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4 Ways Your HCM Technology Should Enhance Your Onboarding Processes

DIVE BRAND STUDIO

When you signed on with your first Human Capital Management (HCM) system, the short-term benefits were clear.

Your organization was increasing in size and complexity, and you knew that an HCM application could offer significant benefits to how you scale your business, allocate talent and manage employee data.

Unfortunately, not all HCM platforms are created equal. While every program offers one or two highlighted functionalities that can meet the biggest priorities of an organization, very few can offer a comprehensive range of capabilities within one application. Therefore, depending on when you chose your HCM system and why you chose it, you may be missing out on an extraordinary amount of functionality.

This functionality gap often happens in the onboarding phase. Successful and adaptable businesses use cutting-edge HCM technology to manage big-picture challenges like compliance and cloud-based data management, but they fail to reap the benefits that a completely comprehensive, single-application HCM system brings to the onboarding process.

What makes onboarding such an important HCM milestone? When it's done well, it has a profound impact on retention and employee engagement. According to Deloitte's 2017 Global Human Capital Trends, 56% of surveyed companies are

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redesigning their HR teams to leverage digital and mobile onboarding and engagement tools that dramatically increase factors like employee engagement, alignment and goal management, as well as career development, job transition and continuous learning.[1] A recent study from the Brandon Hall Group also found that 78% of companies that invested time and resources into their onboarding processes saw an increase in revenue and 54% saw significant improvements in turnover, absenteeism, productivity and satisfaction.[2]

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The data is clear: How you onboard employees – how you introduce them to the company and the technology you deploy to help them manage their information – represents an enormous opportunity to impact the rest of an employee's tenure within your organization.

However, it also represents an enormous risk. When your onboarding process consists of an endless stream of paperwork on the first day, it sends the disastrous message that the company isn't committed to providing the technology necessary to do the job.

Or worse, that the company's outdated approach to onboarding will extend to its vision, mission and culture. This disconnect sets an employee up to be disengaged and unproductive from day one, damaging his or her contributions to the bottom line over time.

Is your HCM system helping your organization develop a world-class onboarding process that engages your new hires and delivers the best possible lifetime employee experience? It should be.

Read on for four specific ways your HCM technology should enhance the onboarding process.

1   # Engage Employees by Simplifying the Onboarding Process

Because onboarding is an employee's first official impression, it can be a powerful motivator when that experience is a simplified, organized and easy one. That's why the first and most important benefit that an HCM application brings to the onboarding process is a seamless and painless employee experience.

"When a candidate reaches the onboarding phase, you're still wooing them," says HR content marketing consultant Mary Ellen Slayter, CEO of Rep Cap. "People can leave jobs really quickly, and they're not locked in during onboarding. Especially in industries with high turnover, the onboarding experience has an immediate impact on your labor force and your business output."

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The benefits of seamless onboarding last far beyond the first day of work; starting with a single application from the beginning of onboarding simplifies *all* subsequent tasks so that an employee's interaction with the HR department gets easier and more familiar over time – not more complicated.

For example, a true single-application HCM system will be able to aggregate all the following HR data and tasks into one easy-to-manage employee account. During the onboarding process, employees can:

- **Complete tax paperwork online,** such as I-9, W-4 and direct-deposit forms
- **Read and sign required documents,** such as an employee handbook or security agreement using electronic signature verification
- **Access benefits information** and enroll in benefits
- **View company training videos** and job-specific instruction
- **Learn how to track their time worked**, manage their schedule, see their pay rates and view their pay stubs
- **Complete surveys** on their new-hire experience

With a high-functioning HCM application, employees have one place to go for access to everything HR-related, both during and after the onboarding process – without requiring the hands-on attention of the HR team.

2 Improve Productivity With Easy-to-Access Training Resources

According to the 2012 Allied Workforce Mobility Survey, it takes about eight months for a newly hired employee to be fully productive.[3] In this time, however, few companies provide the coaching, mentoring or appropriate training activities that new hires need to assimilate quickly. In fact, only 39% of organizations establish milestones or set goals for new employees, and only 66% train their employees during the onboarding process.

A comprehensive, single-application HCM platform enables employees to have access to the HR data and actions they need, and empowers them to make the most of their training resources through one application. From watching videos and onboarding materials, such as a welcome video that introduces the company culture, vision and mission, to on-demand safety and harassment training videos, pre-hires and new hires alike can access everything they need from home or work.

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"The onboarding process sets the stage for how the new hire experiences a company's commitment to their career," says HRIS consulting practice leader Ronni Beckwith, senior vice president of ihouse. "An onboarding system that can incorporate company videos or special messages will add that extra special touch and get employees excited about the organization they are working for."

Furthermore, a full-service HCM system will enable an employee to use the same portal to pursue assigned performance and development goals, and digital training paths as needed throughout the lifetime of his or her employment.

Not only can new employees get up to speed more quickly at the beginning of their career, but they'll develop a familiarity with the application that leads to gains in long-term productivity, retention and profitability for the organization.

3 Optimize the HR Team's Role by Reducing Paperwork

All too often, HCM technology introduces a complicated array of options that are difficult to integrate with each other, leaving your team to sit with functionality you don't have time to learn to use.

A single-application system that houses the in-depth functionality you need allows you to learn one system and make the most of it, freeing your time from paperwork and system troubleshooting, and making room for strategic planning and employee support.

These benefits are passed onto your team, which only needs to learn one system to access all HR- and work-related tasks and data. The result? Your employees have a higher level of competence with the back end of the system, and your HR team spends less time on IT or admin-related tasks.

"When your HCM system is too complicated or not well-integrated, the HR team is bogged down by employee tech requests like, 'This didn't work for me,' and 'Can you show me how to fill out this form?'" says Slayter. "Your HR team's ability to do strategic planning and actually perform the function they're meant to perform is limited by the need for administrative maintenance."

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Building your organization's HR practices around a single-application HCM system reduces this organizational drag, which in turn allows you to do more to engage and support new hires through active onboarding initiatives.

4   Improve Accuracy in Employee Records

If your HR department made the move to the cloud, but still enters employee paperwork manually, you're missing out on an enormous benefit of a single-application HCM system. Storing the data on the cloud means it's easier to organize, update and secure important information. But when employees enter their own information into the system, it brings this level of convenience to a whole new level.

First, it kicks off the employee onboarding experience and helps new hires become more familiar with the application, thus encouraging subsequent use. Employees enter their information into the system during the application process, and their account stays with them throughout their employment life cycle. Second, it increases the likelihood that the information will be entered correctly, reducing errors and helping with your compliance efforts.

And when compliance with complex government regulations cost the U.S. economy nearly $1.9 trillion in 2015 alone, anything you can do to reduce your organization's share of those costs should be a priority.[4]

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In such a robust system, new hires complete their own paperwork, and the program won't accept an incomplete form. This allows HR to track who has completed or not completed a form or set of onboarding tasks, and send automated email alerts without the need to rekey any data."

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"It's crucial that a unified onboarding system flows seamlessly from recruiting to core HR and payroll functions," says Beckwith. "In such a robust system, new hires complete their own paperwork, and the program won't accept an incomplete form. This allows HR to track who has completed or not completed a form or set of onboarding tasks, and send automated email alerts without the need to re-key any data."

A single-application HCM system will allow you to manage the entire employee life cycle using one program, as any change that takes place within the system is entered and updated throughout.

For example, let's say an employee has adopted or given birth to a new baby. She would be able to use her self-service HCM portal to add a dependent and change her health insurance plan from "Employee and Spouse" to "Employee and Family." Once HR reviews and approves this change, the HCM system automatically will update her payroll deductions with the new plan rate and provide the new information to the insurance carrier. This seamless process removes much of the back-and-forth interactions between employee and HR, and HR doesn't have to re-key anything.

Single-Platform HCM Systems Improve Employee Experience

The onboarding experience sets the tone for employee productivity, engagement and retention throughout the life of a new hire. It's no surprise, then, that companies that empower their employees with a full-service, single-application HCM platform experience higher rates of new-hire assimilation, efficiency, compliance and profitability.[5]

The HCM technology you use should provide a superior employee experience, allowing employees to use a single self-service portal do to everything they need to do, from clocking in, managing their schedules and requesting time off to accessing their pay vouchers, uploading expenses and accessing company documents. When this kind of access is available 24/7 on computers, tablets and mobile devices, there's no reason not to empower your employees with it. And if you don't implement one of these – or if you're using one, but not using it to its fullest extent – you aren't providing everything your new employees need to have a successful onboarding experience.

Don't limit your organization's potential to an HCM system that offers only one specialized product or struggles to integrate the functionality you know you need. Build the best possible employee experience by choosing a full-service, single-application HCM tool.

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