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A People Leader's Guide To Welcoming New Employees.

SERVICE / CURIOSITY / RESPECT / ACCOUNTABILITY / APPRECIATION

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YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION



Mountaineers understand the importance of firsts – the first day of class, being first in line and of course, the first day of a new job. The first day (and first few weeks) on the job are vital to both your new employee and to you.

Congratulations on hiring your new employee! As a people leader, it is your privilege to help welcome your new employee to West Virginia University. Successful onboarding helps new employees adjust to the social and performance aspects of their jobs so they can quickly become productive, contributing members of the WVU community.

The WVU Division of Talent and Culture has developed this guide to help leaders and their designees introduce new employees to their jobs, duties, coworkers, work environment and the University. This toolkit is designed to help you during every stage of your employee's onboarding and make the process of welcoming and socializing a new employee a positive experience.

Most new Mountaineers arrive excited, full of expectations and looking for confirmation that joining your team was the right decision. They want to feel informed, connected and valued. Your role as a leader can positively or negatively affect your new employee's experience during the first days, weeks and even months on the new job. This critical time is when new employees learn and develop perceptions about the University, our culture and values, other employees, their responsibilities and their leaders.

Make the first interactions with new employees count. Create a strong and healthy connection by making it clear you want them to succeed. A small investment of your time will result in improved employee satisfaction, less turnover and a better working environment for everyone in the WVU community.

Approximately **70%** of new hires decide whether to stay or leave an organization within the first six months of joining.

— *Human Capital Institute*

There is often a misconception of what the term "onboarding" actually means. It encompasses more than just the required pre-employment paperwork and continues on after the employee's first day. Effective onboarding is the purposeful acclimation of a new employee and their journey to their first year on the job.

MAIN PURPOSES OF ONBOARDING

- / To bring your newly hired talent up to speed with the policies, processes, culture expectations and day-to-day responsibilities in your unit.
- / To ensure the new employees feel welcome, engaged and inspired, confirming why they joined your unit and West Virginia University.

WHY SHOULD ONBOARDING MATTER TO YOU? (As a People Leader)

- / Increases staff engagement and productivity
- / Helps you retain your staff members
- / Reduces high turnover costs
- / Builds a cohesive team and fosters collaboration



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REMOTE ONBOARDING



Many WVU employees work remotely, making completely virtual onboarding of new hires a necessity. Welcoming and onboarding remote employees should be done as strategic, dynamic and informative as in-person onboarding. While many of the concepts are the same as doing it in-person, onboarding remote workers requires you to be more intentional in your efforts to make sure that they are properly set up for work and feel connected and are valued by their new team.

SOCIALIZATION

Building connections is a natural human tendency which can impact the levels of engagement among your employees. Foster these connections with your new hire by setting up virtual "meet-and-greets" with your team and others this person may interact with. Encourage the use of video cameras in addition to joining the call with audio, and find your team's healthy balance for meetings. You want to avoid "zoom burnout", but also want to ensure you have regular time set up for updates and socialization.

ENCOURAGE A DEDICATED WORKSPACE

Having a dedicated workspace helps employees focus and minimizes distractions. It also created a boundary of work vs home space. If possible, encourage your new hire to set up a space in their house completely dedicated to work (ideally somewhere they can close up at the end of the day).

DISCUSS THEIR NEEDS

Start with equipment needs. Do they need a laptop? Monitors? Headset? Use the [Remote Onboarding Checklist](#) to plan for ordering these items. Have a discussion on how familiar they are with the technology and systems your team uses (Microsoft Teams, Outlook, Zoom, etc.) This can help determine where they are coming from and identify any training you may need to provide. Finally asking, "is there anything else that you need to do your job?" is a great way to catch anything that may otherwise go unnoticed.

EMPHASIZE WELLBEING

Make it clear from the very beginning that taking care of yourself is a part of being an effective employee. Talk about the importance of "turning off" for the night, taking breaks throughout the day and try to model those behaviors to show you mean what you are saying.



Frequently tell them you're glad they chose us starting right from the moment they accept the job and continuing on. Think about this as an "event" – that "yes" triggers a text, email, call, video... SOMETHING that acknowledges we're happy to have them join us.

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BEFORE YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE ARRIVES.



A good employee/employer relationship starts before the first day of work. Some time may pass between the acceptance of our offer and a new employee meeting their coworkers for the first time, so you should engage them before day one to welcome them.

PLAN AHEAD – BEFORE DAY ONE

Your job as a leader is to ensure that everything is in place to welcome your new employee. Once the start date is determined and communicated through the offer letter, you should begin preparing for their arrival. The following actions are highly recommended for you to do before day one.

SEND A WELCOME MESSAGE

Help your new employee feel wanted and welcomed. We have provided a [Sample Welcome Message](#) to help you greet your new employee. The welcome message should come from their supervisor, confirm the start date and provide the new employee with information and other tips to prepare for the first day.

INFORM EXISTING STAFF

Let your staff (and any other relevant people) know that a new hire is on the way with the [Welcome to Our Team Template](#). Include pertinent information about the new hire (e.g., where the new employee is coming from, previous job title, education/experience, the new employee's first day, etc.).

CUSTOMIZE PROPER CHECKLISTS

The Onboarding Checklists are designed to guide and assist leaders in coordinating and completing a new employee's onboarding. They outline important information and processes to orient a new employee and may be customized for departments that need less, more or additional items on the list. Choose between the [On-site/Hybrid](#) or [Remote](#) version depending on where your new employee will be working.

With a structured onboarding program, employees are **58%** more likely to remain with their organization after three years.

— *Wynhurst Group*

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FIRST DAY THROUGH FIRST YEAR.



Here are some things to think about as you plan for your employee's first days and months. A breakdown of the first day through the first year, along with customizable checklists, follows in the guide.



Think back to your first day and how hard it was to remember everything being communicated. Our new employees are excited (probably a little nervous) and want to make a good first impression.



Consider asking a more seasoned employee to act as a mentor. Peer mentors provide a “safe haven” for new employees to ask questions, gain knowledge and explore the culture.



EVERY employee plays a role in the success of the University. Pay attention to those working nontraditional hours or in nontraditional locations when customizing the templates and checklists to reflect their unique working environment.



Consider what is appropriate for the first day, week or month and design your orientation with that timeline in mind. Include something they can complete on the first day (e.g., completing the [virtual NMO](#)) to help them feel accomplished.



Send your new employee a copy of their onboarding guide. Include the checklist ([remote](#) or [on-site](#)) you've customized for their specific role. Finally, download your [supervisor checklists and templates](#) and refer back during the onboarding experience.



Success is something that is hard to manage if it is not well defined. Use the [Employee Success Profile](#) to write out your expectations and vision of what success looks like for your new employee's first 30, 60 and 90 days.

FIRST DAY

The first day is a new employee's first real impression of West Virginia University, their work team and the working culture. Your goal on the first day is to make the new employee feel at ease with a welcoming and engaging manner. Most new employees will begin their first day by completing the [Virtual New Mountaineer Orientation](#), while the rest of the day may be spent on basics (e.g., administrative tasks, introductions, settling in, etc.).

Remember to check in at the end of the first day and ask how it went and determine what they need to be successful during their first week.

FIRST WEEKS TO DAY 30

It's important not to lose touch with your new employee after the first day. It's also important for the new employee to have a good understanding of their job responsibilities and their general function within the unit after 30 days. Both you and your new employee should use the following tips to keep your relationship evolving.

FIRST-MONTH BEST PRACTICES

/ Schedule quick check-in meetings for feedback about integration into the team. [The Day 30 Check-in Questions](#) are a great place to start. Keep it informal – ask the new employee to coffee or stop by their work site. The most important thing you can do is listen.

/ Has the new employee successfully completed all mandatory training?

/ Consider thanking the new employee with an email for their work or send an e-card through the [Go Beyond Recognition Portal](#).

Remember, onboarding does not end after the first month. As your new employee settles in, it is important to provide support and training on an ongoing basis. Make sure to check in with your new employee often – don't wait for the employee to come to you.

FIRST THREE MONTHS

Many new employees make a decision to leave within the first 90 days, so focus on establishing a strong relationship that includes:

/ Position-specific training as well as appropriate cross-training, if applicable (the more your employee learns, the more useful they will be)

/ Monitor job performance carefully and provide specific constructive feedback

/ Schedule regular check-ins and solicit feedback from the employee about their observations about the workplace

You should also conduct an optional [Stay Interview](#) at the completion of the first 90 days. Stay interviews are one-on-one meetings conducted to help managers understand why employees stay and what might cause them to leave. In effective stay interviews, managers ask standard, structured questions in a casual and conversational manner to gather critical feedback.

FIRST SIX MONTHS

During the first six months, you want to make sure that your new employee is becoming self-sufficient and that you continue to promote collaboration and teamwork. Your new employee should understand their role and your expectations for their performance and behavior.

Remember to conduct the six-month probationary review and determine steps to be reached by the one-year mark.

FROM SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

Ensure that your new employee continues to get support. At the one-year anniversary, conduct a check-in with the new employee using the [One Year Anniversary Check-In Questions](#).

Don't forget to acknowledge and celebrate the new employee's anniversary (at a minimum, send a congratulations email or card).

THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The annual performance review should be a formal review that looks back at the performance over the specified review period as well as looks to the future. The review should include a formal review of the employee's performance, along with formal, documented feedback. Note that formal annual performance reviews are done on a specified schedule at West Virginia University, which may or may not coincide with the new employee's one-year anniversary.

See [Performance Reviews](#) for information on performance review timelines, forms and supplemental resources.

Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.

– *Timothy Gallwey*

WVU'S VALUES AND CODE OF CONDUCT.

Service, curiosity, respect, accountability and appreciation – these are the values that define us as one West Virginia University family, committed to creating a diverse and inclusive culture that advances education, healthcare and prosperity for all.

ROLE MODEL THE WVU VALUES TO YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE

SERVICE

Be of service. Every. Single. Day.

Show up for your employees and for this University. Be a role model. Ask specifically how you can make your new employee's transition to WVU easier. Prepare your team and others who will be working with the new employee before the start date. Let them know what part they will play in welcoming or training the new person.

CURIOSITY

Because we live in a beautiful state, we often take its beauty for granted. If your new hire is also new to Morgantown or West Virginia, send them these links (gotowv.com, tourmorgantown.com, morgantownwv.gov) and encourage them to explore.

Demonstrate your curiosity by finding out what they are interested in and how you can recognize them in a meaningful way by having them complete the optional [Tell Us About Yourself](#) form.

RESPECT

Show respect. Ask for the correct pronunciation of their name or what name they would like to be known by. At key points during the first day, ask if they need a break or have everything they need. Encourage them to use their knowledge and experience to improve things.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Commit to being accountable for their success. Prep for their first day by scheduling time to meet and orient them yourself. If you can't be available, make sure someone else has that responsibility. Show them their new worksite, introduce them to others, take them to lunch if possible or at the very least, make sure they know what time they can take lunch and for how long. Let them know they matter by taking the time to prepare.

APPRECIATION

Demonstrate that you are glad your new employee picked WVU by sending a welcome email before their first day.

Once your employee has arrived, don't forget to ask if they prefer public or private recognition. Be sure to use the [Go Beyond Recognition Portal](#) to celebrate employee successes and to show your appreciation.

THE FIVE WVU VALUES ARE MORE THAN JUST WORDS ON PAPER. THEY ARE WHAT WE STAND FOR AS MOUNTAINEERS AND SERVE AS A GUIDELINE FOR OUR DAILY WORK. SEE HOW EMPLOYEES LIVE WVU'S VALUES.

CODE OF CONDUCT

At West Virginia University, our values define us. They represent who we are and what we aspire to be. By living our shared values, we can create a positive workplace for the approximately 8,000 employees who call WVU home.

The [WVU Employee Code of Conduct](#) defines the minimum behavioral expectations for faculty and staff while at work. Review and discuss our Code of Conduct with new employees so they understand what it means to live like a Mountaineer every day.

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RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE.



WHAT IS GO BEYOND?

Studies show that there is a strong connection between recognition and employee engagement. Recognizing and appreciating employees are great ways to create strong bonds with new (and existing) employees. Since appreciating the work others do is one of our core Mountaineer values, we created the [Go Beyond Recognition Portal](#), making it easy to recognize the people who make our University special. Benefits-eligible faculty and staff have access to the portal. You can:

- / Send e-cards (with both public and private options)
- / Comment on a coworker's wall to thank those who've gone the extra mile
- / Identify unsung Mountaineer heroes with the touch of an APPLAUD button

How do you get started?

Go to gobeyond.wvu.edu or access through the resources section of portal.wvu.edu

1. Enter your WVU username and password
2. Choose to "send an e-card" or read what others have shared on the WVU Recognition Wall.
3. Review our [help guides](#) for more information on using the system.

Check back often to celebrate the successes of our community. If you have questions or have problems logging in, please contact Leadership and Organization Development at 304-293-7217 or lod@mail.wvu.edu.

For more ways to explore employee recognition, check out our [WVU Appreciation and Recognition](#) page.

Praise and commendation from managers was rated the top motivator for performance, beating out noncash and financial incentives, by a majority of workers.

— *McKinsey Motivating People,
Getting Beyond*

TEMPLATES, CHECKLISTS AND OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES.

INSTRUCTIONS

Click the hyper-linked templates and checklists below to access. Customize for each new employee's specific role.

1. [Sample Welcome Message](#)
2. [Welcome to Our Team Template](#)
3. [Tell Us About Yourself Form](#)
4. [On-site/Hybrid Customizable Checklists \(Pre-arrival on\)](#)
5. [Remote Customizable Checklists \(Pre-arrival on\)](#)
6. [Day 30 Check-in Questions](#)
7. [Stay Interviews](#)
8. [One-Year Anniversary Check-in Questions](#)
9. [ITS Onboarding FAQ Sheet](#)
10. [Employee Success Profile](#)

Treat employees like they make a difference
and they will.

— *Jim Goodnight CEO, SAS*