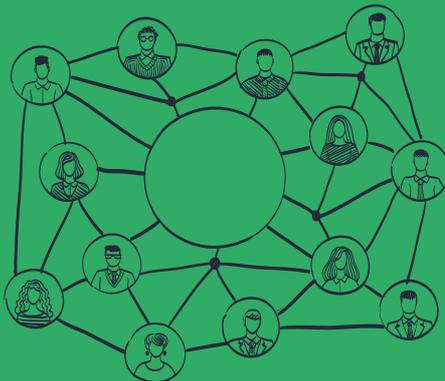


## "The Future of Onboarding"

What if we train new hires and they leave? What if we don't and they stay? New hires tend to decide within three months of starting a new job whether they will stay.

During an onboarding, you want to get people on board. For most people, that starts with a basic transfer of skills, ranging from where the coffee

machine is to how to operate complex systems. However, this process isn't just about transferring skills: it's about transferring culture as well. How do you deal with obstacles or conflicts as a company? How do you celebrate your wins? And what are your social norms like? These are all questions a good onboarding programme should help answer.



**Onboarding:** the process of integrating a new employee into an organisation. It's a crucial stage in people's careers: it influences how long employees are willing to stay at a company, how well they perform, and how much they enjoy their job.

Unfortunately, onboarding isn't always given the attention it deserves, either because employers are unaware of the benefits that good onboarding can bring, or because they feel like other issues deserve more attention. While that attitude may have flown up to now, the job market is changing, and employers are slowly waking up

to the importance of onboarding, making it more important than ever. At RMMBR, we've embraced the importance of onboarding, and are seeking to shake things up a bit. In this whitepaper, we'll walk you through the why, what and how of onboarding in the digital age. **Are you ready?**

## The issue of onboarding

When we look at surveys on onboarding, no matter the data or method they use, they all agree: onboarding is important—and it pays to do it well. Yet, [the Gallup survey](#) has shown that 88% of employees suggests that their companies aren't providing them with a good onboarding programme. So why is that?

The answer is fairly simple: companies don't always see onboarding as something to invest in.

## So why should you invest in onboarding?

Onboarding, then, is lacking in a significant number of companies, and that's a problem. It's been shown that onboarding is the best preventative medicine to make employees feel valued and engaged in their work. When people no longer feel engaged at work, an onboarding (and any other education programmes) is the ultimate way to turn that around. However, it's not just about making people feel valued; onboarding goes beyond that. 53% of HR professionals say that improved onboarding increases

In fact, over a third of all companies expect onboarding to happen organically. They fail to invest in a successful onboarding programme, but may spend up over € 10,000 per person on recruitment and turnover expenses. A small investment in onboarding could save organisations thousands of dollars in recruitment and hiring expense.

employee engagement. This engagement is a key ingredient in raising retention rates and reducing the cost of hiring replacements.

Onboarding makes people feel valued and engaged, which can drastically help reduce turnover. [Studies](#) show that most employee turnover happens in the first three months after a new hire joins the company. The direct reason behind this high turnover rate, so early in someone's new job, is a poor onboarding process that leaves an

employee with too many questions and too few answers. Letting people 'sink or swim' without a support structure will ultimately cause them to leave.

Onboarding and peer-to-peer support is the first line of defence against high turnover.

Add to that a talent market that is increasingly becoming a candidate's market, and you need to scramble to get a good rep. In Europe, talented professionals have more job opportunities than ever before. This leaves recruiters competing with dozens of organisations to attract the right candidates. A good onboarding experience makes it far more likely that a new hire will refer their company to

friends and family, potentially opening doors to future candidates.

In short, spending time and having a budget for your company's onboarding programme seems to pay off. You'll recuperate some of the recruitment expense, reduce the chance that your new hire jumps ship, and you're more likely to have a productive team (member).

So how far do you go with your onboarding processes? How do you make it scalable, timeless, relevant, and engaging?

*Spending time and having a budget for an onboarding programme pays off.*



## Setting up an effective onboarding programme: the digital way

If onboarding is so important: how do you do it? Or, rather, how do you do it well? It's important to realise that onboarding encompasses much more than the basics of setting up an email address or signing up for benefits. Successful onboarding programmes cover policies, processes, technology, and all other aspects of an employee's daily work that they need to know to be successful and confident in their role.

Since time and day, companies have sought out digital learning tools to cover some of the topics above.

Knowledge transfer doesn't only happen in the classroom, so e-learning was largely viewed as a way to save time and make the onboarding process more measurable. It's unfortunate for the participants of some of these e-learning courses that the materials they were given were mind-numbingly boring and unimaginative.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Digital learning tools, implemented correctly, raise up learner engagement *and* are equally scalable, informative and relevant.

Let's take a look at an **example**:

A well-known bank in the Netherlands takes all new hires through a rigorous onboarding process, which lasts 90 days. It's a melting pot of online e-learning modules, digital activities, live meetings, and a challenging digital escape room, which a new hire must complete in a team with other new hires from various departments. This blended trajectory of in-classroom and online activities has proven incredibly beneficial for both the organisation and the employees, and what's more—it's fun. People who went through the onboarding experience enjoyed it immensely, and felt it helped connect them with the company and their colleagues. It may be too early to tell if these new employees stay longer at the company than their peers who onboarded differently years ago, but so far, it's looking good!

Curious to more examples about onboarding? You can find them on our [website](#).

## Digital onboarding and the pandemic

Digital onboarding tools aren't new; they've been around for years. But then, in March 2020, they suddenly became more relevant than any of us could have anticipated. The coronavirus pandemic required organisations to make the digital transition at an unprecedented speed. Hard as the initial months of adjustment were for those established in an organisation, new hires found themselves facing unique challenges during their first few months on the job. The pandemic created an additional layer of complexity to the onboarding process, with a remote onboarding programme going from being a nice-to-have to a fundamental necessity.

The pandemic also contributed to the onboarding challenges companies were already facing. While before the pandemic, employees had been showing dissatisfaction about on-the-floor onboarding, the pandemic skyrocketed that dissatisfaction into a sizable problem. [A Workable survey](#) showed that more than 37% of people listed remote onboarding in the top three biggest challenges their companies faced during the pandemic. Onboarding had suddenly gone from being the umpteenth item on the to-do list, to rocketing to the top of that list. What we're seeing, then, is that there has never been more of a fundamental demand for effective and inclusive remote onboarding.

## Looking to the future: evolving your onboarding

As the pandemic has shown us, we can't predict what future factors will influence the onboarding process. However, we *can* look at the elements of the process that we are able to control and influence. While kids longing for the school bell to ring might

think differently—we're **never finished learning**. On the contrary: we spend our entire lives learning, and we do so in a wide and rich variety of contexts. Be it work, formal education, or that one TikTok that showed us how to make vegan pasta.

there are many contexts in and through which we learn—a concept we have come to know as [lifewide learning](#). The vast majority of people's learning takes place outside of formal educational contexts and consists of informal experiential learning and personal development.

People are not the only ones who continue to develop their entire lives across a variety of contexts: organisations do, too. As organisational structures continue to rapidly change, and ways of working become more flexible and complex, employees' development should develop alongside these changes.

This begs the question: if companies continue to evolve and develop, and we ask employees to do the same, where is the space for them to do so? The onboarding process is the prime site where employees can develop themselves and evolve alongside their organisation. As our view of learning becomes lifelong and lifewide, both for organisations and individuals, the onboarding process should move along with this change. **Onboarding is no longer a finite process** that is finished once someone knows where the pencils are and how the coffee machine works: it is also a continuous process that evolves as the organisation does.

## Wrapping up

Let's briefly recap our findings on the future of onboarding:

- Failing to onboard is (still) a risk to employee engagement and retention.
- A successful onboarding programme is (also) an important ingredient in employee referral and reducing turnover cost.
- The adaptation of digital onboarding tools, standalone or as part of a blended programme, provides the necessary flexibility for all employees to be onboarded. This especially applies to times of unforeseen crisis.
- Onboarding is no longer finite; it's the first step in a constant evolution of the workplace.

**In short:** your onboarding needs to be the best it can be. Want to know what's possible for you? Get in touch with [RMMBR](#) if you're curious about how we can help to transform your onboarding programme; our team is ready to support you.