LEARNOVATE
Leading Learning Innovation

Onboarding in the Online Environment
Customer Persona| Interviews & Surveys Report

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Learnovate Report

This report was created by Learnovate at Trinity College Dublin for the OBOE Core Research Project: Onboarding in the Online Environment

1. Executive Summary

This report provides a summary and overview of the experiences and opinions expressed to Learnovate during the Onboarding in the Online Environment (OBOE) field research.

The team interviewed and surveyed 10 people responsible for onboarding in their organisation and who have onboarded new hires remotely from January 2020 until the time of writing this report. We describe the research approach we undertook and present the findings and insights from the data that were collected based on the customer persona of, 'Alex', who is an onboarding leader in her organisation. The persona of Alex along with our assumptions about her needs with regard to onboarding were captured in a Jobs to be Done workshop.

We structured our findings in this report around the focus areas detailed in the interview and survey questions we asked our research participants, the areas being; innovative approaches they have undertaken, leadership they displayed, the onboarding program in their organisation, approaches to create buy-in and drive implementation and finally, budget considerations for onboarding and any additional insights we gained on best practice.

Key Findings

> **Leadership, buy-in and budget**

The research participants largely see themselves as leaders who are in the service of others. They have the drive and take responsibility for the continued delivery and incremental improvement of their organisation's onboarding program, one that puts the experience of the new employee first. They validate the onboarding program by collecting and reviewing regular feedback from new hires and the quality of collaboration between all onboarding partners.

➢ **The approach to Onboarding**

In most of the organisations we collaborated with in our field research, onboarding is considered a value add to the organisation. As a result, they put in place a solid onboarding program with supporting processes. What is apparent is that onboarding is supported and delivered by many onboarding partners from different parts of the organisation and collaboration and coordination between all parties is a vital element of a successful onboarding experience. In 2019, when onboarding was forced to be delivered remotely, many organisations had to initially scramble to switch their processes to a suitable remote model. This was easier for some than others.

Logistics around IT, resources and HR processes took some time to transition to remote format, but the loss of social connection gained through face-to-face onboarding engagements is most keenly missed *and* most difficult to find a good alternative to. In stating that however, we observed that most organisations have introduced creative and successful programs and solutions, often using technologies like Slack, Zoom, Workday and Asana to address the loss of social in-person interaction. We have highlighted some of these examples in more detail in this report.

➢ **Additional insights**

Interestingly, while most organisations do collect some data and feedback on the impact of their onboarding program and continuously drive improvements, most organisations are not entirely sure what the impact of their onboarding program is, either on the organisation or the new employee. In most cases, the level of engagement seems to be high at the start of the onboarding process, but less is done to support the new employee's performance further down the line (after about the 3-month mark). It appears that the responsibility for integration into the organisation and the new role switches from the onboarding team and line manager to the employee him or herself. At first glance this looks like a natural order of things, although we wonder if longer support could lead to better onboarding practices that are easier to measure and report on.

2. Research Approach

In May 2021 a discovery workshop was held following the Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) approach. The purpose of the workshop was to develop thinking and validation around the concept of what we termed "A solution to online onboarding that provides an effective and engaging experience ensuring new employees are providing value to the organisation as quickly and seamlessly as possible.". Our initial assumptions from research preceding the workshop were that:

➢ Most of the Onboarding processes identified consist of a generalised approach to new employees; the experience being the same for each new employee regardless of past experience, job role, etc.

➢ As with a 'one size fits all' approach to learning experiences, employees can disengage from the Onboarding experience if they are receiving a lot of information that is not relevant to them or their role and does not consider their previous work experience.

➢ From the literature it is identified that employees often rely on trusted work colleagues more than managers and that these relationships are viewed as very important by the new recruit.

➢ Poor onboarding practices lead to attrition and higher staff turnover rates

The JTBD approach essentially tries to define what problems a user faces in their current environment with respect to functional, emotional, and social needs, how these problems relate to outcomes and barriers, and then validate whether or not these problems exist by talking to the real-life users. The JTBD workshop canvas is shown in Figure 1.
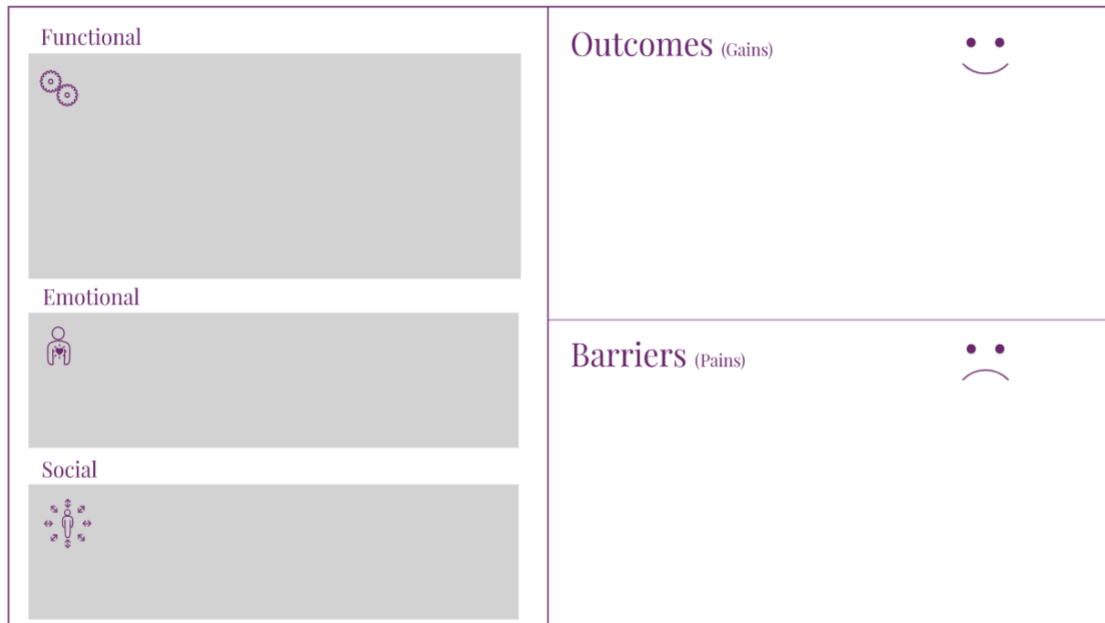
Figure 1. Jobs-to-be-Done Canvas

The first task in the JTBD workshop was to develop a proto-persona. Proto-personas are a variant of the typical persona, with the important difference that they are not initially the result of user research. Instead, they originate from secondary research which tries to encapsulate our beliefs (based on domain expertise and gut feeling) about who might use a product or service and what is motivating them to do so? Proto-personas give an organisation a starting point from which to begin evaluating their products and to create some early design hypotheses. In developing a proto-persona we focus on the customer segment most likely to have the assumed need. The proto-persona identified during the JTBD workshop was **Alex**, Department Head or Head of HR at a medium sized company (**See Section 3**).

After identifying the proto-persona, the next step was to refine our thinking on what Alex's problems are and rank them according to how painful they are. In conjunction with industry partners, we brainstormed what we thought the jobs are that Alex is trying to get done, and the barriers facing her (pains), as well as the outcomes of her getting her jobs done (gains). **Importantly,** in looking at these jobs we are focussed on jobs we believe "*A solution to online onboarding that provides an effective and engaging experience ensuring new employees are providing value to the organisation as quickly and seamlessly as possible*" can solve (Figure 2).

We then rank each of the JTBD, pains and gains in order to focus our thinking around the customer (Figure 3).
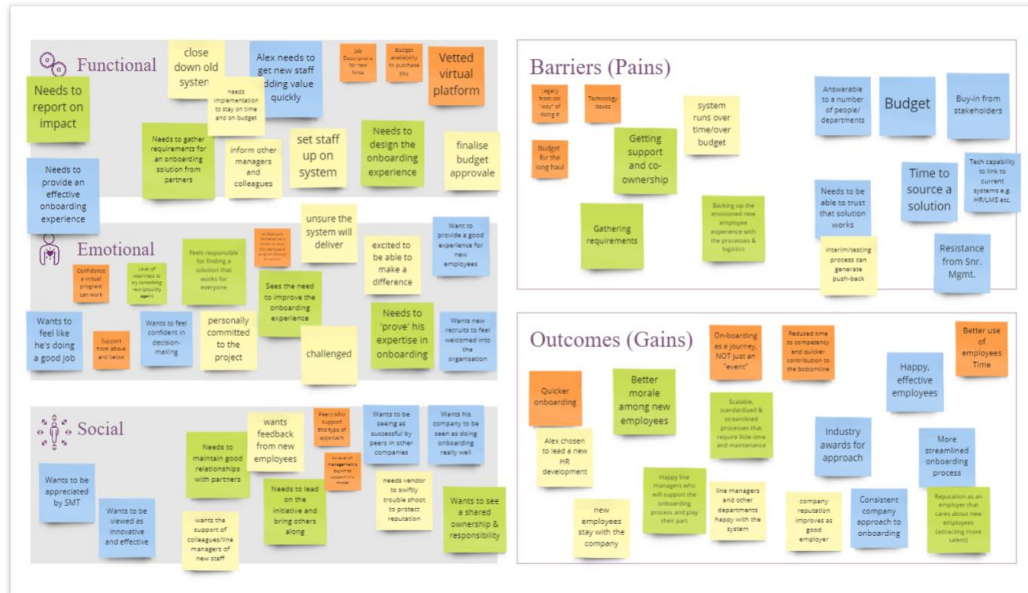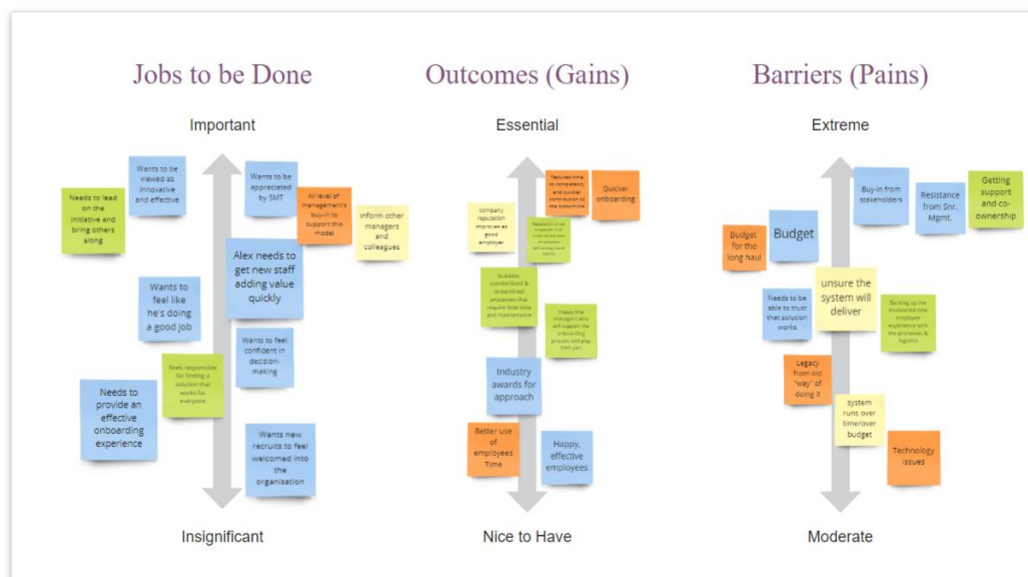

Figure 2. Jobs-to-be-Done for Alex

Figure 3. Jobs-to-be-Done for Alex , Ranked

3. The Customer Persona (Alex)

3.1 Our Assumptions about Alex

The assumptions about Alex, and the characteristics that we project onto her, allow us to target specific participants for validation interviews.

Alex, Age 35+, Dept. Head or Head of HR with 5+ years of management experience. Undergrad in Business/HR & has upskilled	
Tech	-Familiar with relevant business platforms -Uses basic tech such as MS Office/Google suite -Admin of relevant HR platforms
Personality	-Pragmatic leader & empathetic -Professional & leads by example -Team player & has good professional relationships -Eager to learn and upskill -Has strong experience but may be struggling with managing team/services virtually
How Alex Buys	-Professional network & stakeholders -Conferences & vendor demos -Testing e.g. with small group/pilot -Based on impact to business – uses research & feedback
Influencers	-Follows industry trends/thought leaders/industry analysts & benchmarks against other similar organisations -Financial implications e.g. procurement discounts/level of customer support & budget owner -Target audience – engages in focus groups, surveys, etc

3.2 Alex's needs

From the workshop we can make some assumptions about Alex's needs...

- **Alex needs** to be viewed as innovative and an effective leader and feel that she is doing a good job & her company is viewed as a good employer
- **Alex needs** to be appreciated by the Senior Management Team and get buy-in for new initiatives
- **Alex needs** to provide an effective onboarding experience and get new staff adding value to the organisation quickly
- **Alex needs** to feel confident in decision-making and finding solutions that work for everyone concerned
- **Alex needs** to ensure new employees feel welcome and part of the organisation in the best way possible

3.3 Alex Persona: Problem Validation Interview Script

In order to validate these assumptions about Alex, an interview script was developed and reviewed by the Research Working Group. The script was further developed into a survey and shared via network contacts and relevant social media channels. The script was split into several areas of focus based on our assumptions about Alex's needs. The script is shown in Table 1. Our interview approach is based on the Mom Test, where we seek to validate our assumptions and discover if a problem really exists, we do not focus on solutions at this point.

Table 1. Interview Script for Alex

Area of Focus	Questions
Innovative approaches & implementing Initiatives	➤ Can you tell us a little bit about any innovative approaches you have implemented in the past? ➤ What went well/what do you think could be improved? ➤ Do you think that your organisation is viewed as a good place to work? ➤ Have you had any feedback on this or won any awards?

	➢ If yes, what kind of awards? ➢ Is this important to you? Why/why not? ➢ Can you tell us about any initiatives you have run/been part of to ensure your organisation is a good place to work?
Leadership	➢ Do you feel that you are a good leader? ➢ Have you received any feedback in this regard? ➢ How have you received this feedback? ➢ Do you feel that you are appreciated by the senior management team in your organisation? ➢ Why/why not? [open text] ➢ Do you feel that you are trusted to make decisions on new initiatives or solutions? ➢ Do you feel confident in making decisions, for example relating to implementing new initiatives? ➢ What helps you to feel confident?
Buy-in & budget	➢ Do you have budget constraints in implementing new solutions? ➢ How do you overcome budget challenges? ➢ How do you get buy-in on any new initiatives? ➢ Who is involved in this process? ➢ What has worked for you in the past?
Onboarding	➢ Can you tell us a little about the onboarding experience in your organisation? ➢ How has it changed (if relevant) in onboarding employees remotely? ➢ What has worked well? ➢ What do you feel could be improved? ➢ Do you feel that new employees are adding value to the organisation quickly? ➢ Do you think that new employees in your organisation feel welcomed? ➢ How is this facilitated? ➢ How do you think the onboarding experience impacts on your new employees? ➢ Do you have any data or feedback in this regard? ➢ If yes, what kind of information do you have? ➢ What would you do differently in the future? ➢ Is there anything you would like to add in relation to any of the above?

In the interests of clarity and flow, the remainder of this report has been structured according to these areas of focus and we have included in each section any relevant insights, both from the semi-structured interviews conducted by Learnovate and from the relevant survey.

4. Interview & Survey Insights

In speaking with 4 people responsible for onboarding in their organisation and receiving a further 2 responses to our survey, a number of insights were gained which are summarized following the structure of the focus areas outlined in the interview script.

4.1 Background information

The research participants were from a variety of different roles and backgrounds. For some their role was specifically responsible for the onboarding program in their organisations, for others, it was part of their role as a general leader in the organisation. Examples of roles included a Head of Digital Services at a large utility company and an employee development officer at a large tech company. All participants were responsible for or were heavily involved in the onboarding of employees, and their experience with onboarding varied from less than one year to over 9 years. We refer to participants as 'people' where appropriate for the remainder of the report, with 'people' referring generally to Alex personas.

4.2 Leadership, buy-in and budget

Leadership

In general, people see themselves as good leaders, and aspire to be good leaders by setting the right tone for a positive culture or initiating or driving new and innovative initiatives.

One particular point of interest is that people are not focused on themselves as leaders but rather on what they can do to support others in the organisation because of their leadership position. In relation to the onboarding program specifically, some people mentioned that they are continuously driving improvement to the onboarding program in order to improve the

employee experience. They measure their success as a leader by the satisfaction and feedback they get from new hires.

"We carry out some surveys but mostly we collect reports from our retrospectives and create an atmosphere of openness. I think we are on the right track, but we always review and tweak where we can, and learn from what works and doesn't work. I think the way we have things running, the bad stuff and the good stuff becomes apparent pretty quickly."

Buy-in for initiatives

Getting buy-in for new initiatives is closely related to exhibiting the right leadership skills; it is an ongoing discussion and negotiation with onboarding partners and leadership. Creating buy-in can be achieved by showing stakeholders what the added value of the proposition is. In our interviews we asked whether people felt trusted to make decisions on new initiatives or solutions, and one person aptly said:

"Yes, absolutely, but you still need to convince someone that this is a good idea. Nothing gets done unilaterally, you need to create buy-in. I feel I can exhibit leadership skills in doing this."

When there is support for onboarding activities from leadership and management, getting buy-in for the onboarding program and involvement from onboarding partners (the people and teams involved in the realisation of the onboarding experience) can be relatively straightforward. Nevertheless, when there are many partners involved in the onboarding process, there is a significant challenge in aligning the available resources to the program's objectives. Participants indicated that support from their direct manager is important in this context, as well as engaging in frequent discussions and keeping connections with stakeholders open and alive.

In some cases, people mentioned that it is easier to 'ask for forgiveness later' when it comes to introducing new initiatives. However, those people also reported that they felt their efforts

were maybe not appreciated as much as they should be and moving forward without buy-in is seen as effective but not ideal. When this happens, we noticed that there are often resource constraints to implement the onboarding solution. Budget ownership has an effect on this kind of autonomy,

Budget and resources

Almost all of the people we spoke to don't have direct ownership of the budget for onboarding activities. They need to create buy-in in order to receive the resources necessary to manage and run the program. In about half the cases we encountered, people did not experience any budget challenges, whereas for others obtaining resources was a bigger challenge. Some smaller departments have their own budgets to implement new initiatives, but if these initiatives need to be rolled out then buy-in is required.

> *"This (a new initiative) would be brought to the local office director and then he might bring it to more senior directors for some approval. Obviously, there would be a meeting among senior people in the office first to develop and refine the idea. I would rarely act alone and having buy-in from other people in the office makes the decision easier for the director."*

All respondents commented on how securing budget and other resources is a process of selling and negotiating. As one respondent put it: *'I am always looking for ways to get a better deal'*.

Respondents reported that presenting data and concise reports can support showing the value of your idea, what needs it meets, and why it is important to implement. One respondent alluded to the level of trust between senior managers, sometimes you just need to tell the budget-holder that you really need this!

> *"Nobody is going to say anything if I spend a grand here or there to improve things in my team, for example for social occasions or rewards. But if more money is required, I'll have to explain why I need it. But if i tell them it's something that will add value to*

my team, make people happier more effective, better workers etc, then they'll just say go ahead"

One respondent mentioned that getting to the root cause for the need is very important for the onboarding team as well. They had postponed or scrapped new ideas requiring a budget because they either did not fulfil a big need or the timing for implementation was not right. And this was before they entered negotiations to obtain the budget. Therefore, a critical view on what is required using available data is essential.

The discussions on buy-in with participants highlights the need to educate and engage your stakeholders on the onboarding program, in particular its need for resourcing on an ongoing basis and follow-through on intentions to secure any budget. It is a process, not a one-off question or a one-off activity, and requests need to be supported with data, formal proposals and 'value-add' business cases.

4.3 Onboarding

In the following sections we provide a summary of what a typical onboarding program might look like and what is considered in its design and processes. We also share some best practice that was shared during our field research conversations. This section also provides insights on the sudden shift to remote work that forced many organisations to move their onboarding program and practices to fit a very different delivery model.

The organisation as a place to work

Research participants are moderately to highly confident that their organisation is a good place to work. Sometimes this is based on their personal experiences working for the company, in other cases, it is based on data such as feedback from new hires, turnover/attrition rates or perks and support available to new and existing employees.

External validation of how the organisation is viewed as an employer was not a priority or was not considered by many of our research participants; however, a couple noted that this is important to them, and while winning awards such as 'Great Place to Work' is not vital, it is

something that they value. Validation is often obtained instead from new hire or employee feedback, frequent revision of the onboarding process and employee motivation data as well as attrition data.

Social connection and opportunities to connect with colleagues and team is considered essential for a positive onboarding experience with many respondents commenting on how they implement activities and models such as buddy systems and social groups to create the right conditions for new employees to connect with each other, co-workers and the culture of the organisation. One participant described a 'sense of belonging' as crucial for employee integration into the company.

> *"feeling a 'sense of belonging' was most important to their (new employee) satisfaction. Now this can mean a number of things and socialisation is probably one of the most important things."*

What does onboarding look like?

From the organisation's point of view the onboarding experience starts with defining the needs of the new employees, objectives for a successful onboarding experience and securing buy-in and resources. This is followed by putting in place the underlying processes that support the onboarding experience. These processes are plentiful and sometimes include the final recruitment processes like contracting and 'right to work' administration. Typically, the process that underpin the onboarding experience are:

- IT Set-up (hardware, software, tools and accounts)
- Office orientation and administration (desk set-up, office etiquette and facilities, employee benefits)
- Mandatory & compliance training
- Culture & Company Vision and Mission
- Team introduction
- Role-specific support

Opportunities for social connection are often weaved in throughout these components and might continue after the initial onboarding process or induction has been completed.

Not all onboarding programs are made up of all these components. In larger organisations one is likely to see a more elaborate onboarding experience as larger volumes of new hires join these organisations. The processes in these instances can be more standardized and streamlined than in smaller organisations with fewer and less frequent new hires joining the organisation. In these cases, the onboarding process and program could be more personalised and individual.

It is noticeable that particular focus is paid to social integration of new hires. One onboarding manager shared that 'social' is one of the three pillars of their onboarding program along with 'culture' and 'strategy'. Other research participants mentioned ways in which the onboarding program is used as an opportunity to connect the new hire in as many ways to the culture of the organisation as possible through social connection. This could be by making connections with co-workers through a buddy system or 1:1 meetings, but also offering the new hires possibilities to understand the culture, values and unique processes of the organisation (sometimes through a work assignment or project). Others introduced new employees to employee resource groups and would share information on available supports for career, financial as well as mental health. One participant spoke of involving employees in the community surrounding the workplace as well as the workplace itself.

> *"Well from a social perspective we have our social club and we run charity events with different partners to get our employees involved in the local community around the company. We also try to ensure employees have places to bond and talk outside of the immediate workplace."*

> *"different offices may organise things like fireside chats, coffee mornings, online games etc. However, we have found now that people don't necessarily want this, we are aware of Zoom/Meet fatigue"*

Shifting to remote onboarding

The transformation from face-to-face to remote onboarding was stressful and challenging for some respondents. For others, the move to remote onboarding was an extension of what was already implemented as they already worked in a hybrid model to varying degrees.

Those who experienced the sudden shift to remote onboarding most keenly, mentioned that about 85% of their onboarding processes had to change to enable the experience to take place. One participant spoke of the sudden and apparent need in tracking engagement when people were onboarding remotely

> *"We needed to redesign our internal processes and resources somewhat in order to track engagement with it. This was obviously an engineering problem that took a few weeks to sort out and there were some teething issues with it. We designed more short form videos and made it so that we could capture some metrics on whether people were watching them and in what sequence etc. We felt this was important now that we were dealing with more disparate and disconnected employees."*

There was opportunity in the shift to remote onboarding as well with many respondents highlighting the added value of using the available technology (Slack, Gira, Asana, Workday, Zoom and Teams were mentioned) more efficiently and effectively. One of the participants noted that moving to a remote onboarding experience allowed new hires to have more access to leaders in the organisation and other individuals who might otherwise not be accessible due to location or being time-poor.

In one case, the shift to remote onboarding accelerated a move towards much greater efficiency as the face-to-face onboarding model was under too much pressure and became unsustainable because of the ever-increasing volume of new employees joining the organisation on a weekly basis.

The two elements of the onboarding program that were mentioned to be particularly difficult to manage remotely were creating social connection and IT setup. The process around

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physically shipping hardware and making sure employees are set up to work is challenging to achieve in a remote environment.

In relation to social connection, respondents mentioned that connecting via video conferencing is possible but not ideal. Our research participants recognize the difficulty for a new employee to integrate into a new organisation when the opportunity for face-to-face interaction is limited. Information and training can easily be made available online (even though work needs to be done to improve discoverability and navigation for new employees), but personal connection, while essential for many, is more difficult to achieve. One participant spoke of the 'soft bit' of onboarding, such as happiness and belonging, that needs more attention than the 'hard bit', which he referred to as things like checklists and admin tasks.

> *"We have Workday which provides some general frameworks and checklists which might tell you in a very general way that an employee has been onboarded or completed certain tasks or provide a general flow, but it is not really a dedicated onboarding tool. I have explored some other tools which I have heard about anecdotally, but we never committed to any of them. I feel there is a soft bit that needs addressing with onboarding, the IEQ rather than the IQ. I think you need to just take that on a case-by-case basis depending on the role and the person."*

Some participants mentioned that their onboarding focus shifted towards creating opportunities for new employees to connect through buddy programs, the use of Slack, online team building/fun activities or coffee morning. One of our interview participants mentioned the use of 'Donut' through Slack which randomly pairs people with each other to connect serendipitously for virtual coffee, peer learning, etc.

One respondent mentioned that at the start of the pandemic they may have overcompensated for the lack of social connection and that now, opportunities for social interaction are more spaced out as new employees were not really looking for the frequency of engagement.

"Obviously with remote this (socialising) is harder. For the first four months of Covid we had a weekly coffee morning where you were randomly assigned to breakout rooms (kind of like a coffee roulette). This kind of petered out but then when the post-Christmas lockdown came everybody wanted it back!"

A particular new hire group that arose in our interviews was recent graduates and the particular challenges with onboarding graduates remotely who may not have any experience of being in the workplace. In this case, graduates may need additional support and expectations need to be set for them, for example, in understanding how and when communications are expected. A similar cohort that might require additional support and expectation-setting is interns.

Measuring the impact of onboarding

We asked people a number of questions related to the impact of the onboarding program on the new employee. Most organisations depend on the new employee feedback data they collect through feedback surveys. A number of organisations mentioned they conduct surveys in combination with regular retrospectives to analyse the data available in order to identify needs for improvement or expansion of the onboarding program. One participant stated that above all he makes time to speak to their new employees and get feedback first-hand.

"...it can be hard to tell but we try to survey employees whenever we can and carry out regular check-ins. The biweekly retrospectives are important for this, as sub-teams have a chance to air grievances or settle differences. I am always available to (talk to) my staff and this is where the best feedback can come from, in fact I recently spent two hours on the phone with one of our most junior employees as they told me some things that they weren't happy about. This is the kind of atmosphere that we welcome here."

One organisation conducted an external benchmark through a 3rd party to better understand what onboarding best practice looked like outside of their organisation, while another

participant stated that she tries to keep in contact with other companies and get a feel for what they are doing.

> *"We try to scan what other companies are doing. We are quite open about our own practices, so we hold interviews with other companies and exchange ideas. We also review external publications and articles to keep up with new thoughts or ideas in the (onboarding) space."*

The feedback collected shows that new employees generally feel welcomed and appreciate that their new co-workers are approachable and kind. The organisations represented in the study put time, care and effort in the design of their onboarding programs to support the new employees as well as possible. Most people admitted that it is quite difficult to really understand how the onboarding process is impacting new employees and that more could be done to collect and analyse data in order to better understand the onboarding experience of new employees. One participant spoke of the indirect business metrics that can be utilised to get a measure of onboarding impact.

> *"As a marker I can speak to our rate of turnover, since I started this role (four years ago) we have only lost three employees, I always hate to lose employees but sometimes it happens, we try to find out why they leave, have an exit interview etc, but I can't say that employee leaving has ever been down to a poor onboarding process."*

Onboarding best practice

All organisations we spoke to have developed considerable experience with remote onboarding since 2019 and have implemented onboarding activities that support a good onboarding experience in the company.

Whether or not onboarding will stay remote is a question we cannot yet answer. However, the effect of the changes in work in recent times on onboarding practice is undeniable and has encouraged organisations to implement new approaches.

Some people are aware of the challenges ahead, for example how to ensure onboarding is exclusive to all new employees in a hybrid model or how to scale a remote onboarding program while keeping the company culture and values alive as the organisation grows and more people continue to be onboarded remotely.

One organisation collected data on what new hires valued most about their onboarding experience, which was to have a 'sense of belonging'. This can mean a lot of different things to different people. However, extra effort was made to make the onboarding experience inclusive for all by connecting new hires with dedicated resource teams and information to facilitate people's needs for connection in order to feel included and valued.

Another organisation established a network of mental health champions during periods of lockdown to ensure that their new hires and other employees had access to support resources if they needed them. What arose from a few interviews was the implementation of 'mental health first aiders and also Mental Health Week in their organisations.

Another example of new ways to look at their onboarding program came from an organisation that has implemented a role-related project as a component of their onboarding experience. New hires are asked to complete a small role-specific piece of work that is shared and celebrated by the entire organisation upon completion. Its purpose is to boost the new employee's confidence as well as give an opportunity for them to familiarise themselves with the core components of their role. The interesting part about this project is that it is something that is of value to the organisation, and once the project is completed, the idea is then implemented.

In general, all the organisations we spoke with do what they can to ensure the onboarding experience is as productive and positive as possible as well as aimed at supporting the new employee when and where they need it.

As work is shifting to hybrid or remote models, the onboarding program will likely shift more easily as a result of the experience organisations have built since March 2020. Some things, like stepping over the office building threshold to meet your team, were lost, but there has

also been an opportunity for companies to calibrate the onboarding process and find new ways to support and set new employees up for success in more flexible and adaptable ways. As we move towards hybrid models the organisations have been querying their employees and figuring out *what* works best for them.

> *"We ran some surveys of back to work and hybrid working models going forward and the biggest reason people wanted to come in one day a week or one day a month was just to go for a few drinks or something (85% said this). So, I think people miss that part of working in the office and it can have an effect on morale especially for new joiners. We try to keep an eye on that."*

5. Summary & Recommendations

Having interviewed the Alex persona and collected survey feedback, have we validated our assumptions about Alex?

Assumption 1: *Alex needs to be viewed as innovative and an effective leader and feel that she is doing a good job & her company is viewed as a good employer*

We have seen evidence of Alex trying to press innovation with their budget holders and high-ups. This shows that Alex wants the organization to adapt to the new remote reality of onboarding. We have also seen evidence of Alex looking at what other companies are doing and trying to keep-up with new innovations and state-of-the-art practices. This implies that Alex is also eager to show that their organization is not out of step with best practice.

Assumption 2: *Alex needs to be appreciated by the Senior Management Team and get buy-in for new initiatives*

Buy-in is more about just securing budgets for new initiatives, Alex wants to prove to senior management that their practices are getting results and are adding value to the business. Alex wants to convince her colleagues by showing them the evidence. We have seen Alex showing indirect metrics, such as rate of turnover as justification for better onboarding initiatives.

Assumption 3: *Alex needs to provide an effective onboarding experience and get new staff adding value to the organisation quickly*

Alex knows that an employee can't 'float like a jellyfish' forever, they need to settle in and start adding and receiving value as soon as possible. This is a business after all. However, Alex knows that this is a two-way contract, they know that if they can make the employee feel comfortable, integrated, socialised and 'fitted-in', they can expect a happy, productive and valuable worker. This goes beyond showing them a good time for the first two weeks we have seen evidence of Alex trying to continuously engage with new hires and drive their feedback back into the onboarding process.

Assumption 4: *Alex needs to feel confident in decision-making and finding solutions that work for everyone concerned*

We have seen that Alex sometimes makes wrong decisions and has to fix or reverse them. Organisations that are adapting to the remote reality will often find that not everything transitions smoothly. However, Alex needs to use the feedback from new employees and other stakeholders in the process to fix or 'tweak' things. Alex's confidence does not come from always being right, but from having the buy-in form the whole organization that this approach is the right one but may need adjusting as things evolve. This, like so many other things, comes down to a healthy culture, where Alex is allowed to try new initiatives and sometimes not get it quite right.

Assumption 5: *Alex needs to ensure new employees feel welcome and part of the organisation in the best way possible*

We have seen evidence that Alex is aware just how important those first couple of weeks, or even days can be. A sense of welcoming and integration can make the employee feel like they've made the right decision to join this organisation, a bad experience at this point might be too difficult to fix later down the line. Alex needs to be available and get the buy-in from other involved stakeholders, this is a team effort, and it does not fall just on Alex.