How Oak Engage supports **onboarding for new hires**

What is onboarding?

Onboarding is everything that encompasses new hires joining a business. It takes place in every business due to natural churn or through expansion and growth. There may be a need for new talent to take on new roles that have been created, or simply to replace current employees who are moving on or up within the business. It is inevitable that businesses will need to onboard employees at some point and so a robust onboarding process is vital to give these new employees the best start possible within the organisation.

While it is a must-have, the onboarding process isn't always as robust and comprehensive as you might think, with only 12% of employees agreeing that their business does a good job of onboarding new employees. The consequences of poor onboarding can range from lower levels of engagement and lack of trust, to a negative impact on employee morale, missed targets and ultimately higher levels of staff attrition.

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Why is onboarding important for employees?

As humans, we can often feel anxious about changes in our lives. Our time spent working makes up so much of our daily life, so it's natural that changes to this can feel unsettling. Joining a new company is a huge change that can cause a lot of excitement, but there will often be some nerves and stress there too.

The unknown of what to expect before starting a new job can be really hard for many people and the first few weeks of joining a new company can take its toll mentally too. People can experience imposter syndrome and feel overwhelmed. This is why the onboarding process is critical for new employees, offering them a sense of belonging while giving them the tools, information and resources they need to integrate well into the company.

This initial process also builds on your company culture, giving you the opportunity to showcase what the company stands for. This in turn helps to engage employees with the business values, mission and objectives while motivating them to feel that they are a valued part of the team.

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Why is onboarding important for employers?

With onboarding being vital for both employees and employers, why do so many businesses fail when it comes to implementing systems? Common issues that occur around onboarding include:

1 **A lack of training and understanding**

Failure to recognise the impact of a strong onboarding process can sometimes lead to lacklustre and inconsistent inductions. There can be a drive for new employees to 'hit the ground running' in some circumstances, which is usually due to a lack of resource or trying to backfill a role that has put increased pressure on the rest of a team.

In cases like this, a new employee may be utilised as an immediate resource to help relieve this pressure. This, however, can often be more damaging than useful as they are not fully embedded within the company and may not know proper processes. Additionally, their experience of joining the business will feel rushed or stressed.

While in the short term the immediate team can benefit, the new employee will be left with a limited knowledge of how the business works, how to find resources to do their new job, and a lack of understanding about the overall company vision and values. This can cause uncertainty, disengagement and retention issues for new starters, which is completely counter intuitive after having spent time and money on recruiting the right person for the job. This then results in an endless cycle of new employees being brought in to backfill the previous losses, incurring additional cost to the business and a lack of knowledge being built up with employees.

2 **Silos between departments**

While onboarding is typically seen as a job for Human Resources or internal comms teams, it's extremely important that managers from different departments also buy in to the reasons why onboarding is so important for their teams and the business.

Offering a comprehensive experience for all employees ensures they feel like they know their way around the business, who to speak to and where to find things, making them feel like they're fully welcomed into the new environment. This helps to offset any anxiety that can be felt within the first few weeks or months for new employees.

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3 Compliance and onboarding

A robust onboarding process allows for new employees to become compliant with the business processes and expectations, minimising the potential for mistakes, security breaches and inappropriate behaviour.

In industries where there is a lot of regulation, your new starters may require further training modules to be completed before they can perform certain tasks. Having full oversight of all of the training required for each individual will ensure they are not held back once fully onboarded.

4 Onboarding and communication

The onboarding process begins from the moment an employee accepts the job offer: This can be months before they begin their first day. Outside of email, there aren't many communication tools for employers to keep in touch and support new hires in the run-up to their start date. Before any employees start, there are tasks that need to be done, such as ordering IT equipment or getting email addresses created. There are also tasks that the employee needs to complete and email isn't always the best channel for this.

5 Tailored to employees, their needs and timeframes

The onboarding process itself can take on many forms, from a company handbook or individual managers doing the introductions, to group activities that give more of an insight into the business. While these can work well, generally they are done with the other new starters at the same time. While this is great for busy HR / IC teams to streamline activity, it does mean that there is one speed for all and they're usually delivered as a seminar over no more than a few days.

Depending on the size of the business, there can be a lot to absorb, while trying to learn their new role at the same time. The onboarding process needs to adapt to each employee and their needs, so that they can get the best out of it. Traditional methods don't usually cater to this and can be viewed as a tick box exercise. Good onboarding should support employees for as long as they need.

Oak Engage provides modern solutions to all of these common challenges, supporting your onboarding process that can be tailored to the requirements of each new hire and their specific role.

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How Oak supports the onboarding process

Stage 1:

Preboarding and mobile access

With Oak Engage, new hires can access the intranet via their mobile device before they even have their first day at the company. This allows them to do certain activities, as approved by your internal communications team, through a dedicated preboarding homepage, such as:

- Order their uniform
- Enter bank details for pay
- Access and accept policies
- Find useful office information

Having easy access to all of these things can help to reduce anxiety before your new hires start.

Small things like this can really help to support staff with their nerves and anxiety on day one by letting them know what to expect. This also supports the company in showcasing its reputation and how it treats its employees with a focus on wellbeing and mental health.

Stage 2:

Onboarding, audiences and pages - Welcoming new employees and their induction

Within Oak, you have the ability to group various people into different audiences so they have unique journeys when they log into the platform. This enables you to create a bespoke welcome page for new starters that greets them for a period of time, rather than being overwhelmed with the entire intranet and the same user interface that all other employees may see when they log in.

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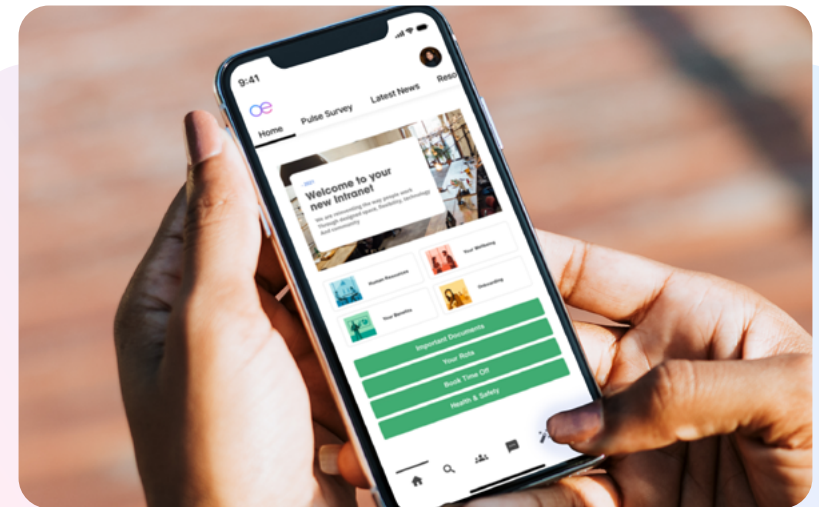
Oak gives you the option to create as many pages as you require, so it's up to you how granular you'd like to go. You may choose to have a version of that page specifically for new hires on day one only, so that users are greeted with a pre-recorded message from the CEO welcoming them to the company, or some very basic usage so that they don't feel overwhelmed.

Active Scheduled Homepages
Homepages shown here will be matched first before falling back to the main homepage

Onboarding

🕐 All the time   👁 new starters   🖥 Any device type ⌄
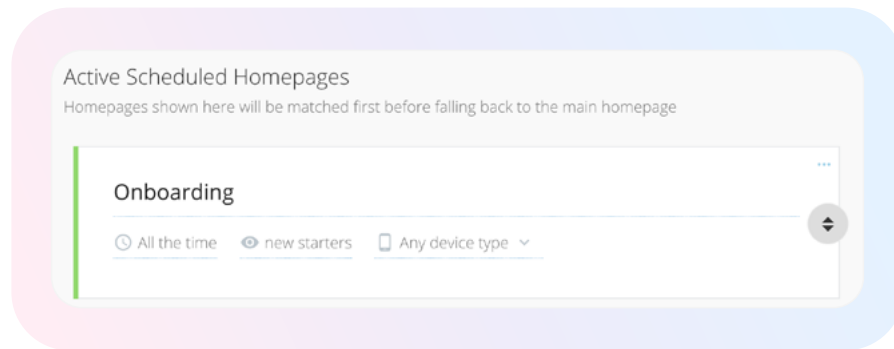
You can also use Oak to create tutorials and tips on how to use the intranet, giving users a basic understanding and overview of how to find certain areas or how to navigate tools and resources they will be using day-to-day.

Joining the company and learning the basics of a new role

After a set amount of time, users can then be transferred over to the main intranet pages to see all the news and updates from the business, but with access back to their onboarding page should they need to check any policies. Onboarding is a longer process than a week or two so by offering quick links back to a place that contains handy information, it allows the new users continuous access to find the information they might want to revisit.

Using the platform in this way means users are not overwhelmed or left confused about how to use the intranet. They can continue to access the information they want for a longer period of time until they're comfortable and confident in using the system.

"Oak's onboarding experience has drastically improved our retention rates, with a 32% reduction in turnover of hourly paid crew in new sites. It has also had a significant impact on new starter drop-out rates. Following the launch of BK Hub and the integrated, automated, personalised onboarding process through the app, Burger King UK has seen an incredible 40% reduction in new starter drop-out rates in the 6 months since it launched."

Nick Hollis, Head of Engagement at Burger King UK

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Supporting employee engagement with Oak

Personalised content and email round-up:

Oak's personalisation will deliver the right message to the right people at the right time. Using AI, it creates a personalised feed of content for every single employee. Deliver targeted and relevant news in a way your people like to access it, across channels, reducing noise.

Oak's personalised, automated email newsletter offers a round-up of unseen news delivered to each employee's inbox. Individually tailored to every employee, no two emails need be the same, regardless of the size of the company.
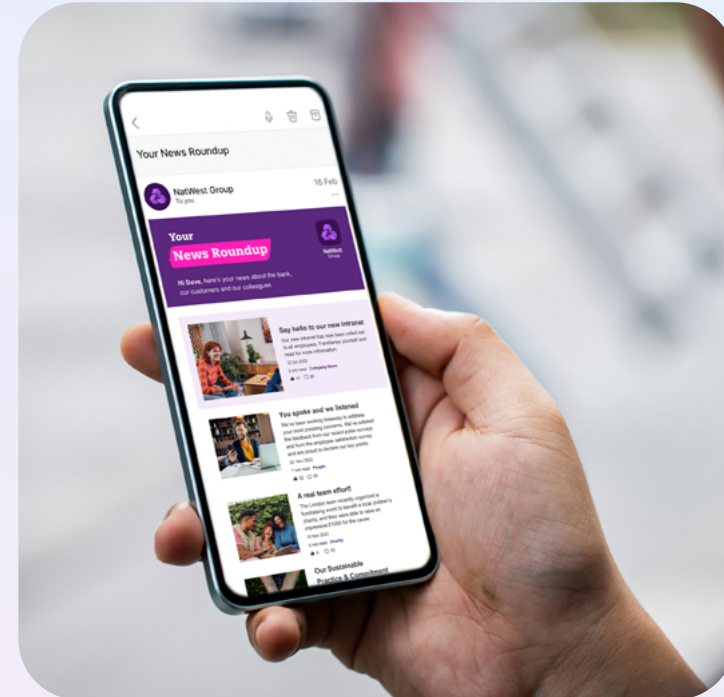
> "Oak Engage has transformed the way we communicate, delivering a single news feed which aligns with our 'one bank' strategy. Consolidating our offering has created a clear channel for communications and a single source of truth. We're already seeing positive engagement from colleagues."

Alan Harris, Director of Internal Communications at NatWest

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Integrations, document storage and tools:

Oak Engage integrates with your business and acts as an integrated storage facility for all internal files, policies and documents. Oak Engage is the missing link, bringing everything into one central place to help streamline how your employees search and access important business information.

Integrations are surfaced through Oak's 'Tools' feature, displayed straight onto your homepage. This gives individuals the flexibility to define their own tools depending on their role and needs. From here, any programmes can be accessed quickly and easily, negating the need to navigate a complex menu structure in order to locate commonly used programs.

> "Oak has allowed us to create a completely new onboarding journey for our people. Homepages for prestarts, days 1-30 and days 31-60 guide an employee through their onboarding and shows them information relevant to them in their role. Acquired employees (employees joining us through a merger or acquisition) will see their own specific homepages to help transition them into the company and provide much needed guidance and clarification in often tight timeframes."

Liz Flynn, Communications Director, Acquisitions and Special Programs at Sevita

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An award-winning employee app and intranet solution

Oak Engage empowers your teams to get the right message, to the right people, at the right time.

We're here to make communication simple. We believe there is a better way to use technology to engage employees, cut through the noise, and inspire action that puts people at the heart of organisations.

The customer is at the heart of Oak Engage, with an attentive support team on hand to help with any customer queries.
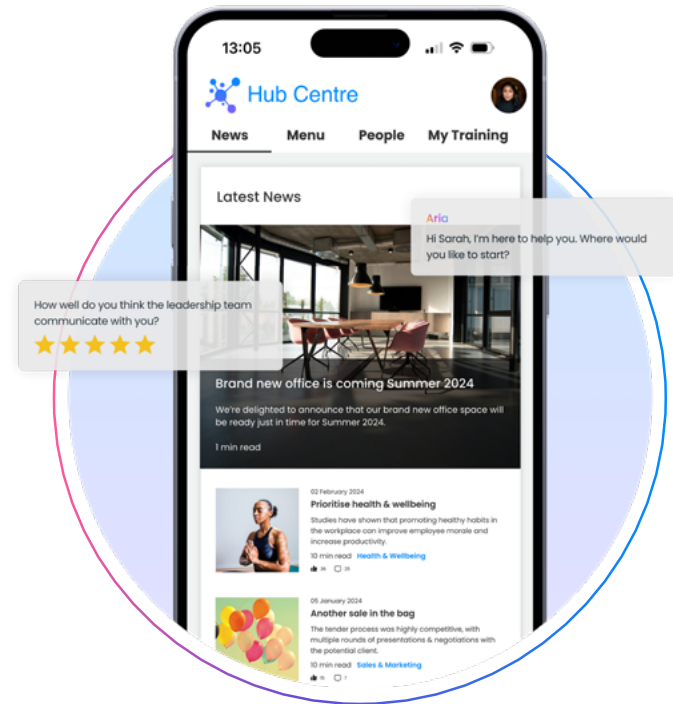
Trusted by the world's biggest brands

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Ready to get started?

We offer a free and personalised demo service, showcasing our intuitive and easy-to-use platform. Tailored to meet your specific needs.

Scan this QR code to book a demo.

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