MLGSCA/NCNMLG 2023 Virtual Spring Symposium

Piloting a Buddy Program to Onboard New Hires

Presenter: Dana Abbey, MLS, AHIP, Associate Professor, Strauss Health Sciences Library

Strauss Health Sciences Library
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Onboarding and the New Hire

Recent surveys found:

1. Remote onboarding or training was one of the biggest hiring challenges.
2. The average cost to onboard a new hire is $4,100.
3. Only 12% of new hires felt the onboarding process was good.
4. Thirty-one percent of new hires left after 6 months.
   - 68% of those left after 3 months.
5. Twenty-five percent of new hires reported an onboarding of a day or less.
6. More than 30% of companies lack a structured onboarding process.
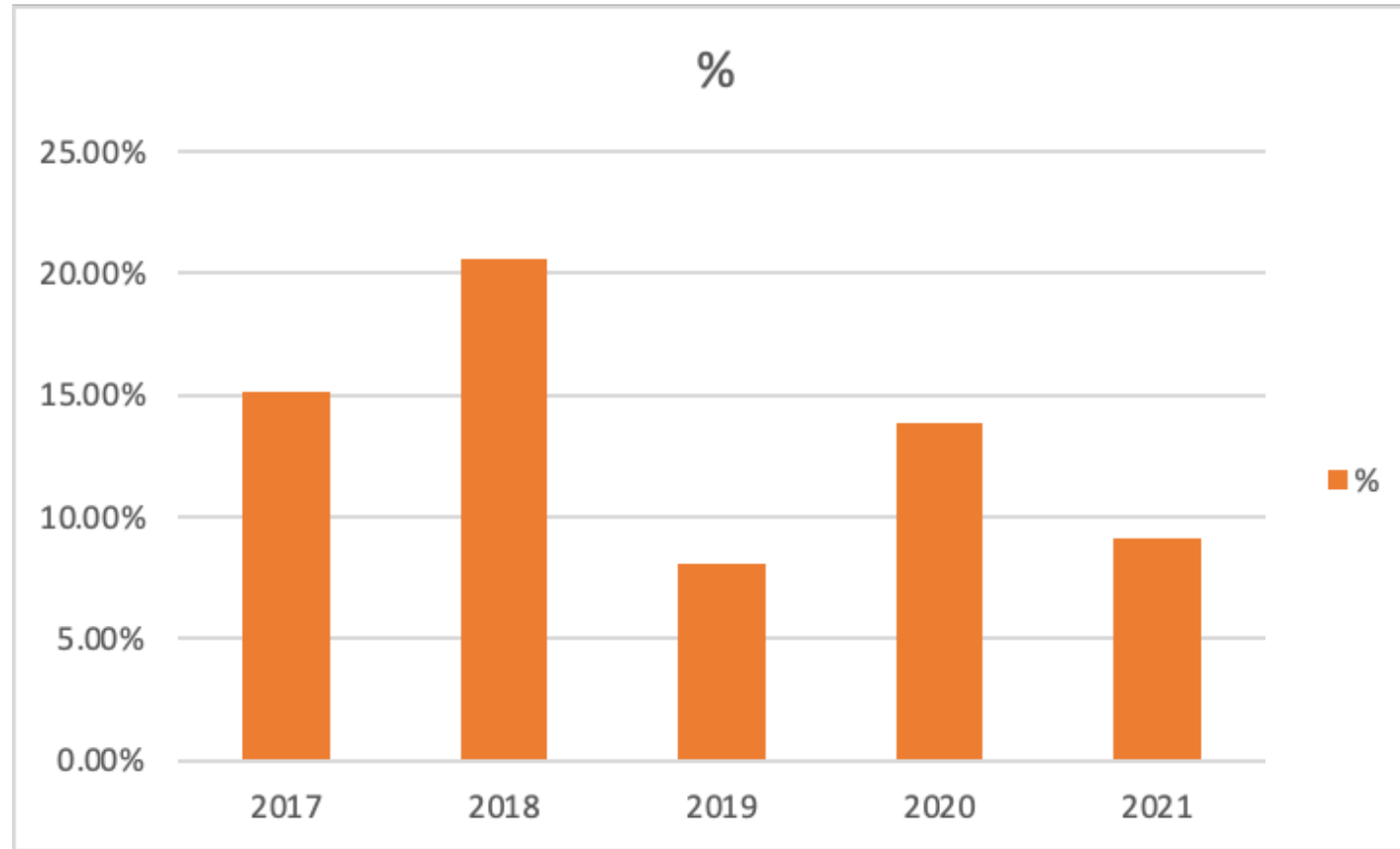7. It takes 8-12 months for an employee to reach their full potential.

Strauss Health Sciences Library

Strauss Health Sciences Library
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Strauss Library Turnover Rates 2017-2021

New Hire Professional Relationships

- Supervisor: directs work schedules, daily activities, performance expectations.
- Mentor: helps new hires with role-related advice and longer-term career development.
- Buddy: assists new employees for short periods of time and require no specialized training as a buddy.

Purpose of the Buddy Program Pilot

To enhance the new hire's experience during their first 4 months of employment.

- The buddy served as an additional resource to the new hire's supervisor for onboarding.

- The aim was to ease transition for the new hire with a peer (non-supervisor) connection.

- Anticipated that the program would fill the gap of serendipitous interactions missed due to remote working.

Why a Buddy Program Pilot?

- Majority of recent hires have been done virtually.
  - Candidates may not get a sense of institutional culture.
  - Candidates may not get a sense of the physical space.
  - Virtual platforms can impede non-verbal communication and body language cues.
  - Virtual interviews decrease the ability to build trust and rapport.
- Provides peer-to-peer relationship building.
- New hire may feel more comfortable asking questions of the Buddy over their supervisor.

Strauss Buddy Program Pilot Project

- Launched in 2021.

- Five pairings since launch.

- A call for a Buddy was made with a new hire.

- Participants received guidelines for the pilot.

Design of the Buddy Program Pilot

- Months 1-2: meet 30-60 minutes every other week.

- Months 3-4: meet 30-60 minutes once per month.

- Meetings covered formal and informal topics.

- The new hire's supervisor and the buddy would meet to discuss possible topics to touch on during the meetings.

- New hire and buddy could opt in to meet after the conclusion of the pilot.

Buddy Program Pilot Feedback

What did you like about participating in the Buddy program?

I liked helping the new hire have a safe space to ask any questions they might have. Job related or not.

Letting the new hire know about the opportunities available within our library and campus, such as professional development. Learning more about the new hire's experiences, interests, and goals.

I appreciated having a go-to person for questions about work culture and amenities in the area.

I like the idea behind it. I think I would have appreciated having the option when I was hired, which is why I volunteered. It was nice getting to know a new person.

Having an experienced person who I could ask questions of that wasn't my supervisor. Having a consistent time when I knew I could ask questions or share observations that extended beyond the first few weeks.

Buddy Program Pilot Feedback

What changes would you like to see implemented to the Buddy program?

I would suggest the program support the privacy of the conversations with the new hires unless they have given permission to share their question or concern with their supervisor or library leadership.

Several times the new hire and I had to cancel or reschedule meetings due to scheduling conflicts or work commitments. A possible solution would be looping in the buddy's and new hire's supervisors, so they are aware of when meetings are scheduled, and don't double-book the buddy or new hire with another meeting.

I don't think the buddy should be within the line of supervision of the new hire. I don't know how you get around this when the new hire doesn't have anyone on their organizational level. But honestly, there was very little work related that I could help with due to the extreme different in our organizational positions. I was able to provide some tips about the campus so it wasn't totally pointless, but maybe not as successful.

Maybe an extension so that you could meet with your buddy a year in to ask in questions that you've accumulated after a full year of work.

Strauss Health Sciences Library
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Buddy Program Feedback

What value do you think the Buddy program brought to the library?

It was fun to be around a new hire and remember the excitement of starting a new position. I think the library benefits from this renewed energy, perspective, and idea generation.

It fosters inter-departmental collaboration and goodwill. The buddy and the new hire can learn more about what goes on in departments other than their own.

Having a buddy is a nice way to connect with another employee with more relaxed expectations.

I think it makes the library more welcoming for new employees. It gives new employees the opportunity to meet individuals outside of their department and get a fuller view of the library.

It made me feel very welcome and much more prepared as an individual employee. To the library as a whole I think it made me a better employee because I understood systems and idiosyncrasies better and earlier. I plan on staying at the library a long time and I think the Buddy program laid a foundation for what I believe will be a lengthy career.

Next Steps

- Continue to solicit feedback from current and future participants.
- Find proactive ways to address program improvement.
- Utilize a metric to measure if the program improves retention.
- Explore expanding the program to all staff, regardless of hire date.

Acknowledgment of Authors

- Dana Abbey, MLS, AHIP, Strauss Health Sciences Library
- Kristen DeSanto, MSLS, AHIP, Strauss Health Sciences Library
- Jacob Gallay, MLIS, MA
- Shandra Knight, M.S., Strauss Health Sciences Library
- Nina McHale, MA, MA/MSLS, AHIP, Strauss Health Sciences Library
- Danielle L. Ostendorf, MLIS, Colorado School of Mines, Arthur Lakes Library
- Christi Piper, MLIS, AHIP, Strauss Health Sciences Library
- Ellie Svoboda, MLIS, AHIP, Strauss Health Sciences Library

Strauss Health Sciences Library
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Works Cited

Cooper, J., & Wight, J. (2014, October 26). *Implementing a buddy system in the workplace - Project Management Institute*. Project Management Institute Learning Library. Retrieved September 16, 2022, from https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/implementing-buddy-system-workplace-9376

Ferrazzi, K. (2017, December 6). *Technology can save onboarding from itself*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2015/03/technology-can-save-onboarding-from-itself#:~:text=Twenty%2Dthree%20percent%20of%20new,employee%20to%20reach%20full%20productivity

Klinghoffer, D., Young, C., & Haspas, D. (2019, June 7). *Every new employee needs an onboarding "Buddy"*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2019/06/every-new-employee-needs-an-onboarding-buddy

Olmstead, L. (2022, August 18). *The cost of onboarding new employees in 2022 (+calculator) - whatfix*. The Whatfix Blog | Drive Digital Adoption. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://whatfix.com/blog/cost-of-onboarding/

Sibisi , S., & Kappers, G. (2022, April 6). *Onboarding can make or break a new hire's experience*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2022/04/onboarding-can-make-or-break-a-new-hires-experience

Thirty-six percent of employers lack a structured onboarding process for new employees, according to New Careerbuilder Survey. Press Room | Career Builder. (2017, May 11). Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://press.careerbuilder.com/2017-05-11-Thirty-Six-Percent-of-Employers-Lack-a-Structured-Onboarding-Process-for-New-Employees-According-to-New-CareerBuilder-Survey

Zucker, R. (2021, June 22). *How to re-onboard employees who started remotely*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2021/06/how-to-re-onboard-employees-who-started-remotely

Strauss Health Sciences Library
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**