The Ultimate Guide to Creating an Employee Welcome Package
Table of Contents

0  INTRODUCTION
    The Importance of a Hearty Welcome  1

1  CHAPTER ONE
    Why You Need a Welcome Package  2

2  CHAPTER TWO
    Things to Consider Before You Get Started  4

3  CHAPTER THREE
    Steps to Creating an Effective Welcome Package  7

4  CHAPTER FOUR
    Welcome Package Checklist  9

5  CONCLUSION
    Final Points to Remember  11
Onboarding is one of the most important parts of the hiring process and it’s essential to the future success of employees. Without a clear welcome package and training schedule in place, employees can feel lost and unproductive during their first days on the job. Worse, they might get the wrong idea about your company culture.

A well-thought out onboarding process that includes a welcoming first few days can help employees feel prepared, accepted in the workplace, and ready to contribute to the team. By spending some extra time up front on introductions and instructions, you’ll be setting up your new team members for success.

In this ebook, we’ll go over everything you need to know to put together a great welcome package and onboarding program.

Let’s get started!

“Onboarding is one of the most important parts of the hiring process, and it’s essential to the future success of employees.”
Making sure that new employees feel welcome is key to getting them started on the right foot. Beyond that, setting a clear outline for what’s expected during the first few days—for both new employees and those training them—will help to ensure a smooth onboarding process.

Here’s a look at a few more reasons why having an onboarding package is so important:

**Help new team members be productive right off the bat**

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Not being given the tools to be productive during one’s first days can be a frustrating experience, and from an employer’s point of view, it really doesn’t make sense to hire someone new only to fail to help them be as productive as possible right off the bat.

“Making sure that new employees feel welcome is key to getting them started on the right foot.”
Work out your working relationship

With so many companies adopting open, relaxed corporate cultures, it’s important to make sure that new team members still know what is expected of them, and the best place to outline those expectations is in an employee welcome package. You can go into more detail in an employee handbook, and of course, new members of your team will learn more about their role as they grow and evolve with the company.

When outlining your welcome package, it’s wise to keep in mind that you should point out basic rules for what the working relationship should look like early on—it’s easier to set expectations right away than to ask someone to change their behaviour later.

Communicate clearly

There’s certainly more than one way to communicate at work. Speaking in person or over the phone, sending an email, or starting an online chat are all good ways of getting in touch with someone, but it can be difficult to know what’s appropriate in a given situation, especially for a new team member with lots of questions.

It might seem like overkill, but clarifying which forms of communication are acceptable at different times can help new employees feel more at ease. A welcome package is the perfect place to iron out such considerations.

Define your company culture

A healthy company culture is an increasingly important aspect of the workplace. Certainly, it’s something we value at Rise. We have wellness and community outreach programs as well as games and events to help foster a feeling of purpose and community.

However, if you’re not proactive about it, you might wake up to find that your company’s culture isn’t quite what you think it should be. In order to create your culture, you’ll have to work to inspire your employees to get on board, right from day one. Your welcome package might be a handy tool and a friendly hello, but it’s also a place to tell new team members about life at your company and to get them excited about working there.

Clearly, a welcome package isn’t something to be forgotten or taken lightly. In the next section, we’ll go over some key considerations for brainstorming your welcome literature.

Proactively answer questions

Beyond helping employees feel at home, a good welcome package acts as a guide to frequently asked questions, streamlining the learning process for some of the routine administrative tasks. In other words, new employees can look at the book for the office WiFi password and save question time with supervisors for more valuable topics.
1. What’s the goal?

It’s your welcome package and your company, so you can do as you like. However, it’s critical to have a handle on what goals you’re trying to accomplish with your welcome package. For example, will the package be primarily a quick reference guide or an introduction to your company’s culture? Will it be a short overview of how things run or a more in-depth manual?

Think about what you’d like employees to get out of their welcome experience before you start trying to create it.

2. Does the package align with your brand?

Double check that what you’re thinking of doing for your welcome package aligns with your company culture and brand. Before you put any of your great ideas for messaging into practice, make sure that they make sense for your business.
3. What about the layout?

Think about what you’re going to say in your welcome package and consider how that information will be presented. Simply tossing your ideas in a bag and putting them in any old order won’t do.

Think about what will resonate most with new employees—what they’re most likely to be interested in, what questions they might have, and what will make them excited to be a part of your team. If you design your welcome package with new team members in mind right from the outset, it will be that much more effective.

4. Have you sourced input and feedback from others?

Your welcome package shouldn’t be written by just one person. Get input from all departments across your business, as this will help ensure that the end product resonates with all new team members. This can include technical information and frequently asked questions. You might also want to ask for help with more informal items, such as where the best coffee shops are.

Additionally, feedback from others who have recently joined your company is a valuable tool for improving your welcome package. Your welcome booklet and onboarding process should remain open to change.

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5. What other touches will you add?

Many businesses opt to add personal touches, such as a call the day before or goodies with the company’s branding attached, to help employees get settled. Here are some great examples of how some companies have created a superb employee welcome package.

For example, e-commerce designer site, Fab, sends employees a detailed agenda for their first days via email, then sends a colourful gift package that includes buttons and a pop-phone. At Rise, new employees receive a welcome package that covers what to expect in their first three months, as well as a gift bag that includes a Rise-branded S’well bottle, t-shirt, and more.

On the business side of things, you may want to think about whether you’ll include things like employment contracts or larger employee handbooks, or whether you’ll leave those to be dealt with separately. If you decide to include them in your welcome package, it doesn’t hurt to think about presentation—if everything looks like it belongs together, it will be easier for your new employee to keep track of.

6. How will you make new team members feel welcome?

As a newcomer, it can be difficult to reach out, so employers should do all they can to foster relationships between management and employees. A welcoming first day is key, so it’s nice to take your new hire out for lunch with your team. Alternatively, try to think of other creative ways to help new team members meet others.

Bonobos, an e-commerce men’s clothing company, likes to play two truths and a lie with new employees, where others are encouraged to meet the new employee to find out which is the lie and the winner of the game receives a $25 store credit. In any case, it’s definitely a good idea to come up with a plan to introduce new employees to other members.

7. What happens after the first day?

A good welcome package might include an agenda of an employee’s first days, plans for follow up after a certain period, and plans for exposure to multiple departments to get an idea of how the whole business works.

Warby Parker, an online eyeglasses retailer, has a one week program that includes retail training, coaching on the company’s core values, and explanations of the role of each department at the company.
1. **Gather the information you want to include**

This might involve getting feedback from various sources, as mentioned earlier. Make sure you talk to key stakeholders in your business, and get the most up-to-date versions of the information you need. Don’t worry—we’ve also included a checklist of specific items to be included.

2. **Organize your information**

Separate your information into categories that make sense. For example, information on holiday pay and time off would go in a section on payroll and vacation time rather than with welcome materials. Information about the company, its products and miscellaneous information such as maps of the local area should also be separated into sections. Don’t forget to include a table of contents once you have everything organized.

3. **Craft your welcome**

You or someone else in your organization should write a welcome letter to preface your company’s welcome package for new employees. Remember, this should stay true to your brand and mission, and should inspire new team members to get on board. Some of the other more technical information you’ve gathered for the package might need some tweaking in order to stay consistent with the tone of the greeting.

Now it’s time to get into the nitty gritty of putting your welcome package together. It might seem difficult to get all of the necessary information into a clear, easy-to-read welcome guide, but by following these steps, you should be well on your way to creating an effective document.
4. Decide on what else to include
As mentioned above, many businesses provide a few extra goodies to employees, possibly with the company's branding, in order to help them feel more welcome. Is there something extra that you’d like to include in your welcome package? Perhaps a branded mug, chocolates, a succulent or other?

5. Build a schedule
From the days leading up to an employee’s first day to 90 days after their start, onboarding can be a lot of work. It’s often a good idea to have the employee’s manager give them a call prior to their first day, and you should also contact any employees in any other departments who might work with your new team member. Make sure everyone has time in their schedule before you draw up an agenda for the new employee, and make sure that everyone is aware if a one or three month review is to be conducted.

6. Double check everything
As with most things, it pays to review your work and double check if there was anything you missed that should have been added to the welcome kit.

7. Review and improve
After each employee is brought onboard, be sure to conduct a review of how the process went from their point of view to see if further improvements can be made to your welcome kit. The package might need a makeover if the company rebrands or changes its direction as well.

These seven steps will go a long way toward getting your business started, especially if you’ve never put together a welcome package before.

Speaking of which, it’s time to take a look at our checklist of items to include in your welcome package.
Welcome Package Checklist

CHAPTER FOUR

Welcome letter and training agenda. These items will be at the very front of your welcome package and will provide a first glimpse into your company’s culture for new employees. Be sure to provide an overview of what’s expected of employees after the training period is up.

Mission statement and company values. Again, it’s important to get new employees on board with what you do. Make sure you share what you stand for right from day one.

Information about your company’s product/service. Depending on an employee’s role at your organization, they might be slightly removed from the bigger picture. It’s important to ensure that all team members are familiar with your company’s products and services, even if they’re not on the front lines.

Company culture. As stated above, this is important to talk about in order to be deliberate about the culture you create in your workplace. Beyond your values and mission statement, this could include other parts of your company’s identity. For instance, Rise’s welcome package talks about its wellness program and community work. Think about what makes your company culture unique and share this information with new employees.

Key contact information. Include contact information for anyone your new hire may need to get in touch with on a regular basis. Provide their full name, title, email address, and phone number.
Pay schedules, benefits, and vacation information. New employees will no doubt be curious about these points, so it makes sense to include them in a welcome package for easy access.

How to get ID and/or company cards. Make sure your new employee knows where to get their ID card and key(s) to the office. Provide instructions on how to obtain these items, if applicable.

Other important office policies. This could include dress codes or any other special policies your company might have.

Other helpful information. This is where you get to have a little fun. In addition to locating nearby transportation, parking, pharmacies, and medical clinics, you can also make new employees feel more welcome by pointing out the best coffee places and lunch spots in the area.

How to treat guests. Whether you’re on the front lines in retail or customer relations or in the office, it’s a good idea to be clear about how employees should respond to guests. This is especially important in an office setting that might not include a receptionist.

Security codes. If a new employee is not given the building/office security code, it’s only a matter of time before they set off the building alarm or get locked out of the office in the middle of something important.

Emergency procedures. Make sure all employees know how to respond in the event of an earthquake or other natural disaster.

Working remotely. Is it allowed? Is it recommended if you have a cold? If relevant, think about including this information in your welcome package.

WiFi access. Include public and private network names and passwords if applicable.

How to book conference/meeting rooms. Depending on one’s position with your team, this could be an important one.

Email and instant messaging. Make sure an employee’s accounts are set up before their first day. Show them how to access their accounts and change their passwords.

Physical mailing and shipping addresses. This is important for employees that may need to ship and receive items as part of their job.

Office supplies. Where are they? Who keeps track of them? Who do you talk to if you need to order more of something? These are all important things new team members might want to know.
Final Points to Remember

From creating an agenda for your new hire’s first day to setting expectations with a guide to employee conduct and more, there’s a lot of work that needs to go into building a welcome package.

Here are a few final points to remember when building your welcome package:

• **Be clear about culture and values.** Make sure new employees know what your company stands for and what kind of company culture to expect.

• **Ask for input.** Get input from multiple departments so that your onboarding process is relevant for everyone, and don’t be afraid to ask for feedback from recently onboarded employees.

• **Bring out the welcome wagon!** The more comfortable and welcome a new employee feels, the more quickly they’ll be able to settle in and be a productive member of your team. Besides, starting office traditions for newcomers is a great way to add to your company culture.