

WELCOMING NEW EMPLOYEES



Groups Today

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BRINGING NEW EMPLOYEES INTO THE FOLD

In these strange and ever-changing times, many people are changing industries, in addition to welcoming less-experienced folks to their teams. With all these revolving doors, it's important to remember all the considerations that should go into bringing a new employee onboard.

MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND YOUR CULTURE.

More than simply words written down in the employee handbook, your company culture must be values that you and your team truly live out daily. Though you likely already considered how your once potential employee would fit into your company's culture, be sure they're aware of what's expected of them from management and their peers.

ENSURE THEY FEEL PART OF THE TEAM IMMEDIATELY.

Things can feel a bit intimidating or awkward for a fresh employee who is just joining a new team. One way to help ease those feelings of anxiousness? An onboarding box! More than simply a box of necessary papers, an onboarding box is a package that essentially rolls out the welcome mat and provides new employees with items and swag to rep your company, while making them feel like they're truly part of the team.

UPDATE AND GO OVER ANY STANDARD OPERATION PROCEDURES.

You and your team have likely already been doing some updating to your SOPs since the pandemic tossed our world upside down. Remember that when a new person joins your team, they're really starting from scratch, so do your best to ensure your SOPs are as up to date as possible. This undoubtedly avoids confusion further down the line and sets your new employee up for success right from the start.

ENCOURAGE CURRENT EMPLOYEES TO OFFER GRACE.

We're all human, and mistakes happen, especially when an employee is learning something new. Rather than get frustrated, encourage the rest of the team to be empathetic and frame things from a more positive perspective. Coming from a place of mentorship rather than judgment helps everyone grow.



Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for Groups Today.

WHAT'S AN ONBOARDING BOX?

Creating employee loyalty right from the starting line can be a challenge—especially when a new person is still getting to know your organization and team members.

But is there a way to make them feel welcome and motivated to rep your company from day one?

Enter: **The Onboarding Box.**

Say what?

No, it's not simply a box of the necessary papers. The onboarding box is a package that essentially rolls out the welcome mat and provides new employees with items and swag to rep your company, while making them feel like they're truly part of the team. Interested? Here are some ideas of items to include, to get the ball rolling.



01 APPAREL AND GEAR

This is the most obvious of the bunch. Whether it's a slouchy T-shirt for when employees sweat it out at the gym, a baseball cap for weekend excursions, or polos for the tradeshow floor and business meetings, providing your employees with an easy—and useful—way to rep your organization is a no-brainer. Throw in a branded notebook or agenda and you're golden.

02 TECH ACCESSORIES

So much business occurs over technology today! That's why it's important to ensure employees are plugged in when they need to be. Providing them with a rechargeable external battery with your logo on it will make them feel like you're invested in their success—even while on the road. Also cool about these batteries? They'll likely travel anywhere and everywhere your employee does.

03 OFFICE GADGETS

If you're someone who doesn't drink coffee each morning, we salute you. However, for the rest of us that are hopelessly addicted to caffeine, having a cool coffee mug always makes the morning brighter. Have a company slogan or motto? Slap it on a mug so every morning, employees will be fueled up and excited about the value of the work they're doing—as well as the services your organization provides to clients.

04 ODDS AND ENDS

Stickers, stuffed animals, stress balls ... Need we say more?

Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for Groups Today.

CULTIVATING COMPANY CULTURE—VIRTUALLY

Executives and employees agree: Company culture is integral to building—and maintaining—a successful business. Especially now when working from home is the new standard, company culture might seem further out of reach than ever before. However, remote work doesn't mean a thriving and distinct company culture isn't possible.

According to research from **Deloitte**, 94% of executives and 88% of employees believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success. But company culture needs to be more than just words written down in the employee handbook; they must be values that are truly lived out daily.

“I believe that creating a defined company culture creates standards for your team that they can expect from each other and as a company,” said Kasie Smith, president and publisher of Serendipity Media. “Every culture is different and knowing what to expect makes all interactions that much easier. Not all cultures are for everyone and that's OK—but being able to clearly define what yours is, makes it that much easier for current and prospective employees.”

It comes as no surprise that exceptional organizations have core beliefs that are unique, simple, leader-led, repetitive and—mostly important—embedded in the culture. Research also indicates there's a correlation between clearly articulated and lived culture and strong business performance—even from home.

Interestingly, executives rank tangible elements such as financial performance and competitive compensation among the highest factors affecting workplace culture, while employees rank intangible elements such as regular and candid communications, employee recognition, and access to leadership highest.



Continued...

It's important to note that building a company culture takes time and commitment. Don't expect it to happen overnight! According to [LinkedIn's Talent Blog](#), there are some steps you could take to get started:

- » Define what you want your company culture and values to look like.
- » Look at what your culture is like currently and if changes need to be made.
- » Identify or hire someone who will be your people person.
- » Invest time in building your talent brand.
- » Optimize your hiring process to ensure you are bringing in the right people.
- » Find ways to constantly reinforce your core values.
- » Measure if your culture is effectively attracting and engaging talent.

Though the culture of each company or organization differs in one way or another, they all exist with the goal of creating a successful business while ensuring employees are motivated and believe in the work they're doing.



Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for [Groups Today](#).

IMPROVE YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT

Staying on task and being your best productive self 100% of the time can be a struggle, especially when it seems like you simply don't have enough time to do it all. If you're feeling overwhelmed with what appears to be endless tasks and appointments, consider some of these tips for upping your time management game.

MAP OUT YOUR GOALS.

Have trouble figuring out where to start? Make a literal list—on paper, on your phone or otherwise—of all the things you'd like to accomplish. From there, rank them based on what's considered highest priority and make your way down the list. If it helps, give yourself pretend deadlines so you can have a visual goal of when to accomplish these tasks.

DON'T WAIT TO PLAN.

Get ahead of the game and ponder how long a task may take you. Then, give yourself even more time than you think you need. Roadblocks will inevitably arise—sometimes when you least expect it—so having an extra buffer built into your timeline is wise. Your future self will thank you!

CONSIDER TRYING THE “POMODORO TECHNIQUE.”

This popular productivity technique entails using a timer to take a five-minute break after about 25 minutes of hard, focused work. Working in this way will offer your brain the little breaks it needs to work longer and smarter. Learn more about the technique [here](#).

BE DECISIVE.

The longer you put off making a decision, the longer it's going to sit there unresolved. If you're informed enough to move forward and make a choice, simply put: Don't wait. Just go for it!

ENLIST THE POWER OF APPS.

Consider any weaknesses you have or areas you'd like to improve upon, and explore what **apps** exist to help put your productivity game into overdrive. Want to see how much time you spend on a specific task or client? Consider using an app like **Harvest** to time track. Don't have the strongest grammar? Install an app like **Grammarly** to be an online writing assistant. Technology is your friend! Might as well use it to your advantage.

*Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for **Groups Today**.*

WHAT REMOTE WORKERS REALLY WANT

Though the COVID-19 pandemic has forced our hand, remote work has skyrocketed and is likely to continue to do so.

In fact, a **Gartner survey** of company leaders found that 80% plan to allow employees to work remotely at least part of the time after the pandemic, while 47% have said they will allow employees to work full-time from home.

Knowing remote work is still going to be increasingly common for the foreseeable future, there are some things to keep in mind when it comes to what remote workers really want (and expect) from their employers and teams:

01 **TO STILL FEEL LIKE PART OF THE TEAM.**

Company culture is huge, as is talk around it. Shifting employees to remote work shouldn't change that! Whether it's Zoom catch-ups, in-person happy hours, or another creative solution, the connection remote workers have to their companies and organizations should be kept strong through active and intentional efforts.

02 **TO NOT BE MICROMANAGED AND TO BE TRUSTED.**

It's safe to say productivity and someone lurking over your shoulder (whether in-person or virtually) don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. Giving remote workers the opportunity to do the work they're supposed to do—when they're supposed to do it—shows you trust them and their abilities. Because if you really didn't, why did you hire them in the first place? However, if performance or outcomes begin to suffer, an intervention is certainly needed.



Continued...

03

TO HAVE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND MATERIALS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

As much as we all wish we had the answers to everything, we're not mind readers. At least I'm not! Though technology allows us to shoot off quick messages and emails, it's not necessarily the same as having an actual conversation if there's a lingering question or issue. In order for projects and day-to-day work to be a shining success, employers should be sure their teams have what they need to do their jobs—whether that means providing physical materials and software, information and content, or access to the people who they're collaborating with. The last thing you want is your team to feel like they're floating in space!

04

TO FEEL VALUED AND RESPECTED.

This one seems like a given—it's what we all expect anyway! However, the difference with remote work is that the office overlaps with the home, making it difficult at times to truly be “done” working for the day or week. Very rarely is someone truly accessible 24/7. Be sure to establish proper work hour boundaries with your team and make it clear if/when they may be called upon to be available outside of that window. Not giving remote workers the opportunity to decompress and check out is a recipe burnout. Being respectful of everyone's time is a sure way to gain respect in return.



Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for Groups Today.

BRIDGING THE GAP WITH GEN Z IN THE WORKPLACE

Millennials have been in the spotlight long enough—now it's Gen Z's time to shine.

Generation Z encompasses just about everyone born after 1995. It's a generation defined by life in the 21st century, growing up with technology in a highly political world.

They're also the generation beginning to enter the workforce, and knowing what they want can help you attract and retain top talent. Of course, we can't say an entire generation wants the same things, but we do know there are trends and cultural shifts to be aware of.

Here are a few of our tips for bridging the gap and connecting with Gen Z as peers.



THEY WANT TO LEARN.

They don't simply want to come to your company and learn how to do one simple task forever. They're eager to see real opportunities for growth, whether it's professional development and training or moving up in the company. If they don't feel stuck in one spot, they're more likely to stick around longer.

USE TECHNOLOGY ... THE RIGHT WAY.

No previous generation has ever grown up so steeped in technology. Just imagine having a smartphone since childhood! The plus side? Gen Z are social media experts. That doesn't mean you should force them to do it all—if anything, they likely want some breaks from screens—but listen to their expertise on how to use social media in an authentic, exciting, thoughtful, way.

The flipside of this is that Gen Z has less tolerance for outdated technology, whether it's front-facing like a website or the programs they're using day-to-day. A company that seems in-touch will always be more attractive. Using apps to communicate and organize is a great idea, but be sure to respect the work-life boundaries, which leads us to the next tip.

GEN Z IS STRESSED OUT.

They're not fragile snowflakes—they're growing up in a world with constant communication and surveillance, student debt, a struggling economy and so on. You shouldn't be their therapist, but if there's one way you can help, it's positive affirmation. It doesn't have to mean coddling your employees, but showing them respect and appreciation when they've put in the proper effort.

Another way to help is to make sure you have a great training program. Gen Z wants to know what to expect and what's expected of them. They want to know their time and energy is making an impact in some way.

Continued...

REPUTATION MATTERS.

At one point, going to work for a big tech company was the most prestigious job you could get. Well, Gen Z tends to be a bit more critical of companies and the impact they have on the world, because they're looking ahead to the future.

When it comes to travel, more and more younger people are talking about the need to be aware of climate change. They want to lower their environmental footprint and fight for social justice issues, both individually and with the company. But be aware: Gen Z are masters at sniffing out inauthenticity. Make sure you're actually doing the work.

MONEY.

Easier said than done, but Gen Z wants to get paid. Tuition, rent and just about everything else has become more expensive while wages remain relatively stagnant. A living wage and health insurance are so important, they should absolutely come before the little perks like free coffee and a foosball table.

In short, Gen Z wants to work hard—they just want to be sure it's worth it.



*Written by Josh Veal, Contributing Writer for **Groups Today**.*

THE FUTURE OF NETWORKING

With millions of people losing their jobs and in-person events disappearing for over a year, COVID-19 has forever changed the way we make connections.

Like everything else in life, networking made the move to virtual in 2020, and we're only now returning to being in the same place. However, all those social and technological changes from the past year aren't vanishing overnight.

The future of networking in a post-pandemic world is still evolving, but it looks like a little of what we've always done mixed with a lot of new ideas. We turned to Sally Davis Berry, operator of TourismProAcademy.com, for her expert insight on how to make connections and rebuild your network going forward.



EMBRACE THE VIDEO CALL

Video calls were an absolute lifesaver for most organizations at a time when nobody could meet in-person for months on end. But after more than a full year of these virtual meetings, many people expressed being fatigued over all that screen time.

Now that many of us are getting back in the office, however, the fatigue is wearing off and we can have the best of both worlds: Meeting in-person when possible, and connecting virtually when useful!

"As someone who has provided tourism training via Zoom since 2019, I have seen many silver linings," Berry said of this shift. "One is that everyone knows how to use Zoom and feels comfortable interacting on the platform. That will make it easier for people to learn new skills, create new bonds and host virtual FAM tours going forward. That's a benefit to all of us in the group tour industry!"

VIRTUAL EVENTS ARE HERE TO STAY

We're all excited for the return of big conferences and festivals, but virtual events have been the glue of the industry over the past year.

"We've all felt disconnected from our tourism family in the last year," Berry said. "I've heard of many destinations that have hosted Zoom events such as trivia games and Beer Bingo just to keep their partners engaged and seeing each other."

These events have created networks that never would have existed had everything stayed in-person. Look for these conferences from professional organizations and trade groups, and use them to meet people all around the world, building unexpected connections.

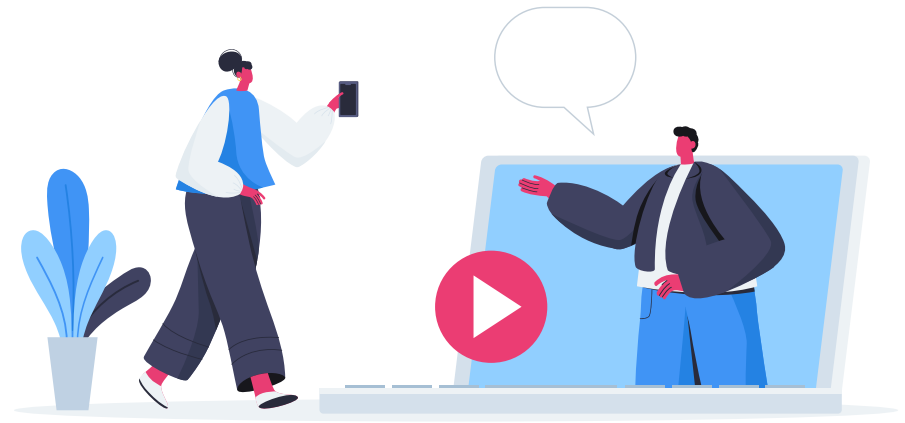
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LINK UP

Of all the networking platforms to emerge as relevant and effective, LinkedIn is on the top. Chances are, half the people in your network have moved on to a new company or role, making LinkedIn one of the best ways to track those career changes and stay connected, no matter what happens next.

“One strategy I often speak about when building your network is leveraging your LinkedIn profile,” Berry said. “LinkedIn is free to use and can help you stay in touch and even build your network by connecting with new peers. Take the time now to update your photo, banner image and headline. Set a goal of spending time on the platform every week; commenting, sharing articles and growing your contacts by at least three a week. Many tour companies have business pages on LinkedIn—follow them and let them know you are open for business!”

Now is the perfect time to update your information and revamp your image. As others rebuild their networks, their eyes will eventually land on you. But it’s not all about aesthetics—when networking, people want to know what you’re looking for and what you have to offer. Be clear with both!



GET CREATIVE

Thanks to a year of intense and constant change, many of us are more open to new ideas than ever before. Think about changing up your networking approach, whether that means sending handwritten letters to contacts, injecting some much-needed humor, or even reaching out to someone you admire. In a world of constant information, do something to stand out.

DON'T ASSUME

When it comes to meeting in-person, everyone’s comfort level varies. Take time to figure out the social norms for whatever place you’re traveling to or group you’re meeting with.

“As we begin to meet again in person, things will be different,” Berry said. “Those hugs we give out so freely to colleagues might be met with resistance now. Not everyone is vaccinated and we don’t know what health issues others have or who they are trying to protect at home. This is the time to learn to read other’s body language—a fist bump might be all that is offered. Respect others’ wishes as we all navigate the new landscape.”



Written by Josh Veal, Contributing Writer for Groups Today.

4 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR POST-TRADE SHOW MOJO

While the pre-planning, logistics and travel for conventions, conferences and trade shows—and perhaps a little too much socializing—can leave one feeling downright exhausted, I’m always invigorated after an event. There’s nothing like meeting a client for the first time face-to-face, making new friends, and gaining fresh insight about my audience and their needs. The day-to-day realities of a full inbox, meetings and unfinished projects quickly creep back in, however, and it’s easy to let some of the motivation wane.

But don’t let it!

Here are some tips that will keep you motivated, protect your investment and reap the rewards of new business!

01

PLAN AHEAD.

Even before you leave for your conference or trade show, set goals for yourself for how you’ll handle leads upon your return.

02

GET DOWN WITH YOUR DATABASE.

Immediately upon your return, enter the contact information into your database while it’s fresh in your mind. Add notes that will help you remember what you talked about and anything personal (you both love yoga and own a Sheepadoodle) you may have learned in your exchange.



Continued...

03

SCHEDULE YOUR FOLLOW-UP TACTICS.

(HINT: IT'S NOT JUST ONE!)

Your first follow-up action should happen as soon as possible. Sending a personalized email the day after returning home will make you look like a rock star—or at least like someone who is genuinely interested in working with them. If you said you would follow up with a phone call, email or package, be sure to keep your promises. Schedule your subsequent efforts like phone calls, emails, LinkedIn invites—even a handwritten note, which will set you apart. If you don't hear back from someone right away, don't give up! We know that, statistically, it takes multiple impressions before someone acts.



04

CONTINUE TO IMPRESS.

Speaking of impressions ... When it comes to your leads and overall success with a certain market, get creative! If you're in sales, loop in your marketing people and vice versa. Is there another way you can reach the same audience with different tactics? We know that it now takes up to 12 impressions before someone takes the next step in engaging with you or your brand. Tactics such as print and web ads can be budget-friendly ways to remind your leads that you're still here and relevant! Tactics such as sponsored content and webinars help you look like the expert in your field, thus gaining trust and loyalty from your new and existing clients.

More often than not, success in sales is a combination of positive personal interactions, creative marketing and dynamic customer service. With a thoughtful plan in place, hard work and dedication, and support from your team, you *can* turn your event mojo into results worthy of celebrating!

Written by Jill Carroll for Groups Today.

WORKING WITH INTERNS: 9 TIPS FOR A GREAT EXPERIENCE

Spring and summer bring the high school and college students out looking for summer internships—either as a way to make money or a way to fulfill a college credit requirement.

Interns hope to learn about their chosen industry through the jobs they perform, and employers hope to get some free or inexpensive help during the busy season.



SET EXPECTATIONS WITH INTERNS

I have had many interns over the years in my various positions. What I have learned is that it takes a lot of work on your part in the first half of the internship in order for it to be successful. Your intern deserves to get part of your time each day, in order to learn why they are doing the tasks you have assigned them. And it's ok to assign them scut work! It's important for them to learn that you are never above peeling labels, or collating brochures when there is a deadline. At the same time, they deserve to be assigned some projects that will look good on their resumes and help them to discover if this industry is for them.

Here are some reminders for employers and interns:

FOR EMPLOYERS WORKING WITH INTERNS:

- » **Your intern is not a free employee.** You are responsible for teaching them something every day and answering their questions. Have them document questions and answers. It will give you a tool to share with your next intern.
- » **It is acceptable to hold them to the same standards as you would an employee,** i.e. dress code, behavior standards at work and level of work quality.
- » **You should try to take your intern to meetings or events outside the office setting.** This broadens their horizons and makes you a hero in their eyes.
- » **Be prepared to document their work and write a review at the end of the internship.** This is easier if you keep a running journal or file on their work experience.

Continued...

FOR INTERNS WORKING WITH A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER:

- » **Remember that your actions and behaviors are being seen** by a potential future employer or reference.
- » **Offer to take on extra assignments** and never say no when asked to perform a seemingly menial task. That kind of help will be remembered.
- » **You are in an office setting, not a college classroom.** Dress professionally. Ask your supervisor if you are not sure of the dress code. It's always better to be more professionally dressed than not.
- » **Sometimes your employer will be busy and will not have the time to help you.** Don't take it personally. Use your time to ask someone else for help or work on another project.
- » **Is there a need you see that you can fix?** I had an intern once who loved spreadsheets (crazy, right?!) and she asked if I would like her to put together a calendar of tradeshow with deadlines, what needed to be sent to each show and more. I never thought of it and it became part of my online **SOP binder.**
- » **Send a handwritten thank you note** at the end of your internship. They are rare and will be remembered.

I always learned as much from my interns as they did from their experience. So, thank you to Amanda, Hillary and Samantha, three of my favorite interns. They are the hardest working and most impressive young ladies I know. Your hard work always made me look good and I am proud to say they have all become very successful in their chosen fields.

Written by Sally Davis Berry, tourism industry expert. Berry provides consulting services and marketing expertise, and runs TourismProAcademy.com, which has online courses and free resources for tourism professionals.

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