Retention through On-Boarding
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If we consider the definition of on-boarding, a series of processes that it takes to transition an accepted applicant into a productive employee, nowhere in that definition is there a set time frame for how long that should take. Many organizations make the mistake of looking at on-boarding as a new employee’s first week on the job. As the definition points out, the on-boarding process ends when the employee is productive. That doesn’t happen in the first week! An investment in employee on-boarding programs positively impacts employee engagement, morale, productivity and retention. That is why it is so important to pay particular attention to this first step.

THE RESEARCH
There are a lot of studies that show the value of formal on-boarding programs, such as a recent study done by TMPWorldwide which reported 75% of top performing companies have a formal program to bring on a new employee. The reasons participants cited were that it provided a consistent experience for all employees at all
levels; a consistent message was being delivered and it was a bit of an insurance that all employees were getting the necessities covered. This same study also showed that companies with established or formal programs had less than five percent of new hires leave the company during their first year. The time and money involved in recruiting and hiring a new employee can be expensive. Consider the intangible factors that cost companies money and can be eased by an on-boarding program. Things like poor employee morale due to added workload when a position goes unfilled or is vacated, or time it takes current staff to train a new employee (this time drain occurs with each new employee, which makes the retention statistic above all the more important).

WHY ON-BOARDING DOESN’T HAPPEN
Several things contribute to why on-boarding doesn’t happen within organizations. Factors like, who is responsible, how do we keep it consistent, and it takes too much time are just a few. The bottom line is that hiring managers are all very different and likely have strong views on how to on-board new staff. The program needs a lead facilitator and the backing from upper management. The human resources department is the natural lead as the acting facilitator; however they cannot own the on-boarding process. They can provide the framework and tools and help educate those managers that have staff whom they are responsible for. It is the manager’s responsibility to guide the process and ensure it is implemented.

THE BASICS OF A GOOD PROGRAM
Think of your new employee. What is it they want? A new employee wants to know how their role fits within the organization. The new employee should know the company’s overall goals and mission. They should understand what they are to contribute and how their work will be measured. They need to know how to interact with other employees and they should have the tools to do their job. Pretty simple, yet we tend to overlook them. Even if your organization doesn’t have a formal plan, here are some basics that any manager can do to help ensure that their new employee gets off to a good start! Before a new employee starts, get all of the paperwork ready to go. In some cases, employers provide essential paperwork like tax forms, I-9, emergency contact, etc. in advance of their start date and that way the new employee can come in with it completed or at least with the information necessary to hurry the process along on their first day. Employers can make sure their office space is ready with a computer, phone and any other necessary equipment. Also, be sure other staff members know that a new hire is starting. Orientation, not to be confused with on-boarding, is really that first week on the job for a new employee. Develop a plan in advance and share that with the new hire. The plan should include a schedule of the week, names of people they will be interacting with, as well as cover some of the critical, necessary company procedures/policies. If you can, try to cover some of the procedures over a week or longer, if possible. This plan should also contain instructions for their first day arrival. Be exact about when, what time and where they should go on their first day. Tell them who they should ask for when they arrive. Explain what attire is appropriate and what they should bring with them.

FIRST WEEK ORIENTATION
On the employee’s first day, do something special. Make the new employee feel special and give them an opportunity to get integrated into the company and begin to foster relationships. Be sure that the new hire is clear with the company’s mission, vision, and values. Talk about their role and how it fits with the overall mission of the organization. Talk about projects, set clear expectations for what is expected of them and the evaluation process. One thing that many organizations miss in this first phase, is to ask the candidate for feedback on their recruiting, interviewing and hiring procedures. They’ve just been through all of those processes and can likely provide great feedback to improve those components. Finally, make sure the employee achieves something. Employees are usually very excited their first week of employment and you can capitalize on that motivation and give them something positive to share with their friends and family. The project needs to be achievable for a new employee and could include things like competitor research, web site critique, sales presentation critique, etc. The goal is to provide them with an opportunity to offer feedback and contribute to the organization.
GETTING ACQUAINTED
The first week for a new employee can be a bit overwhelming, so the first month of the employee’s job is really when they begin to form their opinions of the organization and the work that they’ll be doing. This is where the framework should be laid to help them become a contributing member of the organization.

Early in the first month, you will want to discuss specific goals that the new employee is expected to complete. After being with the company for a week or two, the employee should be able to provide some insight into what those goals might be and how they could go about accomplishing them. Again, review evaluation measurements. What will constitute the goal being reached? The manager plays a very important role during this timeframe. It is important to spend time with the new hire. They will learn things by listening and discussing thoughts. Also encourage interaction with peers, especially those they’ll be working closely with. This time period is when they get to know their department/division and begin to form their relationship with their manager.

FINDING THEIR GROOVE
At the end of the first three months, the “new” has worn off and some minor “employer blemishes” could be starting to show. That is why it is so important to interact at this stage. This can easily be achieved with an open two-way exchange between the employee and manager. During the discussion the following issues should be discussed:

- Is there any additional training needed?
- Is the new hire getting the right level of support from colleagues?
- Are you as the manager pending the correct amount of time with the employee?
- Are there any “tweaks” needed to the employee’s goals?

This is also a good time, not necessarily in the same meeting, to discuss with the employee some areas of improvement that you might be seeing. Be sure to ask for feedback about your management style. However, be sure you are willing to try to implement that feedback.

HALFWAY POINT
At the six month mark, things should get more streamline. The employee should be contributing and achieving goals set forth. The manager should schedule a formal six-month review and be able to look back and compare performance to goals. It is also a time to review comments and suggested feedback from that three month meeting to see if progress is being made on the areas of improvement. If on-boarding has been done correctly, there should be few surprises. One way to set the organization apart from others is to work in some training around this time period.

ONE YEAR
Hopefully by now the organization has a fully engaged employee! At the one year mark, the new employee should have an established relationship with their manager; they should be engaged in their job; achieving an appropriate level of work/life balance; interacting well with colleagues; understanding how their role fits within the organization; and appearing to enjoy their employment. This assessment can be done in an end of year review.

Meet with your Career Coordinator EARLY and OFTEN
The Career Coordinator for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is Mrs. Brook Dickinson. She and her program aide Samantha Winter work with students from freshman to senior year helping with their professional development process. They would be more than happy to assist with your career endeavors while you are here at Texas A&M University.

You can make appointments to meet in Koldus, Kleberg, or Blocker: call the Career Center at (979) 845-5139. You can also reach them through email at brookd@careercenter.tamu.edu or swinter@careercenter.tamu.edu
Upcoming Events

According to recent statistics 80% of jobs/internships are never posted, they are filled through networking (NACE, 2009). So this shows the importance of NETWORKING with companies that are within your field, but also with those companies who aren’t. As students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences you have a diverse skill set that not just agriculture companies are looking for! So put yourself out there and get to networking!

Company Spotlight
Capital Farm Credit

Capital Farm Credit is an organization devoted to improving rural America by providing constructive agricultural loans to our customers. As a borrower owned cooperative with over 20,000 customers and a loan volume of over $5.0 Billion, Capital strives to meet borrower needs on an individual, one to one basis. A member of the nationwide Farm Credit System, Capital Farm Credit is the largest system institution in Texas and the 4th largest in the country making loans from more than 70 conveniently located credit offices located throughout the state of Texas. There are credit offices in predominantly rural cities and towns to better serve our borrowers. Capital Farm Credit makes virtually any kind of agricultural loan including loans to farmers, ranchers, part time operators and agribusinesses. Loans to purchase rural real estate are among the most popular with our customers, but we also make operating loans for crop inputs, livestock loans and equipment loans, as well as loans to agribusinesses and farm related services.

With over 300 employees, Capital is a large organization, but we strive to maintain a genuine family environment that cares for employees and focuses on lasting customer relationships. It is one of the values that made us successful since the inception of the Farm Credit System in the early 1900’s.

Most of our entry level positions are loan officer trainees and credit analyst trainees. In that role, they start out in one of our credit offices and learn the skills necessary to be effective in their role. It is not uncommon for it to take approximately two years to reach a level of initial proficiency in loan related operations. After a trainee demonstrates competence with policy, procedures, business objectives and delivery systems, approval authority is provided consistent with their proven expertise. With a background in credit, our employees can advance to many future roles within the organization both in the lending realm, as well as with administrative operations.

If you are interested in a career with Capital Farm Credit, watch our website at www.capitalfarmcredit (click on about us, then Careers with CFC, and launch the employment center) or contact Randy Breitling ’80 at 806.281.1789 or at Randy.Breitling@CapitalFarmCredit.com. The future is bright at Capital Farm Credit.
Employer Advice
Randy Breitling ’80 VP Human Resources—Capital Farm Credit

- Think about possible careers early in your college education, and find classes, part time employment, volunteer work or other activities that relate to your career goals.
- Resumes of students look very similar to a potential employer, so do positive things in your life that can set your resume apart from others.
- Research the company before talking with a representative to make sure it is a career that interests you, and so you can discuss it knowledgeably with the representative. So much information is available so quickly today that there is no excuse not to know something about the business, industry or company.
- Conduct yourself with professional courtesy and with a degree of humility. We don’t expect you to know everything and if someone acts like they do, it can be perceived as a negative. Understand and portray that you know what it is like to be a part of something “bigger than yourself”.
- Dress appropriately for the occasion. That’s not always “Sunday Best” but present yourself as a professional.
- If possible, make personal contact with a representative of the company to let them know of your interests, goals and desires. They may be busy, so be respectful of their time by e-mailing in advance to ask for a few minutes for a phone call or short personal visit.
- All the time you are in college, remember to conduct yourself in a way that provides a good representation of your life and values. Even though you may be living on your own, you are still a representative of your name, your family, your activities and social groups. Remember this at all times and if you do so in a positive way, a future employer will understand that you will be able to conduct yourself during your employment in a way that represents their business or company in a positive manner.

Randy Breitling, Vice President Human Resources-Capital Farm Credit; P. O. Box 6520; Lubbock, TX 79493; 806.281.1789

Department Spotlight
Agriculture Communications and Journalism
The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications (ALEC) is one of 14 academic departments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Department is authorized to award four bachelor’s degrees, three master’s degrees, and two doctoral degrees with an enrollment of 900 undergraduates and 160 graduate students. The scholarship of the 33 faculty members is grounded in five knowledge bases: planning and needs assessment, learner-centered instructional design, delivery strategies, evaluation and accountability, and research and measurement tools. The work of the faculty is expressed through six contextual applications including Agricultural Communications/Agricultural Journalism, eLearning and Professional Development; Extension Education, Organizational and Community Leadership; Teacher Education; and International Agricultural Education.

Vision Together, we aspire to add scholarship to the discipline, synergy among the faculty, meaning for learners, and value to the publics we serve. We aspire to build upon a strong and balanced academic curriculum that links science, technology, leadership, education, and human performance systems. We aspire to be recognized by stakeholders as one of the premier agricultural education programs in the world and to
forge interdependent relationships with other world-class programs that share complementary missions.

Mission The mission of the Department is to improve the quality of life and the economic well-being of individuals and communities in Texas, the Nation, and selected areas of the World through high quality teaching, leadership, research, extension, and outreach programs.

Graduates of our undergraduate programs follow many career paths including

- Graduate school, Law school, Secondary and primary school teachers, Communications specialists, Reporters, editors, and writers, Publication designers, Publishers, Foundation directors, Chief Operating Officers, Special events coordinators, Public Relations, Sales Representatives, Law Enforcement, Photographers, School Superintendents, Principals, College Professors, Customer Service specialists, Athletic coaches, Human Resources

Jobs posted on Hireaggies.com

**Internship**

The Dannon Company, Inc.: Development Intern- Ft. Worth, TX

SchedID: 44258-T7

Location(s): Fort Worth, TX

Embark on a personal voyage of growth at Dannon. There is something very special inside our company. You can see it reflected in our products, our way of doing business and our relationships with stakeholders. Since its establishment in 1942, Dannon prides itself on consistently delivering high qual.

Resume Drop Deadline: 05/10/10

**Internship**

Greenpeace: Greenpeace Organizing Term - Fall

SchedID: 39718-T1

Location(s): Washington D.C.

Going abroad in the fall? Why not do something productive, engaging and fun and spend the semester in Washington, D.C. with Greenpeace training to become an environmental activist and leader! http://www.greenpeace.org/got The Greenpeace Organizing Term (GOT) is an action-packed semester and the b

Resume Drop Deadline: 05/11/10
Career Center Services for the College of Agriculture and Life Science
Career Beam/ Sigi 3

CareerBeam
Provides a comprehensive source for assessments, resume and cover letter development tools, search strategies and research databases. Gives you access to research 15 million organizations, 20 million industry contacts, in-depth industry profiles, detailed occupational intelligence, and companies in over 70 different countries.

Sigi 3
SIGI^3 - pronounced "siggy three" - is a special tool that can help you to plan your career. It combines the unique capabilities of the Internet with thoroughly researched information about occupations, work-related values, interests, skills, educational programs, and more. To find out more about SIGI^3 and how best to use this unique tool, please take a look at our User Guide.
If you have used SIGI^3 to explore possible occupational choices, you may want to get further information about the careers you are now considering. Or you may still want to explore more widely. Look in the After SIGI Guide for additional avenues to consider.

Questions?
If you have any questions or comments about the Career Center for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences please contact us swinter@careercenter.tamu.edu

Good Place to start for your COALS job search