

How to Create a Successful Onboarding Program

Create an effective onboarding and sales training program that marries the modern technology experience employees expect with the retention and outcomes that trainers need.



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It's no secret that employees rarely get excited to kick off a new job with onboarding. For enablement teams, this lack of enthusiasm is even more challenging, knowing the time and resources required to build effective training sessions.

Sadly, a typical onboarding program presents too much information from outdated slide decks that yield little chance for retention. And, with remote and hybrid workforces becoming more prevalent, onboarding teams across time zones creates even bigger challenges.

To help you design an effective onboarding and sales training program that marries the modern technology experience employees expect with the retention and outcomes that trainers need to be effective, here are three steps to get started.

- 1 Stop drinking from the firehose
- 2 Take your training from an atlas to a GPS
- 3 Make learning easy and accessible

1

Stop drinking from the firehose

The average employee's onboarding experience typically looks a little something like this: Log in to the computer, set up accounts for payroll, email and benefits. After the initial HR functions are complete, it's time to learn company history, structure, policies and procedures. This is usually followed by an introduction to complex software training and deep dives into company-specific sales methodologies, competitors and customer data.

All-told, the average new-hire onboarding process consists of 54 different tasks¹, making employees feel like they're drinking from a firehose. When faced with so much information at once, it's no surprise retention levels fall. In fact, this concept, known as **"the forgetting curve"** shows that within one hour, people will have **forgotten an average of 50 percent²** of the information you presented and within 24 hours, they forget 70 percent of new information.² No matter how many memes you stuff into a slide deck to keep things entertaining, onboarding is just too much for people to handle in their first few weeks.



The firehose effect can create a negative feeling that leaves a poor taste for new employees. Even worse, this overwhelming approach can lead to job dissatisfaction, confusion about the role, and ultimately turnover, with employees saying they are twice as likely to look for another job after a poor onboarding experience.³ With **the average cost of turnover at 1X-3X⁴** an employee's annual salary, it's far better to invest in effective training up front than throw dollars down the drain on rotating hires.

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HOW TO MINIMIZE THE FIREHOSE EFFECT?

When met with a positive onboarding experience, **retention improves by 82%.**⁵ So, how can you make your onboarding program positive and engaging while still communicating critical information?

One word: **microlearning**. This shorter form of content, usually less than six minutes, can reduce the problems that accompany information overload. Specifically, rich media like videos or audio instructions speak to visual and auditory learners who might otherwise tune out hours-long classroom presentations. Microlearning typically includes individual modules that focus on one specific objective, giving employees immediate access to the resolution.

Digestible across devices, microlearning delivers training content to employees where they learn best. Microlearning lessens the forgetting curve and improves retention with bite-sized videos, quizzes, games and visual aids that appeal to every learning style.

Training doesn't have to be overwhelming, yet so many enablement teams forget learning is an ongoing journey best served in small doses. With bite-sized content, enablement leaders can reduce the firehose effect, allowing their teams to spend more time selling and less on repeat-training.



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2

Take your training from an atlas to a GPS

The evolution of the classic road trip is equal parts culture study and a close look at the progression of technology. From hitchhiking and convenience-store directions to Mapquest and GPS, trekking across the country has come a long way.

This progression is not unlike a lot of onboarding programs who still rely on archaic practices to introduce new employees to their company. While Mapquest was once quite helpful with its step-by-step directions, it could also result in a few U-turns if your pages were out of order. With so many steps required to learn a company's tools, it's no surprise that employees get lost along the way.

Today, it's not uncommon for a typical onboarding training session to take place in a classroom, through an outdated Learning Management System, or with a 34-year-old program known as PowerPoint. It's hard to believe anyone would attempt a road trip in a 34-year-old car, yet the PowerPoint training model is still alive and well.

Because each company's sales process is as unique as the products they sell, it can take time for new reps to acclimate. In fact, the forgetting curve goes on to indicate that...

| participants lose almost **90%** of information...

learned in this classroom-style training. To overcome this slow ramp time, onboarding should include modern approaches to learning through technology that mimics the same tools we use in personal lives.

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INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Today, we all like to consume information instantly. Need to order food? Download a song? It's all just a few clicks away. With our brains wired to receive information quickly and in bite-sized chunks, it's no surprise to find that someone talking for hours leaves audiences wondering what they just sat through.

It may seem like a good idea to follow a training session with the recording, but imagine how effective it would be to create short videos of the top takeaways instead? With clips separated by topic, employees can quickly resolve their questions and reference how to do a task without wasting time searching for the answer. Whether in the field or with a client, information that's accessible across multiple devices and in familiar formats will help your teams reach the desired outcomes they need to be successful.

If your training sessions still include pages of step-by-step instructions and aging software, consider ditching the slide decks for a modern [digital enablement platform](#). Designed around the employee experience, digital enablement platforms surface training contextually, directly within an employee's flow of work, making learning a natural part of their day-to-day rather than a distraction.



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3

Make learning easy and accessible

In years past, the traditional office environment included rows of desks and cubicles with offices that lined the perimeter. But today, we've shifted to a hybrid workplace that creates much more personal space, from six feet to miles in between. Remote work is here to stay, which makes it impossible to physically ask a teammate when questions arise. Even worse, supervisors have reported that **37% of employees experience decreased productivity**⁶ when they can't turn to a coworker for answers.

The "swivel chair" approach to learning is long-gone and employees now ask for help across instant messenger chats, emails or collaboration tools like Slack, etc. Sadly, it's been reported that 71% of employees spend at least an hour a day looking for an answer to questions⁷.



71%

OF EMPLOYEES SPEND AT LEAST AN HOUR A DAY
LOOKING FOR ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS⁷

Without the right remote solutions, it should come as no surprise to learn that it typically takes eight months for a newly hired employee to reach full productivity⁸.

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CREATE A NEW SWIVEL-CHAIR SOLUTION

Enablement teams work hard to develop purposeful content, yet when used incorrectly, or worse, not at all, it makes no difference how great your sales resources are. To shorten ramp time and increase productivity, training materials need to be accessible right within the flow of work.

Rather than waste their time searching websites, shared network folders, multiple applications and even their own notes, employees will onboard faster if given information where and when they need it. Digital enablement platforms remove the need to ask a colleague for help by providing a searchable, central repository that's accessible directly within the apps employees use most. Imagine the impact a sales rep can make when given immediate access to battle cards and competitor's products, CRM training modules and software FAQs with just a few clicks?



TURN ONBOARDING TRAINING INTO LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning doesn't stop after the first week, yet so many onboarding programs quickly taper off after short periods of time. Even though **69% of employees are more likely to stay** at a company for three years if they experienced great onboarding⁹, the sad truth is that **only 37% of companies extend their onboarding programs** beyond the first month.¹⁰

With the aid of a digital enablement platform like Spekit, sales enablement teams can reinforce learning and training throughout an employee's tenure. By investing in modern training technology that delivers contextual information and just-in-time content, your onboarding program will transition from cost center to revenue driver.

How enablement teams use Spekit to build successful enablement programs



*"We proceduralized everything and created a formal training approach. New employees go through onboarding, specialized role training, and refresher sessions. We also shifted away from solely synchronous classroom sessions. Instead, we deliver universal training via asynchronous online learning and use face-to-face time to deliver highly personalized or customized sessions. **With Spekit**, we can scale from single-person hiring intakes to 100-person cohorts without hiring an army of training specialists."*

ANN-RENEE THRASH, TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION SPECIALIST AT JLL



*"Our onboarding program has two layers: company-wide and departmental. We're careful not to overload them early on. Our philosophy is to build up knowledge and skills gradually, slowly layering on pieces of someone's day-to-day work on top of their foundational knowledge. Throughout onboarding, no one ever learns something just once. We teach, repeat, and reinforce. Session by session, they turn from fresh-faced new hires into hotshot sales reps. We introduced **Spekit's digital enablement tool** as our third teammate. It's an always-on overlay for our tools, allowing employees to access training content on their own. It's the help they need, when they need it, in their workflow. It's accessible, scalable and located right where it's needed."*

KARA FACTOR, SR. SPECIALIST, TRAINING AT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES



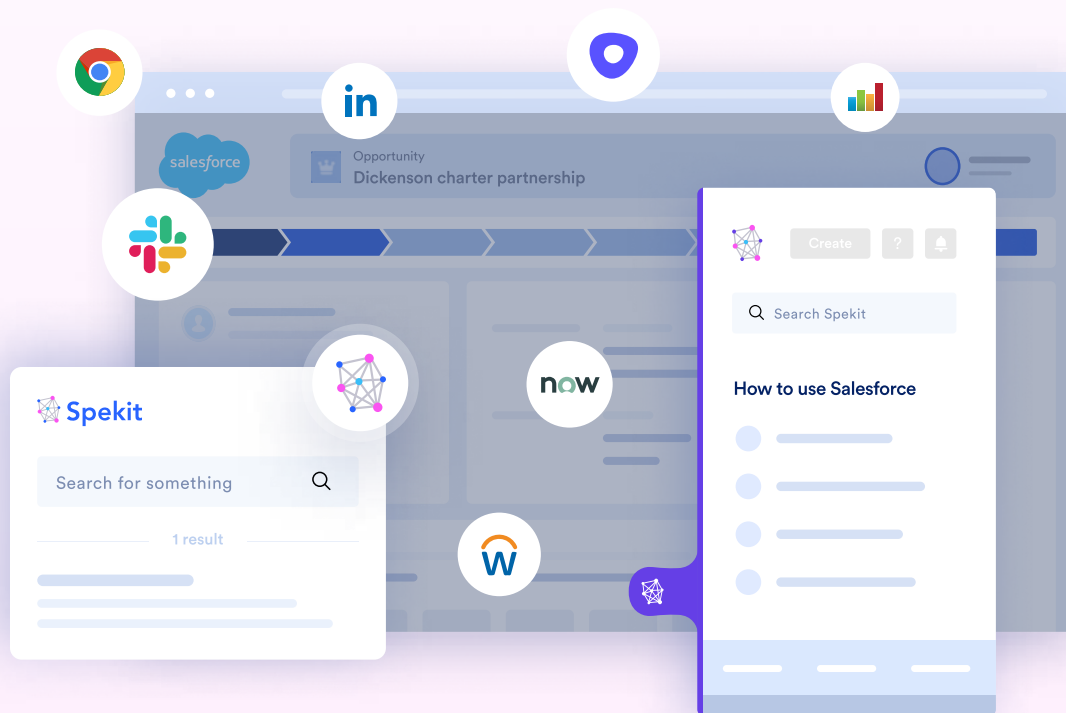
*"With Spekit, we're equipping sales enablement to cope with different learning styles and competing factors people have in their life. This allows us to embed training content within the tool a rep is using, empowering them to learn on their own. **Using Spekit** means we can now deliver information right when the rep needs it, reducing retraining requirements and driving a much higher return-on-effort from my enablement team."*

WHITNEY SIECK, SR. DIRECTOR OF REVENUE - ENABLEMENT AT OUTREACH.IO

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ABOUT SPEKIT

Spekit is a leading SaaS in-app digital adoption and enablement platform that helps employees learn their tools and navigate process changes by accessing answers and enablement resources in real-time, everywhere they work. Built by sales ops professionals for growing & remote teams, Spekit blends the sophistication of a modern digital adoption platform with the simplicity of a contextual knowledge base for a lightweight yet powerful solution to continuous employee training.



Want to learn more about successful onboarding and lifelong learning?

spekit.com/demo

SOURCES:

1. Sapling HR | 2. HCI | 3. Digitate | 4. PeopleKeep | 5. DSapling HR | 6. Spekit | 7. Spekit | 8. HBR | 9. O.C. Tanner | 10. Aberdeen Group

SEE MORE AT [SPEKIT.COM](https://spekit.com)





MORE INFO AT spekit.com