iCIMS®

The Employee Onboarding Playbook

How to win candidates and engage new hires

Extend the candidate experience through the new hire process | **Ramp up new hires** for long-term success

Automate tasks to increase efficiency | **Improve by tracking key metrics**

Train your team for **success** with onboarding

Despite employers working tirelessly to win candidates – ensuring career sites are just right, the application is easy, and the interview process goes smoothly – more than a quarter of workers have quit a job specifically because they didn't feel they were onboarded or trained properly.[1]

Losing the perfect hire after having invested so much time and money finding and winning them over is the talent acquisition equivalent of shooting yourself in the foot.

Onboarding is a culture-killer when it's watered down to a series of administrative tasks. It negates any positive experience with your company up until that point. So much so, that **one in three new hires look for new employment within their first six months.**[2]

Bottom line: Employers who treat onboarding as a continuation of the hiring process retain employees and get them up to speed faster. This guide lays out best practices to create an exceptional onboarding experience.

1. iCIMS, The Candidate Experience Report, 2018.
2. Gartner, Overhauling Onboarding: Using Updated Capabilities and Design Thinking to Move Beyond Compliance to Care, 2019.

Did You
KNOW?

- Nearly **70%** of employees are **more likely to stay** with a company for 3+ years if their onboarding experience was great.[3]

- More than **½** of all organizations with a formal onboarding process get **more productivity** out of their new hires and have **greater retention.**[4]

- Effective onboarding leads to higher employee engagement, and businesses with high levels of engagement are **21% more productive** and **22% more profitable** than less engaged businesses.[5]

- New employees are **more productive** in their first few weeks of work when digital onboarding is used in the hiring stage.[6]

3. TalentWise, Top Employee Onboarding Tips, 2017.
4. Aberdeen Group, Perfecting the Onboarding Funnel, 2016.
5. Brandon Hall Group, Onboarding 2016: Seeking Improvement Report, 2016.
6. The Talent Board, North American Candidate Experience Report, 2016.

Use onboarding to inspire your new team

40% of employees say they've experienced a lack of communication between the time they accepted a job and their first day of work.[7]

New hires have a lot at stake when they take a new job. It's only natural they wonder if they made the right choice. That's where effective onboarding comes in. This considers the time between when a new hire accepts your job offer and their start date - often two or more weeks - and is critical to soothing nerves and setting expectations.

The last thing you want new employees to feel is buyer's remorse. Here's how to ensure your new hires receive the same great experience as candidates:

1. Focus on your organization's culture, brand and values. Your new hires spent a lot of time talking to your recruiters about what it's like to work for your company. Onboarding is the time to reinforce and reassure them that they made the right choice. Show them what approach and values will help them get ahead and contribute to your company.

2. Set new hires up with a mobile-optimized new hire portal. Make it easy for new hires to learn more about your organization and quickly find answers to commonly asked questions. Include information on your company, their new team and role, products and services, benefits, upcoming events and first day logistics, such as what to bring and where to park.

3. Include recruiters and hiring managers in the onboarding experience. Being a new hire is lonely – in fact, up to 40% of adults report feeling lonely at work.[8] Friendly faces should make an appearance throughout the onboarding experience. In fact, high-performing organizations are more likely to involve hiring managers in the onboarding process.[9]

Learn how to fight new hire disconnect with remote onboarding.

7. iCIMS, The Candidate Experience Report, 2018.
8. Harvard Business Review, Work and the Loneliness Epidemic, 2017.
9. Brandon Hall Group, Onboarding: Seeking Improvement Report, 2016.

Playback: how a multinational company built an onboarding program centered around teamwork

Messer — a leading industrial gas company with over 70 production facilities and 5,400 employees across North and South America — approaches onboarding as a continuation of the candidate experience. As a result, Messer has dramatically improved assimilation, employee engagement and productivity.

After a candidate accepts a written offer, Messer transitions them to a special team for onboarding. This team bridges the critical time between acceptance and the first day by assisting with paperwork and administrative tasks. But their real purpose is to build a relationship with their new hire and reinforce Messer's excitement to have them on board. Messer's 6-month onboarding program encompasses:

- Spending the first day with a deep dive into the business's strategy and organization's culture.

- Learning and development checkpoints designed specifically to accommodate different roles and learning styles.

- New hire and manager survey touchpoints to ensure the burgeoning relationship is progressing successfully, as well as feedback to improve the program going forward.

Get your new recruits up to speed faster

Onboarding isn't a one-size-fits-most proposition. New hires have different needs based on role type, whether or not they're part-time or remote, and geographic location – meaning **onboarding needs to be customizable.**

Employers don't have the luxury of batching new hires into onboarding classes based on their role type. New hire portals give employers added flexibility to customize the content and resources they share with new hires, both before they start and during their first 30-90 days.

In addition, get your new hires ramped up quickly by sending them text messages as reminders to complete time sensitive onboarding tasks, such as drug screens. Employers that text candidates have a 99% open rate and 37% response rate,[10] far outpacing the effectiveness of emails or voicemails alone, and can be automated and personalized to your recruiters' preferences.

It takes time to get new hires productive in their roles. The more they prepare before their start date, the faster they start contributing.

FULTON FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Fulton Financial, a $20 billion, financial holding company with 3,700 employees and 250 locations in the Mid-Atlantic, chose to put candidate experience first by integrating best-in-class onboarding software with its HRIS system.

As a result,

Fulton reduced its onboarding process from 43 pieces of paperwork to zero, resulting in stellar survey results from its new hires.

10. TextRecruit, Engage with Employees Over Text Message, 2019.

Focus on building up your team, let automation handle the rest

New hires are bombarded with information from the moment they arrive on their first day. There's names and faces to learn, floorplans to memorize and a flurry of activities to acclimatize them to the business. It's overwhelming.

Above all, new hires want to make sure they have all their ducks in a row and ensure nothing important falls through the cracks. Did their payroll information go through properly? Is their desk or work area set up and ready for them? Does their keycard give them access to the building?

New hire logistics take time and involve touchpoints across multiple teams. Yet many employers don't start thinking about them until their newest employees show up for their first day.

**Onboarding is slow and error-prone because it's manual and exists in a silo.**

Instead, use a onboarding approach to automate workflows and facilitate communication between HR, Finance, IT, hiring managers and individual teams, ensuring new hire tasks get assigned and accomplished before new hires arrive.

By making sure everything – laptops, onboarding packets, paperwork, training resources, etc. – is set up and ready for new hires on their first day, you set the right tone about focus, productivity, efficiency and your expectations. Additionally, new hires have everything they need to hit the ground running.

ISAGENIX®

Isagenix International has expanded rapidly since its founding in 2002. The health and wellness company boasts 600,000 customers, $6 billion in cumulative sales, and a global workforce of more than 1,700 employees.

One of the keys to supporting rapid growth was automating and digitizing all previously manual processes, including paperwork, to cut their new hire processing time by 83%.
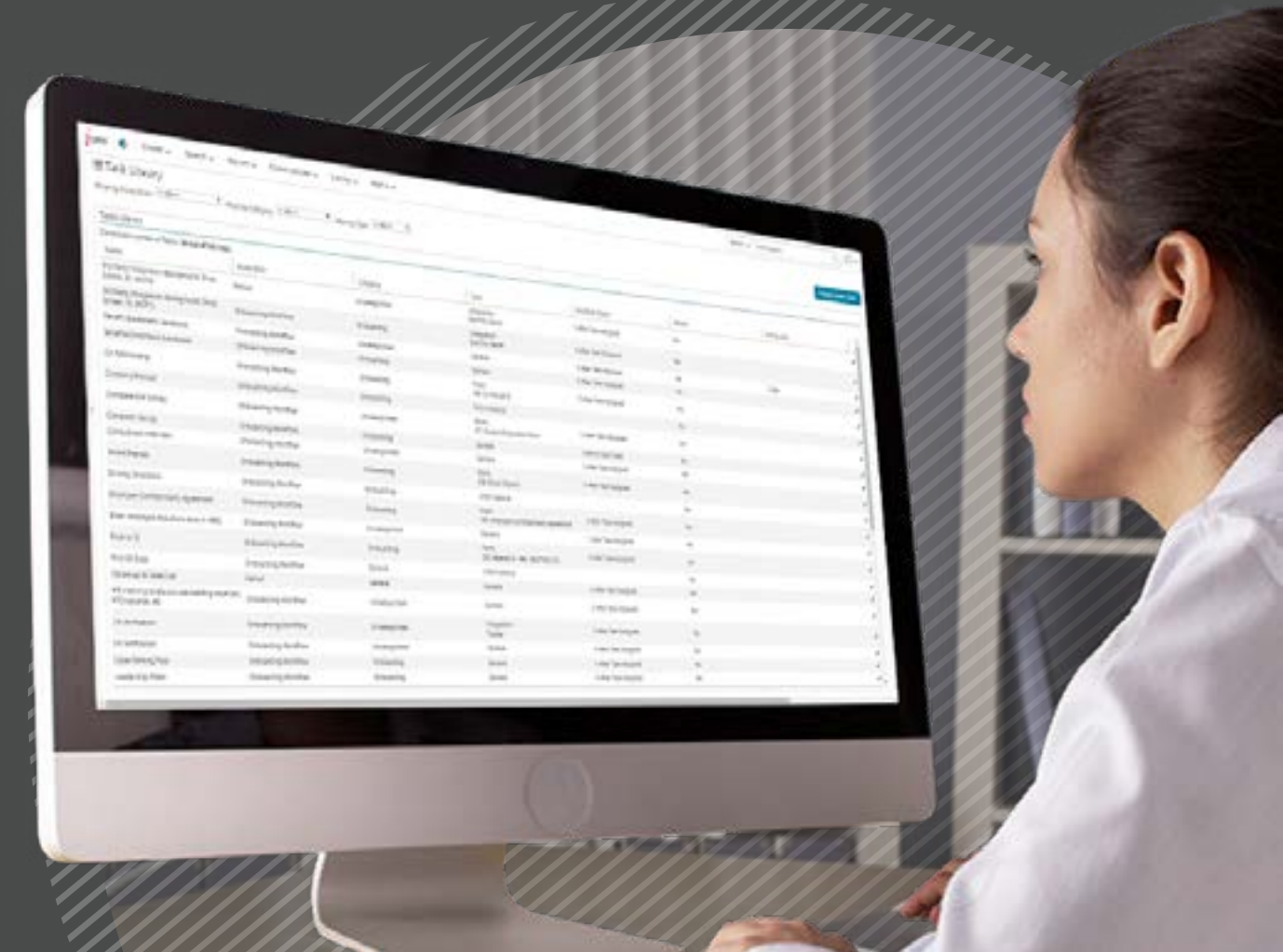
Up your game with real-time analytics

Centralized reporting is the key to optimizing your onboarding program. Data is poor when it sits isolated in pockets around the business. It's strong when it follows new hires throughout the employee lifecycle – from the time they're candidates through their departure.
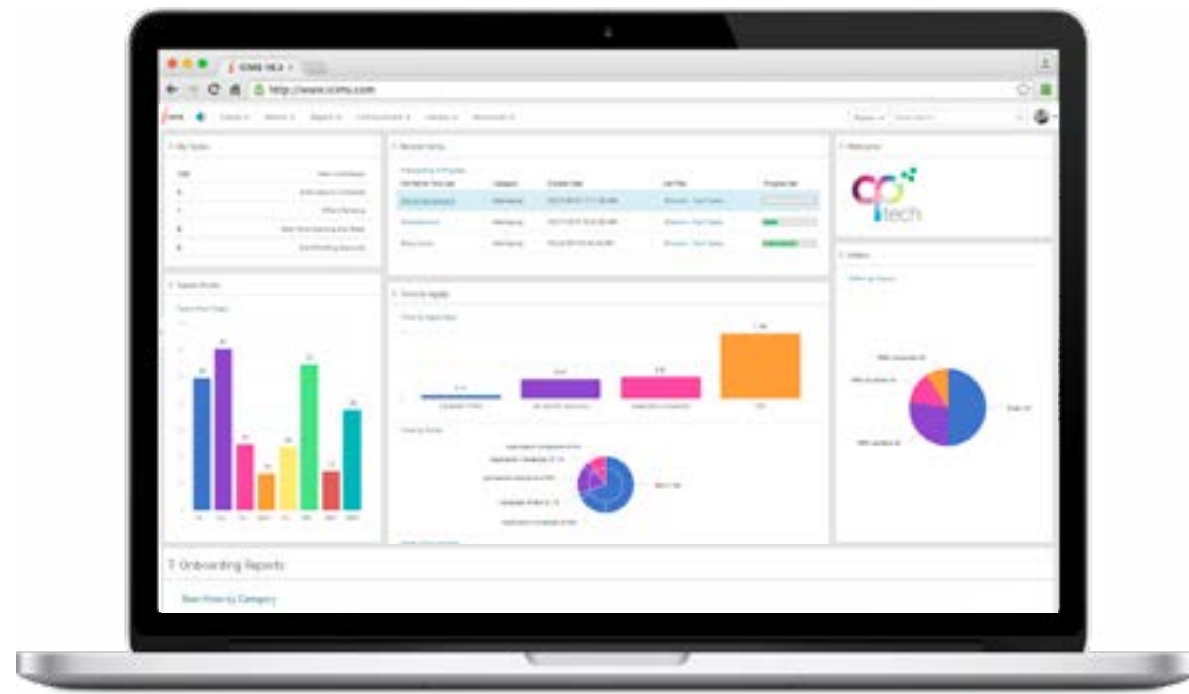
Quick win for the onboarding experience: Integrate your talent, onboarding and HR software and track what matters.

1. Time to productivity. When employees come up to speed quickly, it's an indication they're relevant training in a timely manner. If in six months your new hires seem almost as lost as they were in their first few weeks, chances are there are gaps in your onboarding process.

2. New hire retention rate. More than half of employees who leave their job do so within the first 12 months.[11] If new employees don't stick around long, chances are they're not making connections or finding meaning in their work. In addition to training, one of the goals of effective onboarding programs is to make candidates feel like they're a part of the organization.

3. New hire error rate. New employees are always going to make mistakes. Keeping a pulse on the frequency of errors and how often the same mistakes are repeated tells you where to focus on talent development.

4. New hire referrals. Happy employees refer people in their networks. Referrals from new hires are an indication these employees are bought into your company culture and see long-term potential with your organization.

11. Equifax, Equifax Workforce Insights, 2016.

Trick play: Combine TA with HR for superior onboarding

Your talent team created a winning candidate experience. That shouldn't end when the offer letter is signed. A quick hand-off from talent to HR is a missed opportunity.

Here's what to remember:

1. Set candidates up for success before their first day with a strong onboarding program. Preliminary training, paperwork, introductions, and familiarization with your culture and values can all be done prior to your new hire's start date.

2. Continue building on the trust and rapport between your recruiters and job seekers. Onboarding smooths the transition from candidate to employee, increasing productivity early and the likelihood new hires will stay longer.

Talent acquisition and HR play important roles in onboarding new hires. iCIMS onboarding solution - used by approximately 2,000 companies, including Benihana, Foot Locker, Fulton Financial, Hard Rock International, LL Bean and Spirit Airlines – seamlessly integrates into leading HRIS systems including ADP, Oracle, Ultimate Software and Workday.
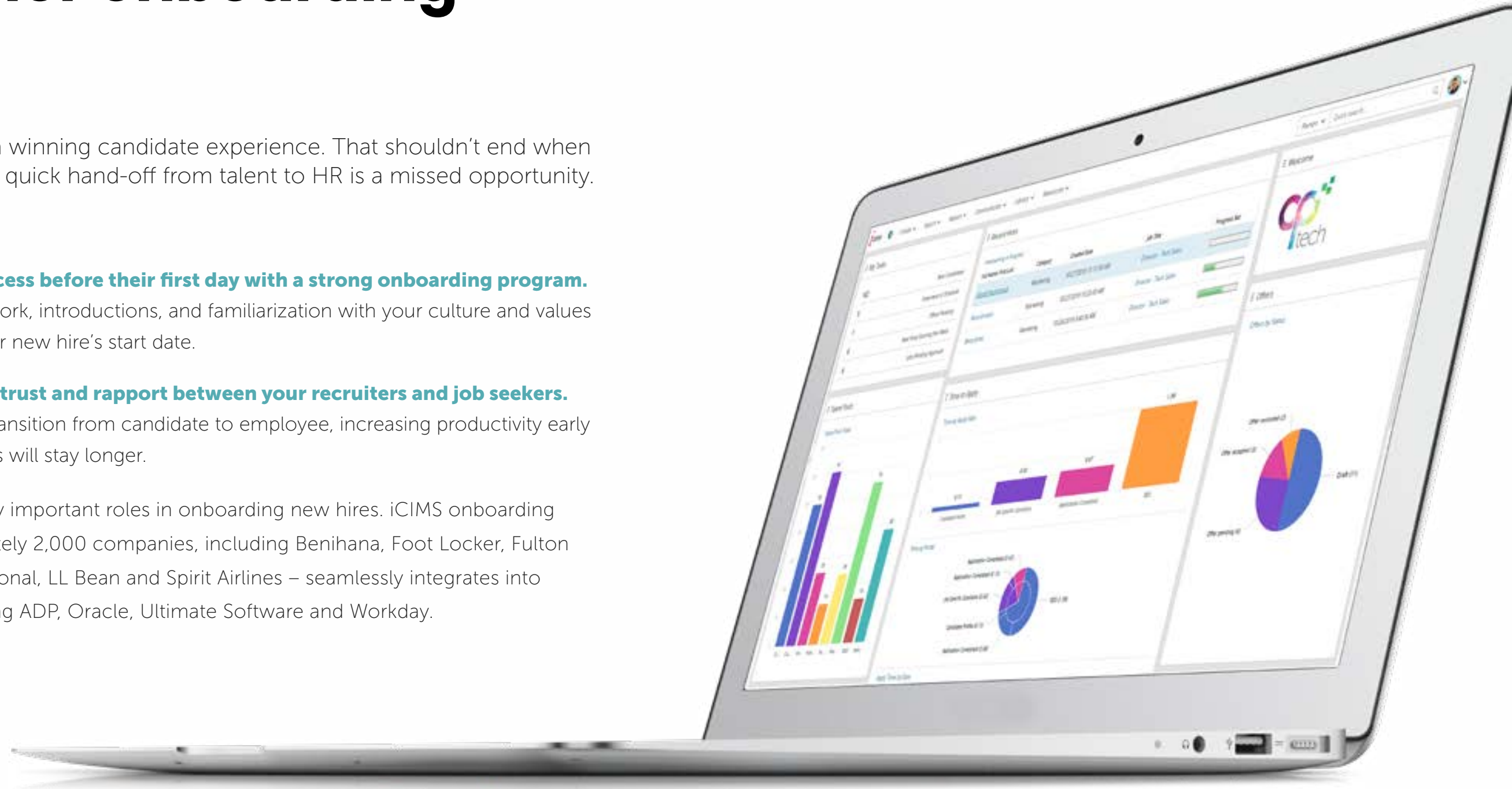
New recruit checklist

Send new hires their onboarding portal, including:

☐ Branded welcome messages or videos that accurately showcase your company's culture and value.

☐ Employee paperwork through automated online forms, such as I-9 and W-4.

☐ Start date, time, place, parking instructions, dress code and who to ask for upon arrival.

☐ Employee handbook.

Introduce new hires around:

☐ Send a welcome/introduction email to your team, copying your new hire. Share what experience they bring from previous jobs.

☐ Select a mentor for your new hire. This person should be experienced with your company and know the ins and outs of how things get done. If you're bringing in a class of new hires at one time, introduce them to one another via email.

☐ Invite new hires to ongoing meetings and set up introductions with co-workers and key stakeholders during their first few weeks.

☐ Arrange lunch with your new hire's team during their first week.

Get their work area set up:

☐ Ensure their computer and workstation are ready, including stocking supplies they'll need.

☐ Set up their email and any essential usernames or logins.

☐ Make copies of keys or program their key card; have their badge ready at reception.

☐ Create a 30-90-day plan with goals and first projects to focus on.

☐ Put together a welcome packet with job description, team member bios, building map, organization chart, etc.

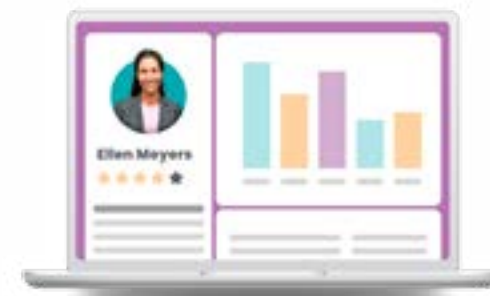## Once your new hires arrive, keep momentum going. Share:

☐ Expectations in their role and on their team.

☐ Online resources to read, bookmark and reference.

☐ Schedule of trainings to take and where.

You've seen the power of effective onboarding.

Now see how to fuel the entire hiring journey in our Definitive Guide to Targeted Recruiting.

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