

THE BELONGING PROJECT

Deep senses of Belonging show a massive 56% increase in job performance and a substantial 50% drop in turnover risk.*
Our project focuses on the tactics our clients can use to retain exceptional talent.



Onboarding During A Crisis: 3 Critical Actions For Leaders

Here are the three things we would urge you to invest time in as you bring new people on board at this time – no matter how senior or experienced the new joiner is. Any time saved now by not doing these things will be paid for by increasing the time it takes for them to feel they belong.



Make the time for 1:1 personal conversations on a weekly basis

These can be short calls – it is the frequency and the consistency that are more vital than the length.

The more senior you are, the more impactful this early, consistent interaction will be for accelerating the new joiner's sense of belonging. **5-15 minute** calls are fine.

Ask your new hire **what is going on with their close and extended family during this crisis**. Are there any important family dates coming up? Remembering people's birthdays were mentioned by a number of our interviewees as small but very impactful on their sense of "belonging".

Be empathetic. As one of our interviewees said, "*the best advice when bringing new people in is to spend **more time listening to them than talking at them***".

Be willing to share your own situation, so that the new joiner can feel trusted: "*it is **connecting on a personal level that allows trust to truly open up***". Also, they will be more likely to truly open up if they feel you are too.

This could feel uncomfortable as we wouldn't normally push for this personal information so early. But it will be vital to this **person's success over the next few months**, to feel more psychologically safe², joining your organization at this time.



Establish very short-term goals in the context of your longer-term vision

Our research tells us that we are more likely to feel we belong when **we feel like we are contributing**.

Co-create **short-term goals** with the new joiner, so that you can engender a sense of success and progress.

In the context of the crisis, while 90 day goals still matter, **one week and one month goals** will be vital to accelerating belonging.



Identify, respect and celebrate differences

Our research shows us that the joiners who most quickly feel like **they belong have been listened to, respected and even celebrated** for their "differences": which could be diverse characteristics or not having been "born and bred" in your organization.

Think about the differences that your new joiner may be facing, **ask them about the things that are most on their mind**, and coach and support them to fit into your organization, without having to hide who they are.

Can they be virtually grouped or connected with others who are in similar scenarios or facing similar challenges, **to accelerate an early sense of belonging?**

We started our research into Belonging – the need to be accepted and included by those around you – back in January to support our clients in retaining their exceptional talent. The Belonging Project is grounded in cross-sector research and interviews on the critical roles of recruitment and onboarding in instilling a sense of Belonging.

*These statistics are credited to: <https://hbr.org/2019/12/the-value-of-belonging-at-work>.

Hedley May is a global executive search firm dedicated to finding exceptional talent to transform your executive leadership teams.

From our offices in London and New York, we exclusively specialize in the most senior corporate functional roles for the world's leading organizations.