



**Reimagine the
Onboarding
Experience**

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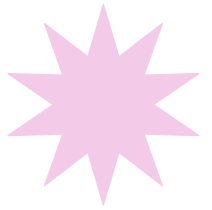
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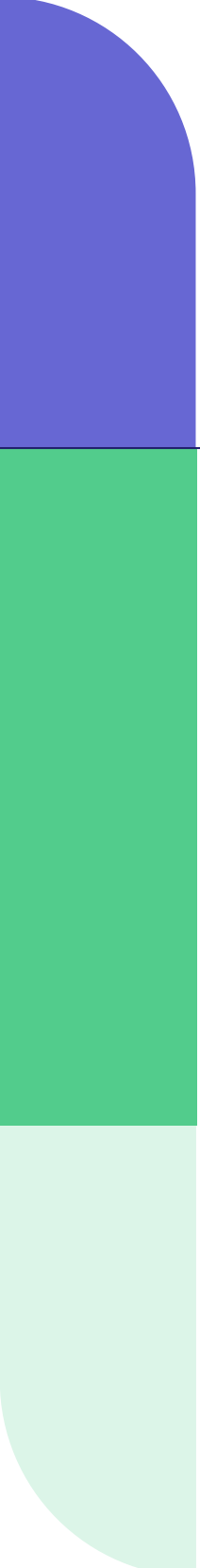


Highlights



Up to **20%**

of new employees can leave a job within the first 45 days if onboarding fails to deliver on expectations.



The cost of replacing an entry-level employee is **30-50%**

of the person's annual salary and is much higher for mid and senior level employees.



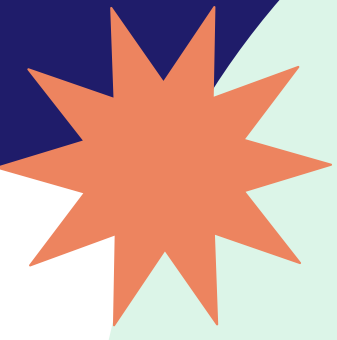
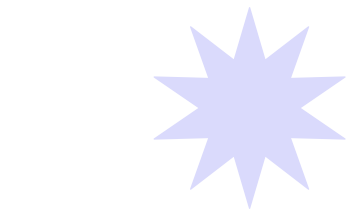
Only **32%**

of companies have a formal onboarding process.

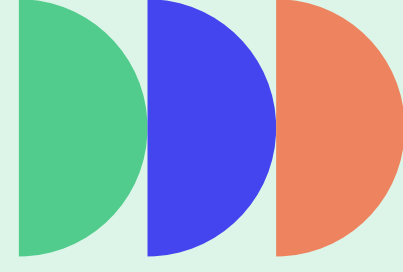
Only **12%**

of employees strongly agree their organisation does a great job of onboarding new employees.

(Source: Gallup)



Impact of a well-designed onboarding programme



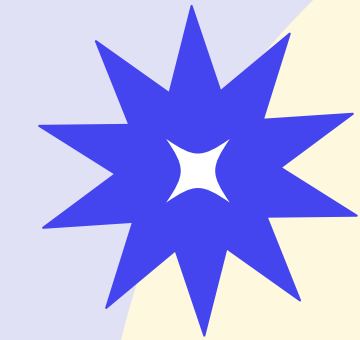
Energy Australia adopted a blended solution for onboarding, improving learner satisfaction and reducing costs significantly.

New Zealand telecommunications company **Vocus Group** (now **2 Degrees**) redesigned their onboarding experience to improve employee experience and keep the company culture alive in a geographically dispersed environment.

American retailer **EyeMart Express** reduced the formal onboarding time from 35 days to 10 days and saved thousands of dollars per person.



Introduction



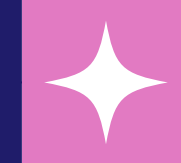
“First impressions count. The onboarding process is critical to ensuring new employees feel welcome in your organisation and confident in their new role. It’s an opportunity to win their hearts and minds, to develop engaged employees from day one,”

Drew McGuire
CEO of Capability Group

A well thought-out, well designed, well delivered onboarding experience integrates new hires into your organisation faster. It shows your people that you care, that you value them, which in turn creates loyalty and brand advocates. A good onboarding experience helps reassure new employees that they’ve made the right decision.



Research indicates that **69%** of employees are more likely to stay at an organisation after 3 years if they’ve gone through a great onboarding experience.¹



Getting the onboarding process right is more important than ever before given all that has happened recently. With a tight labour market, there are a lot of employment options for the talent you are seeking to attract. Since the COVID pandemic at the start of 2020, staff turnover rates have skyrocketed and hybrid ways of working have become the norm.

The shift to working from home has had a huge impact on how we grow the skills and capabilities of people in our organisations. It also kick-started a much needed, long overdue redesign of onboarding programmes to help engage new hires from day one.

It’s time for a new onboarding story to address the needs of new employees and help them find their feet in their new role. The key design question, Drew McGuire says, is how can you effectively train and onboard new employees in a geographically dispersed environment, foster a culture of connectivity, and deliver a great employee experience?

Redesigning the onboarding experience with the right human centred approach enables organisations to deliver blended learning solutions enabled by technology that streamline the onboarding process; improves speed to competency; develops capable, confident staff; creates a continuous learning environment; and reduces employee turnover.

Capability Group designs innovative blended onboarding programmes aligned with your Employee Value Proposition (more about this later!) that include:

- ✦ **Face-to face workshops**
- ✦ **Adaptive online microlearning**
- ✦ **Performance support materials**
- ✦ **Engaging & brand aligned e-learning modules**

Capability Group curates a range of learning technology solutions that can also be incorporated into a blended onboarding solution.

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/dont-underestimate-the-importance-of-effective-onboarding.aspx>



It takes a lot of time and money to recruit and train new employees. Replacing an entry-level employee is 30-50% of the person's annual salary and is much higher for mid and senior level employees². A great onboarding experience sets your people up for success, helping to reduce employee churn and saving money in the long-term.

Industry experience, a basic level of qualification and appropriate soft skills used to be the minimum requirements for most jobs. Now organisations are forced to hire people who may have never worked in the industry or done similar work before. That means training people from scratch which creates its own onboarding challenges.

JD Dillon, Axonify's Chief Learning Architect, on our recent webinar "**Onboarding in a Hybrid World**", says:

"This is a great opportunity to reimagine the onboarding experience because businesses understand the limitations that we're up against now."

What's the problem?

Onboarding was already a challenge pre-COVID and it has become more difficult in this tight labour market where **organisations are struggling to find and retain employees.**

Labour shortages mean there's an increased urgency to bring people on board and up to speed faster than ever before. It has also changed how organisations recruit people.

A study by strategy and research firm Aberdeen Group found that **54%** of organisations with a formal onboarding process experience greater new hire productivity and **50%** experience greater new hire retention³. Those figures emphasise just how important it is for organisations to provide a great first impression.

An effective onboarding experience should amongst other things:

- ✦ Introduce a new employee to the organisation and their workmates
- ✦ Train new employees on the work processes required to do the job
- ✦ Explain the mission, values and culture of the organisation
- ✦ Continue beyond formal onboarding to support new employees while on-the-job

² <https://www.inc.com/the-build-network/turnover-costs.html>

³ <https://www.aberdeen.com/blogposts/perfecting-onboarding-funnel/>

So where are organisations falling short with their onboarding programmes?

01. Lack of onboarding experience

Organisations are losing new hires before they even become productive and the cost of finding, hiring and training a new employee is very high. Even before the virtual shift, more than one-third of companies lacked a structured onboarding process, remote or otherwise.

In fact, research from the Aberdeen Group found that only **32%** of companies have a formal onboarding process⁴.

Furthermore, many organisations underestimate how long it takes a new hire to be proficient in their role.

02. Overwhelmed, underdone

Traditional onboarding has a definite beginning and end. The new employee arrives for their first day on the job, excited to get started. Unfortunately, they are overwhelmed with a firehose of content, leaving them vulnerable to the forgetting curve and not taking into account their existing capabilities or individual needs.

By the second day after training, they've likely already lost a staggering **70%** of the information they learned.

One-size-fits-all training doesn't make sense when onboarding employees with different levels of knowledge, but often they are forced to sit in front of a computer for hours on end to consume compulsory online training. They can spend days or even weeks in a classroom, away from the job they were actually hired to do.

⁴ <https://www.aberdeen.com/blogposts/perfecting-onboarding-funnel/>



03. The Capability Cliff

When the firehose of information is turned off, new employees are often left to fend for themselves with little or no continued support.

In many cases, they fall off the capability cliff as they face unexpected challenges and forget the firehose of information they were supposed to have learned, which can affect their confidence.

This leads to high staff turnover in the initial weeks and months of employment.

Those that do stay, settle into their new role and start to build their capability through on-the-job experience. However, this can often lead to questionable decision-making and bad habits that limit potential in the long term.

04. Disconnected, disengaged

With the shift to hybrid work, gone are the days of 100% face-to-face training.

Learning in a hybrid work environment is different from learning in person, but **socialisation is essential for new employees** to feel part of the team and connected to the company culture.

Learning and development teams should identify strategies to engage geographically dispersed team members that can be incorporated into the design of programmes.



How can we fix onboarding?

During a time when companies are struggling to retain talent, creating a strong onboarding process for new hires is imperative.

By implementing a strategic onboarding programme, managers can build new hires' confidence, increase engagement, and create an environment that retains talent.

Done well, onboarding can provide a solid foundation for a positive employee experience.

Drew McGuire explains,

"Employee experience is about a person's entire journey from the time they become aware your company exists to the point where they leave the organisation."

"To design a positive employee experience, you must break down all the key touch points you have with employees throughout their journey, keeping in mind that each person's experience is unique."

Onboarding is a crucial part of the employee experience and must be aligned with the employer value proposition (EVP). The EVP is what your organisation offers in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences an employee brings to the organisation and it needs to be relevant and compelling to attract, engage and retain talent.

Your talent and recruitment team may have done a great job of promoting your organisation's EVP to attract great new talent. The question is does your onboarding programme provide an experience that is aligned with and lives up to your EVP? In most cases it doesn't and the onboarding process is something to be endured rather than enjoyed.

"Done well, onboarding can also generate significant savings in terms of reduced speed to competency, reduced cost of programme delivery, reduced recruitment costs and a decrease in opportunity costs related to high churn of employees. This is crucial to your CFO, COO and those with responsibility for delivery and a P&L,"

Drew McGuire
CEO of Capability Group

Here are a few things to consider to reimagine your onboarding experience.

01. Prioritise content

Onboarding should not be about how much information you can cram into someone's head as quickly as possible. That's counterproductive. Instead, the goal should be to give employees what they need to do the job. You can avoid the firehose effect by prioritising content.

Start by thinking about how you can make it easier on new hires.

What onboarding content do you 'need to have' and what's 'nice to have'? Take out the 'nice to haves' and prioritise the information that matters most.

"I've yet to meet an employee who was unable to do their job if they didn't know what year the company was founded,"

says JD Dillon of Axonify on our webinar "Onboarding in a Hybrid World".

"Employees don't need to know the history of your company straight out of the gate. You can cover all of that stuff later but it doesn't have to be front loaded in a course. All of the information employees don't need to do their job from day one can be introduced when they have some fundamental understanding of what they're doing."

"You need to focus on hitting key milestones to get people up and contributing as quickly as we can. When people walk through the door there's a whole bunch of stuff they don't know. So how do you provide them with the resources to grow their knowledge and skills while they're doing their job?"

JD Dillon
Axonify's Chief Learning Architect

This allows employees to focus on critical content during the formal onboarding process which reduces the firehose of information they are typically subjected to. By delivering just the need-to-know resources as part of the onboarding programme new hires can solve problems immediately. It also frees up trainers to spend more time delivering on-the-job training instead of focusing on information delivery.

02. Make information accessible



Make it as easy as possible for employees to find the resources they need.

As JD Dillon puts it,

“make the simple stuff simple.”

“People should be able to find resources and get questions answered with little-to-no effort from day one,” he says. “This is true of any onboarding situation, but especially in a remote setting where you can’t tap the person next to you and say, ‘Hey, what does that mean?’”

“Employees need to easily find the information they need without adding layers of frustration. On the internet I can find the information I need really easily. Why is it so much harder at work?”

03. Think long term

An onboarding experience doesn't necessarily need to have an end date. In fact, an unsatisfactory onboarding experience that ends too soon can leave new employees feeling frustrated, disillusioned and without enough information to do their job effectively.



Research suggests up to **20%** of new employees can leave a job within the first 45 days if onboarding fails to deliver on expectations⁵.

An effective onboarding programme sets your new employees up for long-term development as they become familiar with their new role ensuring they continue to build capability while on-the-job.

Establish a knowledge baseline for new employees and work to close knowledge gaps as soon as possible after they start. Extending the onboarding experience to a 6-12 month programme leads to long-term productive and capable employees.

“It’s a shift in mindset of how we think about onboarding from a programme that has a predictable start and end date... Instead, onboarding needs to be viewed as just the beginning of the process of learning what you need to know to work in an organisation.”

JD Dillon
Axonify's Chief Learning Architect



⁵ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/reducing-new-employee-turnover-among-emerging-adults.aspx>

04. Build a continuous learning environment

Build up your employees' knowledge over time. Front loading all of the information creates a lack of confidence and a lack of knowledge that causes bad decisions. Introducing it at the right time and reinforcing it is much more effective.

Delivering a single training session isn't enough. To make information stick, you need to repeat it more than once. That's why **reinforcement is essential** for onboarding programmes.

By providing access to new topics as the employee progresses, learning continues to transfer to long-term memory and the right on-the-job behaviours. As the employee continues to develop through work experience, you can adapt the learning experience to build long-term capability.

Capability development is an ongoing process through continued reinforcement, behaviour assessment, targeted coaching and refresher training. A platform like Axonify as part of your blended learning solution can be really useful in delivering this type of continuous learning experience.

05. Create customised content

"There are a number of reasons to leverage technology as part of the onboarding process including speed, scale, consistency and personalisation,"

says JD Dillon of Axonify on our webinar "Onboarding in a Hybrid World".

"Technology is allowing us to personalise the digital experience. Data allows managers and team leaders to have more meaningful interactions with each employee instead of treating everyone like they're the same and learning at the same pace."

One-size-fits-all training doesn't make sense for onboarding employees with varying levels of experience and knowledge.

It's important to make sure onboarding programme content targets areas where employees need more support.

06. Build connections

"A Zoom happy hour or a team quiz only goes so far, for so long and what worked five years ago, probably isn't going to work today. Employees have more flexibility so they don't feel pressured to attend a work do. They'd rather spend that time with their kids instead."

says JD Dillon of Axonify on our webinar **"Onboarding in a Hybrid World"**.

Designing opportunities for connection and engagement need to be built into onboarding programmes and beyond.

Managers are the most important people in workplace learning and performance because they have so much influence over the employee experience and supporting the right types of development and behaviours.

Now managers are physically separated from employees, their role is more important than ever. Those casual moments of interaction in the workplace that make a great manager are missing in a hybrid environment.

They [managers] need the time and resources to have **meaningful communication**, especially with new hires.

Too often, managers get on a webcam and talk about deliverables and priorities and product releases and don't take time to talk to the human beings at the other end of the call.



"In a call centre, it's very easy to create and cultivate a culture,"

says Stacie Morgan, the Learning & Development Manager at Vocus (now 2Degrees), the New Zealand telecommunication company that manages the Slingshot, Orcon and Flip brands.

"It's not so easy when you're working from home. There's a disconnect. At Vocus, we're constantly thinking about ways that we can keep that culture alive."

"There are things that can't be replicated when people are working from home but nothing beats talking to someone face-to-face. We've had to think about ways to make people feel connected while working from home. How can we make them feel like they are part of a team?"

07. Focus on outcomes

"Design your onboarding process for outcomes,"

advises JD Dillon.

If you don't know how you're going to measure the impact of the training you deliver, what's the point of delivering the training? A learning platform like Axonify, as part of your blended learning solution, can measure how people are changing in terms of what they know and how they're behaving on the job. You have lots of data and metrics. It's about figuring out which ones are most impactful and designing training that does what it's supposed to do."

The priority should be to accelerate the onboarding experience and get people to that level of comfort so they can contribute and help close the staffing gap, without lessening the customer experience.

"The customer doesn't care how long an employee has worked for you," says Dillon. "They don't care if they've worked with you for five years or five minutes. They expect a knowledgeable employee to support them. Onboarding should make sure that the customer experience is what it needs to be to make your business profitable and competitive."

Conclusion

Onboarding done right is a great way of supporting and integrating new employees into your organisation faster, and ensuring they continue to build capability while on-the-job. It can also facilitate speed to competency at scale.

Start-ups and organisations that are rapidly scaling up need to onboard a high volume of employees in a short period of time. Either as a post pandemic effect where organisations reduced their workforce and subsequently needed to rapidly rehire staff, or rapidly growing businesses that need employees to be fully operational in a short period of time.

With the combination of personalised content and shared knowledge support, **blended onboarding programmes** enabled by the right technology can help new employees become more capable more quickly, set the tone for a great employee experience, and ultimately lead to more engaged and more productive employees.

“[Axonify] helps us identify where the gaps in our learners' knowledge are and where we need to improve our content. Ultimately it helps us answer the question: ‘How do we support our people to be competent and confident in their role from day one?’”

Debbie Smith
Head of the Digital Learning Enablement Team
at Energy Australia

Energy Australia

Case Study

With 4000+ employees supporting customer operations for over 1.2 million customers, Energy Australia faces some significant challenges delivering onboarding, learning and development content.

The company onboards over 800 new hires every year for their six contact centres in **India, the Philippines and Australia.**

It's a complex, ever-changing industry so there's a lot for new hires to learn.

Energy Australia partnered with Capability Group to design a blended learning solution enabled by technology, in this case Axonify.

Before using a blended learning approach to onboarding, the company's onboarding process typically involved bringing 15-20 people into a classroom for an average of 20 days of face-to-face delivery. The face-to-face delivery process required a big investment in terms of resources, trainers and facilitators travelling overseas regularly to accredit the trainers and oversee the training.

Energy Australia had a number of requirements from a new blended onboarding approach. They wanted:

- ◆ An agile and flexible solution to support an ever-changing and evolving environment
- ◆ Dedicated resources to support the transition
- ◆ The capability to deliver ongoing, targeted reinforcement learning
- ◆ To reduce costs by onboarding at scale & with greater speed
- ◆ Data driven insights to measure the impact of the learning delivered

The Solution

The company had already engaged with Capability Group before the COVID pandemic in 2020 because it saw the need to move from a traditional, face-to-face onboarding programme to a **blended learning model.**

The Axonify learning platform (EA has renamed the platform iLearn) was part of the blended learning solution Energy Australia developed with Capability Group. With Covid, the company had to pivot quickly and digitalise even more of their critical learning content that could no longer be delivered face-to-face.

Describing the impact of having the blended onboarding solution powered by Axonify, Deb Smith, the head of Digital Learning at Energy Australia says,

"The problem we tackled first, or the quick win, was how to deliver our generic content to the masses across every business unit. The business was impressed at how quickly we were able to respond and recognised the value from a digitally enabled approach to learning and development."

Some of the other benefits of the blended learning onboarding solution supported by the Axonify platform include:

- Agile, engaging programmes that deliver at scale & speed, supporting an environment of constant change
- Centralised learner scorecard
- Learner reinforcement to drive speed to competency
- Leader view of coaching opportunities
- Modern learner experience with engagement through interactions, rewards and gamification
- Data & insights to drive improvement across the wider business

"Our learner satisfaction scores have improved significantly and it has also helped with better oversight and tracking of employee capabilities,"

says Smith.

"The Leader Zone dashboard on the iLearn platform enables our team leaders and managers to monitor their learners' progress and identify coaching opportunities. It helps us identify where the gaps in our learners' knowledge are and where we need to improve our content. Ultimately it helps us answer the question: 'How do we support our people to be competent and confident in their role from day one?'"

"Our blended approach to onboarding enables us to design and deliver flexible, personalised, digitally-led training. It's more than just an onboarding solution. Onboarding is just one piece of the puzzle. For us, it's a learning and development asset and it's an ongoing process to use the solution effectively and evolve the offering."

Debbie Smith
Head of the Digital Learning Enablement Team at Energy Australia

Reimagine the Onboarding Experience

For more information, find us on

 www.capabilitygroup.co
 [@capabilitygroup](https://www.linkedin.com/company/capabilitygroup)

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