

EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING: AN ANALYSIS OF BEST  
PRACTICE IN EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING AND THEIR  
IMPLEMENTATION IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES  
INDUSTRY IN IRELAND.

By

John O'Brien.

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## **Abstract**

On average an American worker between the age of 18 and 37 will have had 10 jobs (Rollag, Parise & Cross, 2005). This statistic is very interesting. It can be viewed that the average American worker gets bored in his position very quickly. Can this be as a result of bad work practices in employee onboarding? Van Vark (2006) advises us that the cost of employing new people runs between 30% – 40% of base salary. This is a very high cost for companies. The cost is effectively hidden in with the other employment costs of the company. It is rarely highlighted to Senior Management.

Bourdeau (2011) writes about an incident in the onboarding of an employee in the US. The employee was astounded when she arrived to start work on her first day to find that her manager, who had spent months wooing her to join her company, was not in the office for her first week. This astonishment turned to dismay when she found out that she had no office and no computer. The funny fact here is that the company that employed her was in the Human Resource Management world. With onboarding processes like this I am sure that the employee became one of Rollag, et al. (2005) statistics. This also highlights the fact that bad onboarding practices can be inherent, no matter what the industry.

This research will look at the best practices in employee onboarding that are adopted by the leading companies in the world. It will then look to compare these best practices with those practices employed in Financial Services Industry in Ireland today. It will also look into the various tools that make up best practice. The aim of which is to engage the employee quicker and make the employee productive earlier. The feeling of belonging to the organizational citizenship of the company at an early stage, leads employees to attaining this engagement and productivity.

This process is designed to reduce the need to re-hire and therefore reduce the costs of the company, while at the same time increasing the employee's satisfaction with their work life balance. The employee forms a bond of loyalty with the company and thus will engage more effectively and efficiently resulting in a more productive employee (Gallup, 2006).

This research project encompassed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. 8 interviews were carried out with Human Resource Managers from leading companies in the IFSC. Also a survey containing 20 questions was completed by 182 participants from the IFSC.

## **Declaration**

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study, leading to the award of M.A. in Business Administration is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that, such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Student Number: .....

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Onboarding definition**

Collins (2013) defines Onboarding as “the induction and assimilation of a new employee into a company or organisation”. In general terms this definition is adequate, but it does fall short somewhat.

Rollag, et al. (2005) identifies the onboarding process as how managers and organisations quickly transform new hires into productive employees, and calls the process “rapid on-boarding”.

Stimpson (2009) firstly states that the onboarding process is that of “acquiring, accommodating, assimilating and accelerating new team members, whether they come from outside or inside the organization. It is used to refer to the administrative work involved with setting an employee up in a new job or role”. Stimpson (2009) then goes further and states that “the term is broader and is defined as the entire process around recruitment, hiring, and helping the new employee reach full productivity as quickly as possible”.

So for the purposes of this research “Onboarding” will be defined as “the assimilation of a new employee into a company so that the new employee reaches full productivity as early as possible”. Poor onboarding processes can have a negative effect on a company’s bottom line (Van Vark, 2006). Employees who have had a negative experience going through the onboarding process are very likely to leave the company’s employment after a very short period of time. This period of time or as Hill and Trist (1955) calls it the Survival Curve can be different from firm to firm but



is evident in all firms. The slope of the curve is steep in the first few weeks and months and was called the “induction crisis” period. Over the next six months to two years the slope became gentler and this period was called the “differential transit” period.

The company then has all the costs associated with a re-hire for the position. These costs can be both direct and indirect. Direct costs can include costs for advertising, agency fees, doctor’s fees for medical check-up and candidate interview costs. Indirect costs can include unnecessary overtime, loss of production, reduction in performance levels and staff morale may be lower as a result.

Companies are always looking at ways to increase their profitability. There are only 2 ways that this can be done. Either increase sales or reduce costs. If a company has a 10% margin then it needs to increase sales by 10 times that of any reduction in costs to have the same effect on the bottom line. This is why companies keep a tight control on their expenses.

The onboarding process has developed much through the last few decades but particularly since 2000. This may be seen, in part, as a result of the rise in technological developments that have happened (Rollag, et al., 2005). With the invention of computers, the internet and smart phones, information now has more mediums through which it can be distributed.

These developments have put pressure on companies to keep up with the changing times. Companies have had to make changes to their processes on their production lines and in their service centres to embrace new technology. These changes in technology have meant that the set of skills that an average employee must have has

changed too. The average employee must now show on their resume that they have an adequate knowledge of the new technology and how it works, particularly in relation to the industry in which they work.

Companies are now looking at the ways they hire and onboard new employees. With the explosion in the use of social media, companies are looking at ways to utilize this technology in their onboarding processes. Companies are setting up websites and chat rooms for new employees (Schneidermeyer, 2010). The purpose of these tools is so that the new employees can get to know the policies and procedures of the company, know where to go for further details on any issue and also more importantly, to interact with other new employees and other co-workers that they will have a direct working relationship with (Schneidermeyer, 2010).

Saks and Gruman (2011) identify this in their study of 140 university students at the end of their work placements. They found that a more structured onboarding process makes for happier, more confident and stronger employees. The employee believes that they fit both the job and the company and feel more engaged with the company strategy and objectives. This feeling of increased engagement by the employee leads to better employee productivity and a reduction in the turnover rate for the company. In short, companies that want to have quicker and enhanced engagement and productivity from their new employees, coupled with the associated cost reductions, should have effective onboarding higher up on their strategic agendas (Day & Fedele, 2012).

This research project will seek to examine employee onboarding in the context of the Irish Financial Services firms located in the IFSC in Dublin. This research project encompassed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. 8 interviews were carried out with Human Resource Managers from leading companies in the IFSC. Also a survey containing 20 questions was completed by 182 participants from the IFSC.

The results identified a number of elements that help to make up best practice such as introductory meetings, buddy systems, mentoring systems, coaching plans and social networking technology. The issue of when the onboarding process should start was also an item that warranted discussion with the HR Managers.

Chapter 2 deals with the review of relevant literature in order to identify the elements that other companies are utilizing worldwide as part of their onboarding process. This will lead to the identification of best practice. Chapter 3 outlines the aims and objectives of this research project while Chapter 4 deals with the various research methodologies and identifies those methodologies being utilised in this research project. Chapter 5 and 6 sets out an analysis of the data from the HR Manager interviews and the employee's questionnaire. Chapter 7 discusses the conclusions of the analysis and references them to the original literature review.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

In order to prepare the researcher for the gathering of the data and taking the interviews, the researcher must look at all the available literature on the onboarding process that is employed in some of the leading companies in the world as well as in the financial services companies in Ireland.

The researcher has reviewed the literature under a number of headings, including onboarding prevalence, success quantification and what is included in the onboarding process.

### ***2.2 How prevalent is onboarding?***

Aberdeen Group's first report in 2006 entitled Onboarding Benchmark Report identified only 40% of all organisations having a formal onboarding strategy. This number grew to 62% in Aberdeen Group's (2008) report. Their expectation was that in 2009 this figure would grow to 77%.

Three drivers were identified for this increase namely;

New employee retention - 70%

New employee productivity - 53%

Company reputation in recruiting top talent – 41%

These drivers changed over time. Aberdeen Group's (2006) report identifies productivity as the number 1 driver in 2006, while in 2008 it changed to employee retention.

Aberdeen Group's (2006) report is based on a survey of over 600 HR professionals, in a wide variety of industries (largest being aerospace at 17%), with 55% located in North America and the balance in the UK and Asia-Pacific region. The companies are all large, 37% with annual revenue above \$1 Billion, 29% with revenue between \$50Million and \$1 Billion and 34% below \$50Million.

### ***2.3 Quantifying a successful onboarding process.***

Aberdeen Group's (2011) report identifies that onboarding processes should be rated on the level of success. The success has to be measurable. Aberdeen Group measured it under 3 categories; employee retention, new hires' work performance, hiring managers satisfaction ratings.

Looking at these 3 categories only, they averaged the top 20% of all figures gathered in their research. They came up with what they called "Best In Class" criteria for organisations;

- 96% of first year employees were retained
- 82% of employees hired within the last 12 months attained their first performance milestones on time
- 18% year over year improvement in hiring manager satisfaction ratings.

This implies that if an organisation meets these criteria it would be regarded as best in class and that its onboarding process is successful.

#### ***2.4 What should be included in onboarding processes?***

Amour (2000) cites a Harvard study that identifies that 80% of employee turnover is as a result of mistakes in the hiring phase and the reason for this is mainly attributable to new employees not fitting in with the culture of the company. On the realization of this issue, companies are now more focused on ensuring that the onboarding process includes information about the company's culture. This should be followed by enough reinforcement so that the new employees can understand it and can fit in with it (Garger, 1999).

Silkroad Technology Inc. is a talent management solutions company based in Winston Salem North Carolina USA. It has offices throughout the world and is regarded as a leader in the field of onboarding solutions. Silkroad (2009) point to 7 elements that need to be contained in an onboarding process for it to be successful;

- Start before day 1
- Socialise.

- Extend beyond day 1.
- Assign a Mentor / Buddy
- Get manager involved
- Measure the success
- Automate the process

Each of these 7 elements will be looked at individually.

### ***2.4.1 Start before day 1***

Tradition has dictated companies to start their onboarding process when the new employee comes through the front door on their first day of employment. The employee will be very anxious wondering what their first few days will be like. If this anxiety was in some way alleviated by providing the employee the ability to have advance access to the information that they will be looking for in their first few days, the employee will feel more positive in their position. Friedman (2006) highlights that preparation is one of the key tasks in the onboarding process. It is in the period between acceptance of the position and the start of employment that this preparation should begin.

The idea of including staff, that have not actually started with the company in team planning and communications meetings can seem at first to be a bit “off the wall” but with further consideration is a very good concept (Bradt & Vonnegut, 2010). This idea may not suit all companies for reasons of confidentiality. But these issues can be and sometimes are addressed within the employee’s contract of employment.

### ***2.4.2 Socialise***

Onboarding programs help new employees socialize into the company and “get them up to speed” (Lee, 2006). One of the first recognized papers on socialization was Van Maanen and Schein (1979) in which they identified socialization as a process where an employee can acquire the traits needed to be a successful participant in a new organisation. These traits include attitude, behaviour and knowledge.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) went further and identified 6 dimensions of socialization tactics of an organisation. The six dimensions are;

1. Collective vs individual socialization processes
2. Formal vs informal
3. Sequential vs variable
4. Fixed vs variable
5. Serial vs disjunctive
6. Investiture vs divestiture

Saks and Gruman, (2011) argue that there is a relationship between socialization tactics and higher levels of engagement in newcomers. They state that these higher levels are because “institutionalized socialization tactics provide new hires with the



information, guidance, direction and social support they need to experience meaningfulness, safety and availability”.

Making newcomers feel that they are part of the team or the family, whichever way the company refers to its staff, is vital to the engagement of the newcomer. Socialising newcomers is therefore an important part of the onboarding process. It is therefore incumbent on the company to providing events that make this happen.

Buchanan (2010) identifies some unusual events that are focused on getting newcomers to meet and socialize with the other staff. They include a run up and down the steps in Harvard Stadium by the newcomers to Gentle Giant a moving company based in Somerville, Massachusetts, newcomers serving coffee and doughnuts from a cart to everyone at CXtec, a data networking company headquartered in Syracuse, New York.

These socializing events are designed to transform strangers into friends as quickly as possible and to show the culture of the company to newcomers. Some might think these events are akin to rites or rituals that would be part of an induction process into a university fraternity, a religious order or even the military. In these organisations each individual feeling as being part of the whole group is vital to the success of the organisation. It is very successful in these organisations and therefore can be very successful in companies (Buchanan, 2010).

### ***2.4.3 Extend beyond day 1***

Savitt, (2012) identifies Norton Healthcare's approach to onboarding that has 3 phases. The first stage lasts for 1 week and is purely an introductory process of the new employee to the organisation. The second phase is from the first week to 30 days and focuses on the company's clients. The third phase extends from 30 days to 90 days. This last stage helps new employees deal with the stresses of the job, establishing a work / life balance and creating their own personal and professional plan for their career in the company.

### ***2.4.4 Assign a Mentor / Buddy***

Loveland (2012) identifies that the purpose of his Buddy Program in Disney is to help Cast Members become more comfortable in their new role in a shorter period of time. It provides a one-point access to questions about the company, its culture, its procedures and policies and provides support, advice and encouragement for newcomers.

A number of companies use this buddy system and Rigby (2008) identifies leading companies such as Google and Innocent and other consultancy companies like Penna that extol the virtues of buddy systems in onboarding processes.

#### ***2.4.5 Get manager involved***

It is important that managers get to meet newcomers at a very early stage in the onboarding process. This can be done in conjunction with having an event to get the staff and newcomers together. Managers should attend and speak at these meetings. They can be the conveyers of the culture and ethos of the company. They can let newcomers know what is expected from them and what management and staff will do to help them acclimatize to the structures of the company (Bradt & Vonnegut, 2010).

#### ***2.4.6 Measure the success***

In order to measure the success of the onboarding process feedback on the process is required. Feedback both from new employees who are going through the onboarding process and those that have just completed it, should be gathered. This feedback needs to be reviewed and looked at objectively. Items relating to parts of the onboarding process that require improvement, will be easily identifiable.

Bourdeau (2011) identifies that Birchwood holds lunches for those employees that have completed their 90 day onboarding process. During the lunch feedback is requested and gathered. They have found this process to be very successful with many issues identified that were easily fixable.

#### ***2.4.7 Automate the process***

Salesforce.com Inc. is a global enterprise software company based in San Francisco, California. They utilise a software program as part of their onboarding process. It is a

collaborative application that they call Chatter. It is essentially like a social media board. It helps people get connected with other team members. Each new hire is part of a Chatter Group that is cross functional. It includes team members from various groups such as IT, finance, sales operations and from locations across the globe. It provides a forum for discussion, ideas, networking and solutionising (Schneidermeyer, 2010).

### ***2.5 Mistakes to avoid***

Vernon (2012) identifies 5 commonly made mistakes when it comes to effective onboarding processes employed by companies.

- Failing to engage employees on the first day;
- Failing to articulate clear responsibilities;
- Failing to address cultural fit;
- Failing to link onboarding to desired skills;
- Failing to deliver feedback early and often;

### ***2.5.1 Failing to engage employees on the first day***

The first day should not just be used as a reading session on compliance documentation; the first day should also show how the new employee can become a valued team member.

### ***2.5.2 Failing to articulate clear responsibilities***

Identify each of the repeatable tasks that are required of the new employee. Identify how these tasks are managed, how each task relates to the overall higher level objectives and the parameters for successful completion. Bell & Kozlowski (2002) identifies that clear direction and goals enhance individual self-regulation and enables team members to monitor their own performance.

### ***2.5.3 Failing to address cultural fit***

O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, (1991) discuss the importance of understanding the fit between individuals' preferences and organizational cultures. Consistent discussion and reinforcement of the company's culture is required to be provided by the employee's management so that the employee understands the way the company works, the jargon employed and the reasoning for company events. In a 2010 interview with Forbes magazine Zappo's CEO Tony Hsieh is quoted as saying "If you get the culture right, than a lot of really amazing things happen on their own".

#### ***2.5.4 Failing to link onboarding to desired skills***

Identify exactly what skills the new employee needs to master to be successful and then working backwards ensure that those skills are included in the onboarding process.

#### ***2.5.5 Failing to deliver feedback early and often***

Scientists agree that it can take 90 days to form a habit, 21 days to break a habit and 40 days to change a bad habit into a positive one (Maltz, 1960). The onboarding process tries to make the workplace tasks into habitual behaviours. So it is therefore important to identify at an early stage where bad habits are developing and request employees to tweak their behaviours that do not support success. This process should begin from day 1 and be consistent and periodic throughout the onboarding process.

If mistakes like these are made then the employee just becomes one of Garger (1999)'s 80% statistics and leaves the company.

With the cost of re-employment large percentages of the salary cost it is imperative for the company that these mistakes are avoided or else the company's bottom-line is directly affected (Van Vark, 2006).

### ***2.6 Conclusions of Literature Review***

This chapter has looked at the various elements that impact, both positively and negatively on the process of onboarding employees into a company. It has identified positive elements, such as Buddy programs, Mentor / Coaching programs, introductory meetings should all form part of the process. It also identifies new technologies like, social networking, should be utilised by companies to help communication among their staff. This is particularly true for their new recruits, as these are the technologies that are used as part of new recruits' everyday lives.

## **Chapter 3: Research Project Aims and Objectives**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

This chapter identifies the aims and objectives of the researcher in this research project.

The aims and objectives are to;

- Identify the latest onboarding tools and techniques that are employed by leading companies throughout the world. This identification will be made researching applicable literature written on this matter. Research papers, industry journals, books and periodicals will be utilised for this review.
- Explore if the financial services companies in the IFSC are aware of these latest tools and techniques. This assertion will be made during interviews with the HR Managers of a number of the IFSC companies.
- If the companies are aware of these latest tools and techniques, to find out if these tools and techniques are utilised by financial services companies in the IFSC. This will be identified both through the HR Manager interviews as well as the employee surveys.
- If the companies are not utilising these latest tools and techniques, explore why they are not being utilised. This will be ascertained during interviews with the HR Managers of a number of the IFSC companies.



- Ascertain what tools are utilised by the IFSC companies in their current onboarding process. This will be ascertained during interviews with the HR Managers of a number of the IFSC companies.
- Explore if the IFSC companies intend to amend their processes to include these researched tools, maybe in light of this research project. This will be ascertained during interviews with the HR Managers of a number of the IFSC companies.

### ***3.2 Expected outcomes***

It is the researcher's hypothesis that some but not all of the techniques that are utilised in some of the leading companies throughout the world are not utilised in the IFSC companies in Dublin. This hypothesis has been gained through working in the IFSC for the last 20 years and dealing with new employees and HR groups in a number of the IFSC companies.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter deals with the research methodology and the research tools employed in this research project and provides an explanation of the choice of methodology and the reasons for choosing each particular research instrument. It looks at the use of quantitative and qualitative research and the pros and cons that go with each.

The use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, as research tools is reviewed to see where the academic theories are identifiable in this research project.

Collins, (2013) defines Research as the “systematic investigation to establish facts or principles or to collect information on a subject”. Horn (2009) advises that it is important to identify the aims and objectives of a research project as these will point the researcher to the most appropriate methodologies that should be chosen to help conduct the research.

The Research Methodology is the corner stone of the research project. Collins & Hussey (2009) advise that the methodology is “an approach to the process of the research encompassing a body of methods”.

## ***4.2 Interviews***

There are advantages and disadvantages of all types of research methods. The researcher has chosen to conduct interviews with some of the HR managers in the IFSC because it provides two main advantages. Firstly, the interviewee can express themselves more than during a limited questionnaire and secondly, the interview allows for feedback and interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 1997). If the interviewee is willing, the answers can lead on to more probing questions around specific areas of the topic question.

The direct, face-to-face interviews with the HR managers will also give the researcher the ability to see the body-language of the interviewee. The interviewee's behaviour, particularly when it comes to non-verbal communication can demonstrate the true feeling of the interviewee at particular points or questions in an interview.

Sometimes on questionnaires a question can be misunderstood. The researcher does not have the ability to know about this misunderstanding. But during a face-to-face interview the researcher will know if the question has been misunderstood and can ask the question again in a different way.

For a successful research project Patton (1990, pg. 169) claims that qualitative study typically focuses on relatively small samples, selected purposefully. It is therefore important to identify the correct people to conduct interviews with. The researcher has identified HR Managers from a number of financial services companies as interviewees.

### ***4.3 Questionnaires***

Ghuri & Gronhaug (2005, pg. 124) defines a questionnaire as a method of data collection to record verbal behaviour. They continue and state that a survey is an effective tool to gather opinions, attitudes and descriptions.

Quinlan (2011) identifies a questionnaire as a structured means of gathering data. McColl (1993) goes further and advises that a questionnaire is a highly structured method to collect data from many respondents in response to the same questions. It is a very direct way of obtaining the data.

The use of questionnaires has major advantages for the researcher. They are very cost effective and can be sent out at the same time to all the intended recipients.

Questionnaires can also be a preferential method of data collection for the respondent. They do not need to be completed straight away and therefore the respondent can pick the best time to complete the questionnaire. Bailey (1987) argues that this is a positive factor when the respondent can delay his completion as he may be unwell, stressed or tired. Feelings of being unwell, stressed or tired can have a negative effect on a person's reasoning ability, and therefore the replies may be affected.

The researcher will utilise some closed ended questions as described by (Quinlan, 2011). They will only require short responses e.g. YES/ NO. They will be utilised to

ascertain if various elements form part of their employer's onboarding process. These will be supplemented with questions that ask the respondents to rate the effectiveness of various elements. The Likert scale will be used for these responses. The Likert Scale is an approach to scaling responses in survey research. The scale is a 7 point scale with the answers ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (Likert, 1932).

#### ***4.4 Focus groups***

The researcher looked at the possibility of utilizing focus groups to ascertain the research data. The idea of Focus groups dates back to the 1950s. A Focus group is defined as a recorded discussion with four or more individuals around the topic. It allows the researcher to gather a number of opinions at one time within a group situation (Horn, 2009). Quinlan (2011) identified Focus groups as a means to gather new knowledge and new insights. According to Zikmund (2000) focus groups tend to be quite unstructured but the dialogue can be free flowing.

One of the disadvantages of Focus groups is their lack of confidentiality (Williams, 1998). There is also a tendency for dominant behaviour to materialize. This dominant behaviour upsets the free flow of information and can lead to other participants not participating in the topic discussion.

It is on the basis of these disadvantages that the researcher decided not to utilise Focus groups as a research method in this research project.

#### ***4.5 Ethical Considerations***

Horn (2009) identifies that the research performed should do no harm and in fact should do some good and that this should be the main objective from an ethical standard. The researcher ensured that all guidelines around confidentiality and ethics are followed throughout the research project.

Jankowicz (2004) states that ethical issues must be considered by the researcher to ensure that the work meets a high standard. One of the aims of having the survey pilot tested was to check that it was politically and ethically correct in its language. Saunders et al (2009) warns that the researcher's behaviour must be appropriate when dealing with the individuals that become part of the research project.

#### ***4.6 Research Methods employed***

To reach the objectives of this research project the researcher decided to utilize a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research for this research project. The thought behind this is that by using the two research methods, the results will be more comprehensive than just using one research method (Yauch and Steudel, 2003, p.465).

The IFSC contains over 500 companies who employ in excess of 32,700 staff. Contact was made with 26 Human Resource Managers in companies in the IFSC. These were selected from various directories and listings that were available to the researcher. The employee questionnaire was limited to the employees of the company for which the HR Managers were employed. As these companies are all financial services companies the employee questionnaire was completed by financial services professionals.

#### ***4.6.1 Qualitative Research Methods employed***

The qualitative research would be obtained by documented, recorded semi- structured interviews with the HR manager of a number of the companies in the IFSC as described by Yauch and Steudel, (2003).

In order to help the HR Managers get a briefing on the questions being asked, a Topic list would be provided to the HR manager in advance of the agreed interview date (Fisher, 2004). (See Appendix I). This provided the HR Manager with enough time to prepare the answers for the interview.

The questions in the Topic list are based on literature research that was conducted to ascertain the latest onboarding tools that are employed in leading companies around the world.

The researcher felt that some of the latest onboarding tools would not be employed in the companies in the IFSC, but felt that by the very fact of identifying them in the Topic list, the HR managers would want to sit down and discuss them. This would provide an opportunity for the researcher to achieve the objectives of the research project.

The questions in the HR Manager Topic list are open and would therefore provide the HR Manager with the leeway to provide as much detail as they wished. As the questions would provide the base line for the conversation it was anticipated that the conversation would be broader than just the questions documented. Again this would provide the researcher additional data that can be utilized in the analysis and conclusions.

#### ***4.6.1.1 Sampling***

In order to identify HR Managers that the researcher wanted to interview, a number of avenues were taken to find the contact details of these people. The IFSC has an online portal that houses a directory of the Companies that are present in the IFSC. This portal does not house the contact details of the HR Managers in each of these



companies that are identified. Contact was made with the host of the portal to ascertain if a list of the HR Managers contacts was available and if so, if that list was a public document that could be distributed. The host confirmed that it was not their policy to provide contact details.

The companies in the IFSC come from a number of industry sectors. Some of these industry sectors have their own associations. Contact was made with two of these associations that represent a large number of companies in the IFSC. One of these associations confirmed that it was also their policy not to provide member contact details to the public. The other association maintains a website. From viewing the website it was noted that there was a particular committee that dealt with HR Management. The website provided a list of the committee members' names and companies but no contact details. The website also identified the chairperson of the committee. The researcher made contact with the chairperson of the committee and advised him of the topic of the research being conducted and asked if there was a contact list for the members of the committee that could be provided. The chairperson confirmed that it was not the policy of the association or the committee to provide these details. He advised that he would contact each member of the committee requesting approval to provide the researcher with their contact details. The chairperson subsequently sent a list with the contact details of the committee members who agreed to the provision of their contact details.

In total 30 requests were sent to HR Managers. Of these there were 10 replies. Of the replies 8 were willing to be interviewed and 2 were not. One of these 2 had moved

roles and was now located in London and was not able to help with the research. The other advised that their company was at the preliminary stage of implementing a global onboarding programme and, as a result, believed it is too early to participate in the research. In total 8 interviews were arranged. The response rate to the original interview request was very low. This was despite a second email chaser being sent 5 days following the original email request.

In all cases the interviews took place on the premises of the interviewee. With the exception of one interview, all the interviews took place in the private office of the HR Manager. This ensured privacy and confidentiality for the interviewer and the interviewee.

In the case of the one exception, the interview took place at a table in the canteen that was located in a corner of the room. This interview was held at 4pm and therefore there were not many people around and the canteen was very quiet. For the duration of the interview, only one person walked close by the table that the interview was being conducted at.

The interviewees were all female with the exception of one that was male. They were all in the 35 – 45 age bracket with between 3 and 20 years of experience in the Human Resources field. Some of the interviewees were in the financial services industry their whole career. But others had moved between industries with accountancy, technology and insurance being the main industries worked in.

Before the start of each interview, the interviewee's consent was requested to record the conversation. In all cases the interviewees agreed to the recording of the conversation. The recording was made on a digital device. These recordings are available on the attached CD. Each interview has a separate file on the CD identified by a numbering system.

The researcher also informed each of the interviewees that if they felt uncomfortable answering one or more of the questions from an ethical or any other perspective, those questions could remain unanswered or the interview could be terminated. All interviewees acknowledged that they were comfortable to proceed. All the interviewees responded to the entire list of questions on the HR Manager Topic List.

The interviews ranged in duration from 8 minutes to 31minutes. The average interview was 21 minutes. The interviewee for the shortest interview, that of 8 minutes seemed very rushed and the researcher felt that the interviewee would have preferred to be somewhere else. Just like all the other interviews, at the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the interviewee for their time and attention.

#### ***4.6.2 Quantitative Research Methods employed***

The quantitative research method encompassed a questionnaire with 20 questions. See Appendix II. The questions in the questionnaire are based on literature research

that was conducted to ascertain the latest onboarding tools that are employed in companies around the world.

During the HR Manager interviews the researcher requested if a survey could be conducted of their company's new employees to ascertain their perspective on their company's onboarding process. As an incentive to the HR Manager to engage with the researcher and the research project, if the HR Manager's company allowed the researcher to survey its staff, the researcher would provide the option of feedback from the employee questionnaire. This would only be provided on the basis of employee anonymity in the feedback to the company. The company would only see the feedback from their employees as a group as well as the whole questionnaire group.

In each case the HR Manager preferred that the survey be sent directly to them. They needed to seek approval from their management to send the survey around. Employee anonymity would be guaranteed with respect to feedback to the employers and within the entire research project published documentation. Following each of the HR Manager interviews the questionnaire was sent to the HR Manager requesting them to forward the survey on to their new staff.

The Employee Questionnaire consists of 20 questions. Some questions will have YES / NO answers and some questions will be answered on a 1-7 scale based on the Likert Scale.

The Likert Scale is an approach to scaling responses in survey research. It was invented by the eminent psychologist Rensis Likert in 1932. The scale is a 7 point scale with the answers ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (Likert, 1932).

#### ***4.6.3. Drafting the questionnaire and its structure***

The researcher decided to utilise an online survey generation tool to house the questionnaire. The online survey tool allowed the researcher to mix closed ended questions with both questions that required the Likert scale for answering and those questions that required a narrative answer.

This tool also helped with the generation of the answer templates, providing the respondent with direction on the systematic responses allowable in the survey. The tool received and housed all of the responses. The tool also collated the responses for each of the questions.

#### ***4.6.4. Piloting the questionnaire***

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) advise the use of a pilot survey. They state that it will confirm ease of completing for the individual taking the survey.

With the questionnaire complete the researcher undertook a pilot survey to confirm that the questions were easily read, that they were free of any grammatical errors and

that it was politically and ethically correct in its language. The pilot was taken by 5 individuals. The researcher also wanted to make sure that there was a thorough understanding of the questions. The feedback from this pilot survey was that the questions needed to have more definition. This was particularly identified with the questions around the buddy program, mentoring, coaching and social media. The feedback advised that a definition should be attached to those questions to ensure that the individual who was undertaking the survey understood the terms being utilised. The feedback gave the researcher an understanding of the length of time required to complete the survey. This was deemed by the individuals as not excessive.

Amendments were made to the questionnaire adding detailed definition of the relevant terms, as requested by the pilot testers.

Saunders et al (2009) also advise that during a pilot survey the data captured should be analyzed to ensure that it meets the needs of the researcher in that it can properly support the outcome of the research. This was done by the researcher with the 5 pilot answers and the researcher deemed that the data capture would meet the researcher's needs in this research project.

#### ***4.6.5 Treatment of the data collected***

Each of the HR Manager interviews was recorded. The recordings were made on a digital device. These recordings are available on the attached CD. Each interview has

a separate file on the CD identified by a numbering system. Also the data collected from the questionnaire survey was collated and is also available on the attached CD – Appendix III.

## **Chapter 5: Data Analysis of HR Manager Interviews**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

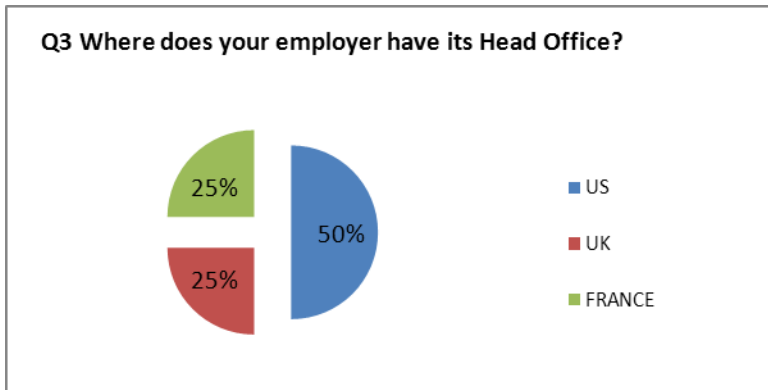
This chapter deals with each of the HR Managers interviews. It describes the background to each of the interviews and highlights the main points that the interviewees made during each of the interviews. It will show the results of the analysis of the data collected.

At the start of each interview the researcher advised the interviewee of the definition the term “Onboarding” that was being used in this research project, so that the interviewee was aware of the context of each of the topic questions. This definition was printed on the top of the Topic list for the interviewee’s ease of reference.

### ***5.2 Employer details***

Getting the interviews started, Questions 1, 2 and 3 requested some demographic information of the interviewee which put the interviewees at ease. All interviewees are employed by companies who operate overseas. 50% have their Head Office operations in the United States while the balance was spread throughout Europe. Again with the exception of one, all the companies have staff numbers in the 1001+ category.





### ***5.3 Onboarding process***

Questions 4 and 5 identify if the employer had a process in place and how long the process is in place. The interviewees all responded positively to having an onboarding process in place. The average length of time that the companies had their onboarding process in place is almost 6 1/2 years. This seems a little short considering Rollag was writing about the process in 2005, 8 years ago. The researcher investigated the interviewee’s answers further, referencing back to the interview notes and the interview recording and identified that the answers spread the length of time that each process was in place from 18 months to over 15 years. The researcher decided to clarify the answer of “18 months” as this answer was having a major determination on the calculation of the average number of years. Contact was made with the interviewee and the interviewee confirmed that the answer of “18 months” was indeed correct as she had put the process in place shortly after he starting with the company.

### ***5.4 Who put process in place, why and how***

Questions 6, 7 and 8 all revolve around how and why the onboarding process was put in place, and which groups were instrumental in its setup.

Most of the interviewees stated that the reason why the process was put in place was one or more of the following;

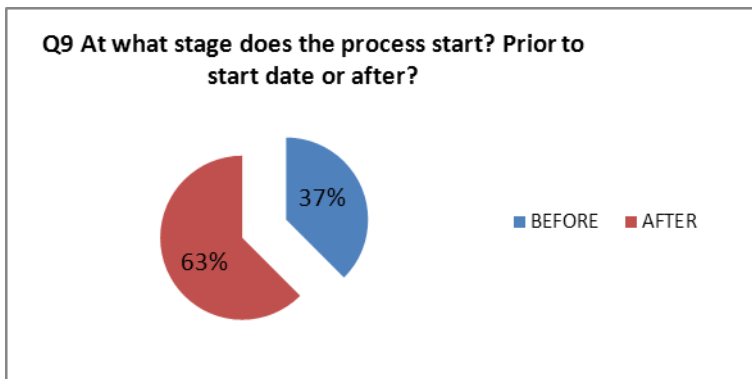
- to ensure that new employees settle into the company well,
- to get new employees effective and productive earlier than before,
- to give the new employees a good introduction to the company.
- exit interviews identifying that there was no onboarding process
- that there was no new employee onboarding process in place prior to being employed by the company.

38% of the interviewees stated that the process was led by either one of the Line of Business or the Human Resource groups, while 62% stated that it was a collaboration between these 2 groups. It was noted from the responses that not all the lines of business treated the process with the same amount of importance. It was down to the individual manager that ran the line of business. If he/she thought that the process was worthwhile, then he/she would invest the time and effort in the process. Other managers, who thought the opposite, would only engage with the process to a much lesser degree.

### 5.5 When does process start

Question 9 asked if the onboarding process started before or after the employee's starting date. 63% of the interviewees advised that the process started only after the employee's start date, while 37% advised that the process started before. On further investigation by the researcher, the 38% used the time between offering a candidate the position and the start date to go through an employee verification process, where the employee's work history was checked with their previous employers. The period was not used by an employer to give the employee a background to the ethos or the culture of the company or to provide the new employee with further details, ie process flows, policies, procedures of the position the new employee was taking up. This was in all cases provided on or after the start date.

The researcher probed this further to ascertain why this was the case. 75% of the interviewees said that this was from a confidentiality perspective, with 25% stating that it was not in their HR procedure.



### ***5.6 Buddy/Mentor/Coach/Lunchmate/social technology elements***

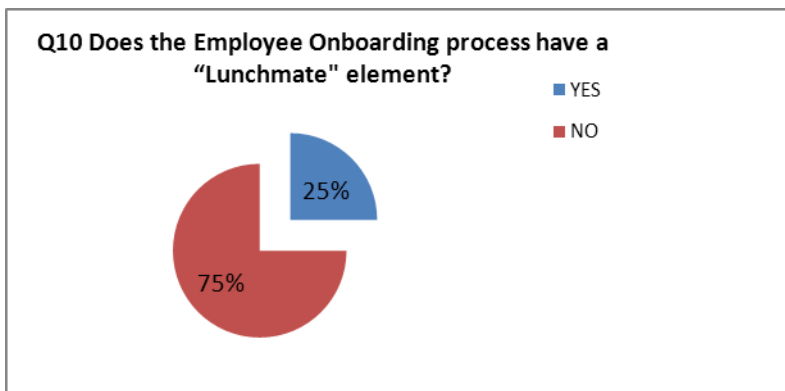
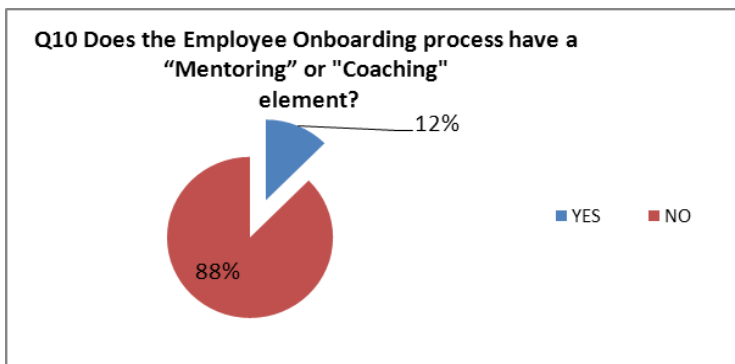
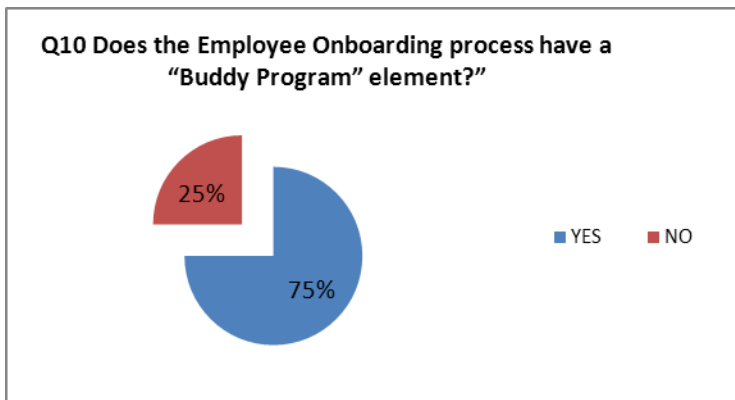
Questions 10 and 11 tried to identify if some of the elements identified through the researcher's literary review formed part of the onboarding process in the interviewee's company. 75% of the interviewees advised that the "Buddy" element was utilised in their companies for periods of up to 60 days. One of the interviewees stated "... that a lot of the managers did not allocate buddies correctly, that it was usually the last person employed in the group that became the buddy for the next recruit".

25% identified that a "Lunchmate" element was part of their process, but only for short periods and for lower level employees. Only 12% of the interviewees advised that they had a "Mentor" or "Coaching" element as part of their process. On further investigation by the researcher these elements were only utilised for new senior executives.

Interestingly, a further one of the interviewees stated that ... "their employer had utilised the "Coaching" element when the economy was in a better position and the company was more profitable". The researcher explored this further to see if this would change in the future. The interviewee stated "... that I expect that this element would be utilised when the economy gets better".

In relation to social networking technology question, none of the interviewee's companies utilised this technology. One interviewee advised that there was a trial going on in its head office where this would be provided. It was not clear yet how it would work and who would be involved and who would be able to access it. When the researcher advised that from his research he identified a large technology

company that provided this type of collaborative tool, almost all of the interviewees commented that it would be very worthwhile for their companies particularly with the younger recruits who would be acquainted with that type of technology in their normal daily lives as a means of communication. One interviewee stated "... that will all the communication over social media nowadays, it would have to be utilised more in the business world".



### ***5.7 Introductory Meeting element***

Question 12 asked if the company had any introductory meetings or gatherings for the new employees. 88% of the interviewees responded positively to this question. The process around these meetings varied from company to company. Some of the companies would have a structured meeting on the new employee's first day. Others, predominately larger companies would have the introductory meeting monthly or quarterly. This would be dependent on the number of new employees that have been taken into the company in the period. One interviewee stated "... that their introductory meetings were rated the best part of their onboarding process".

The meetings would usually be over lunch or breakfast and the new employees would meet with the heads of the lines of business in the company. The heads of the lines of business would give a presentation on their line of business and how it would interact with the new employees. The ethos or culture of the company would also be explained to the new employees. In each of the positive responses to this question, the interviewee advised that the meetings were as informal as possible so that the new employee would be put at ease.

12% of the interviewees advised that if the new employee had been assigned a "Buddy", the buddy would also be present at the meeting. This was done to ensure that the new employee had someone to go to if they did not fully understand the culture and ethos of the company. This was considered by the company to be a very important aspect to the meeting.

## ***5.8 Gathering feedback and measurement***

Questions 13 and 14 tried to identify if the company requested feedback from the new employee to measure the success of the onboarding process. And if so, how was it performed, what was measured, who gets the information and what is it used for. Of the interviewees, 62% confirmed that they did seek feedback from new employees on their company's onboarding process, 12% advised that this feedback was only sought at exit interview stage following the employee's resignation.

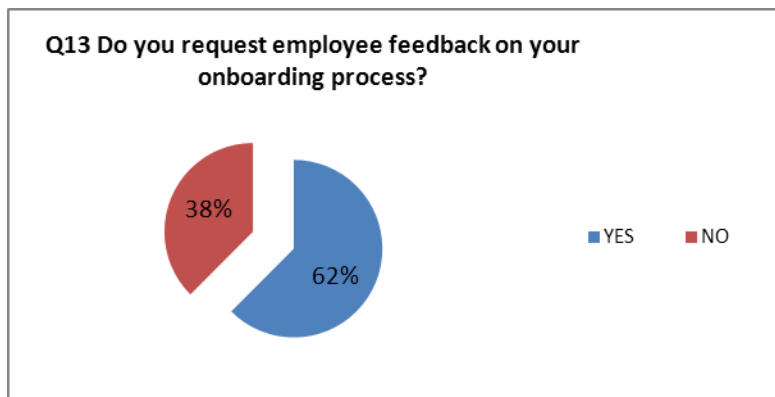
The 25% of the interviewees that did look for feedback advised that the feedback was sought in different ways and after varying periods. In some cases it was after the probationary period was completed and in other cases it was at a fixed period ranging from 30 days to 90 days after the new employee's starting date depending on the new employee's level within the company. The collection of the feedback was mainly in a survey form, with some having informal face to face meetings to ascertain the information.

In 75% of the cases the process of gathering the feedback was led by the Human Resource department. The balance was a collaboration between the Lines of Business and the Human Resource department. When the Human resource department was the only group involved in the gathering of the feedback, the results of the feedback were passed on to the lines of business. In general, this was a very informal process.

12% of the interviewees had a more formal process. It was led by the Human Resource group and the levels of satisfaction were measure in a survey. New employees were requested to rate their levels of satisfaction on a 5 point scale. The surveys were analyzed by the Human Resource group and reports were sent to senior

management quarterly. The reports were split by lines of business and therefore senior management could compare the new employee satisfaction levels across the lines of business. The interviewee stated "...that the results, quarter after quarter, were always very good and therefore questioned how valid the results really were". The interviewee spoke about the candidness of the new employees when completing the surveys and the fact that they were looking for a "more robust means of gathering the information".

In general the suggestions that were received in the process were investigated to see how viable they were for the company. A lot of the suggestions revolved around having more social gatherings and employee attended events. These suggestions were looked at in light of the economic climate at the time and how the company's profitability. Viable suggestions were then brought forward before senior management to decide if the suggestion would be adopted.



### ***5.9 HR Management tool or other***

Question 15 tried to identify if the interviewee considered the onboarding process as an important Human Resource Management tool. While 100% of the interviewees



agreed that the process is very important, 63% stated that the tool should not just be viewed as a Human Resource tool, but as the lines of business are included and sometimes take the lead, the process should be seen as a management process across all groups within a company. One interviewee stated "... that the process should not be seen as a HR tool but a line of business tool".



### ***5.10 Poor experience implication***

Question 16 tried to get the interviewee's view on the effect that a poor onboarding process can have on an employee, would an employee, if the process was felt to be so bad, start looking elsewhere for other opportunities. 87% of the interviewees agreed emphatically that this would be the case, while 13% disagreed. One of the interviewees that agreed stated "... that she had personal experience of the situation". Her experience in the onboarding process was so negative that she decided "straight away to search for another opportunity".

The one interviewee who disagreed stated that "there was no evidence in any of the feedback received, that they were involved in, that clearly identified this as being the reason to search for another opportunity".

### ***5.11 What should be included***

The last question, number 17, was an open question requesting the interviewees' thoughts on what elements should form part of an effective onboarding process. All the interviewees provided a lot of feedback on the question. The main topics identified in their responses were as follows;

- Process should start as soon as role advertised with clear definition of the responsibilities and requirements for the role.
- Importance of employee feeling that the company is taking an interest in advance of the start date.
- Provision of HR related policies and procedures for review
- Logistics around premises, team location, desk location and systems accesses etc.
- Utilization of the “Buddy” system for an initial period
- Cultural overview of the company to be explained thoroughly
- Company business model to be explained thoroughly
- Ensure appropriate time commitment by new employee's manager and team
- Identification and clarification of success factors for new employee's role.
- Management plan for each new employee from start date up to agreed period end

- Meet with all groups in the company to understand their purpose in the company
- Meet and spend time with “key players” in the groups where the new employee will have direct interaction, to build the relationships at an early stage
- Ongoing contact and review of how the new employee is getting on in the role.
- Provision of feedback to the new employee “early and often” to ensure they are on the right track.
- Provision of a confidential means for the new employee to provide feedback on the onboarding process
- Measure the success of the process in terms that can be reported to senior management
- Forget the “sink or swim” culture

### ***5.12 Conclusions of data analysis***

From the interviews the researcher has learned that the responses from the HR Manager sample are fairly consistent across the various elements from the literature review. They understand the elements that make up a good onboarding process but not all the elements are employed by their companies. This can be put down to time, effort and cost. It takes a lot of effort to either have the process set up or liaise with the lines of business for them to put them in place. The costs of some of the elements

can be prohibitive, particularly as companies grow and do not have relevant budgets approved. Or the budgets can be cut when the economy is going through a bad phase.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis of Employee Questionnaires**

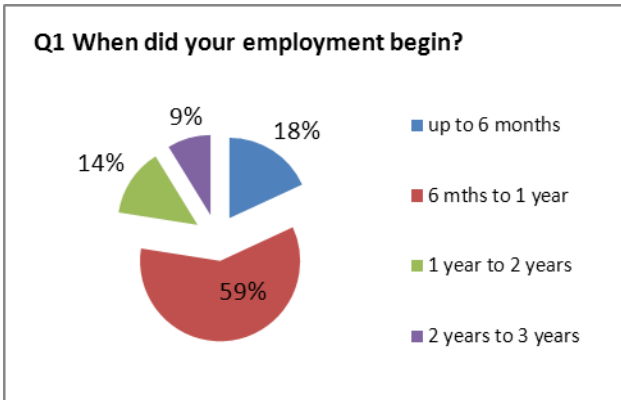
### ***6.1 Introduction***

This chapter deals with the responses from the Employee Questionnaire. It looks at the array of answers to each of the questions in the questionnaire. All the answers have been placed into categories and these categories have been identified in terms of a label. Each label is shown as a percentage of the overall group.

### ***6.2 Period with employer***

Question 1 tried to identify how long the respondents have been in their current position.

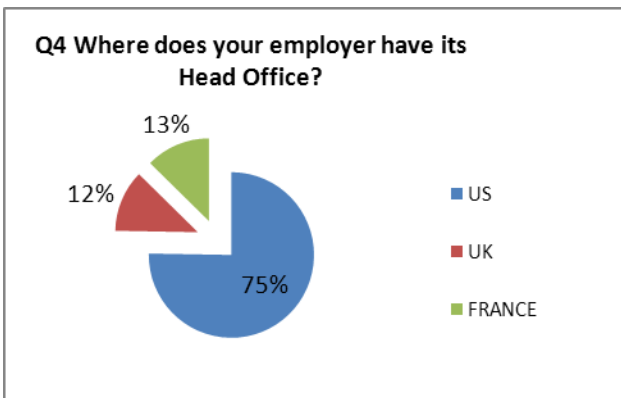
The largest percentage, at 59%, is in the “6 Mths to 1 year” category, with the next largest being the “up to 6 Mths” category with 18%. This is consistent with the fact that the HR Managers were requested to only seek participation in the survey by those individuals who were recent starters with the company. The furthest out period was the “2 years to 3 years” category with only 9%.



### 6.3 Company demographics

Question 2, 3 and 4 were asked to gather some demographic data on the companies themselves.

All of the respondents confirmed that their companies all operated overseas, they were all large companies with employee numbers in the “over 1001” employee number category. The vast majority, 75%, of the respondents confirmed that their company had its head office in the US. France was the second highest with 13% closely followed by the UK with 12%.

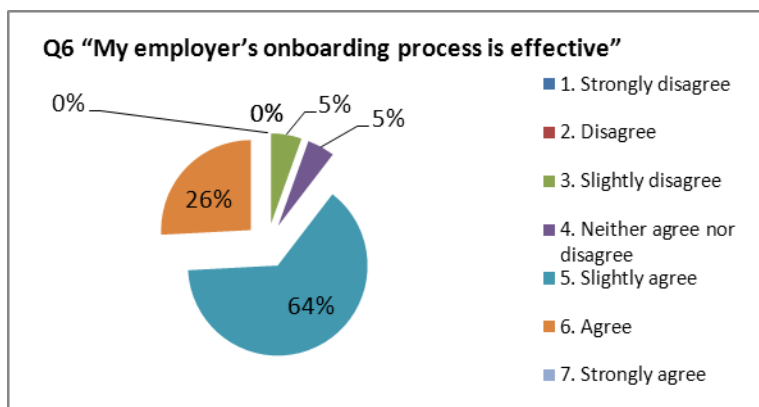


#### ***6.4 Employer's onboarding process & rating***

Question 5 requested the respondent to confirm if his company had an official onboarding process.

The results here were that 100% of the respondents confirmed that their company does have an official onboarding process. This result was expected and concurs with the result of the similar question posed to the HR Managers.

Question 6 requested the respondent's rating of the effectiveness of their employer's onboarding process. 90% of the respondents agreed that their employer's onboarding process was effective. Only 5% disagreed. There are three categories of "agreement". The 90% is broken down into these three categories as 64% "slightly agree", 26% "agree" and 0% "strongly agree".

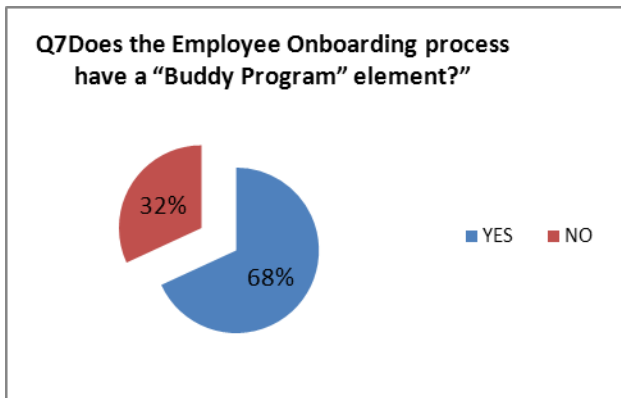


### **6.5 Employer's buddy element & rating**

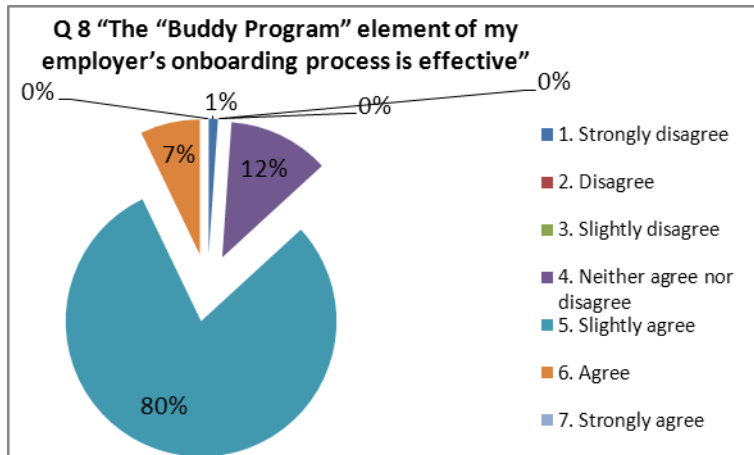
Question 7 and question 8 were posed to identify if the respondent's employer had a "Buddy Program" element to its onboarding process and how effective it was.

68% of the respondents confirmed that a "Buddy program" was an element to their employer's onboarding process. 87% agreed that it was an effective element to the onboarding process. Interestingly the vast majority of this, 80% were in the "slightly agree" category. So maybe this element should be made clearer for the new employees. 1% responded as "strongly disagree". Maybe there should be further investigation in this case to see where the issue lay.

This is consistent with the HR Managers analysis where 75% confirming the inclusion of this element in the onboarding process.





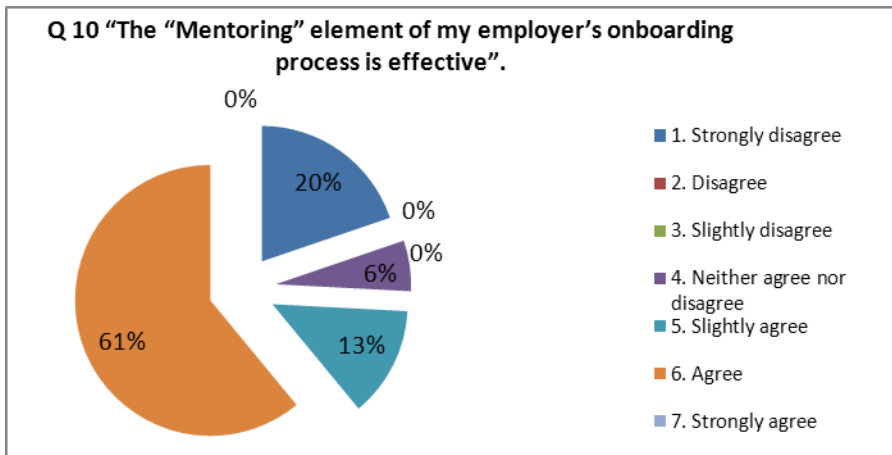
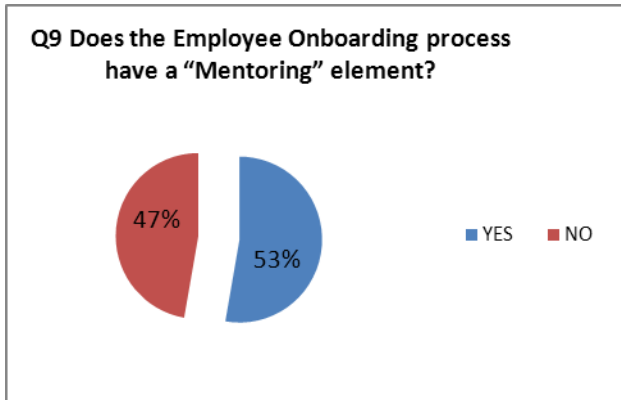


### ***6.6 Employer's mentoring element & rating***

Question 9 and 10 looked at "Mentoring" as an element in the respondent's onboarding process.

53% confirmed that there was a "Mentoring" element to their employer's onboarding process. This is inconsistent with the results of the HR Managers interviews. Only 12% of the HR Managers confirmed that this element formed part of the onboarding process. There could have been an issue here with the definition of "Mentoring", the survey respondents thinking that they were mentored to some degree. In most of the HR Manager's employers there was a mentoring program, but this, they confirmed was performed after at least a year and was for personal development purposes.

Interestingly 74% of the survey respondents agreed that this element was effective. Maybe further investigation here would identify what the actual cause of this inconsistency was.

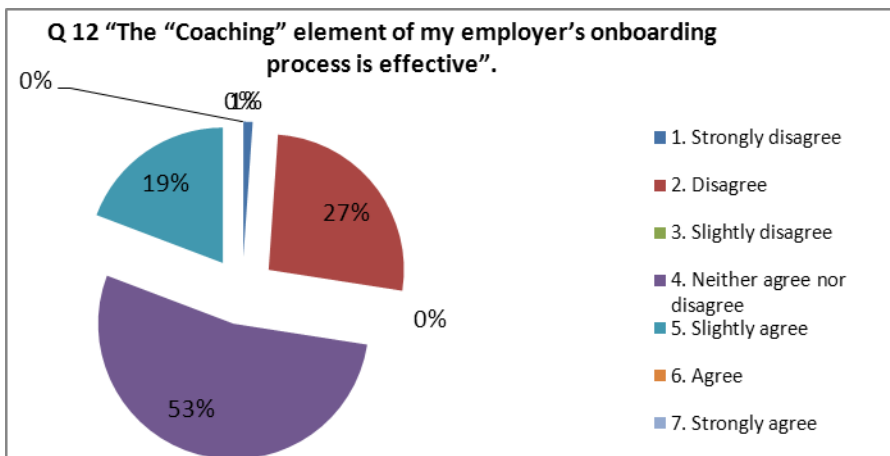
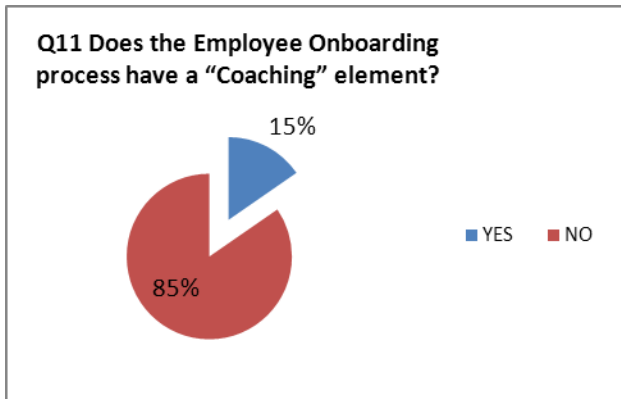


**6.7 Employer’s coaching element & rating**

Question 11 and 12 looked at “Coaching“ as an element in the respondent’s onboarding process.

85% of the respondents confirmed that “Coaching” did not form part of their employer’s onboarding process. This is consistent with the results of the HR Managers interviews. With such a large percentage in the negative one would therefore expect when respondents were rating the effectiveness of this element that an equally large percentage would be in the rating category ” Neither agree nor disagree”. The results show that category as only 53%. Interestingly 27% had chosen

“disagree” and 19% “slightly agree” rating the effectiveness of a process where 85% had confirmed the nonexistence of the process.

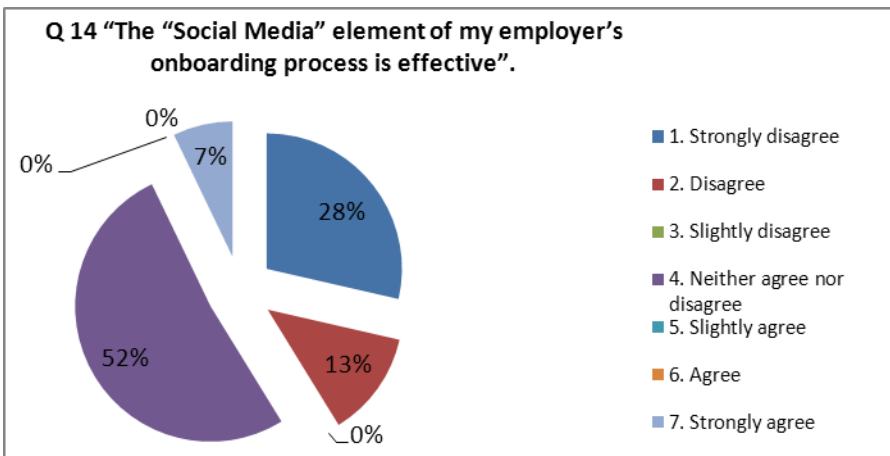
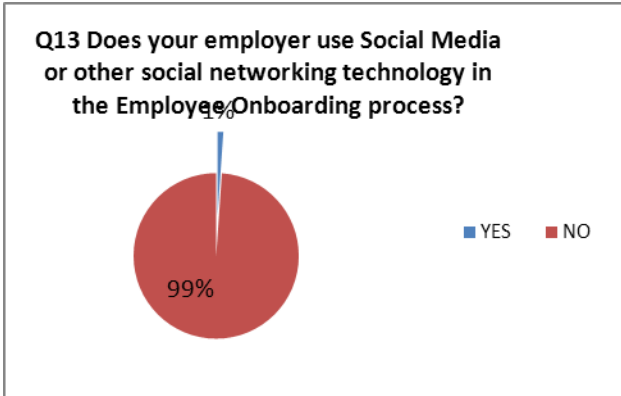


### ***6.8 Employer’s social networking technology element & rating***

Question 13 and question 14 were posed to identify if the respondent’s employer utilised social media or other social networking technology in it’s onboarding process and how effective it was.

99% of the respondents answered in the negative to this element. This is consistent with HR Managers responses. Only 52% rated this element as effective while 28%

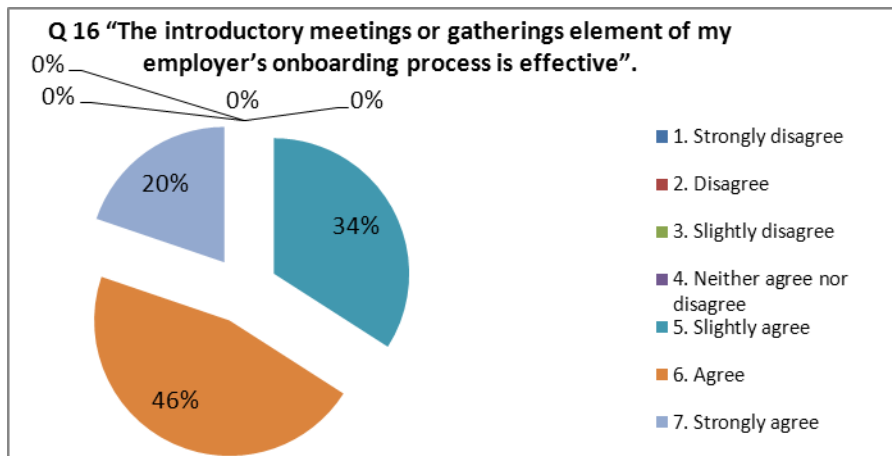
strongly disagreed that it was effective.



### ***6.9 Employer's introductory meeting element & rating***

Question 15 and 16 looked at the issue of "introductory meetings" as an element in the respondent's onboarding process.

100% of the respondents confirmed that “introductory meetings” did not form part of their employer’s onboarding process. When the respondents rated this item, 100% acknowledged that it was effective. 20% “strongly agreed”, 46% “agreed” and 34% “slightly agreed”. This is a very positive response for this item and clearly shows the positive effect it had on the respondents.



### ***6.10 Effect of a poor process***

Question 17 tried to get the respondent’s view on the effect that a poor onboarding process can have on an employee, would an employee, if the process was felt to be so bad, start looking elsewhere for other opportunities. 100% of the respondents agreed that this would be the case. Again this emphatic result highlights that, even during

current times of widespread layoffs in the IFSC, new employees would consider moving employment if their onboarding experience was deemed to be so negative.

### ***6.11 Elements that should be in an onboarding process***

The last question, number 18, was an open question requesting the respondent's thoughts on what elements should form part of an effective onboarding process. All the respondents provided a lot of feedback on the question. The main topics identified in their responses were very similar to those of the HR Managers and were as follows;

- Provision of HR related policies and procedures for review before starting date
- Structured and thorough onboarding process.
- Logistics around premises, team location, desk location and systems accesses etc.
- Properly trained and knowledgeable “Buddies” for an initial period
- Explanation of the ethos and the business of the company
- Clarity on goals, objectives and success factors for the position
- A plan for the initial stage with group / individual meetings arranged with people who there will be direct contact with on the job
- Feedback on progress
- Feeling of inclusion, not being left to sort out things themselves.

## Chapter 7: Discussion & Conclusions

### *7.1 Review of aims and objectives*

The research undertaken by the researcher identifies a number of elements that the researcher thought would be the best practice in the onboarding of new employees. These elements included, introductory meetings, buddy systems, mentoring systems, coaching plans and social networking technology. The issue of when the onboarding process should start was also an item that warranted discussion with the HR Managers. These elements were some of the ones that were identified in Silkroad (2009) report entitled “Steps to a successful onboarding process”.

### *7.2 Identified elements that form part of employer’s onboarding process*

From the HR Managers interviews and the employee surveys, it is clear that some, but not all of these best practices are included in the onboarding processes of companies in the IFSC. See fig 3 that identifies the individual best practices that are included in IFSC companies.

<b>Fig 3</b>	<b>Best Practices included in IFSC Companies</b>	
	<b>Survey results</b>	<b>HR Managers results</b>
<b>Buddy system</b>	68% - YES	75% - YES
<b>Introductory Meetings</b>	100% - YES	88% - YES

### ***7.3 Identified elements not part of employer's onboarding process***

Fig 4 identifies the individual best practices that are not included in the onboarding process of IFSC companies.

<b>Best Practices not included in IFSC Companies</b>		
<b>Fig 4</b>	<b>Survey results</b>	<b>HR Managers results</b>
<b>Coaching plans</b>	85% -NO	88% -NO
<b>Social Networking technology</b>	100% - NO	100% - NO

One of the HR Managers that were interviewed advised that there was a trial going on in its head office for the provision of social networking technology as part of its onboarding process. It was not clear yet how it would work and who would be involved and who would be able to access it. Most of the HR Managers took a keen interest in the discussion around this element. Most felt that it was a very good idea considering the amount of time that younger employees spend on social networking sites to communicate and interact with their friends. They felt once the site was internal, locked down and had the necessary security and confidentiality, that it would form a very useful tool in their company's onboarding process.



The HR Manager interviews identified that “coaching plans” were not utilised as part of the onboarding process but was utilised as part of development programs for senior executives.

#### ***7.4 The question around when should the process start***

63% of the interviewees advised that the process started only after the employee’s start date. It is incumbent on all HR staff and Line of Business management to make the new employee as productive as quickly as possible.

In an effort to do this, all time that is available should be utilised as efficiently as possible. There can be a lot of time between the date of offering of a position to a new employee, to that employee’s starting date. This time can be used more efficiently. If it was used to get the new employee up to speed on the various aspects of his/her position, the employee would be in a better starting position when it comes to the starting date.

75% of the HR Managers interviewed said that it was from a confidentiality perspective that company data was not sent to the new employee for review. If this impediment could be cleared then time would be utilised more efficiently. 25% stated that it was not in their HR procedure. Maybe this procedure should also be reviewed to see if it can be changed too.

### ***7.5 Research consistencies between HR Manager Interviews and employee questionnaire***

In the case of Buddy systems, introductory meetings social networking technology and coaching plans, there was consistency in the results of the analysis of both the HR Managers interviews and the employee survey. See fig 1

<b>Fig 1</b>	<b>Survey results</b>	<b>HR Managers results</b>
<b>Buddy system</b>	68% - YES	75% - YES
<b>Introductory Meetings</b>	100% - YES	88% - YES
<b>Social Networking technology</b>	100% - NO	100% - NO
<b>Coaching plans</b>	85% -NO	88% -NO

In one of the elements ie Mentoring systems the results were inconsistent between the two groups, one group at 47% while the other at 88%. See fig 2

<b>Fig 2</b>	<b>Survey results</b>	<b>HR Managers results</b>
<b>Mentoring systems</b>	47% -NO	88% -NO

The researcher analyzed this inconsistency. From the discussions with the HR Managers it was clear that they had the correct understanding of the researcher's definition of the term "Mentoring systems". As there is no direct contact with the survey respondents, the researcher believes that the definition may not have been

fully understood in the context of the question posed, which would lead to the inconsistency.

### ***7.6 Review of researchers hypothesis***

It was the researcher's hypothesis that the techniques that are utilised in some of the leading companies throughout the world are not utilised in the IFSC companies in Dublin. This paper has proved this hypothesis to be correct with social networking technology and coaching plans not being utilised in the companies in the IFSC. The researcher did not expect the extent of the use of buddy systems to be at 68% – 75%. The researcher's expectation was at the 25% level.

In the researcher's view the 100% agreement with Question 17 in the employee survey, dealing with the possible effect of a poor onboarding process, was the most alarming, particularly with the current general economic conditions and employment market in the IFSC. Companies looking at this should understand that they have to employ time and effort into their onboarding processes as negative effects will cost money in replacement costs and employee productivity.

### ***7.7 Limitations of this research project***

Clearly some of the interviewees did not want to properly engage with the researcher. This can be evidenced in the duration of some of the shorter interviews. Therefore the quality and depth of the answers were limited. Even with further prying by the researcher, very little additional information was forthcoming.

The number of interviews performed was small and probably a direct indication of the lack of transparency on behalf of some of the HR Managers that did not reply to the request for an interview.

The issue of data protection also raised its head when it comes to the respective associations or groups and the provision of HR Manager contact detail data that they would house in their systems.

### ***7.8 Conclusion***

The goal of companies in this world is to make profits. In order to achieve this goal companies need to employ productive staff who run and manage the company's various processes and procedures. If these people leave, it costs the company, not just in management time spent, but also in replacement costs. Van Vark (2006) advises us that the cost of employing new people runs between 30% – 40% of base salary. This is a very high cost for companies.

According to Kjerulf (2007), a happy employee is a productive employee and Saks and Gruman (2011) identify that a more structured onboarding process makes for happy employees. Therefore a structured onboarding process can help to develop more productive and happy employees thus increasing the profitability of companies and at the same time reducing the costs as employee retention levels are higher. The problem is that not all companies see this correlation and therefore need to have effective onboarding higher up on their strategic agendas (Day & Fedele, 2012).

## **Appendix I**

HR Manager interview request email;

Dear XXX,

I am a mature, part-time, postgraduate student at the National College of Ireland and as part of my Masters in Business Administration I am conducting some primary research into the best practice in Employee Onboarding and the implementation of these practices in the Financial Services Industry in Ireland.

I am looking for 30 minutes of your time to get your views on this subject and how it fits into your company's overall HR Management platform.

As a guide to help the conversation please see attached topic list.

Your participation is voluntary, anonymous and entirely confidential. The findings of the research will be included in my final thesis. The results of this research will be available to you on request. All data collected will be stored securely and destroyed once no longer required for the purposes of the research.

If you would like to participate please reply to arrange a suitable time to meet.

Regards

John O'Brien

HR Managers Topic list;

For the purposes of this research “Onboarding” will be defined as “the assimilation of a new employee into a company so that the new employee reaches full productivity as early as possible”.

Question 1. Does your employer operate overseas?

Question 2. How many staff does your employer have worldwide?

1-50, 51 – 100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001+

Question 3. Where does your employer have its Head Office?

Question 4. Does your company have an onboarding process for new employees?

Question 5. How long has your company had an onboarding process?

Question 6. Why was the process put in place?

Question 7. How was the process introduced?

Question 8. What groups were involved in the introduction?

Question 9. At what stage does the process start? Prior to start date or after?

Question 10. Does your company’s onboarding process include a “Buddy / Mentor / Coach / Lunchmate” element, if so, how does each element work?

Question 11. Does your company use Social Media or other social networking technology in the onboarding process? If so what does it involve?

Question 12. Does your company have any introductory meetings or gatherings for new employees?

Question 13. Do you request employee feedback on your onboarding process?

Question 14. Do you measure the success of your company's onboarding process? How is it measured? What is measured? Who gets the information? What is it used for subsequently?

Question 15. Do you consider your onboarding process as an importance Human Resource Management tool for your company;

Question 16. Do you feel that a poor employee onboarding experience can contribute to an employee not settling into their new role and hence looking around for other opportunities?

Question 17. What elements should an effective employee onboarding process contain?



## **Appendix II**

Cover email with survey participation request;

Dear Participant,

I am a postgraduate student at the National College of Ireland. This survey is part of my Masters in Business Administration. The survey focuses on the best practice in Employee Onboarding and the implementation of these practices in the Financial services Industry in Ireland.

For the purposes of this research “Onboarding” will be defined as “the assimilation of a new employee into a company so that the new employee reaches full productivity as early as possible”.

The full survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, anonymous and entirely confidential. The findings of the research will be included in my final thesis. The results of this research will be available to you on request. All data collected will be stored securely and destroyed once no longer required for the purposes of the research.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8XBZNDF>

If you have any queries regarding this survey please contact me at:

john.obrien1@student.ncirl.ie

Thank you very much for your participation.

John O’Brien

Survey;

For the purposes of this research “Onboarding” will be defined as “the assimilation of a new employee into a company so that the new employee reaches full productivity as early as possible”.

Questionnaire for Employees;

Employer Name. \_\_\_\_\_

What department do you work in. \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1.

When did your employment begin? --/--/----

Question 2.

Does your employer operate overseas? Y/ N

Question 3 .

How many staff does your employer have worldwide?

1-50 , 51 – 100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001+

Question 4.

Where does your employer have its Head Office?

(country list)

Question 5.

Does your employer have an official employee onboarding process? Y/ N

Question 6.

“My employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 7.

Does the Employee Onboarding process have a “Buddy Program” element?

Definition: A Buddy program provides a one-point access to questions about the company, its culture, its procedures and policies and provides support, advice and encouragement for newcomers. Y / N

Question 8.

“The “Buddy” element of my employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 9.

Does the Employee Onboarding process have a “Mentoring” element? Definition: Mentoring is defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentoree) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the mentoree’s professional and personal growth.

Y / N

Question 10.

“The “Mentor” element of my employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 11.

Does the Employee Onboarding process have a “Coaching” element? Definition: Coaching is similar to Mentoring but the receiver is at an executive level in the company. Y / N

Question 12.

“The “Coaching” element of my employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 13.

Does your employer use Social Media or other social networking technology in the Employee Onboarding process? Definition: Social media is the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Y / N

Question 14.

“The “Social Media” element of my employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 15.

Does your employer have any introductory meetings or gatherings for new employees?

Y / N

Question 16.

“The introductory meetings or gatherings element of my employer’s onboarding process is effective”.

Using the 1-7 scale, please indicate your agreement with the above statement.

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree
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Question 17.

Do you feel that a poor employee onboarding experience can contribute to an employee not settling into their new role and hence looking around for other opportunities?

Y / N

Question 18.

What elements should an effective employee onboarding process contain?

(free format reply)

## **Appendix III**

Table of answers to Employee Questionnaire and the recordings of the HR Manager interviews located on this CD.

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