

Chapter 6

Onboarding for Competitive Performance:

Leadership Responsibility in Initiating a Mentorship Journey for New Recruits

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ABSTRACT

Welcoming new employees into their job requires more concerted leadership effort to ensure that they settle in, begin work as soon as possible, and can be competitive. This chapter highlights the significance of complying with onboarding processes at all levels within an organisation. Drawing from literature, the importance of onboarding for purposes of acquiring competitiveness is offered, and then an onboarding process mapping and modelling (OPMM) is developed. A vignette based on ethnobiography of lived experiences during onboarding at a University in South Africa is presented. After using the structural narrative analysis, findings provide insights on the significance of the leaders' role at all levels of the organisation, in complying with the onboarding processes to yield employee competitiveness. Finally, the strategies for early engagement are presented, relaying approaches for socialisation to yield a competitive advantage factor. This implies that internal monitoring and evaluation of the process is essential to derive value.

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INTRODUCTION

“You’re hired, welcome onboard”

Embarking into a new job brings along excitement, expectations, anxiety, uncertainty and determination to join the workforce and thrust into the new working environment. Uppermost are expectations to fulfil what attracted the new employee to the organisation in the first place. Keeping up with the tempo of anticipation warrants a structured programme by the leadership to welcome new employees and evoke competitiveness. According to Oosthuizen & Kara (2008), people who show competitiveness are deemed a competitive advantage factor. This thus, arguably imply that there is value regarding appropriate support and guidance by leadership, in a form of orientation, coaching and or mentoring to be and remain competitive. A conscience orientation and mainstreaming in relation to employees’ job specifications is required to begin the journey of appraising competitiveness.

This chapter explores the significance of onboarding new recruits. This arguably, begins with comprehensive planning for new staff orientation, mentorship and coaching through systems put in place to provide continued development and support of staff. Authors writing on this subject maintain that employee mentorship has a strong operational function (Bauer, 2010; Saks, and Gruman, 2011; Setlhodi, 2018b), which offers and distributes dominant support in various ways to employees. The goal is to first orientate them, and then provide intermittent coaching and mentoring towards interacting with their new employment before starting to work and whilst working respectively, to ensure competitiveness. Competitiveness entails suitability to perform work independently within a team and go beyond job expectations, showing adeptness and skillfulness. Leaders in organisations focusing on ensuring that employees have these characteristics are sure to increase productivity and could have high staff retention rate (Bauer, 2013).

I begin by outlining the significance of orientating recruits into the organisation. This is followed by reviewing literature based on on-boarding, mentorship, and coaching in relation to boarding new recruits and then present an Onboarding Process Mapping and Modelling (OPMM). I then share a vignette of my lived experiences upon joining a university in South Africa in a form of an autobiography and use Structural Narrative Analysis, to interpret and offer findings and discussions. Finally, I present Strategies for Early Engagement, summary and recommendations.

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