March, 2015

Creating Organizational Community: The Role of New Employee Onboarding Practices ACRL Poster 2015

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/bruce-lowell-keisling/11/
The following topics were mentioned by respondents most frequently when asked what was important for them to learn during the onboarding period.

**Expectations** – They wanted to understand the standards for routine performance and advancement. They were also concerned about local norms on issues such as work/life balance and how decisions get made.

**Alliances** – They wanted to understand who had the influence and capacity to help them reach goals. They were also interested in developing cohort relationships with others in their same role as New Person.

**Reflection** – We heard from our respondents that the onboarding period is a time of active self-reflection about areas such as personal strengths and preferred work styles as they develop their professional identities in a new environment.

Most respondents had not been told which of their strengths were most important to the hiring organization, but surmised it was experience or specific job knowledge, friendliness or a willingness to question long-standing conventions. They believed that learning about their strengths was happening but had difficulty articulating which strengths were valued and how best to express them to have an impact in their new organizations.

For most respondents in our study group, there had been significant effort on the part of their new organizations to help them move from the I Don’t Know quadrant within the first 6 to 18 months in a new position, some more effectively than others. In contrast, our respondents did not report anything close to equivalent efforts made by their new organizations to move from the We Don’t Know to the We Know quadrants. They could, however, articulate for us how more learning about them during the orientation period would be helpful to their organizations and themselves.

Although we identified clear themes about how orientation could be improved to enhance employees’ learning about their new institutions, our study has led us to conclude that a greater focus on institutional learning about the new employee would provide especially significant opportunities for improving orientation programs and building strong employee engagement.

### Recommendations

1. **Create specific opportunities to use them on high visibility, high priority projects.**
2. **Develop specific organizational learning outcomes in advance for all new librarians.**
3. **Combine guided and self-directed approaches for acquiring information.**
4. **Have new employees and their new colleagues what skills and strengths led to their selection and create early opportunities to use them on high visibility, high priority projects.**
5. **Focus the orientation program on expectations, organizational tools and broad-based relationship building.**