

Improving the Sale Staff Onboarding Process: Case Study Stockman Company

I Kulkova¹

¹Ural State University of Economics, 62, The 8th of March str., Yekaterinburg,
620144, Russian Federation

E-mail: i.a.koukova@yandex.ru

Abstract. The article is devoted to analysis of effectiveness of administration the newly staff adaptation process in company Stockman and the development of proposals for its improvement. The aim of the study was to measure the onboarding system of newly hired sellers' effectiveness. A comprehensive study of the social and psychological aspects of new employees' labor adaptation in the company was carried out on the basis of interviews with the Yekaterinburg department store managers, using A. Rean's methods, V. Smirnov's job satisfaction assessment card and a full employee survey using A. Kibanov's supplemented employee adaptation questionnaire. 178 people were interviewed in total. According to the results of the study, three main problems of personnel onboarding management in the company were identified and a project was developed to improve the adaptation process of employees in Stockmann JSC

1. Introduction

Many companies are increasingly paying attention to the onboarding policy recently. It is a debugged adaptation system that allows to keep new employees in the workplace who have been looking for so long, choosing the best and most professional candidates.

In order not to lose funds spent on attracting new specialists (Harder et. al., 2017), the company's management is interested in the speedy new employees' integration into the team. Newly accepted worker is forced to comply with the values, norms and regulations of the company, unwittingly becomes part of the active system. The effective onboarding policy implementation contributes to the working in a new team addiction (Bargmann, 2018; Gupta, et.al, 2018). As a result, the tenderfoot quickly and accurately copes with his responsibilities within the established standards; uncertainty and fear not to cope with the assigned task disappears. Otherwise, the newbie will quit. As a rule, there are two main reasons for new employees' leaving in the first months, or even days, from the company: either a poorly thought-out, poorly organized or absent adaptation system (1) or the company's corporate culture is not grafted with a benevolent, attentive attitude towards newcomers (2).

The onboarding process of newly recruited personnel has often become the research object; the author has found studies for engineering staff (Lynda Nguyen, et.al, 2014), industrial workers (Kalashnikova, et.al, 2016), military personnel (Osterberg & Rydstedt, 2018), nurses (Babar, et.al, 2016) and others.

The aim of this study is to analyze the onboarding system at Stockmann JSC for sale staff and identify areas for its improvement.

2. Theoretical basis

The research conducted by the author is a practical implementation of the onboarding theory.

Specialists give different definitions of the “staff adaptation” concept (Garcia, et.al., 2018; Caldwell & Peters, 2018); their main similarity is that it can be understood as a process during which the new employee adapts to various organizational aspects. The difference in the understanding by different researchers and specialists lies in the interpretation of this process as one-sided or mutual, as well as in considering the underlying mechanisms (training, informing, identifying, changing attitudes and behavior, etc.). Professionals use term induction in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and parts of Europe, and training to describe the same process.

Various authors’ previous studies have shown that the use of socialization techniques in the organizations leads to positive outcomes for new employees (Gatti, et.al., 2016) such as higher job satisfaction (Gosse & Hurson, 2016), better job performance, greater organizational commitment, and reduction in occupational stress and intent to quit (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Fisher, 1985), staff turnover reduction (Shulepova & Yatsenko, 2019).

Based on the Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) study, Jones (1996) proposed combining all the adaptation dimensions into two: institutionalized and individualized socialization. The author of this paper has studied institutionalized socialization in the company, in particular, the managers and mentors’ activities effectiveness, as Ostroff and Kozlowski’s (1993) studies has shown newcomers with mentors become more knowledgeable about the organization than did newcomers without. In addition, adapted new employees show higher satisfaction, and this can either help the company, or prevent it from succeeding (Bauer, 2007).

3. Research methods

The following procedures were used to collect information:

- Interviews with managers, supervising personnel of a department store in Yekaterinburg;
- Survey according to the A. Rean’s method;
- Using V. Smirnova’s scorecard of job satisfaction;
- Questionnaire survey of employees by the continuous selection methodology using A. Kibanov’s questionnaire about employee adaptation supplemented by the author.

The survey method (questionnaire) was used for studying these indicators. The questionnaire developed by the author includes three semantic parts:

- The introduction, which contains the purpose of the survey, emphasizes the importance of participation for the respondent, guarantees the answers anonymity and outlines the rules for filling in the questionnaire.
- The main part, consisting of a list of questions that need to be answered.
- The socio-demographic part, designed to identify the respondent’s basic data and social status.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were processed further and analyzed by using MS Excel.

Processing the questionnaire results by A. Rean’s method was occurred in accordance with the key. If the answer would match with the key, 1 point was given. The total number of scored points was calculated. When the number of scored points is from 1 to 7, the motivation for failure is diagnosed; from 14 to 20 points - the motivation for success is diagnosed; from 8 to 13 points - it should be considered that the motivational pole is not clearly expressed. A total of 178 questionnaires were processed, counts were carried out by MS Excel.

4. Results

The Stockmann company is one of the most successful shopping centers networks in Europe, Russia and the Baltic countries. Stockmann JSC has been engaged in trading activities in Russia since 1989. There are five Stockmann shopping centers in Moscow today, one is located in St. Petersburg and one - in Yekaterinburg in the Greenwich shopping center.

The average number of personnel in Yekaterinburg Stockmann department store in 2017 was 178 people, the turnover rate was 19.7%. During the year, workers were accepted: 39 people - in 2015, 44

- in 2016 and 37 people in 2017. The personnel selection system in Stockmann JSC is a series of procedures organized in a clear order and carried out in several stages:

- monitoring of the personnel situation and timely need for new personnel determination;
- search for applicants;
- primary analysis of information and CV;
- preliminary candidates' interviewing by phone;
- interview with applicants;
- the most suitable candidates' selection and their CV's hand out to the head;
- interview with candidates, organized by the head;
- making the final decision;
- hiring the applicant.

There is no unambiguous recommendation about the using a particular technology of personnel selection and assessment in Stockmann JSC today - each department store manager might determine the most effective independently. The choice is made from a large number of candidates: the number of applicants exceeded the number of accepted was 8.75 times in September 2017, 10.3 times in October and 12.7 times in November. The recruitment procedure at Stockmann JSC is a rather extended and expensive process; by the new employee's first working day the company have already spent considerable funds, that is why the personnel adaptation process is so important (Surkova, 2018).

Interviewing the company's managers showed that the staff is replenished regularly, as young people are mostly represented in the staff and most of them are students aged 19 to 26 who tend to change jobs frequently. The team atmosphere is quite relaxed and pleasant, the relationship between managers and subordinates is also very friendly. Salary is very attractive especially for beginners.

Further, 144 workers were interviewed according to the A.Rean's method. The counting results were presented in table 1.

Table 1. The results of using A. Rean's questionnaire ^a.

Motivation type	Number of employees	Share of employees (%)
Fail motivation	25	17.36
Success motivation	48	33.33
Motivation is not expressed	19	13.19
Tendency towards fail motivation	18	12.50
Tendency towards success motivation	34	23.61
Total	144	100

^a Compiled by the author

The obtained results let us talk that the majority of employees (33.3%) are succeed motivated, another 23.61% of respondents have a tendency towards success motivation; as a result, about 57% are more likely to be motivated to succeed. But, 17.36% are motivated to fail, 12.5% of employees have a tendency towards motivation to fail, slightly less than a third of employees do not have adequate motivation, which can complicate employee motivation processes.

Afterwards, a job satisfaction assessment chart was compiled (in accordance with V. Smirnova), and it was calculated for the entire staff as well as for each type of staff identified by the A. Rean's method. The calculation results are presented in table 2.

As can be seen from the data in table 2, the highest satisfaction in all work aspects was shown by success motivation type respondents; at the second place the respondents with tendency towards success motivation is. Employees who do not have certain motivation type are at the third place in terms of satisfaction with most work aspects. They are less satisfied in two aspects than employees with fail motivation type. So, in such work aspect as ability to influence on the team affairs they are not much less satisfied and the manager's style and methods of work satisfy them much less. The

employees with fail motivation type are at the fourth place in satisfaction degree, although it would be more logical to assume that there should have been employees with the tendency towards fail motivation type.

Table 2. The calculation results of the work satisfaction chart ^a.

Work aspect	Fail motivation	Success motivation	Motivation is not expressed	Tendency towards fail motivation	Tendency towards success motivation	Total
Organization and labor conditions	2.40	3.96	2.89	2.00	3.24	3.13
Work content (performed work)	2.12	4.38	3.42	1.89	3.82	3.42
Degree of employees' participation in decision-making process	2.28	4.15	2.37	1.72	3.91	3.23
Wages	2.16	3.67	2.89	2.28	3.38	3.06
Benefits distribution	2.40	3.58	2.74	2.11	3.00	2.94
Team relationships	2.40	4.21	2.79	2.00	3.94	3.37
Relationship with the head	2.96	3.94	2.32	2.06	3.97	3.33
Manager's style and methods of work	3.48	3.81	2.74	2.17	3.71	3.38
The ability to influence on the team affairs	2.36	3.85	2.32	2.11	3.68	3.13
Administration attitude towards the employees' needs	2.48	3.81	2.68	1.94	3.47	3.12
Growth prospects	1.56	3.79	3.00	2.33	3.12	2.96
The opportunity for professional development	1.68	4.21	2.11	2.06	3.82	3.13
Head's objective assessment the employees' work	2.24	3.94	2.26	1.67	3.62	3.06

^a Compiled by the author

The job satisfaction level can be assessed within 2.94 - 3.42 in general, herewith such work aspects as benefits distribution and growth prospects got less than 3 points; and employees are more satisfied with the work content, manager's style and methods of work and team relationships/

All 178 employees' survey conducted by the author showed the following results:

- the majority of respondents (37.5%) rather like the work, 25% of respondents rather do not like the work; 8.3% of respondents said that they really like their work, but 10.4% said that they do not like the work at all. Others noted that sometimes they like their work and sometimes they do not like it;
- the most important in the work is the work place location (close to home) for the majority of respondents (27.1%); wages amount takes only the second place (20.8% of respondents consider this factor as the most important). The adequate leadership is also important (20.1% of respondents chose this factor); such factor as the friendly team is at the last place (this factor was chosen by 13.2% of respondents);
- the majority of respondents (34.7%) consider that it was nether difficult, no easy to adept to a new job. It was easy to settle in a new work place for 27.8% of respondents, while it was more difficult for 18.1%;
- the majority of the respondents (29.9 %) was finally adapted to the new workplace in one-month period; 22.9% of respondents felt that they had settled into a new workplace in 2 weeks period, while 20.8% of respondents needed more than a month for this. It should be noted that 11.1% of the respondents have not yet settled in their new workplace;
- it was rather easy to adapt to the new team for the majority of respondents (29.2%); a significant part of respondents (22.2%) said that it was very easy to adapt to the new team for them, while it was rather difficult for 21.5% of respondents;

- for the majority of respondents (32.6%) it was rather easy to adapt to the leadership; a significant part of respondents (23.6%) said that it was neither difficult, nor easy to adapt to the new leadership, while it was rather difficult for 18.1% of respondents. It should be noted that 17.4% of respondents said that it was really easy for them to adapt to the new leadership;
- the process of adaptation to the new rate of work, the new order and the working process organization was rather simple for the majority of respondents (26.4%). The answers “rather difficult than easy” and “not difficult, but not easy” were divided equally (by 23.6%) among the respondents. It should be noted that it was easy to adapt to the new rate of work, new order and working process organization for 18.8% of respondents.

5. Conclusion

According to the research results, we can diagnose a block with three problems in the employees' adaptation process:

- low formalization of adaptation processes in the company, adaptation is spontaneous; it is an integral part of the introduction process to the position for the line manager;
- there is no incentive motivation system for mentors;
- there are no activities to adapt new employees to the organizational social norms.

The author has developed a project to improve the onboarding system at the analyzed company, which includes drawing up a set of local regulations governing the adaptation process and conducting special trainings for new employees. The “Regulations on the Newly Admitted Employees Adaptation” and the “Regulations on Mentoring” was drafted by the author; the second “Regulations” included a special section regulating incentive measures for mentors.

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