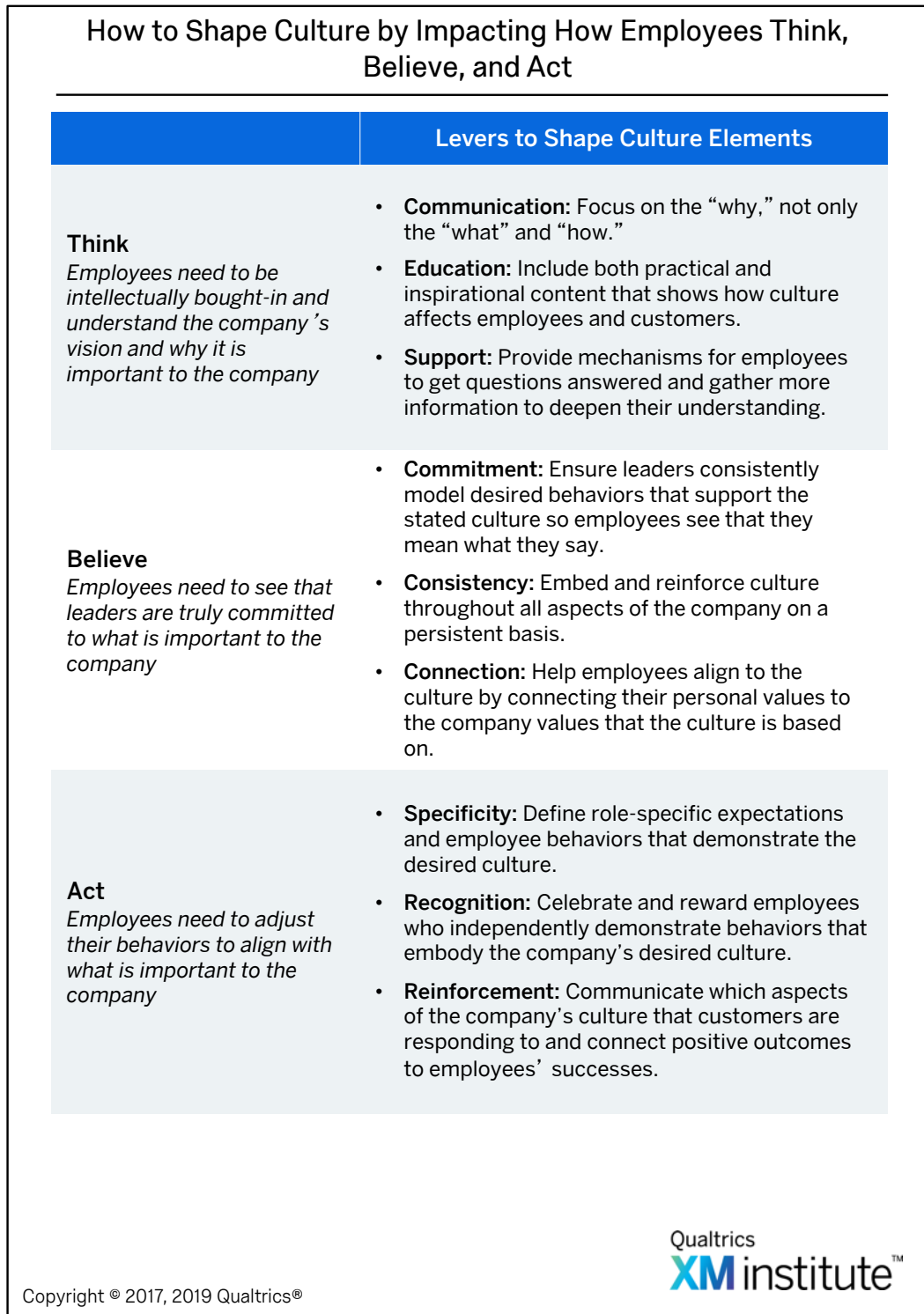
## How to Shape Culture by Impacting How Employees Think, Believe, and Act

| | Levers to Shape Culture Elements |
|---|---|
| **Think**<br>*Employees need to be intellectually bought-in and understand the company's vision and why it is important to the company* | • **Communication:** Focus on the "why," not only the "what" and "how."<br>• **Education:** Include both practical and inspirational content that shows how culture affects employees and customers.<br>• **Support:** Provide mechanisms for employees to get questions answered and gather more information to deepen their understanding. |
| **Believe**<br>*Employees need to see that leaders are truly committed to what is important to the company* | • **Commitment:** Ensure leaders consistently model desired behaviors that support the stated culture so employees see that they mean what they say.<br>• **Consistency:** Embed and reinforce culture throughout all aspects of the company on a persistent basis.<br>• **Connection:** Help employees align to the culture by connecting their personal values to the company values that the culture is based on. |
| **Act**<br>*Employees need to adjust their behaviors to align with what is important to the company* | • **Specificity:** Define role-specific expectations and employee behaviors that demonstrate the desired culture.<br>• **Recognition:** Celebrate and reward employees who independently demonstrate behaviors that embody the company's desired culture.<br>• **Reinforcement:** Communicate which aspects of the company's culture that customers are responding to and connect positive outcomes to employees' successes. |

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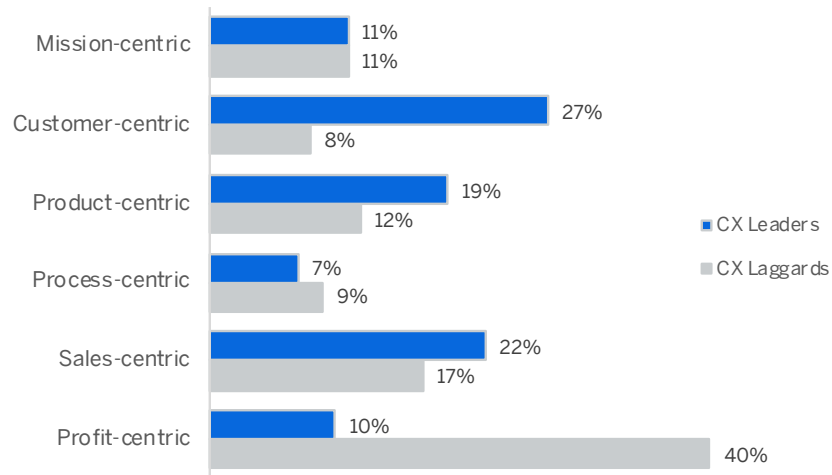Copyright © 2017, 2019 Qualtrics®

Figure 1

## Six Areas of Culture Focus

- **Mission-centric:** Fulfilling our mission comes first

- **Customer-centric:** Our customers come first

- **Product-centric:** Product features and capabilities come first

- **Process-centric:** Process efficiency comes first

- **Sales-centric:** Generating sales comes first

- **Profit-centric:** Generating profits comes first

### CX Leaders are More Customer-centric, CX Laggards are More Profit-centric

| Area | CX Leaders | CX Laggards |
|---|---|---|
| Mission-centric | 11% | 11% |
| Customer-centric | 27% | 8% |
| Product-centric | 19% | 12% |
| Process-centric | 7% | 9% |
| Sales-centric | 22% | 17% |
| Profit-centric | 10% | 40% |

Base: 180 organizations with $500 million or more in annual revenues
Source: Temkin group Q1 2017 CX Management Survey

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Figure 2

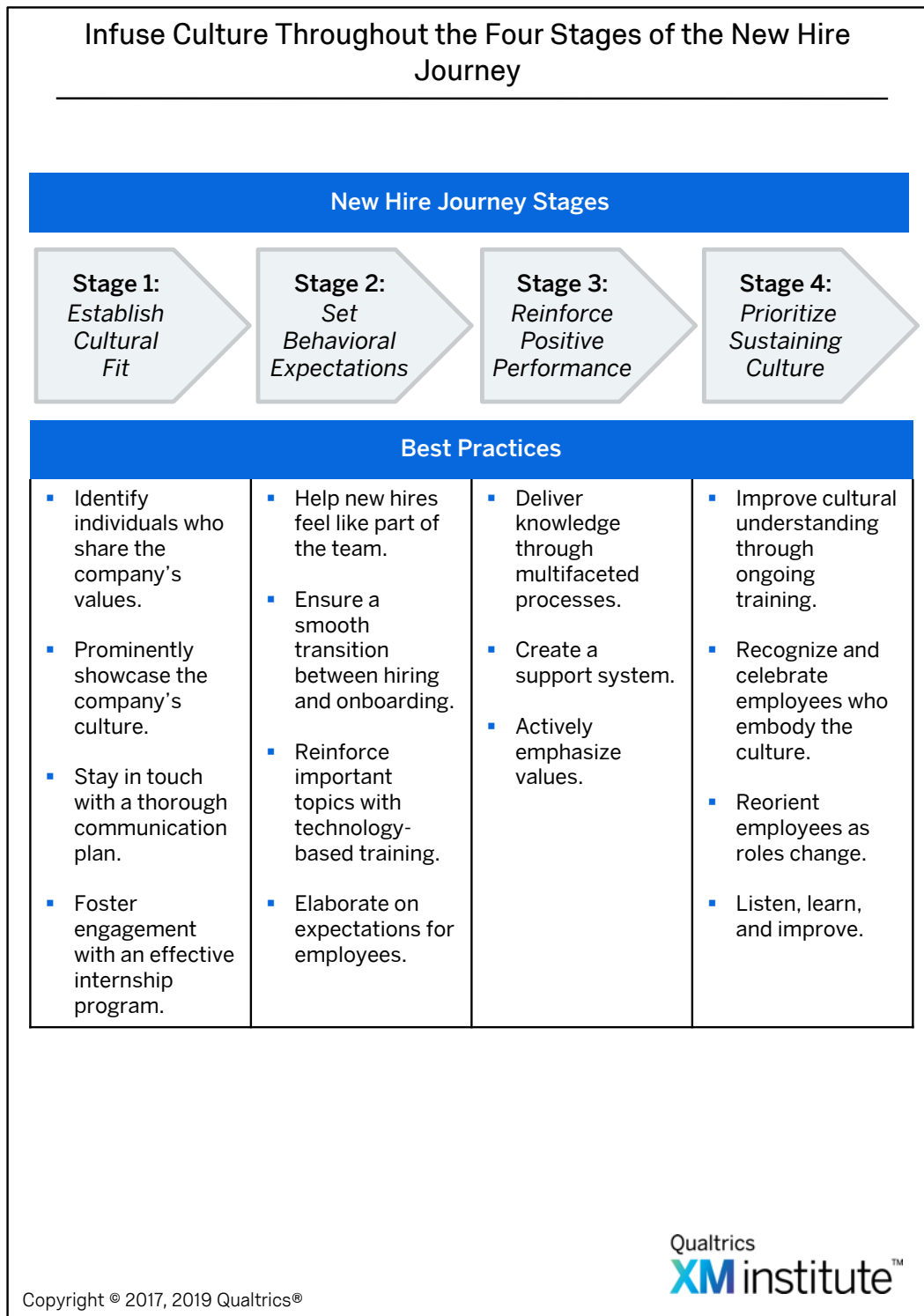Page **14**

## Infuse Culture Throughout the Four Stages of the New Hire Journey

### New Hire Journey Stages

| Stage 1: *Establish Cultural Fit* | Stage 2: *Set Behavioral Expectations* | Stage 3: *Reinforce Positive Performance* | Stage 4: *Prioritize Sustaining Culture* |
|---|---|---|---|

### Best Practices

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▪ Identify individuals who share the company's values.<br><br>▪ Prominently showcase the company's culture.<br><br>▪ Stay in touch with a thorough communication plan.<br><br>▪ Foster engagement with an effective internship program. | ▪ Help new hires feel like part of the team.<br><br>▪ Ensure a smooth transition between hiring and onboarding.<br><br>▪ Reinforce important topics with technology-based training.<br><br>▪ Elaborate on expectations for employees. | ▪ Deliver knowledge through multifaceted processes.<br><br>▪ Create a support system.<br><br>▪ Actively emphasize values. | ▪ Improve cultural understanding through ongoing training.<br><br>▪ Recognize and celebrate employees who embody the culture.<br><br>▪ Reorient employees as roles change.<br><br>▪ Listen, learn, and improve. |

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Figure 3

## Examples of Culture-Focused Onboarding Across the Four Stages of the New Hire Journey

| | Think | Believe | Act |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Establish Cultural Fit** | **Crowe Horwath's** consistent communication underscores their culture and helps prospective employees connect what they've learned about the company's culture with the company's actions. | **Safelite's** job preview videos allow potential employees to understand the vision of the company and how the culture is represented in daily activities. | **SoulCycle** selects instructors based on behavioral principles instead of on past work experience, making it easier to align these new hires to the culture by working with their naturally occurring behaviors. |
| **Set Behavioral Expectations** | **Wheatsville** promotes its cultural stance on a new hire's very first day by asking them to partake in an exercise that not only promotes the "food" aspect of their work, but also highlights the importance of sharing and cooperation. | **Adobe** uses an interactive online platform to teach new hires about the core values through collaborative exercises and by connecting them to current employees who share and discuss their experiences. | **Ritz-Carlton** brings its culture to life through daily team "huddles," where leaders model ideal behaviors while promoting a general team atmosphere. |
| **Reinforce Positive Performance** | **Red Hat** instills their brand values through a "cultural bible" and connects new hires to managers and employee ambassadors during an off-site at the company's headquarters. | **JAMF's** senior leadership drives home their commitment through a series of conversations about the culture and how each role contributes to the company's success. | **Oxford Properties'** translates customer success stories shared on its *oPositive* site into best practices that emphasize what *The Oxford Commitment* looks like in action. |
| **Prioritize Sustaining Culture** | **Hagerty's** restoration projects and *Hagerty University* courses promote continued learning and help employees deepen their understanding of the culture of classic cars and customers' passion behind the hobby. | **TouchPoint Support Services** uses a three-part training program for employees who advance into management roles, complete with supervisor training centered around collaboration and retention – two key elements of its culture. | **Regions Bank** awards associates who epitomize the company's values with its *Better Life Award*, which includes recognition at HQ, an additional week of vacation, and a $1,000 donation to a charity of their choice. |

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Figure 4

## LexisNexis Summer Intern Program

### 10-Week Program Overview

Identify and engage high-potential undergraduate, graduate, and PhD program candidates with critical skills that are difficult to find in the candidate market to:

- Build a pipeline of diverse talent to fill upcoming hiring needs by converting interns to full-time roles upon graduation
- Establish LexisNexis as an employer of choice in local university communities

| Component | Description |
|---|---|
| **Communication** | • **Prior to start of program:** Regular emails on what to expect, company norms (like attire), and other essential information.<br>• **Throughout the program:** Group communications regarding tips for success at work, encouraging interns to participate in upcoming company events, reminders on Intern Program action items, etc.<br>• **Following end of program:** Individual phone calls and emails from program coordinator to stay in touch and share major business updates and discuss full-time roles or future internships. |
| **Activities** | • **First Day Orientation:** Delivered live at company headquarters with video connections to other locations.  All interns, regardless of location, have lunch with their manager/team on their first day.<br>• **"Meet the Intern" Kick-off Event:** Meet and greet with permanent employees to help the interns feel welcome and start developing their internal network.<br>• **Performance Development:** Interns participate in the same activities as full-time employees, including goal setting, mid-program, and end-of-program reviews. Managers also provide on-going informal feedback outside of performance development process.<br>• **Regular Intern Meetings:** Designed to keep interns in touch with each other and provide setting to share what they are working on. Also includes less formal sessions like recurring lunches and other social interactions to help them build connections.<br>• **Mentoring:** Managers are charged with finding their interns each a mentor to provide more personalized attention and coaching.<br>• **Committees:** Interns can join committees to get more involved through community service or social events.<br>• **Intern and Manager of the Summer Awards:** Nomination process open to all interns and their managers, publicly awarded at End-of-Summer Internship Luncheon. |
| **Leadership Involvement** | • **Business Unit Overviews:** Senior leaders meet with interns to share current and future state news about their business and field interns' questions about their work.<br>• **End-of-Summer Presentations:** Senior leaders, front-line managers, and mentors participate in final presentation report-outs of interns' projects and their accomplishments from the 10-week program. |

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Figure 5

## The Oxford Commitment

### Four Defining Behaviors of Oxford's Culture

1. We stay flexible and are in touch with the needs of our employees, customers, partners, and stakeholders. We relate to people as individuals and are united under a "winning culture."
2. We remain humble and hardworking. We know we must earn people's respect in every interaction, every day.
3. We provide a safe environment for people to take risks and to foster empowerment, innovation, and leadership.
4. We are empathetic and responsive to our customers' needs; and build teams around people who have customer service in their DNA.

### Customer Service Commitments

- **We consistently deliver a world class experience.** We focus on hiring and developing the best people for every job; people who learn, live, and breathe the culture and brand of the organization. That means every one of us delivers exceptional service in everything we do.

- **We earn your respect in every interaction, every day.** Relationships are our most important asset. We go above and beyond to protect and grow them by anticipating needs, being honest and considerate, and valuing customers as genuine partners.

- **We empower our teams to deliver effective solutions fast.** We know problems happen. We listen; we are accessible, creative, and responsive with our solutions, and we act with urgency to make the right decisions.

- **We take great pride in leading the industry.** For over 50 years we have earned our place as a leader through innovation, service excellence, and an unrivaled focus on customers. We are committed to that tradition of leadership and to a passion for excellence.

- **We work with purpose.** As OMERS real estate investment entity, we work in the name of 400,000 plus pensioners. We raise the bar in everything we do to deliver on the pension promise and to provide a competitive edge for all of our business partners.

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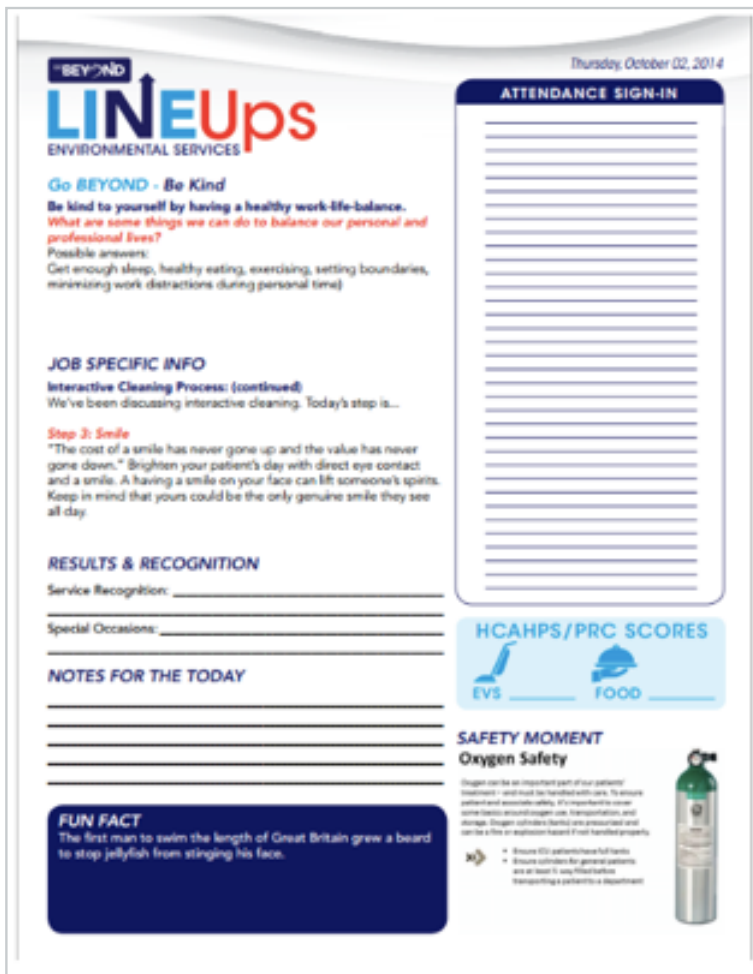Copyright © 2017, 2019 Qualtrics®

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Figure 6

Figure 7

## Touchpoint Services Keeps Employees Learning Through Daily LineUp Meetings

Touchpoint Services sustains its focus on customer experience through LineUp meetings held within every department across all locations every day. This meeting guide provides an outline for managers to use while sharing feedback from federally-mandated patient surveys, recognizing special occasions, and reinforcing one of the company's GoBEYOND brand promises.



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Figure 8

## Recommendations for Designing an Effective Employee Recognition Program

- **Clearly define "good" behaviors.** Before you can align your rewards and recognition tactics, it's important to have a clear picture of the behaviors that will best support your culture. Once the company has explicitly defined those actions for employees, it can reinforce the "good" behaviors by syncing up measurements, incentives, and celebrations.

- **Check for mixed messages.** Simply introducing new elements to your rewards and recognition program without reviewing what is already being targeted can have a negative effect if the "new" contradicts the "old". Therefore, to promote clarity, change or abandon existing practices that emphasize less optimal employee behaviors.

- **Create formal awards.** Many companies currently use award and incentive programs to target sales or quality accomplishments, which only serves to affirm profit- or sales-centric mindsets. Formalizing culture-oriented awards sends a signal to employees that their company cares about and recognizes the importance of culture.

- **Facilitate peer-to-peer recognition.** Recognition from managers and senior leaders can be a powerful driver of behavior, but can often overlook the daily accomplishments that result from acting in line with a company's culture. Peer appreciation and recognition programs allow for on-the-spot acknowledgements, which not only generate support and community, but also helps employees better understand desired behaviors by spotting them in others.

- **Tap into intrinsic motivations.** When it comes to what drives individual behavior, intrinsic motivators – like meaning, progress, knowledge, and competence – make a big difference. Creating a sense of meaningfulness through personalized letters or company-wide recognition reinforces the meaning or importance the company places on an employees' work.

- **Don't forget to celebrate teamwork.** Many rewards and recognition programs tend to focus on individual accomplishments, causing companies to miss vital opportunities to recognize teams that collectively demonstrate cultural excellence.

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Figure 9

## Select TouchPoint Support Services Manager Training

| Program | Primary Objective | Delivery | Additional Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Leadership Fundamentals Supervisor Training** | Leadership development to transition top performers from "do-er" to supervisor | Six modules | • Modules delivered by members of customer experience team, as well as participation by the CEO<br>• Participants are encouraged to put new skills into practice after each session<br>• Focuses on key skills including conflict management, delegation, and dealing with difficult employees |
| **New Manager Orientation** | Acclimate new managers to TouchPoint Support Services Culture in the context of their new role | 3-day session held monthly at company headquarters | • Concentration on company values, Top of Mind business objectives, and other operations training delivered by CEO, Sr. VPs, and regional VPs<br>• Emphasis on fostering collaboration includes meeting every leader at the HQ |
| **Love 'Em or Lose 'Em (LELE) Training** | Reinforce the importance of employee engagement and retention | Included in New Manager Orientation | • Introduces 26 engagement strategies for employee retention<br>• Also covers front-line supervisory responsibilities<br>• Managers across the organization apply these strategies as they strengthen their relationships with associates |

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Figure 10

## Channels for Listening to Employee Feedback

| Listening Channel | Description | Best Used For |
|---|---|---|
| **Employee Surveys** | Combination of closed- and open-ended questions delivered online with varying topics and length.<br><br>Administered at periodic intervals. | • Formal measurement of employee engagement metrics and key drivers to spur prompt intervention/action.<br>• Efficiently reaching large or segmented employee populations on specific topics of interest. |
| **Online Forum**<br><br>**Includes Suggestion Box-style Collection** | Intranet-based, moderated platform combining company- and employee-generated discussion threads.<br><br>Can supplement or further explore survey-generated feedback. | • Ongoing collection of employee questions, suggestions, and other feedback on customer or employee experience. If applicable, allows for anonymous improvement suggestions without fear of retribution. |
| **Social Network** | A combination of blogs, internal online communities, and wikis to capture employee-generated content. | • Monitoring peer-to-peer sharing and reactions via content ratings, "likes," and reader comments.<br>• Creating spaces for employees to find and engage in communities of interest.<br>• Appealing to social technology-inclined employees to engage their participation. |
| **Employee Committee** | Cross-functional team of appointed employees who meet on a regular basis to work on shared interests and issues regarding the employee or customer experience.<br><br>Includes easy access to executive or higher-level manager to report insights. | • Creating a comprehensive picture of specific survey results or other topics from relevant, focused employee input.<br>• Planning and advocating employee or customer experience improvements at local or company-wide levels. |
| **Directed Listening** | Targeted feedback collection via focus groups, interviews, or private online discussion | • Gathering insights into specific topics when time is limited and scope is directed and well-defined.<br>• Explicitly understanding employees' perspectives and opinions on certain issues or propositions. |

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Figure 11

## Actions to Take to Strengthen Company Culture

| | Immediate Actions | Near-term Actions | Long-term Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Establish Cultural Fit** | Do an audit of existing communications and other materials sent to prospects and candidates to review the balance of job and cultural information. | Compile real success stories of company culture in action (across roles/levels) to use as part of recruiting and pre-start communications. | Integrate cultural questions into interviews or hiring guides, and teach interviewers what traits to look for in potential employees.<br><br>Assess current employer branding campaign and update weaker areas to strengthen cultural alignment. |
| **Set Behavioral Expectations** | Compose timeline of short- and long-term activities to help new employees understand priorities and the aspects of culture that can help them reach their goals, why the culture is that way, and the importance of the overall goals. | Adjust first day onboarding agenda to bring in current leaders and employees to welcome new employees and tell their stories about what the culture is like and what it means to them.<br><br>Have new hires share their "Why I joined" story or otherwise highlight their initial and existing affinity for the culture. | Develop "new hire onboarding" learning tools for use during new manager or leader training to prepare them for their role in welcoming future hires.<br><br>Create a special program to use during onboarding after mergers and acquisitions. |
| **Reinforce Positive Behaviors** | Create a short checklist for new hires' managers on easy ways they can help new hires understand and adapt to company's culture over their first 30 days. | Standardize a "check in" process to assess how new hires are settling in and where HR intervention may be needed (training, manager coaching, etc.) | Instate new hire "buddy" or mentor programs to give individualized attention to new hires while building on their understanding of cultural and job-related expectations. |
| **Prioritize Sustaining Culture** | Review culture training curriculum to identify areas and materials to broadcast to all employees and align existing role-specific training where needed. | Make changes to rewards and recognition programs to celebrate and highlight culture-aligned behaviors and successes. | Introduce a "Culture Index" into employee surveys and metrics to measure employee engagement and culture adoption while also determining strength or where improvements are needed across the company. |

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Figure 12

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