

Onboarding

The First Line of Engagement

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~ Underwritten, in Part, by ~



Executive Summary

Anyone who has been part of a blind date, cold-call, or formal business introduction knows that the first impression has the potential to make or break a relationship. The exact same thing applies to companies and their employees. Onboarding – the strategic process of attracting and engaging new employees, reaffirming their employment decision, acclimating them into the organization's culture, and preparing them to contribute at a desired level as quickly as possible – is that first impression that sets the stage for the entire relationship to come. Onboarding has been a big part of Aberdeen's research for the past few years, and during that time its role has evolved significantly. Aberdeen's February 2010 onboarding research, conducted among 466 professionals from HR and line of business, shows that strategic onboarding is not only more widely practiced than ever, but also more grandiose in design – linking directly to business profitability. This report will show why engagement has become the underlying theme, and why HR and line of business will need to work together to make that first impression a superior and lasting one.

Best-in-Class Performance

Aberdeen used the following three key performance criteria to distinguish Best-in-Class companies:

- 89% of employees who have been with the company for one year or less rate themselves as “highly engaged”
- 87% of new employees achieved their first performance milestone within the agreed-to time period
- 67% of new employees received a rating of “exceeds expectations” in their first performance review

Competitive Maturity Assessment

Survey results show that the firms enjoying Best-in-Class performance shared several common characteristics, including:

- 85% have a formal onboarding process in place
- 67% support onboarding with formal learning and development
- 66% formally evaluate onboarding process impact at least annually

Required Actions

In addition to the specific recommendations in Chapter Three of this report, to achieve Best-in-Class performance, companies must:

- Ensure collaboration between all relevant stakeholders
- Provide consistency in the onboarding process enterprise-wide
- Integrate onboarding with other key talent management elements

Research Benchmark

Aberdeen's Research Benchmarks provide an in-depth and comprehensive look into process, procedure, methodologies, and technologies with best practice identification and actionable recommendations

"With a standardized onboarding process it is possible to create a better first impression among new employees, which has a profound effect on the new employee morale. This will result in increased sales over the long-term, greater engagement, and better productivity."

~ Arlene Baquiran, HR Business Partner, General Motors

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Chapter One: Benchmarking the Best-in-Class

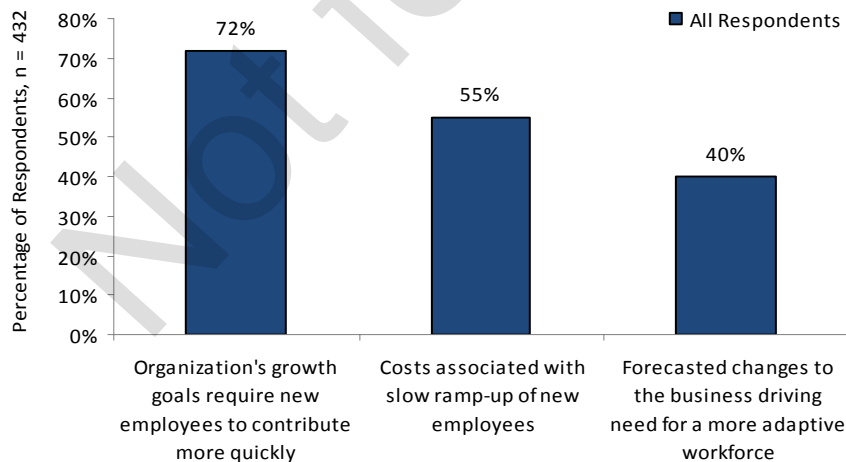
Business Context

Amidst the economic turmoil of the past 18 months, organizations were left with little choice but to press harder than ever on a flat or dwindling workforce. While this may have minimized the negative effects on the business in the short-term, it is not realistic to expect a workforce that is already stretched to continue in overdrive in the long-term. The good news, according to survey data collected in the fourth quarter of calendar 2009 for the Aberdeen Business Review, is that business executives are looking at 2010 as a year of growth. In fact, 48% of 1,230 business executives from cross-functional disciplines indicated "organic revenue growth" as a top business goal this year. And, to support this growth, 48% of respondents anticipated their organization would increase headcount in 2010. As this occurs, the immediate and near-term experience of these new employees will have a direct impact on the productivity and profitability these organizations achieve. This is where onboarding comes into play.

The Economy... Again

Given these trends, it is clear that the economy will play equally as important of a role in 2010 as it did in 2009, but this time for a different reason. And, according to survey data collected by Aberdeen in January and February 2010 from 466 human resources, talent, and line of business executives, organizations will look to onboarding as a means to help them achieve this growth (Figure 1). In fact, 57% of survey respondents indicated the current state of the economy will increase the importance their organization places on onboarding in 2010.

Figure 1: Top Internal Challenges to Overcome via Onboarding



Note: Up to 2 responses were accepted; Responses do not equal 100%

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Aberdeen Defines Onboarding

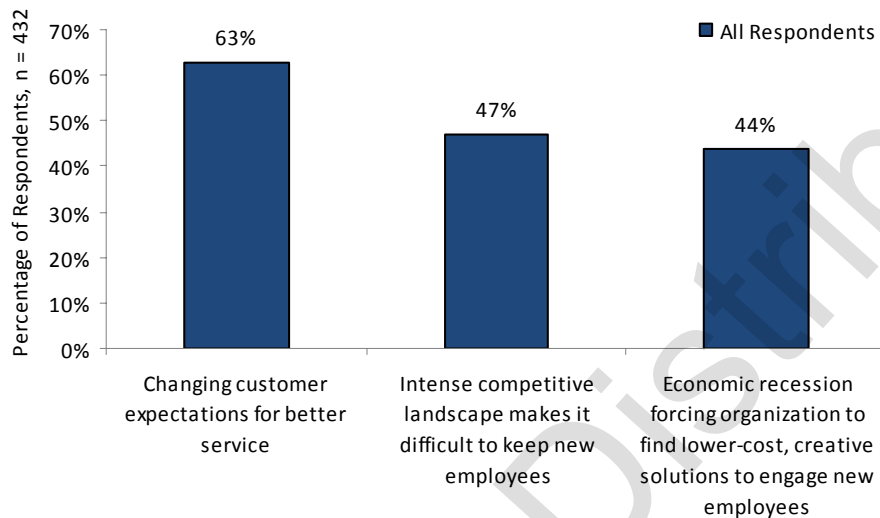
Onboarding (a.k.a. "induction") is the strategic process designed to attract and engage new employees, reaffirm their employment decision, acclimate them into the organization's culture, and prepare them to contribute to a desired level as quickly as possible.

Fast Facts

√ 432 of the 466 survey respondents for this study indicated their organization has either a formal or informal onboarding process in place. The data from the 32 respondents with no onboarding process at all was not included in this study.

But the focus on economic growth isn't the only trend of note. Equally as compelling is the fact that the third most pressing internal challenge that organizations seek to overcome via onboarding is related to the need to adapt to changes in the business. While this is somewhat related to the slow but steady projected growth, it is also a function of something equally as profound – the changing needs and expectations of the customer. Figure 2, which shows the external pressures driving onboarding efforts in 2010, helps to illustrate this point.

Figure 2: Top External Forces Driving Onboarding Efforts



Note: Up to 2 responses were accepted; responses do not equal 100%

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

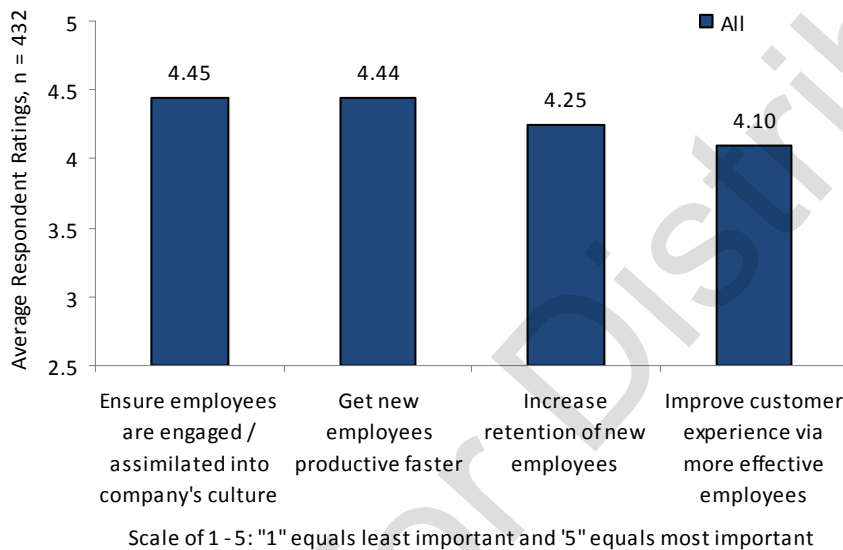
Although organizations are in the process of climbing out of the ditch, they will be emerging to a very different landscape than what had existed before the recession, and they know it. Consumers have become more discerning and resourceful as their wallets have tightened, and corporate spending cuts have delayed many purchase decisions. As a result, expectations and purchasing patterns have changed. Further compounding this is an ever-increasingly competitive business landscape that not only makes it more difficult to differentiate but also to attract and retain really good employees. Businesses know they will need to evolve their products and services, as well as internal cultures and programs, to meet these changing expectations and remain competitive. Onboarding is one of the key ways in which these companies will seek to stay ahead of the steeper competitive curve.

The Role of Onboarding

While the business world is keeping its ear closely to the ground to determine the course and speed of change, there is one thing that is for sure – organizations need to motivate and mobilize their people in order to adapt and compete. Leaders will be looking to their people to help meet the

simultaneous demands of adapting to consumer expectations and achieving aggressive growth goals for the coming year. Much of the contribution that companies are looking for will come from new faces as they begin to ramp up their recruiting engines, and much of this will come from seasoned veterans – but even they will need reorientation if a change in the customer approach is to be expected. This falls on the shoulders of onboarding, and although onboarding means many things, companies are particularly concerned about engagement and alignment. How do we know this? Out of the 466 respondents in Aberdeen's survey, the most important goals identified for onboarding are to ensure that employees are engaged and assimilated into the company's culture and to make them productive as quickly as possible (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Most Important Goals for Onboarding



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Based on Figure 3, it appears that engagement isn't the only theme for onboarding. And while looking at engagement alone would be a myopic view of a very complex topic, the reality is that the other goals identified actually support this one important theme. The best example of this can be seen when looking at the third and fourth most important goals, improving customer experience via more effective employees and increasing retention of new employees. Although it isn't illustrated in the figure, these were actually points of contention between top-performing companies and all others. But what does this differentiation mean? First and foremost, top-performing companies prioritized new employee retention slightly lower than the rest (4.06 versus 4.30). The difference here is that, while retention is very important for top performers, they recognize the fact that it is a byproduct of engagement. If employees are engaged and engaged early, they are much more likely to stay.

The second point of contention lies in improving customer experience via more effective employees, a point which top-performing companies gave higher priority than all others (4.28 vs. 4.05). This actually lends support to the concept of business integration, a concept that has been very popular in recent Aberdeen research. Customer experience, of course, is a goal that has much more to do with the line of business than with traditional HR, and many companies are able to clearly see how onboarding can have a sizeable impact in this regard. But similarly to retention, the idea of using onboarding to support the business doesn't do anything to detract from the importance of engagement. If anything, it makes it even more critical as engagement and business integration are much more closely intertwined than it may appear on the surface.

Fast Facts

- ✓ **57% of survey respondents** anticipate efforts pertaining to onboarding will increase at their organization in 2010
- ✓ Those who identify engagement as critically important to onboarding are **53% more likely to be Best-in-Class** than those who don't

The Role of Engagement with Alignment

Aberdeen's December 2009 research report, [*Integrated Talent Management: Improving Business Results Through Visibility and Alignment*](#) also established business integration as a key competitive differentiator. In that report, it was revealed that organizations can achieve more from their workforce by better aligning them with the goals of the business. In fact, 68% of top-performing organizations in that study indicated *aligning talent management efforts with the organization's objectives* as one of the top two talent strategies for 2010.

So how does engagement link to alignment? In fact, alignment – one of the most important components of business integration – begins with engagement, at least according to Aberdeen's July 2009 research report [*Beyond Satisfaction: Engaging Employees to Retain Customers*](#). In that study, Aberdeen put forth the following: *Engagement is all about aligning individual priorities, goals, and desires with the needs of the organization in order to deliver business results.* Figure 4 illustrates the concept of engagement a little bit further.

Figure 4: Alignment Reflects Engagement



Source: BusinessPundit.com, May 2009

When many people think of employee engagement, they think of employee satisfaction. But this doesn't even touch upon the true value of engagement. What you see above shows an employee who clearly isn't engaged. He or she *could* be very satisfied – you get to work outdoors, you can obviously cut a corner or two – but it's fairly blatant that they aren't very concerned with achieving the goals of the company. Engagement, of course, is less about how happy the employee is (although that plays a big part) and more concerned with how committed they are to the goals of the business and how well they understand their role in impacting the business.

If this is beginning to sound a bit like alignment, it's no coincidence. According to Aberdeen's January 2009 research report [Fully On-Board: Getting the Most from Your Talent in the First Year](#) – and reiterated again in this year's research – one of the two most valuable activities to help new employees feel engaged is for the new employee and his / her manager to agree to performance expectations and development plans. Indeed, engagement and alignment go hand-in-glove, and both initiatives should be pursued as early as possible with new employees. This is where onboarding takes center stage.

The Maturity Class Framework

Figure 3 (above) shows that Best-in-Class organizations are primarily concerned with three things: Engaging employees; getting them productive as quickly as possible; and providing a better customer experience via well-equipped employees. And while new employee retention is important, it is more so a result of their overall level of engagement. This, of course, ties in with the arguments made above for the importance of engagement and business integration. Considering this focus, Aberdeen used three key performance criteria to distinguish the Best-in-Class from Industry Average and Laggard organizations.

- **New employee engagement.** Calculated as the percentage of employees that have been with the company one year or less that rated themselves as "highly engaged" in the company's last employee engagement survey.
- **New employee time-to-productivity.** Calculated as the percentage of new employees from the past 12 months that achieved their first performance milestone within the agreed-to timeframe.
- **New employee performance.** Calculated as the percentage of new employees who started within the past 12 months that received a rating of "exceeds expectations" in their first performance review.

Organizations with top performance based on these criteria earned Best-in-Class status, as described in Table I. For additional details on the Aberdeen Maturity Class Framework, see Table 8 in Appendix A.

Table I: Top Performers Earn Best-in-Class Status

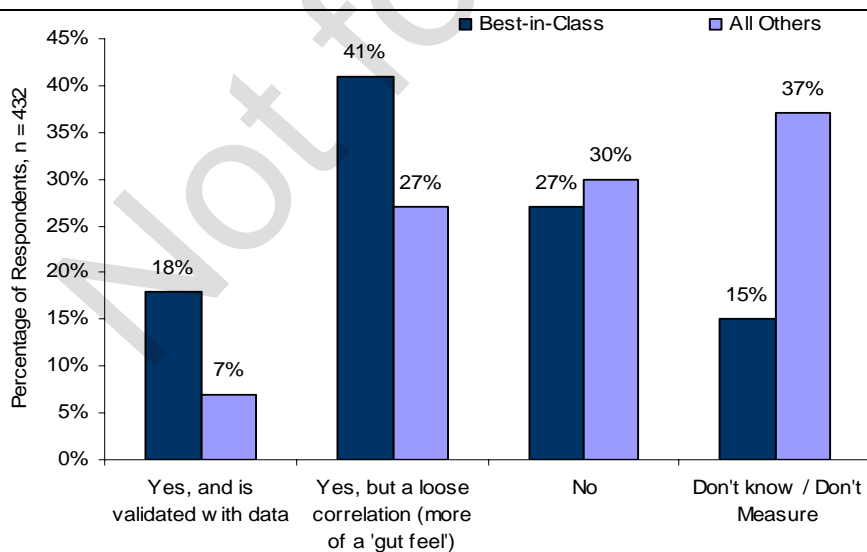
Definition of Maturity Class	Mean Class Performance (Weighted Averages)
Best-in-Class: Top 20% of aggregate performance scorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89% of employees who have been with company for one year or less rate themselves as “highly engaged” 87% of new employees achieved first performance milestone within the agreed-to time period 67% of new employees (<12 months) receive a rating of “exceeds” in their first performance review
Industry Average: Middle 50% of aggregate performance scorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 68% of employees who have been with company for one year or less rate themselves as “highly engaged” 68% of new employees achieved first performance milestone within the agreed-to time period 41% of new employees (<12 months) receive a rating of “exceeds” in their first performance review
Laggard: Bottom 30% of aggregate performance scorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of employees who have been with company for one year or less rate themselves as “highly engaged” 21% of new employees achieved first performance milestone within the agreed-to time period 20% of new employees (<12 months) receive a rating of “exceeds” in their first performance review

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Onboarding's Impact on Corporate Profitability

In addition to the KPIs highlighted in Table I, 40% of all survey respondents indicated their organization attributes improvements in its revenue and / or profitability directly to their onboarding process. However, while 59% of Best-in-Class draw this correlation, only 34% of all other organizations do.

Figure 5: Onboarding has Direct Impact on Revenue / Profitability



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

"Because of the phased Onboarding (we focus on accountability, upfront training and attention) we can quantify productivity into the bottom line."

~ Jan Sadlowski, HR Generalist,
Coaxis Inc.

Certainly, onboarding can be a difference maker at companies – and this study provides ample evidence of how effective onboarding processes help propel improvements in key business measures. However, Figure 5 also brings into light the difficulty all organizations have with correlating onboarding's impact via hard data. Specific recommendations to overcome this barrier follow in Chapters Two and Three of this report.

The Best-in-Class PACE Model

The organizations that comprise each of the three aforementioned Maturity Classes all have in place at least some form of onboarding process. What then accounts for Best-in-Class outperforming Industry Average by 63% in new employee performance? Also, why do Industry Average companies outperform Laggards by more than 200% in number of employees that achieved their first agreed-to performance milestone in a timely fashion? And, why are new employees at Best-in-Class organizations 2.5-times more likely than those at Laggard organizations to rate themselves as “highly engaged?”

Aberdeen's research suggests that a combination of strategic actions, organizational capabilities, and enabling technologies is critical – referred to by Aberdeen as the Best-in-Class PACE Framework (for a description of the Aberdeen PACE Framework, see Table 7 in Appendix A). The characteristics exhibited by Best-in-Class organizations in this study are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: The Best-in-Class PACE Framework

Pressures	Actions	Capabilities	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changing customer expectations / requirements for better service from your employees ▪ Organization's growth goals require new employees to contribute more quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage new employees as early as possible ▪ Standardize all or some of the onboarding process across the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal process to ensure all relevant stakeholders know what is expected of them to ensure new employees arrive on day-one ready to be productive ▪ Formal learning events are provided to instill requisite job skills or knowledge ▪ Collaboration between all relevant stakeholders to ensure they all know the role of the new employee and how they can impact that person in their first 90 days with the company ▪ Formal process to solicit feedback from new employees on their onboarding experience ▪ Onboarding processes are modified to address distinct employee groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee performance management tools ▪ Employee screening and / or background checks ▪ Assessment tools for skills / knowledge ▪ Employee self-service (e.g., new employee portals) ▪ Competency management tools ▪ Manager self-service ▪ Tools that track progress against development / career plans

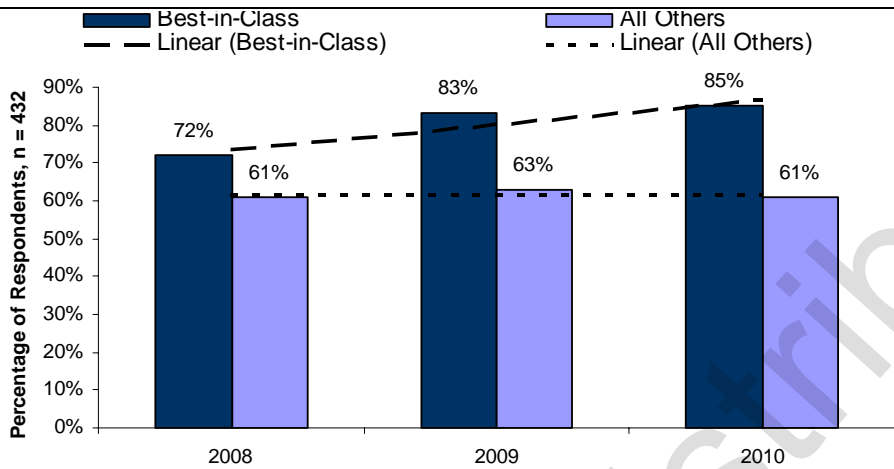
Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Best-in-Class Strategies

By a factor of nearly six (85% versus 15%), the Best-in-Class have formalized their onboarding process (where a formal process is one that has a

dedicated strategy and set of objectives). In comparison, an equal percentage of Laggard organizations (49%) provide either a formal or informal onboarding process. And over the past three years, while the percentage of Best-in-Class organizations with a formal process continues to grow, the percentage of all other organizations that do the same remains flat (Figure 6).

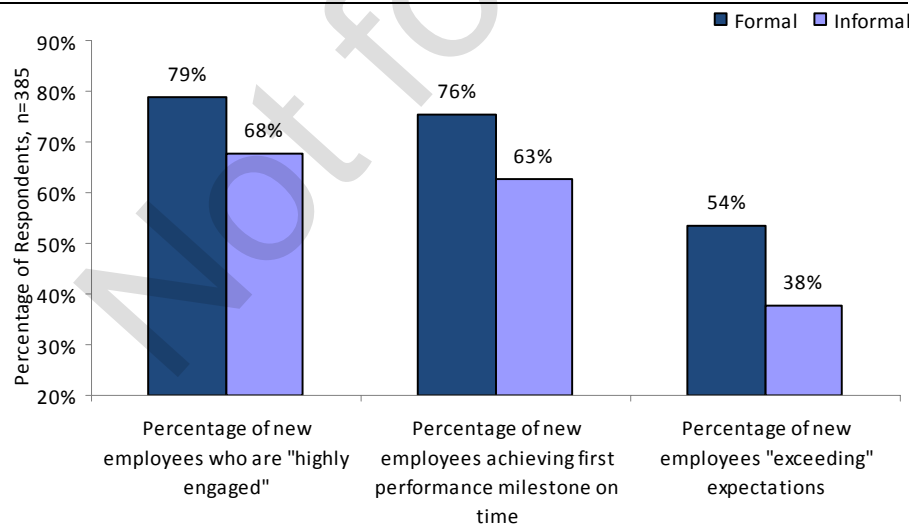
Figure 6: A Formal Process Continues to Distance Best-in-Class



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Indeed, organizations with a formal onboarding process in place have a more engaged and productive workforce. In comparing the 66% of organizations with a formal onboarding process to the 34% that indicate their onboarding process is more informal, the performance of new employees speaks for itself (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Formal Onboarding Process Drives Greater Results



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

"Driving successful Onboarding is a priority at The Hanover. As a company in aggressive growth mode, we seek to engage and align our new employees as early as possible, working in partnership with our management teams to facilitate time-to-effectiveness. We also anticipate a shift in the economy, so we believe it is essential for us to engage and excite all our new employees so they remain a committed and focused member of our Hanover Team."

~ Pamela Getchell, Vice President of Human Resources, The Hanover Insurance Group

Fast Facts

As compared to organizations with an informal (i.e. ad-hoc) onboarding process, those with a formal onboarding process report:

- ✓ 60% greater year-over-year improvement in revenue per full-time equivalent
- ✓ 63% greater year-over-year improvement in customer satisfaction

And it is no coincidence that organizations with a formal onboarding process also report significantly higher year-over-year gains in critical business measures, specifically:

- 60% greater year-over-year improvement in revenue per FTE
- 63% greater year-over-year improvement in customer satisfaction

Maturation Makes a Difference – So Get Started Now!

While an onboarding process with a dedicated strategy and set of objectives is important to performance optimization, the lessons learned and institutional acceptance that comes from process maturation also makes a difference. In fact, whereas 49% of Best-in-Class organizations in this year's research indicate they've had a formal onboarding process in place for at least three years, only 29% of all other organizations (the combination of Industry Average and Laggard) indicate the same.

This is not to imply that a company will not experience immediate gains as a result of onboarding. In fact, 41% of organizations with an onboarding process (and 63% of Best-in-Class) indicate they have experienced employee performance improvements within one year of instituting their onboarding process. See the Aberdeen Insight in this chapter for more details. That withstanding, Aberdeen's research over the past three years does reveal an increasing gap between Best-in-Class and Laggard organizations based on the length of time a formal onboarding process has been in place (Figure 8).

Fast Facts

- √ 41% of organizations with an onboarding process (and **63% of Best-in-Class**) indicate they have experienced employee performance improvements within one year of instituting their onboarding process

Figure 8: Maturity of Onboarding Process Makes a Difference



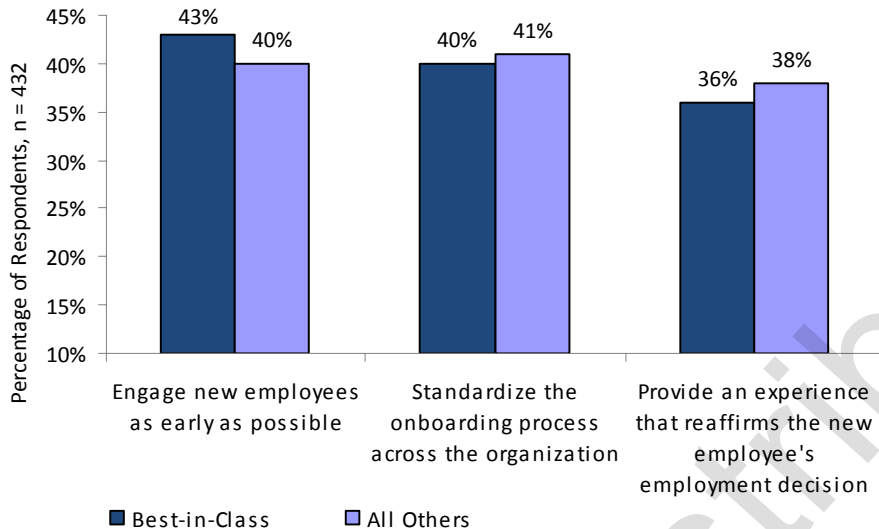
Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

It's About Engagement... In Many Ways

To achieve the goals of assimilating new employees quickly into the organization's culture and facilitating their ability to be productive, as well as minimizing first year attrition and equipping them to better serve customers, organizations across all three maturity classes place relatively equal

weighting across strategies to ensure their new employees receive an engaging and consistent experience (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Best-in-Class Strategies to Optimize Onboarding



"Our onboarding process has allowed us to develop greater engagement and foster cross-departmental relationships. Employees have a better understanding of the whole organization and their role within it, and feel a deep sense of self worth within the organization."

~ Susan Word, HR Director,
City of Pflugerville, TX

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Indeed, engagement accounts for the difference between an onboarding process that simply exists to ensure a new employee completes the requisite paperwork to become an employee of record, gains a high-level understanding of the business, and performs the job at hand to the best of their current ability, and one that is capable of accelerating organizational growth, instilling a sense of purpose in the new employee, and making the company more competitive. And to ensure a consistent experience among all new employees onboarded, approximately 40% of all organizations are focused on standardizing some or all of their onboarding process across their enterprise. However, for Best-in-Class, this focus mostly represents adding slightly more standardization as the vast majority (91%) indicate their process is currently at least somewhat standardized.

So what do Best-in-Class organizations find most valuable to engage new employees? Aberdeen's research over the past two years reveals how these top-performers find the most value in activities that focus on three areas (See Table 3):

1. Assimilation into an organization's social and cultural frameworks;
2. Integration of learning and performance management within the onboarding process; and
3. Coordination of the technical equipment the new employee will need to be productive in their new job.

Table 3: Most Valuable Activities to Engage New Employees

Activities	Best-in-Class 2010	Best-in-Class 2009
All IT is up and running when employee arrives on day one	4.34	4.36
Mutually agreed-to performance expectations and development plan	4.31	4.50
Frequent informal reviews between manager and employee	4.29	4.33
Assign a mentor or coach	4.08	4.01
Regularly scheduled briefings by senior leadership to exchange information	3.99	3.96
Formal learning events	3.70	Did not measure
Provide communities that allow new employees to connect with each other	3.57	2.95

Respondents rated these activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the least valuable and 5 is the most valuable
Source: Aberdeen Group: February 2010

These activities shed light on the importance of collaboration and orchestration among HR, IT, and hiring managers during a new employee's first days and months on the job – and this will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two of this report. However, these also suggest that organizations can make significant impact simply by placing greater emphasis on things that are completely in their control and do not require a significant monetary investment:

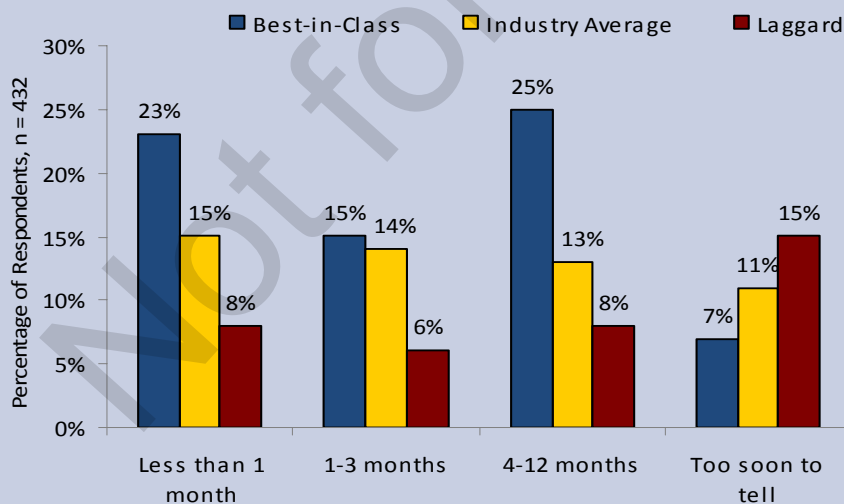
- **IT is ready and working when new employee arrives** – With so much focus on getting new employee's productive sooner, it's no surprise that this activity has been viewed as one of the top two activities over the past two years. Furthermore, this demonstrates the organization's preparedness for the new employee's arrival – which, in itself, implies the organization's focus on performance.
- **Frequent informal reviews between manager and employee** – The importance of a new employee and his / her manager agreeing to performance expectations and a related development plan must not be overlooked. And, 74% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate this occurs within the first two weeks of employment. However, the critical employee performance management element that really distinguishes Best-in-Class is found among the 69% that indicate their managers meet informally at least quarterly with new employees in their first year to review and discuss progress against goals and expectations. This same frequency is matched by only 50% of Industry Average and a mere 29% of Laggards.
- **Communities to find and connect with other employees** – The 21% growth in perceived value of communities such as online forums and social networks, as well as blogs and wikis, speaks volumes to a couple of factors that organizations must contend with: Remote or geographically-dispersed workers, and younger workers who are more comfortable communicating via technology in real-time.

Aberdeen Insights — \$600 Million in Increased Sales in Six Months!

Case in Point: The CEO of a Fortune 50 company issued an edict – to expand “share of wallet” – which would result in the need to hire new sales resources. In 2009, the company’s HR function rolled out an onboarding process to 1,000 new sales reps with the goal to reduce the time it took for each sales rep to be able to close deals. Virtual learning and development played a critical role. After six months, the company realized an average 20% reduction in the time for a new sales rep to close their first three deals – as compared to sales reps hired in 2008 who were not onboarded. As a result, the new sales reps in 2009 averaged 56% of their annual sales quota attained just six months after they started, as compared to an average 48% of sales quota achieved at six months for sales reps hired in 2008. With each sales rep carrying a \$15 million annual sales quota, the average difference in sales achieved during the first six months equates to an additional \$600,000 per sales rep hired and onboarded in 2009. This represents incremental six-month sales of \$600 million to which onboarding played an integral role.

While the value of an onboarding process that grows with and adapts to an organization’s evolving needs is self evident, its first-year impact on an organization can be significant. In fact, 63% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate they experienced improvements in employee performance within the first 12 months of rolling out their onboarding process, as compared to 42% of Industry Average and only 22% of Laggards (Figure 10). Of course, this implies that these companies know how to measure onboarding’s impact on employee performance – something that 49% of Laggards indicate they do not!

Figure 10: The Impact of Onboarding can be Immediate



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

In the next chapter, we will see what the top performers are doing to achieve these gains.

Chapter Two: Benchmarking Requirements for Success

If there is any reason why onboarding should focus on engagement, it's this: engaged employees result in engaged customers. This is how onboarding can have such a strong impact on profitability, as an engaged customer is one that feels stronger loyalty to a brand that ultimately affects their purchasing decisions. The problem for many, of course, is proving this correlation *in their business* and measuring the extent of that correlation so as to drive continuously better results.

This correlation, however, does exist and can be proven. And once a company does achieve this, it becomes difficult to imagine how it ever could have been in doubt. North Shore LIJ Health System is a perfect example of an organization that has accomplished this in an industry where customer or patient satisfaction is critically important. This example shows how engagement as a result of onboarding has not only driven better bottom-line performance, but contributed to the strengthening of their brand in the marketplace.

Fast Facts

- √ Organizations that indicate they directly link onboarding to changes in profitability experienced nearly **two-times greater annual improvement in customer satisfaction**, and are 58% more likely to be Best-in-Class

Case Study — Onboarding Contributes to \$25M Margin Growth!

North Shore-LIJ Health System (NSLIJ) is a \$5 billion health care system, and the ninth-largest employer in New York City. North Shore-LIJ serves 5.2 million people in the New York metropolitan area through its 14 hospitals and other health services offerings. Five years ago, as part of a larger HR transformation, North Shore-LIJ made an aggressive effort to improve its onboarding process.

It all started with a strategic visioning process during which the organization identified three major business priorities, which would form the basis for all of its talent management efforts. These include: quality, patient experience, and financial performance. It was with these in mind that they designed their onboarding program from the ground up, starting with the streamlining and automation of regulatory new-hire paperwork. “By automating our basic onboarding processes, we were able to focus on what was most important to us – employee engagement,” said Joseph Cabral, SVP and Chief Human Resources Officer.

To improve engagement within the organization, North Shore-LIJ took on a modified version of an orientation approach that had been developed by The Walt Disney Company to “capture the hearts” of new employees starting on day one. By the end of week one with the company, all new employees attend a series of sessions during which they craft their goals for various stages of their careers within the organization (30 days, 90 days, six months, and so on), in which the theme is alignment and how their goals impact the business of transforming patient care.

continued

Case Study — Onboarding Contributes to \$25M Margin Growth!

Most importantly, North Shore-LIJ’s President and CEO personally greets and inspires new employees on their first day, affirming senior leadership’s commitment to employees and helping to further drive home the concept of alignment.

By focusing on embracing and aligning employees’ individual career goals, and having active and direct involvement of senior leadership, North Shore-LIJ was able to observe tremendous improvements in engagement scores. Today, their average engagement score across their multiple facilities hovers in the high 70s to low 80s in percentage of employees rating themselves as highly engaged – compared to a 59% industry average. So how does this align with the organization’s priorities? Not only have they been able to directly correlate higher employee engagement to better patient satisfaction and loyalty (in fact, the organization was recently awarded the 2010 NQF National Quality Healthcare Award for outstanding quality measures), but they were able to link engagement to a 2008 financial performance that outperformed budgeted margin by \$25 million.

Competitive Assessment

Aberdeen analyzed the aggregated metrics of surveyed companies to determine whether their performance ranked as Best-in-Class, Industry Average, or Laggard. In addition to having common performance levels, each class also shared characteristics in five key categories: (1) **process** (the approaches they take to execute daily operations); (2) **organization** (corporate focus and collaboration among stakeholders); (3) **knowledge management** (contextualizing data and exposing it to key stakeholders); (4) **technology** (the selection of the appropriate tools and the effective deployment of those tools); and (5) **performance management** (the ability of the organization to measure its results to improve its business). These characteristics (identified in Table 4) serve as a guideline for best practices, and correlate directly with Best-in-Class performance across the key metrics.

Table 4: The Competitive Framework

	Best-in-Class	Average	Laggards
Process	Formal process to ensure all relevant stakeholders know what is expected of them to ensure new employees arrive on day-one ready to be productive		
	78%	58%	50%
Process	Formal process to solicit feedback from new employees on their onboarding experience		
	64%	46%	27%

	Best-in-Class	Average	Laggards
Organization	All relevant stakeholders (e.g., hiring managers, HR, all interdependencies) know how they can impact each new employee in their first 90 days with the company		
	64%	43%	24%
Knowledge	Formal new hire learning program that maps to specific competency requirements or development plans		
	51%	37%	17%
	Data from the recruiting process is integrated with the company's performance management process		
	41%	21%	13%
Technology	Technology currently in use to support the onboarding process:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 78% Employee performance management tools ▪ 54% Skills / knowledge assessments ▪ 51% Competency management tools ▪ 49% Tools that track progress against development / career plans ▪ 45% Behavior / attribute assessments ▪ 36% Web 2.0 and other tools that enable socialization and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 61% Employee performance management tools ▪ 41% Skills / knowledge assessments ▪ 30% Competency management tools ▪ 32% Tools that track progress against development / career plans ▪ 36% Behavior / attribute assessments ▪ 27% Web 2.0 and other tools that enable socialization and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 47% Employee performance management tools ▪ 21% Skills / knowledge assessments ▪ 24% Competency management tools ▪ 16% Tools that track progress against development / career plans ▪ 20% Behavior / attribute assessments ▪ 17% Web 2.0 and other tools that enable socialization and engagement
	Formally evaluates performance of onboarding process at least annually (as opposed to ad-hoc or informally)		
	66%	44%	24%
Performance	Metrics to measure onboarding effectiveness are agreed to by all relevant stakeholders		
	38%	25%	7%

"The biggest contribution is to employee engagement. It is my goal to ensure that employees feel like they are a valued part of the team as quickly as possible. Once they are engaged, productivity increases which of course leads to increased profitability."

~ Lynn Strocen, Office Manager, Print Audit

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Capabilities and Enablers

Based on the findings of the Competitive Framework and interviews with end users, Aberdeen's analysis of the Best-in-Class reveals that the importance of onboarding is realized at the highest levels within the organization and, as such, it is integrated more completely across the entire organization. This results in much wider application across employee groups, as well as accountability among both human resources functions and hiring managers – both of which will be explained in greater detail in the Organization section of this chapter.

It is also important to highlight that Aberdeen's previous research on onboarding has established that Best-in-Class organizations follow two simple rules when administering their onboarding process: 1) standardize the process across the organization – this helps ensure consistency in delivery as well as consistency with the experience of all who go through the process; and 2) centralize the management of the onboarding process.

This continues to remain true with 91% of Best-in-Class indicating their onboarding process is either fully standardized (36%), where one process is consistent across the entire enterprise, or somewhat standardized (55%), where one process can be tweaked by location or business unit to address unique needs. In addition, 80% of this year's Best-in-Class indicate the management of their onboarding process is either centralized (36%), where one dedicated resource has oversight and decision authority over the organization's entire onboarding process, or centralized with regional oversight (44%), where one dedicated corporate resource works with a team of onboarding managers in each business unit, function, or locale.

Process

Keeping in mind how Best-in-Class organizations utilize their onboarding process as a means to impact a broad range of performance measures, it follows that these organizations would require greater coordination across those who ultimately impact the experience of new employees before they begin their first day of employment (in order to influence and reinforce their employment decision) as well as once they arrive on day one. This explains why more than three-quarters of Best-in-Class have in place a formal process to ensure all relevant stakeholders (from HR to recruiters, including hiring managers and information technology) know what is expected of them to ensure new employees arrive on day one ready to be productive.

In addition, to ensure their efforts are on target, nearly two-thirds of Best-in-Class organizations have in place a formal process to solicit feedback from new employees on their onboarding experience. In addition to demonstrating to these new employees that the company is interested in their feedback, this provides these organizations with valuable ideas on ways in which they can not only drive greater engagement and productivity from the employees currently going through the process, but also those who will be going through the next onboarding process.

Fast Facts

√ **70% of new employees at Best-in-Class** organizations who were onboarded within the past 12 months indicated they were satisfied with their organization's onboarding process – as compared to 39% of Industry Average and 27% of Laggards.

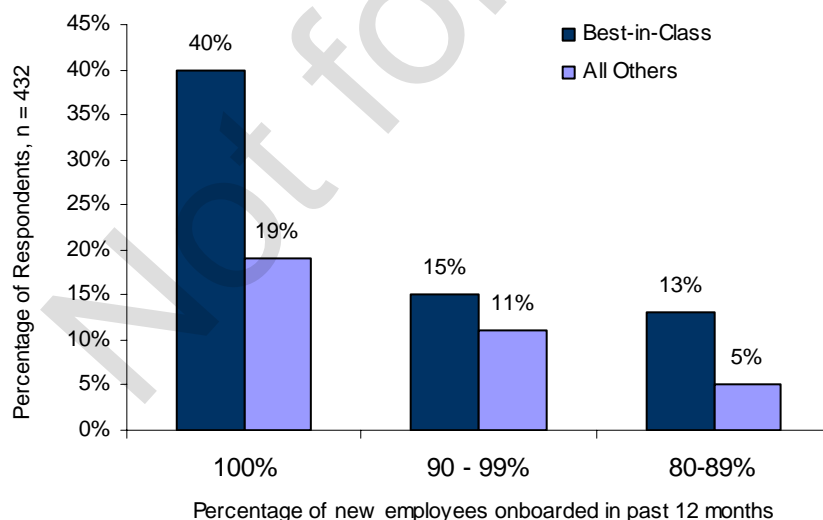
Organization

Eighty-six percent (86%) of survey respondents for this research perceive that it takes up to six months for a new employee to make a firm decision whether or not to stay with his or her new employer. As a means to address this, two-thirds of Best-in-Class organizations ensure coordination and unification among relevant stakeholders before the new employee arrives as well as through the first 90 days of a new employee's tenure with the organization.

These companies ensure that the right parties not only know which job role each new employee will fill, but also how they can impact each new employee in their first 90 days with the company. This type of coordination should apply to stakeholders who either directly (e.g., the hiring manager, mentor or onboarding "buddy," and IT person responsible for technical provisioning) or peripherally (e.g., project teammate or senior leadership) impact the ability of a new employee to be productive and feel welcomed into the organization in those critical first days and months on the job.

Of course, this type of enterprise coordination is made much easier with senior leadership buy-in. And 63% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate their onboarding strategy has the support of the CEO or President, while an additional 10% indicate they have the support of their Board of Directors! Given all of this, it comes as no surprise that Best-in-Class are also more likely to onboard a greater percentage of new employees. Figure 11 shows that 40% of these top-performers onboarded every single one of their new employees last year and 68% onboarded at least 80% of new employees during the past 12 months – while only 35% of all other organizations indicate the same.

Figure 11: Best-in-Class Organizations Onboard More Employees



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Knowledge Management

As shown earlier in Table 3 of this report, Best-in-Class organizations rate *formal learning events* as a 3.70 on a scale of 1 to 5, where “5” equals most valuable in terms of activities to engage new employees. In support of this, fully two-thirds (67%) of Best-in-Class include formal (e.g., classroom or web-based) learning events during the onboarding process to instill requisite job skills or knowledge in new employees – something included in the onboarding processes at only 48% of Laggards.

Furthermore, this year's research shows that the learning programs provided by a majority of Best-in-Class (51%) map to specific competency requirements or development plans – as compared to 37% of Industry Average and a mere 17% of Laggards. Not only does this critical level of detail help organizations prescribe targeted learning activities to specific gaps in employee competence, but it also ensures that learning and development programs / activities are aligned with the goals or needs of the business. This specific knowledge management differentiator has seen significant growth among Best-in-Class and Industry Average organizations over the past year (46% and 48% respectively). And based on planned adoption, our research suggests approximately two-thirds of Best-in-Class will have this in place by year's end.

In addition to formal learning events, 41% of Best-in-Class also provide new employees with structured social learning via which they can build relationships, share ideas, and learn from their co-workers. Through the use of online communities, wikis, or forums, these organizations are not only helping new employees connect with others across their enterprises, but are also leveraging the collective knowledge base and subject matter expertise of their veteran and new workers.

Aberdeen Insights — Data Integration

When it comes to onboarding, 41% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate they integrate data from their recruiting process with their employee performance management process – as compared to only 18% of all other organizations. Why is this data integration so important? According to Aberdeen's December 2009 study on [Integrated Talent Management](#), organizations that integrated data from at least two talent management elements recorded performance advantages across three key measures that an onboarding process aims to address (Table 5).

continued

Aberdeen Insights — Data Integration

Table 5: Value of Talent Management (TM) Data Integration

KPI	Data is Fully or Partially Integrated	Data is Not Integrated
Employee Engagement – year-over-year change in engagement scores	7%	0%
Hiring Manager Satisfaction – year-over-year improvement	14%	8%
Customer retention – year-over-year improvement	7%	3%

Source: Aberdeen Group, December 2009

With regard to onboarding, data integration is critical to an organization's ability to measure and validate the impact of onboarding initiatives. Figure 5 in this report illustrated how 59% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate they attribute their changes in profitability directly to onboarding, yet only 18% indicate they can validate this with data. A strong reason for this is that only 17% of Best-in-Class (and only 1% of Laggards) are able to benchmark the performance of employees who were onboarded against those who were not.

Technology

Last year, Aberdeen's research on onboarding suggested that 2009 may be the year during which the automation of onboarding would become mainstream. In fact, 42% of Best-in-Class organizations from that study indicated that "automation" would be a top way their onboarding process would change in 2009. And, across all maturity classes, this has become the case as 65% of Best-in-Class and 67% of all other organizations indicate their onboarding process is at least partially automated. On the surface, it would appear as though automation is not a differentiating factor for the Best-in-Class. However, further analysis reveals a significant delta among not only the types of technologies Best-in-Class organizations use to support their process, but also in elements that comprise their onboarding process.

The most utilized technology among Best-in-Class for onboarding purposes (employee performance management software) is also one that provides significant differentiation. More than three-quarters of Best-in-Class utilize this software, and they are 68% more likely than Laggards to do so. This software helps provide visibility into (and progress against) performance expectations and development plans. In addition, many of these tools also include competency libraries that can be used, in combination with assessment tools, to ascertain gaps in terms of knowledge, skills and / or attributes as well as to align individual development plans with the needs of the organization.

While the distinct technologies highlighted in Table 4 all factor into an organization's ability to achieve its onboarding goals, their application may be best comprehended when considering the elements of onboarding to which they are applied (Table 6). For example, two-thirds of Best-in-Class utilize technology to deliver learning events / activities to their new employees, and just over one-half utilize learning management technology to track their progress against these developmental programs. The automated delivery is especially critical for educating geographically-dispersed new employees, as well as for allowing new employees to revisit what they were taught at a later date (i.e. via an archived online class session). And by providing visibility into the development progress of their new employees, managers are better equipped to adjust or prioritize assignments based on each new employee's personal progress.

And when it comes to tracking progress, another critical area that enables someone to become more productive more quickly and, at the same time, allows a company to measure its effectiveness at provisioning (i.e. getting all the tasks and checklist items completed on time) pertains to tasks management. By automating this element of onboarding organizations will be able to identify where bottlenecks occur and target organizational areas where communication or workflows can be improved.

Table 6: The Most Automated Elements of Onboarding

Elements of Onboarding	Best-in-Class	All Others
The delivery of learning / training (for product training, skills, or professional development)	67%	42%
Tasks management – the creation, assignment, completion, and tracking of checklist items and deliverables required to complete the new employee onboarding process	56%	39%
Tracking and / or documenting progress against learning or development requirements	53%	28%
Socialization / Culturalization – learning about the company's norms / values and getting to know co-workers (i.e. forums / discussion boards, digital media, social networks)	38%	29%

Source: Aberdeen Group: February 2010

Performance Management

Frequency – this is one word that organizations need to remember when it comes to managing the performance of their onboarding process. In fact, 66% of Best-in-Class formally evaluate performance of onboarding processes at least annually (as opposed to ad-hoc or informally) – and 40% of Best-in-Class do so at least every six months. However, this frequency, coupled with the communication of the results on an organizational basis (at least to key stakeholders) is where the difference becomes pronounced.

However, the performance management of onboarding most certainly can be improved. Yes, the Best-in-Class are more than five-times more likely than Laggards to have established metrics to measure onboarding effectiveness and achieved buy-in to these measures to by all relevant stakeholders; however, this is just slightly more than one-third of Best-in-Class organizations.

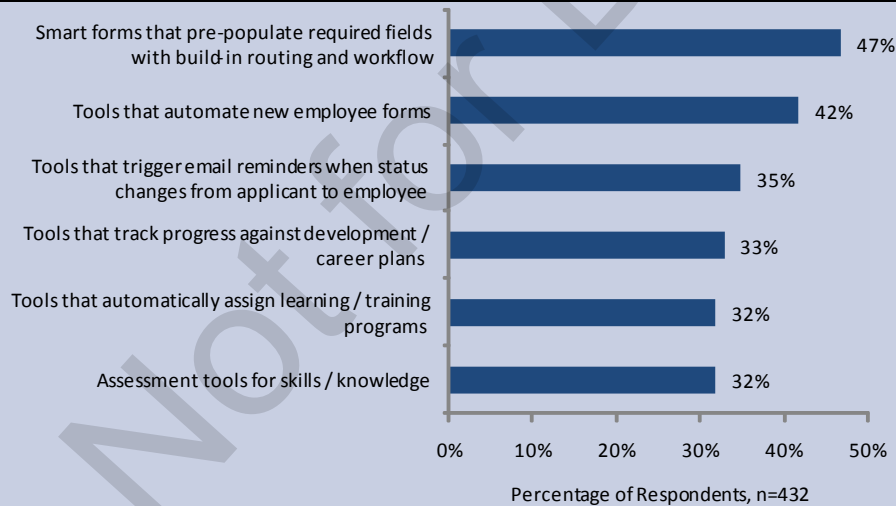
All organizations should consider the top goals highlighted in Figure 3 of this report as the basis for the metrics they establish. However, what must be underscored is the importance of HR's ability to work with hiring managers and line of business executives to not only understand what measures are key to the business, but also to articulate how (and subsequently create and execute) an onboarding process can be developed to enable the achievement of those goals.

Aberdeen Insights — Technology

Indeed, automation can drive immediate gains for a business. In fact, organizations that have at least partially automated their onboarding process indicate a 50% average decrease in cost per employee onboarded since automation. Furthermore, 41% of Best-in-Class organizations indicate it took less than six months to achieve cost savings or improved efficiencies once they automated their onboarding process.

Projected growth in technology adoption among Best-in-Class organizations will center mostly on tools that leverage data collected in the pre-hire phase in order to pre-populate new employee forms as well as track which sources provide the best new employees. In addition, technology that enables companies to educate employees and influence their ability to achieve key competencies will see large growth – with the focus on productivity, the integration of learning and development into onboarding is a natural fit (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Projected Onboarding Technology Adoption Rates



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Chapter Three: Required Actions

Whether an organization is trying to move its performance in onboarding from Laggard to Industry Average, or Industry Average to Best-in-Class, the following actions will help spur the necessary performance improvements:

All Organizations

Onboard more than just new-hires. This research puts forth demonstrable evidence of the impact of onboarding on business performance measures. While most organizations apply onboarding to exempt and non-exempt new hires, Best-in-Class organizations are more likely to provide formal onboarding to workers that fall outside of these descriptions. Yet less than one-half of all maturity classes provide onboarding to the following:

- **Employees brought on via mergers or acquisitions** – 31% of all organizations
- **Internal job transfers** – 18% of all organizations
- **Contingent labor** (jobs structured to be short-term or seasonal) – only 15% of all organizations
- **Contract labor** (professional or longer-term consultants) – 21% of all organizations

Laggard Steps to Success

- **Formalize the onboarding process.** Only 49% of Laggard organizations indicated that they have a formal process in place. Informal processes may work for some organizations in terms of basic orientation and paperwork, but it is significantly more difficult to turn onboarding into a difference-maker without actually incorporating strategy and concrete objectives to it. Without these in place, neither HR nor line of business will be inclined to take accountability for its execution. Furthermore, formal onboarding processes allow results to manifest much faster. Among all organizations, those with a formal onboarding process were over 2.5-times as likely to experience employee performance improvements within three months.
- **Make learning a part of the process.** Onboarding is all about engagement, and one of the most important ways to improve engagement is through learning. In Aberdeen's July 2009 report, [*Beyond Satisfaction: Engaging Employees to Retain Customers*](#), the development of high-potential learning programs was identified as one of the top five activities for increasing engagement. This should come as no surprise either, as employees like to learn and like to feel that their organization is invested in their long-term success.

Fast Facts

- ✓ Companies with a formal onboarding process are **2.5-times more likely** than those with an informal process or no process to experience employee performance improvements within three months
- ✓ Organizations with a formal process to solicit feedback from new employees on the onboarding indicated that **81% of employees rated themselves as highly engaged** in their most recent engagement survey, compared to 72% among those without

Currently, only 43% of Laggard organizations include enrollment into learning and development programs as part of onboarding, and only 48% include formal learning events for requisite job skills or knowledge.

- **Give the new employee a say in the onboarding process.** Regardless of how an organization's onboarding strategy is implemented, one fact remains the same – it is all about the new hire. However, only 27% of Laggard organizations have a formal process to solicit feedback from new employees on their onboarding experience. While the purpose of this report is to show how onboarding can benefit the organization, it is important to remember that it does so by first engaging and empowering the new hire. If new hire feedback isn't taken into account, it becomes much more difficult to ensure that the onboarding process is best meeting their needs and to make necessary improvements to it along the way.

Industry Average Steps to Success

- **Ensure collaboration and communication between all relevant parties.** It was established earlier that onboarding is a process that must be owned by a number of parties, not just HR. In order for best-in-class performance to be achieved, a multitude of stakeholders need to be involved, including the new hire, the hiring manager, senior leadership, team members, information technology, and in some cases a peer mentor or coach. These stakeholders need to know exactly what the new employee's goals are and exactly how they are expected to get involved in ensuring that they get reached. Currently, only 58% of Average organizations ensure that all relevant stakeholders know what is expected of them to ensure new-hire readiness on day-one (compared to 78% of Best-in-Class), and only 43% ensure collaboration so that everyone knows how they are expected to impact the new employee within the first 90 days (compared to 64% of Best-in-Class).
- **Ensure senior leadership and line of business accountability.** Like any aspect of human capital management, there needs to be ample senior leadership accountability to ensure buy-in. Some organizations even go so far as to have the CEO join in every new-hire orientation and every goals-oriented meeting. But where this really comes into play is with the hiring managers. Because the new employee will be reporting directly to the hiring manager, it is critical that they feel accountability for their onboarding. When asked to rate the extent of accountability by stakeholder group on a scale of 1 to 5, Best-in-Class companies rated the hiring manager at 4.20, second only to senior-level HR leadership. In contrast, Industry Average and Laggard organizations rated the recruiting or staffing function (3.87) ahead of hiring managers (3.70).

- **Link onboarding to other aspects of talent management.** There are many reasons why onboarding can't exist in a talent management vacuum, but the biggest reason is the fact that engagement and development don't just stop as soon as the employee hits their 90-day or six-month anniversary with the company. Aberdeen's December 2009 report, [*Integrated Talent Management: Improving Business Results through Visibility and Alignment*](#), found that talent management must go on throughout the entire employee lifecycle, and that employee engagement and alignment with the organization is maximized when each of the individual processes are linked together (either through consistent management of each process or through data, process, and workflow integration). In fact, integration of processes and workflows was shown to result in huge performance advantages in bench strength, engagement, time to productivity, hiring manager satisfaction, and profit per full-time equivalent. Some prime examples of how to start achieving this are to integrate recruitment data with the company's performance management process (implemented by 21% of industry average organizations), map new hire learning to specific competency requirements (implemented by 37% of industry average organizations, and adopt tools to track the employee's progress against career or development plans (implemented by 32% of Industry Average organizations).

Best-in-Class Steps to Success

- **Clearly define metrics for success.** Companies that have achieved a high level of onboarding maturity have, for the most part, already cleared a number of the big hurdles. They have a formal onboarding process with the right goals and strategies, they assign accountability and encourage collaboration among all stakeholders, and they ensure that onboarding walks hand-in-hand with other important talent management processes. The next hurdle is to learn how to define and measure success in order to continuously tweak and improve upon what has already put into place. This starts with metrics. Currently, only 38% of Best-in-Class organizations have clearly defined metrics to measure onboarding success, and for good reason – such things can be hard to quantify. But those who had put this capability into place achieved better results in every single performance indicator, most notably a whopping 17% year-over-year improvement in customer satisfaction.
- **Improve the flow of information.** The importance of stakeholder collaboration cannot be overstated, and while Best-in-Class companies have mostly achieved this, there are still limiting factors that come into play. The most significant of these is the immediate availability of information. The more the hiring manager, senior-HR executives, and even CEO can see about a new employee's onboarding progress, the better equipped they will be to add the most value. Currently, only 34% of Best-in-Class

"Revenue increases with each employee hire; productivity improves (margin) as employees are oriented and set-up to work."

~ Harold Cypress, Global Learning Director, Midsize Consulting / Services Company

companies indicate that key stakeholders are able to view the development progress of the new hire throughout the onboarding process. Those who had implemented this, however, enjoyed performance improvements across the board compared to those that hadn't, particularly in business metrics such as improvement in revenue per full-time equivalent (15% versus 5%) and improvement in customer satisfaction (18% versus 9%).

Aberdeen Insights — Summary

The value of onboarding is something that very few people would dispute, especially given the anticipated increase in hiring as the economy begins to recover. However, for many organizations the role of onboarding needs to change. Given the intense competitive landscape, companies need to do more than provide a basic orientation for their new employees in order to stay ahead. They need to provide opportunities for learning, assimilate them into the organizational culture, and, most importantly, make sure they know exactly how their goals align with the organization and how their performance has an impact. Indeed, companies do need to "capture the hearts" of their employees to the point where that enthusiasm and engagement rubs off on the customer. This is where onboarding shines. When implemented in partnership with the line of business and as part of a larger talent management strategy, onboarding can have a profound impact on business competitiveness. By following the strategies laid out in this report, companies can beef up their onboarding strategies to make a first impression that pays off in measurable profits.

Appendix A: Research Methodology

Between January and February 2010, Aberdeen examined the use, the experiences, and the intentions of more than 450 enterprises in various industries and geographies pertaining to the practice of onboarding.

Aberdeen supplemented this online survey effort with telephone interviews with select survey respondents, gathering additional information on onboarding strategies, experiences, and results.

Responding enterprises included the following:

- **Job title:** The research sample included respondents with the following job titles: CEO / President (10%); EVP / SVP / VP (11%); Director (19%); Manager (33%); Consultant (8%); and other (19%).
- **Department / function:** The research sample included respondents from the following departments or functions: Human Resources / Talent Management (57%); Sales / Marketing (9%); Corporate Management (6%); Information Technology (3%); and other (25%).
- **Industry:** The research sample included respondents from the following industries: education (5%), financial services (8%), government (7%), healthcare (8%), IT / consulting (8%), software (6%), construction (5%), and other (53%).
- **Geography:** The majority of respondents (77%) were from North America. Remaining respondents were from the Asia-Pacific region (11%), Europe (8%), and the Middle-East (4%).
- **Company size:** Thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents were from large enterprises (annual revenues above US \$1 billion); 32% were from midsize enterprises (annual revenues between \$50 million and \$1 billion); and 36% of respondents were from small businesses (annual revenues of \$50 million or less).
- **Headcount:** Half (50%) of respondents were from large enterprises (headcount greater than 1,000 employees); 29% were from midsize enterprises (headcount between 101 and 1,000 employees); and 21% of respondents were from small businesses (headcount between 1 and 100 employees).

Study Focus

Responding executives completed an online survey that included questions designed to determine the following:

- √ The degree to which onboarding is deployed in their operations and the financial implications of the technology
- √ The structure and effectiveness of existing onboarding implementations
- √ Current and planned use of onboarding software to aid operational and promotional activities
- √ The benefits, if any, that have been derived from onboarding initiatives

The study aimed to identify emerging best practices for onboarding, and to provide a framework by which readers could assess their own management capabilities.

Table 7: The PACE Framework Key

Overview
<p>Aberdeen applies a methodology to benchmark research that evaluates the business pressures, actions, capabilities, and enablers (PACE) that indicate corporate behavior in specific business processes. These terms are defined as follows:</p> <p>Pressures — external forces that impact an organization’s market position, competitiveness, or business operations (e.g., economic, political and regulatory, technology, changing customer preferences, competitive)</p> <p>Actions — the strategic approaches that an organization takes in response to industry pressures (e.g., align the corporate business model to leverage industry opportunities, such as product / service strategy, target markets, financial strategy, go-to-market, and sales strategy)</p> <p>Capabilities — the business process competencies required to execute corporate strategy (e.g., skilled people, brand, market positioning, viable products / services, ecosystem partners, financing)</p> <p>Enablers — the key functionality of technology solutions required to support the organization’s enabling business practices (e.g., development platform, applications, network connectivity, user interface, training and support, partner interfaces, data cleansing, and management)</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Table 8: The Competitive Framework Key

Overview	
<p>The Aberdeen Competitive Framework defines enterprises as falling into one of the following three levels of practices and performance:</p> <p>Best-in-Class (20%) — Practices that are the best currently being employed and are significantly superior to the Industry Average, and result in the top industry performance.</p> <p>Industry Average (50%) — Practices that represent the average or norm, and result in average industry performance.</p> <p>Laggards (30%) — Practices that are significantly behind the average of the industry, and result in below average performance.</p>	<p>In the following categories:</p> <p>Process — What is the scope of process standardization? What is the efficiency and effectiveness of this process?</p> <p>Organization — How is your company currently organized to manage and optimize this particular process?</p> <p>Knowledge — What visibility do you have into key data and intelligence required to manage this process?</p> <p>Technology — What level of automation have you used to support this process? How is this automation integrated and aligned?</p> <p>Performance — What do you measure? How frequently? What’s your actual performance?</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Table 9: The Relationship Between PACE and the Competitive Framework

PACE and the Competitive Framework – How They Interact
<p>Aberdeen research indicates that companies that identify the most influential pressures and take the most transformational and effective actions are most likely to achieve superior performance. The level of competitive performance that a company achieves is strongly determined by the PACE choices that they make and how well they execute those decisions.</p>

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2010

Appendix B: Related Aberdeen Research

Related Aberdeen research that forms a companion or reference to this report includes:

- [*Integrated Talent Management: Improving Business Results Through Visibility and Alignment*](#); December 2009
- [*Strategic Workforce Planning: Winning Scenarios for Uncertain Times*](#); January 2010
- [*Learning & Development: Arming Front-line and Mid-level Managers to Deliver People and Performance Results*](#); October 2009
- [*Talent Acquisition Strategies 2009: Cutting through the Clutter and Proactively Managing Quality Candidates*](#); August 2009
- [*Beyond Satisfaction: Engaging Employees to Retain Customers*](#); July 2009
- [*Employee Performance Management: Individual Goals Boost Satisfaction Inside and Out*](#); July 2009
- [*Employer Branding: How to Grow, Measure and Manage Your Company's Perception*](#); April 2009
- [*Assessments in Talent Management: Strategies to Improve Pre- and Post-hire Performance*](#); March 2009
- [*Fully On-Board: Getting the Most from Your Talent in the First Year*](#); January 2009
- [*The 2009 HR Executive's Agenda*](#) December 2008

Information on these and any other Aberdeen publications can be found at www.aberdeen.com.

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