

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.

Virtual Inductions

In this new era of “virtual inductions”, new joiners will likely feel “newer” for longer. Investing in the following five steps will maximize Belonging for new hires.

■ **Technology:** get it running smoothly before Day One

New employees must have all the technology they will need – *before* Day One. In our virtual reality, nothing will happen without it.

“If you’re a new joiner, technology is vital – I have to work from home, but I wasn’t supplied with a computer or a phone on my first day, which made it incredibly hard to add value or to feel valued!”

Have your systems been adapted for this purpose?

High goodwill is created when a new joiner has a spectacular and seamless Day One.

■ **Mentors:** even more key

Mentors help build trust and psychological safety.

Personal-level connections are inherent to developing senses of Belonging. Virtual new joiners are unable to “bump into” anyone around the office or easily establish informal networks.

Now, more than ever, mentors are critical to create open dialogue.

The “right” mentors for virtual joiners should have broad networks, be organizationally savvy, and be highly empathetic. Their role in boosting the new joiners’ senses of Belonging cannot be underestimated.

■ **Networks:** create new virtual networks

Design virtual networking groups to connect and introduce new hires across the entire business (to peers, stakeholders, functional teams, etc.).

Don’t forget to connect new joiners to other new joiners – they can go through this together.

“Once I had established a network, my value was much greater. It’s like when you wear excellent skiing clothes and they make you a more confident skier.”

■ **Time:** allow more

New joiners will feel new for longer.

You can work hard on virtual integration – but recognize and appreciate too that your new hires will need more time than “normal” to fully integrate.

Make this clear to everyone – guide both the new joiners and the team to adjust expectations.

The high-performing new joiners may be disappointed by their ability to make less impact and to do so less quickly. Reassure them.

■ **Adapt:** be prepared and prepare to adapt

Most organizations have a “typical” induction plan. Seek feedback from your new hires and adapt that plan *with* them for the virtual world.

“It is important to spend more time listening to new joiners than talking at them – induction meetings can feel like information overload when they should be as much about the organization getting to know the individual as the other way around.”

Remember: the new joiner is only having virtual contact.

Who and what needs to be added to the induction schedule (think: recorded messages, gamification, virtual “welcome” drinks, etc.)?

What parts of the traditional orientation can be left behind, at least for now?

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>.