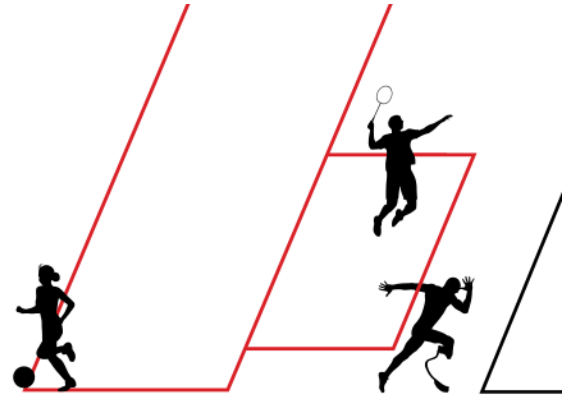# Onboarding guide for a sports organization

Onboarding is a plan to help new employees, volunteers, and even new board members enter smoothly into their new roles and the organization. It involves preparing their workspace (if required for the role), introducing them to the team, showing them how everything works, and giving them what they need to succeed in their role. The aim is to help them feel connected and part of the team as they begin to contribute to the broader team's success.

Creating a good onboarding process is the best way to make new staff, volunteers, and board members feel welcome. It involves planning and understanding things from the new individuals' perspective. Onboarding isn't just about the first day. Onboarding begins when you start looking for someone to join your team and continues until the new team member feels completely comfortable in their job (Duggan, 2023).

Onboarding checklists

Welcoming new team members smoothly is vital for any organization. When used, a well-planned checklist can ensure a seamless transition and help individuals feel confident in their roles. Here's a comprehensive guide to onboarding, covering the hiring process through to full integration:

A. Before they start:

Prepare workspace
- Ensure that the new member's workspace is set up with necessary equipment, supplies, and access permissions, if required for the role. This is also where you prepare your new hire's technology, if applicable (laptop, phone, …).

B. First day:

Welcome package
- Prepare and share a welcome package with essential information about the organization, its values, and policies.

Orientation session
- Conduct an orientation session to introduce the new member to the organization's history, mission, and values, including equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

Facility tour
- Provide a tour of the facilities, highlight key areas, cover health and safety practices, introduce the individual to team members and explain the working environment, and make sure to reinforce working hours and facility access hours.

Technology setup
- Assist in setting up email accounts, security badges, software tools, and other necessary technology.

C. First week:

Introduction to teams
- Arrange meetings with different teams to foster collaboration and build relationships.

Training schedule
- Develop a structured training schedule covering job responsibilities, organizational processes, and policies.
- Set up and share a team and work calendar. This will help the new team members keep up with important tasks and track how well they're doing in their new role.
- Develop a training plan that includes EDI training for all new hires.

Buddy system
- Assign a mentor or "buddy" to help the new member adapt to the organization's culture and workflows.
  - A mentor or "buddy" is the more experienced member in the organization helping the less experienced new member.

D. First month:

Performance expectations
- Clearly communicate performance expectations and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the role.

Feedback session
- Schedule regular feedback sessions to address any concerns and provide constructive feedback.

Social integration
- Encourage participation in social events or team-building activities to strengthen interpersonal relationships.
- Establish employee resource groups (ERGs) to provide support and foster a sense of belonging. Encourage the individuals to join a community of practice if any exist in their sector.

E. First 3 months:

Professional development
- Discuss and plan for ongoing professional development opportunities.

Check-in meetings
- Schedule regular check-in meetings to ensure the new member is adapting well and address any challenges.

Performance review
- Comprehensively review performance to evaluate progress and set goals for the future.
- Ensure evaluations are free from bias and align with EDI initiatives and policies.

F. Ongoing:

Continuous learning
- Promote a culture of continuous learning and provide resources for skill enhancement.
- Encourage staff to stay updated on trends and best practices.

EDI training for existing staff
- Provide regular EDI training for existing staff, board members, and volunteers.
- Reinforce the organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive culture.

Feedback mechanism
- Establish an open feedback mechanism for continuous improvement.

Recognition and appreciation
- Through various channels, recognize and appreciate the contributions of staff, board members, and volunteers.

Team-building events
- Organize periodic team-building events to strengthen bonds and enhance collaboration.
- These links are great resources with some team building activities:
    - https://iwlca.wordpress.com/2018/01/31/twenty-team-bonding-ideas/
    - https://www.cultureally.com/blog/10diversityandinclusionactivitiestodowithyourteam

G. Continuous Support:

Feedback on onboarding process
- Create a confidential feedback mechanism for employees to express concerns or suggestions to make continuous improvements.

Evaluation of integration
- Assess the integration of the new member into the organization's culture and workflow.

Using this thorough checklist enables your sports organization to carry out a streamlined onboarding process. In turn, that cultivates heightened satisfaction and productivity among newly recruited staff members, board members, and volunteers alike.

Work cited:
Duggan, C. (2023, October). How to build a new employee onboarding process. *Workable.* https://resources.workable.com/tutorial/employee-onboarding