



Guide to Onboarding

Seven Steps for Setting Your
New Multifamily Employees
Up for Success

When bringing on a new employee, it's been said that the recruiting phase is like dating, while the first days of employment are more like marriage—you know, the time when the REAL stuff is revealed, warts and all!

In many cases, the first day on the job can be the most uncomfortable of all for the new hire.

This is understandable, because as a hiring supervisor, chances are you've been running short staffed, putting in extra hours while the work continues to pile up. You are ragged and weary and likely haven't had even 20 minutes to think about how you're going to welcome this new employee into the mix. There's no question you're delighted that they're hired—you just haven't had a minute to prepare!

On top of that, if you're like most multifamily supervisors, there's no road map for the onboarding process, either. As a result, you're forced to kind of make it up as you go along. We've been there, so we totally get it!

Follow these seven steps for setting your newest multifamily team members up for success.

1

Don't Underestimate the Impact of a Structured Onboarding Program

Just how badly are you feeling the burn of employee churn? Check out these stats for a glimpse at how rough it is out there for a hiring supervisor:

- In the US there are 800,000 more jobs than workers to fill them
- *US Dept of Labor 11/2018*
- It takes an average of 68 days to fill a vacancy, putting a significant extra workload on existing staff
- *Entrepreneur.com*
- More workers are “ghosting” employers like a bad date. They just disappear with no notice given
- *Washington Post 12/2018*
- About 1/3 of all new employees don't even last 90 days on the job
- *Gallup*
- The typical tenure of a Leasing Professional is less than one year
- *indeed.com*
- It can cost one-half to two times an employee's annual salary to identify and onboard a replacement
- *Gallup*

Not having an effective onboarding plan can literally cost your company time and money...plus a whole lot of aggravation!

Now for some good news:

- Employees with an exceptional onboarding experience are 2.6 times as likely to be extremely satisfied with work
 - *Gallup*
- Employees who are effectively onboarded are more engaged from the start and will put 20% more effort into their work.
 - *Cornell University*
- Employees are 60% more likely to remain with the organization for more than three years when there is a structured onboarding program
 - *Gillespie Associates*
- Effective onboarding increases employees' "discretionary effort" by as much as 20%
 - *Corporate Leadership Council*

**And, when employees are satisfied, they stay!
Creating an effective onboarding experience can
keep you from having to recruit, hire, and onboard
all over again anytime soon.**

2

Begin “Pre-Boarding” Before Day One

Using the time between the hire and start dates to build on the relationship that began during the interview process is a great way to let your new hire know you're as excited about their first day as they are! Plus, staying in contact during this time period can increase your new employee's sense of commitment and loyalty, and in turn, reduce the likelihood they will “ghost” you by not showing up on their first day.

Here are a few ideas to keep the connection going:

- ✓ *Send congratulations through a handwritten note or, if your budget allows, send flowers or a small gift. Branded promo items are perfect!*
- ✓ *Inform the team there's a new team member starting and encourage them to make contact by sending a fun email, photo, or note*
- ✓ *Share new hire paperwork in advance – preferably electronically*
- ✓ *Use a Welcome Letter! Include info such as work and office hours, uniform standards, lunch norms, and an agenda for day one*
- ✓ *Give them a phone call the day before they start. This is a great opportunity to answer any last minute or logistical questions they may have such as where they should park and what time they should arrive*

3

Make a Great First Impression

According to OfficeTeam, a Robert Half Company, 54% of new hires report experiencing at least one mishap when starting a new job. For example:

- 33% report technology wasn't properly set up
- 22% say necessary supplies were not provided
- 16% didn't receive an overview of the company and policies
- 15% were never introduced to coworkers
- 14% didn't receive a tour of the office

Think about it: you go to great lengths to ensure the first impression you make on your prospective residents is a positive one. It's important that your new employees also form a positive first impression.

A little advanced preparation shows your new hire that they're important to you!

When they arrive for their first day you should be organized and ready.

Tips:

- ✓ *Consider the best day of the week and week of the month to welcome a new hire. If possible, schedule your new employee to start on a day that you expect to be less busy than others. That's probably not a Monday, and it's probably not the first week of the month!*
- ✓ *Add some flair to their workspace to celebrate their arrival, such as a balloon at their desk, or a banner in a front row parking space. If your office has a marquis sign, that's the perfect place to give your new team member a friendly shout-out and lets the whole community in on your good news*
- ✓ *Arrive at least 30 minutes before your new hire is due and greet them at the door. Here's a great idea: ask your new team member to arrive mid-morning so you can get the busyness of your morning routine out of the way. You'll be more composed and better able to concentrate on your newest team member*
- ✓ *Have a designated workspace ready and well-stocked with supplies*
- ✓ *Set up any required technology and equipment*
- ✓ *Create and document all logins and passwords*
- ✓ *Have their business cards, name badges, and keys prepared*
- ✓ *Notify coworkers that "today's the day" and ask them to extend a warm welcome during the day*

4

Don't Just Wing It

Don't leave your new employee's onboarding process to chance. Creating an effective and welcoming first day experience requires a plan. Many supervisors may fall into the trap of having their new team member follow or "shadow" an experienced coworker for the day.

When well structured, shadowing can be an effective learning tool; however, hoping for "training by osmosis" isn't a good strategy.

Instead, have multiple team members play the role of Tag Team Tour Guides, each with a specific, goal-oriented assignment. For example, have the Service Supervisor show off the amenities and grounds and the Assistant Manager handle the property management software orientation.

Tip:

Be sure your Tag Team Tour Guides know their roles in advance and allow them time to prepare. Remove distractions as much as possible so that they can focus on the new hire rather than responding to interruptions. As an added bonus, having multiple team members participate in the process of onboarding is a great opportunity for purposeful socialization.

5

It's About Your People

Your newest team member will become more comfortable and confident the more they know the people they are reporting to, working alongside, and supporting. Therefore, the bulk of your onboarding efforts should be spent on boosting camaraderie.

When used effectively, social interaction is a powerful tactic to introduce company culture and build enthusiasm.

As noted in a recent publication by Gallup, “Feelings of belonging, trust and respect can’t be generated from a checklist. They require conversations and experiences with leaders, managers and team members.”

Try this:

- ✓ Schedule meetings with key coworkers and time with leadership
- ✓ Use Skype or Google Hangouts to create facetime opportunities with remote team members, such as communities in another state
- ✓ Assign a team member to act as a mentor and schedule blocks of time for them to meet

6

Less Paperwork, More Meaningful Work

While it may be tempting to occupy your new hire with paperwork on their first day or ask them to read through an employee manual that rivals Tolstoy's War and Peace, these tasks may leave your new associate feeling less than inspired.

Instead of form-filling and rules and regulations, focus on creating a positive “First Day Feeling.”

How? Remember the suggestion earlier to send new hire paperwork before their start date? Have your new hire bring the completed paperwork with them on their first day. This allows you to quickly review it, address any questions either of you have, and then move on to hands-on training and interactions that are more relevant to the actual job. Less paperwork and more involvement in meaningful work will leave your new team member feeling like,

“Wow! They’re really excited to have me here. This is better than I expected. I’m happy to have found my new work home!”

7

Start Planning for the Future

Orientation is an event, but onboarding is a process. If you want your new associate to be thinking long term, you need to also. Integrating a new associate to your team goes much further than just getting through their first day or even their first week. Consider using 30, 60 and 90 day benchmarks as opportunities to check-in with them and ensure they feel comfortable, confident, and capable of contributing to your community and company success.

Tips:

- ✓ *Provide an outline of what onboarding, mentoring, and training activities are still to come over the next several months*
- ✓ *Find out what their long term career goals are and share the steps to advancement in your organization. Show them where to find news regarding open positions*
- ✓ *Send a note of congratulations when they become eligible for benefits such as paid vacation*
- ✓ *Use a shared onboarding checklist to track tasks and milestones*
- ✓ *Survey your new hire to uncover their feedback on your onboarding processes. Use their candid responses to improve*
- ✓ *Celebrate their anniversary – as early as 30 days in!*

Now that you know the 7 steps to effective onboarding, you're all set to get your onboarding plans in place!

By taking action to improve your new hire experience, you are more likely to have new employees that are confident, quickly up to speed, and ready to contribute. They'll have a greater sense of belonging and camaraderie with their coworkers, which will benefit the entire team! On top of that, an effective onboarding program is proven to help increase tenure with the company. This means you get to keep these thriving employees longer and spend less time recruiting, hiring and onboarding their replacements. That alone should be incentive enough to get your onboarding plans in place today.

About Swift Bunny

Swift Bunny was born and raised in the multifamily industry. We are the brainchild of people-focused innovators. With a team powered by proven track records and rock-solid relationships, we understand employee engagement, retention, and feedback systems better than anyone else in multifamily.

We'll partner with you in building a culture of engagement – one that will increase employee and resident retention, enhance your brand reputation, improve employee satisfaction and boost your bottom line.

It's time you engaged your employees. Call us at 888.896.2933 or visit us at www.swiftbunny.com to learn more. We promise a SWIFT response!