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Building An Effective Hiring and Smooth Employee Boarding Process

– Company X

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MASTER'S THESIS | ABSTRACT

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BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE HIRING AND SMOOTH EMPLOYEE BOARDING PROCESS

- COMPANY X

The focus of this Master's thesis was to design a practical hiring and employee boarding concept for company X using service design tools to create an effective and smooth process for new employees. The goal was to lead to job satisfaction and long-term employee retention. The research question that guided the study was:

- What kind of hiring and employee boarding concept helps company X in achieving operational efficiency and cost savings?

The hiring and employee boarding are critical for new employees to acclimate to coworkers, management, and the corporate culture. This thesis reviewed the process from the employees' perspective post-hiring/onboarding to identify and address challenges. It is essential to plan and conduct the hiring and employee boarding process in an organized and effective manner to enhance the commitment of newly hired employees.

The study took a comprehensive approach to improve the hiring and employee boarding process by integrating best practices and service design research. It utilized qualitative methods, employing inductive reasoning to interpret the collected data. The research methods encompassed a literature review, analysis of secondary research data, employee surveys, interviews, benchmarking, and the application of service design methods and tools to facilitate a seamless hiring and employee boarding process.

Companies seeking to deliver successful hiring and a positive employee boarding experience will find this study helpful in the hiring, orientation, and departure phase. Regardless of corporate culture or employees' work backgrounds, a well-planned hiring and boarding process can lead to better employee engagement, job satisfaction, and higher new hire retention.

KEYWORDS:

Hiring, Human Resources, Interviews, New Hires, Pre-boarding, Onboarding, Off-boarding, Orientation, Recruitment

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

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Abbreviation	Explanation of abbreviation (Source)
CSAT	Customer Satisfaction Score
CJM	Customer Journey Mapping
HR	Human Resources (Kenton, 2022)
HQ	Head Quarter
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
NPS	Net Promoter Score
SOP	Standard Operation Procedure
The company	Company X Salo office
TUAS	Turku University of Applied Sciences
VDU/DSE	Visual Display Units/Display Screen Equipment

1. INTRODUCTION

Talent acquisition and retention are essential subjects to building a successful business. It is a consistent struggle for Human Resources (HR) professionals, leaders, and business owners face in their positions. The organization's success depends on hiring and retaining the right employees. Black swan¹ events such as the Covid-19 epidemic tend to recur over time, and workforces will remain susceptible to disruptive events. Hence, more comprehensive necessary coping mechanisms should be established prior to the outset of future unpredictable events to protect workforce sustainability in the long run.

Acquiring a candidate of the appropriate caliber is paramount, given that a proficient personnel member can enhance the organization's productivity and efficacy. Ascertaining how to search for apt and competent professionals and hiring suitable applicants constitutes one of the most significant responsibilities a hiring manager undertakes. (Laumer et al., 2022.) Adopting a structured and comprehensive hiring process will help the company to find and attract the right talent to effectively fulfill any openings, saving the company's time, money, and resources. A qualified candidate will help build the company culture, promote business, and ultimately position the company as an industry leader. (Robinson, 2016.)

The process of employee boarding is undoubtedly critical since it allows recently acquired personnel to cultivate a sense of inclusion and amalgamation within the established team while simultaneously facilitating their introduction to the multifarious duties and responsibilities of their job roles. Not only does it allow new onboards to familiarize themselves with the company's culture, but it also enables them to gain insight into the potential prospects that may lie in store for them within the organization. Moreover, it serves as an impetus for newly arrived employees to proactively contribute to the triumphs and accomplishments of the company and, by extension, catalyzes the retention of such freshly-minted hires. (Jeske & Olson, 2022.) A successful boarding strategy will reduce employee attrition and increase employee engagement, improving customer satisfaction and contributing to the company's overall purpose (Newhouse, 2020.)

¹ A black swan event refers to an occurrence that is highly unexpected and goes beyond the realm of what is typically anticipated in a given situation. These events can have significant and potentially severe consequences. (The Investopedia Team, 2022a).

The author has a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management and wishes to explore the thesis topic to improve company X's hiring and employee boarding process in the branch office. She has observed some struggles and challenges that the new hires face during their onboarding. The author believes that she can apply the research as a means to design a smooth company hiring and boarding process reliably.

This study applies a qualitative methodology to reveal the behavior and perception of new employees undergoing the hiring and boarding process. Qualitative research is chosen as the general scientific approach of this thesis. Qualitative research relies on the researcher to collect first-hand information through methods such as observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, content analysis, recordings made in natural settings, documents, and artifacts. The data are generally nonnumerical. (Hennink et al., 2020, p.10.) Qualitative research is to discover people's experiences and create a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that the research is about. Especially when the research subject is related to social sciences, qualitative research allows the researcher to look beneath the surface of the text. Qualitative research aims to understand human experience, get insights from research methods, and foreground the empathetic skills of the research. It requires a greater understanding of the conceptual framework of a given subject to interpret its underlying implications. (Silverman, 2020, p.3.)

1.1. Background of the commission

Company X is the world's leading charger manufacturer and manufacturer of power supplies in low to medium power ranges, IoT sensors, 5G RF parts, magnetic materials, and other electronic devices. The company offers high-precision manufacturing in rechargeable batteries, power adapters, and chargers for mobiles, tablets, notebooks, gateways, routers, set-top boxes, electronic applications, et cetera. (Company X, n.d.) Company X was established in Salo, Finland, in 1973. It started only to manufacture chargers and Nokia owned company X from 1983 to 1999. In June 2019, company X was sold to the Chinese component manufacturer, and its headquarter in Shenzhen, China. (Company X, 2019.)

The company has branch offices in the USA, Brazil, Taiwan, South Korea, Turkey, and Hong Kong. The production plants are in Shenzhen and Guigang, China; Chennai and Noida, India; and Manaus, Brazil (Company X, n.d.). There are seven employees currently in the Salo office during the time of research. The primary business functions

are finance and sales in the Salo office. The Salo office aims to create profit for its shareholders and seek business opportunities in Europe.

1.2. Goals and research problems

This thesis aims to design a smooth hiring and boarding concept for company X in the Salo office. The commissioning company wanted to find out how to improve new employees' hiring and boarding process in order to retain new employees, encourage employee engagement, and increase work performance. The author joined company X in 2020. She noticed some challenges in the hiring and boarding process of the company. After a discussion with the commissioner, the author was pleased to decide on a thesis topic with practical relevance to her daily work. Equipped with past working experience and a relevant degree, the author is confident in undertaking the research topic.

There is no well-defined hiring and boarding process at company X, Salo office. The commissioner wishes to establish a structured hiring and boarding process according to the main functions (finance and sales) of the Salo office. The existing recruiting and orientation process is rudimentary; the Salo office will undergo the hiring process when a position is opening. The company HR will reach out to potential candidates through professional networking sites or available contact channels to post a job opening. Then, these individuals fill out job applications, attend job interviews, and accept job offers. The Salo office orientates new employees with the predecessor's work materials and on-the-job training. It is up to the new hires to adapt and acquire the necessary work knowledge of the company.

This study seeks to support and guide the new employee, hiring manager, and HR with business design concepts and development actions to reach the long-term success of a business. By applying service design methods and tools to uncover the needs and expectations of the new hires, this research can help create an effective hiring and smooth employee boarding concept for company X in the Salo office.

1.3. Research questions

The study aims to develop a comprehensive hiring and boarding strategy for company X that enhances operational efficiency and leads to cost savings. To achieve this objective, the main research question is framed as follows: What kind of hiring and employee

boarding concept helps company X in achieving operational efficiency and cost savings? To answer the main research question, the study will address the following sub-questions:

1. What are the company's current practices and challenges in hiring and onboarding new hires?
2. What valuable insights can service design methods and tools reveal about developing the hiring and employee boarding concept?

The study is structured around two sub-questions that provide a framework for the research. The first sub-question examines the existing recruitment and employee boarding practices and challenges in the Salo office. The second sub-question aims to suggest ways to improve the hiring and employee boarding model by utilizing service design methods and tools. Good research questions can give the research a clear focus and purpose and pinpoint what the researcher wants to discover (McCombes, 2022). Research questions address an issue or a problem, and they are answered in the study's conclusion through investigation, analysis, and interpretation of the empirical data. (Bouchrika, 2022.)

Company X's Salo office provides finance and sales functions with limited employees. As a branch office, the Salo office receives restricted resources from the headquarter. Therefore, the designer wishes to integrate hiring and employee boarding into a step-by-step and seamless process for the Salo office to enhance the overall hiring and employee boarding experience.

1.4. Frame of reference

The framework of this thesis (Figure 1) adopts a design thinking methodology that prioritizes the stakeholders' requirements. By utilizing research methods and workshops, the aim is to uncover the needs of all the stakeholders involved. The empirical data collected and analyzed through research methods and tools are benchmarking, brainstorming, mindmap, personas, affinity diagram, stakeholder map, empathy map, new-hires journey map, and service blueprint. The theoretical data will be gathered through literature studies of hiring practices, onboarding practices, offboarding practices, human resources (HR) roles, and service design. The purpose of the literature review is to provide an overview of the studied topic and explore existing information in the field of research. The service design methods and tools help identify any new insights or

understanding to build a successful hiring and employee boarding concept, according to Figure 1.



Figure 1. The frame of reference.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

The official start of this thesis process was in the autumn of 2022, but preliminary discussions had already taken place with the commissioner to agree on a workshop schedule in September 2022. During October and November 2022, the literature review, research methods, project plan, and benchmarking were developed. The necessary interviews and online surveys for stakeholders were conducted in November 2022. Towards the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, personas, a new-hire journey map, and workshops were carried out in conjunction with the interview and survey results. The final conclusions and recommendations were presented to the commissioner in May 2023. Figure 2 illustrates the thesis process and the schedule in detail. The research process and service design methods are shown in Figure 3.

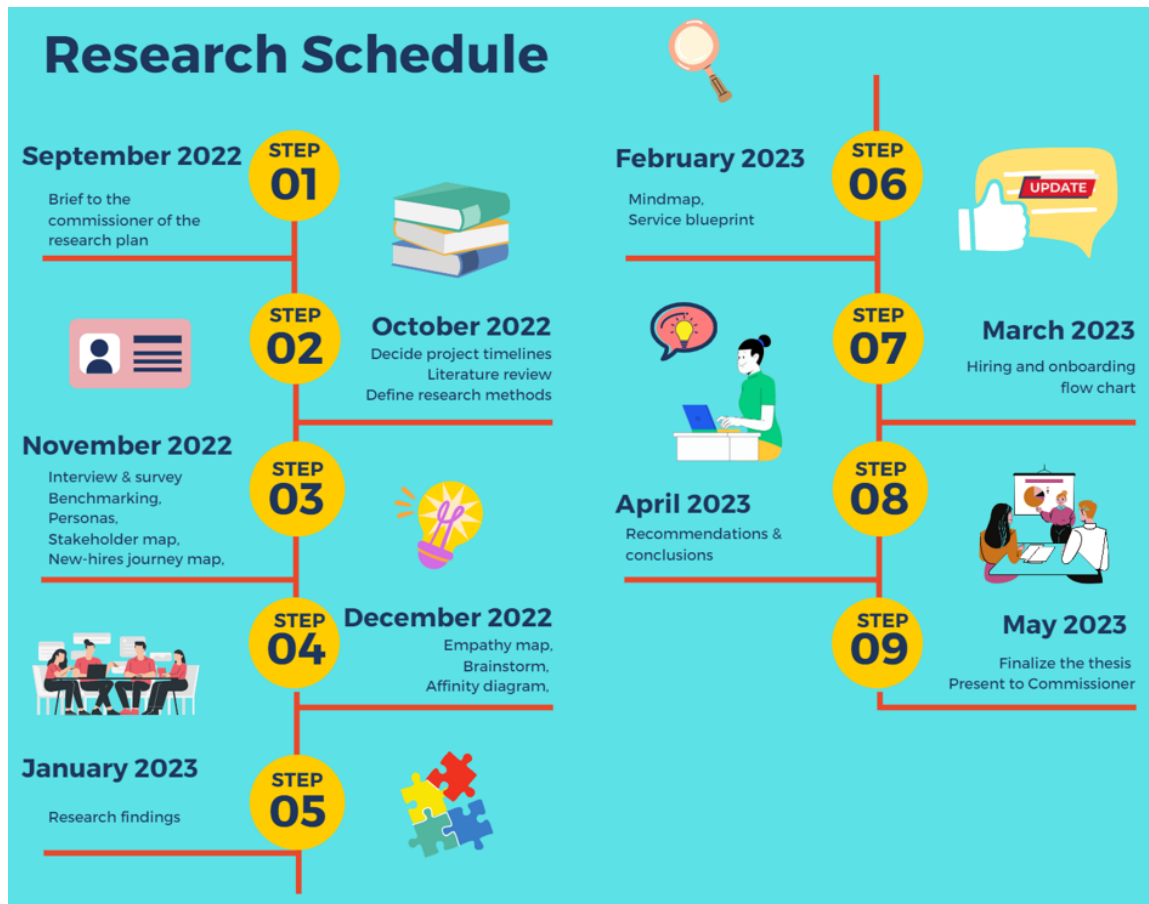


Figure 2. Thesis schedule.

During the discover/empathize phase, Figure 3 illustrates a comprehensive study that will be conducted using a range of techniques, such as interviews, literature reviews, and internet surveys. These techniques will be used to develop a detailed grasp of the issues and potential fixes associated with the study's topic. In order to study current theories and concepts on the subject, the literature review will evaluate published materials such as academic journals, books, and internet resources. Interviews will also provide an in-depth understanding of the problems with company X's employees in the subject. Conducting an online survey will allow for collecting data and opinions from a broader range of respondents, resulting in a more diverse set of viewpoints being acquired. The primary focus of this stage is investigating the most effective hiring and boarding methods and utilizing service design theories to improve the existing process. To establish a foundation for developing the hiring and boarding concept, benchmarking is utilized to compare and identify industry best practices. By benchmarking companies within the same industry, a baseline is established to guide the development of the hiring and employee boarding concept.

The primary focus in the Insights/define phase is identifying the stakeholders involved. To establish realistic representations of the key audience segments, personas are developed for reference. The new-hire journey map provides a comprehensive overview of the interactive experience. Additionally, the empathy map reveals users' attitudes and behaviors and uncovers employees' experiences and emotional responses to enhance the existing customer journey. Overall, the Insights phase gathers insights through stakeholder maps, personas, empathy maps, and new-hire journey maps, which help define the challenges.

The ideation/development phase involves a variety of methods, including brainstorming, affinity diagrams, mind maps, and service blueprints, to generate solutions by unearthing creative ideas and answers to defined problems. To enhance the user experience, a service blueprint is used to visualize service processes. Iterative collaboration with users throughout this phase ensures the development of a more robust hiring and employee boarding concept. Through divergent thinking, the Ideation phase includes brainstorming, affinity diagrams, mind maps, and service blueprints to encourage different opinions and ideas, seeking inspiration from various stakeholders.

The resulting concept is finalized in the delivery/prototype phase using insights gathered from the new-hire journey map and service blueprint. The final step in addressing the needs identified in the discovery phase is to converge on analyzing, filtering, and evaluating ideas generated during divergent thinking to extract a well-defined solution for the research problem. In this stage, the hiring and employee boarding flow chart that visually represents the necessary steps for information and action flow within a system is created to deliver the final recommendations and suggestions to the commissioner.

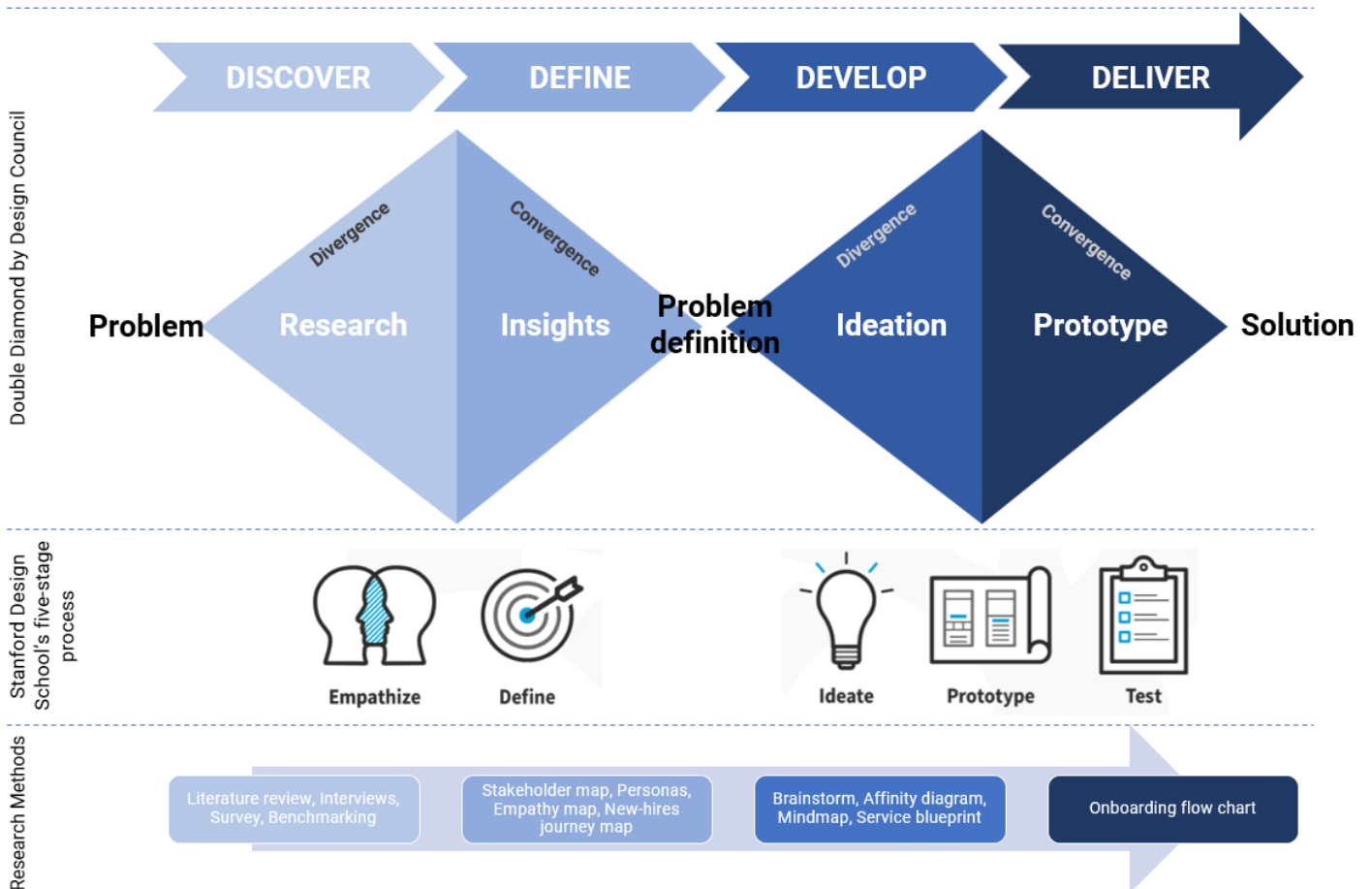


Figure 3. Design thinking process chart.

(Adapted from Design Council (2019) and Stanford Design School (Plattner, 2010)).

This thesis contains six chapters altogether. Chapter 1 briefly introduces the thesis topic; company X and its business operation; the research design; the aim of the study, the research questions, and the reference framework. The British Design Council's (2015) "Double Diamond" process model (Figure 7) and the Stanford Design School's five-stage process (Figure 6) are used as a structural frame of this thesis. Chapters 2 and 3 comprehensively review the literature on hiring practices, preboarding practices, onboarding practices, offboarding practices, human resources (HR) roles, and service design. The author will utilize a design thinking approach to examine the essential aspects of service design, emphasizing a human-centered perspective to tackle the research questions. Chapter 4 outlines the methods and tools utilized in the study and highlights the findings obtained from the research methods and workshops. Chapter 5 summarizes the research findings and suggests a hiring and employee boarding flowchart. In Chapter 6, the research questions are analyzed in the context of the research objectives, and study limitations are identified. Additionally, suggestions for future actions are provided.

2. HIRING AND BOARDING PRACTICES

The theoretical framework outlined in this chapter comprises traditional hiring and employee boarding practices. In subsequent sections, the author will broaden the theoretical framework to encompass a wider view of hiring, preboarding, onboarding, offboarding, the role of HR, and design thinking, with the goal of providing guidance and support for the study's findings and analysis. The author aims to establish a framework that can be utilized to explain and direct the research process. Furthermore, the author strives to underscore the significance of an effective hiring and employee boarding process and intends to apply service design thinking to enhance the process.

2.1. Hiring practices

Recruiters need to cope with the dynamics of the world in the talent market. The introduction states that black swan events like the Covid-19 pandemic have changed how companies hire and recruit talent. Since the pandemic, people have realized that their jobs can easily be done at home. Remote or hybrid work has become more prevalent post-COVID (Hobbs & Mutebi, 2022). Companies must think of creative ways to hire and recruit talents now that their competitors offer more flexible work opportunities for candidates (Vidaure, 2022, p.4). Recruiters should have the knowledge and expertise to land top candidates for organizations.

Forbes magazine has identified hiring factors that have changed after the pandemic concerning recruiting. During the pandemic, people have been reevaluating the meaning of work, especially regarding work-life balance. (Clark, 2022.) According to findings from *Indeed Hiring Lab* in the research, which produces research in the global labor market, the total number of job postings on *Indeed* was significantly higher during the pandemic. (Konkel, 2021.) People are used to remote work, and most do not want to return to the office. Therefore, job seekers are no longer limited by geography. The retirement rate among baby boomers² is increased. (Clark, 2022.) As a result, recruiting and hiring strategies need adjusting after the pandemic. To adapt to this new hiring field, the company should establish a reputable employer brand to recruit better candidates, reduce hiring and marketing costs, and improve productivity. (Cubukcu, 2018.) The

² The term "baby boomer" refers to a person who was born between 1946 and 1964. An important share of the world's population, particularly in developed countries, belongs to the baby boomer generation. (The Investopedia Team, 2022b)

human touch remains a powerful and important factor in delivering a successful recruiting experience to candidates.

To attract the talent needed, the company should develop and build an appealing employment brand for the candidates they want (Barcelos, 2019). Create a profile based on the company's top performers to target candidates. Create job requirements specific to each job. Leverage social media and references to contact directly with prospects. Research qualified candidates to find out what is important to them. (Clark, 2022.) One common strategy employed by the company is to create a pool of potential candidates in advance of a job opening by utilizing online platforms to attract and engage prospects, thereby building an effective talent community. This approach enables the company to save valuable time, money, and resources in recruiting top talent. (Xiao, 2020.) According to Clark (2022), *Forbes* human resources council member, the key steps to building a talent community in the company must forecast hiring needs and target suitable candidates accordingly. Reach out to targeted prospects proactively. Offer prospects to join the talent community with a good incentive such as gift cards or discounts on the company's products or services. Regularly update posts to keep the online platform fresh to retain talents.

According to a survey conducted by Tara Mohr (2014), an expert on women's leadership, in *Harvard Business Review*, most people, especially women, apply for "high-percentage" opportunities rather than a scattershot chance job position. The company should adopt a more flexible approach to hiring requirements to expand the pool of potential candidates and attract the most qualified individual (Millet, 2022). One possible approach is to replace "five to ten years of experience in engineering" with "significant experience in engineering." This may encourage a highly qualified candidate with only three years of experience to apply for the position. (Clark, 2022.)

A good onboarding process is one of the best ways to make a positive impression on new hires (Duvigneau, 2022). The company may lose candidates due to a sketchy hiring and employee-boarding process. The company should establish a standard hiring process to win top talent over a competitor company. Involve all stakeholders to follow up on hiring timelines to secure quality candidates. The company should ensure that people who conducted the interview/selection process are well trained and stay connected with candidates to inform them of the hiring progress. Review the hiring and boarding process to keep it up to date with the world. (Clark, 2022.)

The company should respond according to the jobseekers' desires and expectations. Top talents are seeking flexibility. Prudential's Pulse, the largest insurance provider in

the United States in 2019, of the *American Worker Survey* indicates that most workers want to work from home at least part of the time. (Currie, 2021.) Emotional intelligence from managers is vital to retain employees. According to Limeade (2021b), a company that tracks global employee well-being, it discovered that in 2021, 40% of employees left their jobs because they were burned out. Other reasons for quitting are inflexibility, a lack of appreciation/recognition, and discrimination. Employers need to support and care for their employees to prevent further turnover and business disruption. (Overton, 2021.) Ben Laker and Thomas Roulet of *MIT Sloan Management Review* (2021), a research-based magazine, indicated "epidemic of burnout" has triggered companies to promote wellness programs to better respond to pandemic needs. The COVID-19 pandemic, which forced workers to work at home for months, has intensified the need for mental health and wellness in the workplace. Boundaries between work and life are blurred for a post-pandemic workforce. (Laker & Roulet, 2021.) Ellen Kelsay stressed, president and CEO of Business Group on Health, an association that provides innovative solutions for health and benefits issues: With companies worldwide increasingly bolstering their well-being programs, the workforce is expected to become healthier and more committed. (Miller, 2021.)

2.2. Onboarding practices

Onboarding is the process of helping new employees adjust to the organization through formal and informal practices, programs, and policies. Management and HR departments establish these practices, programs, and policies to structure newcomers' early experiences and facilitate organizational socialization. (Klein & Polin, 2012, p.268.) There are many activities in the onboarding process, from job offers to job training. This process may last a few weeks to a year (Lalwani, 2021). Onboarding is often confused with orientation. In general, orientation is the initial process of settling new employees into their new workplace, including introducing them to their colleagues and managers and acquainting them with the organization. They are informed about their job responsibilities and must complete paperwork as part of the process. Typically, orientation occurs within the first few days of the new hire's employment and could last up to a week. (Kelly, 2022.) Onboarding practices typically encompass multiple activities that occur over a period of several weeks or months (Frögéli et al., 2023, p4).

The onboarding of new hires is an essential part of the hiring process. With a well-planned onboarding process, the company can acclimate the new employees to the company culture and support them with the necessary knowledge and resources to

become productive members of the organization. (Baluch & Main, 2022.) It can also improve employee experience, productivity, and retention. According to Brandon Hall Group (2015), a preeminent research and analyst firm, organizations with an effective onboarding process increase new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%.

There are many good onboarding practices in business. Preboarding is the process of getting new hires ready for their first day (Gruman & Saks, 2018). It is the period between a job offer and an employee's first day, and it is a part of the onboarding process. Activities include customizing uniforms, scheduling an office tour, and inviting new hires to corporate events. (Colman, 2022.) Make virtual introductions to the new onboards beforehand to get them excited and adequately prepared before their first day (Krasman, 2015).

To create a positive employee experience, the company can send a welcome email/kit before the first day. A welcome kit for the new hires can reinforce the new hire's decision to join the company and convey the company appreciates the new hires because welcome packages reflect the company's unique culture (Baluch & Main, 2022). The welcome kit may include a company newsletter, perks, and benefits, company brochures, pens, notebooks, et cetera. (Furstner, 2019).

The first few days are for the new hires to get to know the work and the organization. Arduous paperwork can intimidate and affect the confidence of the new hire, who is already quite nervous (Bhargava, 2022). Therefore, giving the new hires a head start on administrative tasks is a good idea. Encourage new employees to complete paperwork such as tax forms, banking information, employee agreements, employee handbook acknowledgment forms, code of conduct, et cetera. electronically before they start. (Baluch & Main, 2022.)

The company should make sure new employees have all the necessary information before their arrival. HR should email new employees for details such as where to park, how to get into the building, and the dress code before their first day. (Collins, 2018.) To provide necessary software and tools to enhance the new onboard's productivity. Some standard provisioning of tools can include access keys for the office, desk space, and meeting rooms; passwords and logins for pc wi-fi and other software; predecessor's profiles and documents; basic equipment like computer, keyboard, and mouse; et cetera. (Diard, 2022.) The office staff is responsible for setting up a comprehensive workstation for the new employee, which consists of a desk, chair, equipment, and software required to fulfill their job responsibilities. A workstation includes all the necessary components,

such as visual display units/display screen equipment (VDU/DSE), as well as the individual pieces of equipment, chair, desk, and work environment. (Conaty, 2021.)

The company should arrange a brief meeting to introduce new hires to other employees, managers, supervisors, and even senior leaders. This can make a positive impression on new employees. (Baluch & Main, 2022.) HR shows around the office premises, points out the functional areas, and introduces the new recruits to colleagues during the office tour. The manager should introduce the new employee to any security procedures and protocols, toilets, printing machines, lunchtime hangouts, coffee, et cetera. (Collins, 2018.)

The company should assign an onboarding buddy to help the new employees feel comfortable, adjust to the company culture, and get up to speed quickly. This buddy should be an existing employee with extensive knowledge of the company and the role (Bhargava, 2022). A seasoned employee can assist new hires in familiarizing themselves with the organization's policies and procedures (K. Brown, 2020). A buddy program can help newbies feel comfortable asking their buddies about the culture and team (Baluch & Main, 2022). HR can match the new hire with a buddy who is willing to invest time to interact and show around. Letting both parties know this temporary partnership might help foster cooperation. (Bhargava, 2022.)

Employee training and development plans can give new hires an understanding of the responsibilities, knowledge, and skills they need to do the job (Bhargava, 2022). The company provides training programs to help new hires become productive team members. Training allows new employees to quickly adapt to the organization's vision and mission and help them evolve into assets for the organization. (Diard, 2022.) This will enhance the new onboard confidence and improve their overall performance (Burton, 2021).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are important for monitoring the performance of the employees. They refer to a set of quantifiable measurements to evaluate the success of an organization. (Lindberg et al., 2015.) To create a KPI, it is necessary to define measurable metrics that capture the relevant data and align with the business objectives (Trendowicz et al., 2023, p.2). They have the power to pinpoint underperformance and identify areas for improvement. KPIs can be financial, customer-focused, and process-focused to measure a company's overall long-term performance. It can be evaluated through business analytics software and reporting tools. (Twin, 2022.) Setting clear KPIs and goals allows employees to have role clarity and to grow within the company (Diard, 2022). It is essential to clearly communicate the KPIs with the new hires because it helps

them feel involved and engaged and aligns them well with the company strategy. (Bhargava, 2022.)

Managers play a major role in ensuring the onboarding process works. Successful onboarding is a collaborative effort; try to get senior team members involved in the onboarding process. During the onboarding process, new employees will feel more comfortable knowing that their superiors are taking the time to meet with them. (Baluch & Main, 2022.) A poorly planned onboarding experience gives new hires the impression that the company is badly managed and does not appreciate their joining. (Furstner, 2019.) Managers provide direction for onboarding, identify key objectives, support necessary resources, and facilitate knowledge transfer to new employees. (Dumitrascu, 2021.)

It is important that companies continue to optimize the onboarding process because good onboarding also contributes to improved staff retention (Chignell, 2022). Actively seek feedback from current employees through surveys or conversations to continually improve the employee onboarding experience at the company. (Baluch & Main, 2022.) Learn which aspects stand out the most and find future improvement areas (Diard, 2022). This helps weed out the worst practices and embrace the best ones (Bhargava, 2022).

The pandemic's most prominent impact has been the substantial rise in remote and virtual work. Despite some individuals returning to physical office spaces, remote work may continue even after the pandemic. (Scott et al., 2022.) Organizations must reconsider and revamp their workforce strategies in response to social distancing and the prevalence of virtual work in all aspects. (Scott et al., 2022.) Companies should establish a strategy to overcome onboarding challenges during crises such as pandemics or unpredictable events (Williams, 2020). The company can enjoy several benefits by opting for virtual onboarding during crises. These advantages include reducing the burden of planning and costs, ensuring consistent training quality, boosting new hire productivity, providing personalized learning, facilitating networking and collaboration, and continuously improving the content with feedback. (Karpenkova, 2022.)

A virtual onboarding program provides employees with personalized learning at the right pace. HR managers can efficiently deliver consistent training quality by hosting or uploading pre-recorded training videos and distributing important company information. Consistent training of new hires is a significant challenge for HR professionals. A virtual onboarding process can help organizations consistently deliver new hires the same content, material, and information. This can be accomplished through a well-planned

virtual onboarding program. (Majeed, 2022.) Online training courses provide the same content to all (Arden, 2021).

New employees could take 8 to 12 months to become productive in their positions (Majeed, 2022). The company can set up onboarding/training in the metaverse³ to help new employees acquire information about the organization by exploring documents, images, and videos comfortably. (Majeed, 2022.) There are no travel expenses to consider because the training takes place comfortably at home (Arden, 2021). Online skills training eliminates commute expenses and maintains employees' productivity. Also, online learning makes it convenient and affordable for companies to train new hires wherever or whenever. Virtual onboarding simplifies and plans the training period for new hires at a lower cost with better outcomes. (Majeed, 2022.)

New employees can learn a new skill at work in less than an hour and build knowledge and confidence simultaneously. (Kitterman, 2021.) Virtual webinars allow employees to learn at their own pace and according to their unique learning requirements. The sessions are recorded and modified with the participants' permission to create an educational resource for trainees. These webinars are then uploaded to an online archive that can be accessed anytime for playback. (Ng et al., 2022.) Online courses allow new hires to watch and revisit the training video presentations in their environment and time. It is a more personalized studying experience with self-paced learning. (Chithaluri, 2021.) Addressing different learning styles allows employees to review training material as often as they wish through online training (Kitterman, 2021).

New hires can connect with other employees on a much broader scale in the organization through online training (Majeed, 2022). Virtual learning can provide employees with career advancement opportunities, such as collaboration with other professionals (Emeritus, 2021). Networking chat rooms allow senior leadership and new employees to interact through group chats to enhance communication and cooperation (Majeed, 2022).

Virtual onboarding allows the company to track new employee onboarding progress by monitoring employees' understanding of assessment (Majeed, 2022). With immediate results and feedback on employees' online course performance, the users can track or revisit areas of mistakes before completing the training. (Martinelli, 2017.) The company

³ Virtual reality, which is characterized by persistent virtual environments that continue to exist despite the absence of playing, and augmented reality, which fuses elements of the digital and actual worlds, are both examples of the metaverse. (Ravenscraft, 2022.)

can communicate with any employee directly and track and improve development through a virtual onboarding platform (Majeed, 2022).

2.3. Offboarding practices

Offboarding is a critical process that helps companies separate from former employees smoothly and prepare for restructuring or hiring. This process formally separates employees through resignation, termination, or retirement and has become increasingly important. A well-planned offboarding strategy eases transitions, protects against legal issues, and impacts business operations. (Crail, 2022; P. Nayak & Park, 2020.) Organizations incur high costs when employees leave, as replacing them involves investing resources into recruitment, socialization, and training. While some turnover can be beneficial if non-fitting employees leave, research indicates that higher turnover rates are generally associated with negative effects on organizational performance. (Park & Shaw, 2013.) Offboarding is a crucial process for both employees and companies. It facilitates a smooth transition to the incoming employee and ensures that departing employees complete their tasks and leave on a positive note. (Nautiyal, 2022.)

To facilitate a smooth offboarding process, the company can develop an offboarding guide or checklist that outlines the essential steps for HR, management, and employees to follow. These key steps may involve tasks such as completing paperwork, transferring knowledge, returning equipment, conducting exit interviews, contacting clients, and revoking account access. It is important to note that the specific steps may vary depending on the circumstances, whether the employee is resigning, retiring, or being terminated. (Crail, 2022.) To ensure an effective offboarding process, the company should clearly define offboarding goals, assign responsibility to relevant individuals or teams, establish a timeline for completion, draft a mission statement outlining the objectives, and create a formalized roadmap utilizing a diagramming tool. This approach allows for sufficient time for a smooth transition and comprehensive documentation. (Guthrie, 2022.)

To ensure a seamless knowledge transfer, the company should develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the recipients and timelines for the transfer. Ideally, the company should encourage departing employees to provide several months' notice, enabling ample time to find a suitable replacement. It is crucial to determine the extent of knowledge to be transferred, encompassing both explicit and tacit knowledge, and subsequently create learning plans for the successor and the team. (Knight, 2016.) To prevent a decrease in productivity when an employee leaves, it is advised to transfer

their knowledge beforehand. This involves having the departing employee document their tasks and responsibilities and potentially training their replacement to ease the transition process. (Andriotis, 2019.)

The HR department manages the employee lifecycle, including offboarding. They work with the employee's manager and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth process. HR coordinates activities such as collecting company property, terminating system access, and providing the necessary paperwork. They may also conduct exit interviews to gather feedback and improve the offboarding process. (J. Brown, 2022) Managers should guide their staff through the offboarding process as they did during onboarding. Being present during offboarding is crucial, as managers often know the most about departing employees. Providing support during offboarding and closely following the process is important for making departing employees feel supported and not abandoned. (Raeburn, 2022.)

Talent acquisition and retention are challenging for HR. High competition leads to more employee departures. Exit interviews help organizations understand why employees leave so that they can improve and reduce turnover. (Sengupta et al., 2018.) Exit interviews help improve employee retention. They are especially beneficial for employees who have resigned. Conducted by an HR representative, they provide an opportunity for departing employees to offer feedback that can be used to improve the company's working conditions and culture. To ensure honesty, it is recommended that the employee's manager does not conduct the interview. The questions asked will depend on the employee's position and the company's context. (Vasconcelos, 2022.) Although exit interviews are often considered unproductive since employees may not provide honest feedback, they can be valuable if conducted effectively. They can help pinpoint organizational flaws, provide an understanding of the employee experience, and offer insights into the reasons for employee departure. Additionally, conducting exit interviews may demonstrate to departing employees that their concerns will be taken into account if they decide to return to the company. (Westfall & Rogers, 2021.)

When offboarding employees, the company needs to recover all company assets and disable their digital access to prevent confidential information from being taken out by the departing employee. Maintaining a list of all company assets, including laptops, mobile phones, access cards, and ID badges, is critical. In addition, it is necessary to create a list of all digital accounts, such as company email and workplace communication platforms, and revoke their access. (Andriotis, 2019.) To minimize security risks, it is crucial to have a well-defined offboarding process that restricts the former employee's access to the company's tools and software. This helps protect resources, lowers the

risk of identity theft or data leakage, and ensures that no important documents or correspondence are lost during the transition. (Nautiyal, 2022.)

A knowledge base is useful for storing information about offboarding, including step-by-step guides and templates. It can also be used to store information and expertise about the departing employee's work, facilitating knowledge transfer to those taking over. The knowledge base can provide training and support to managers and HR staff and create a culture of learning and development, improving organizational performance. (Brown, 2022.) Having tools and systems in place for knowledge transfer can make the offboarding process smoother. In order to avoid a single employee possessing all the company-specific knowledge, training and coaching should be included in the promotion process or phased retirement incentives. (Knight, 2016.)

When offboarding an employee, treating them fairly and respectfully is essential. The process should be consistent and clear to show the organization's commitment to its values and employees, regardless of why they leave. (Brown, 2022.) It is important to thank them for their contributions and acknowledge the time and effort they have invested in the company. This approach helps protect the organization from potential legal issues or data breaches while preserving the possibility of maintaining a positive relationship with the former employee. This can lead to opportunities for them to become a future customer, brand advocate, or industry connections. (Crail, 2022.) The company should maintain connections and provide support to departing employees through alum networks and LinkedIn groups. This includes offering recommendation letters, referring them to relevant job openings, and providing constructive feedback to enhance their skills and competitiveness. (Andriotis, 2019.)

2.4. Role of human resources (HR)

Leon C. Megginson (Megginson, 1977) defines Human Resources as the combination of an organization's workforce's knowledge, skills, talents, competencies, and attitudes. This includes the creative abilities, aptitudes, values, commitment, and beliefs of individuals within the organization. Human resources (HR) oversees the relationship between employers and employees. Its main goal is to utilize people effectively to achieve the organization's strategic objectives while also meeting the needs of individual employees. By creating policies and practices that motivate employees, HR can add value to the organization by encouraging productive behavior. (Stone et al., 2020.) HR professionals need to align their work with external stakeholders, such as customers and investors, by understanding their expectations (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015).

Human resource management involves managers responsible for accomplishing the organization's goals by managing the efforts of the organization's people. (Dessler, 2016, p.39.) Human resource management (HRM) achieves organizational goals by managing people through planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling functions. HRM encompasses acquiring, training, appraising, and compensating employees and managing their labor relations, health, safety, and fairness concerns. (Dessler, 2013, p.30.) The specific activities involved in each function include establishing goals, developing rules, delegating authority, recruiting, selecting, compensating, and evaluating employees, motivating subordinates, setting standards, and taking corrective action. (Dessler, 2016, p.39.)

Human resources planning is crucial for organizations to achieve their objectives related to employee recruitment, retention, and skill improvement. The process involves anticipating future requirements, assessing the current workforce, and maintaining an optimal structure to ensure the right personnel is available. Additionally, it helps maximize the use of human resources and estimate the associated cost. (Rao, 2009, p.78.) The human resource manager has three main functions: line function, coordinative function, and staff function. The line function involves managing the people in the HR department, while the coordinative function ensures that managers comply with HR policies. The staff function consists in advising and assisting line managers in various aspects of personnel management. HR also plays a role in administering benefits, complying with employment laws, handling grievances, and representing employee interests. Although HR managers may not have direct authority, they may have implied authority due to their position and relationship with top management. (Dessler, 2013.)

To realize the cost and service benefits, HR and the business must clearly understand what they want from the function and how the new model will improve current operations. This involves starting with the key business stakeholders and defining the core features of the HR service that will make a real difference to their business. These features will serve as design principles for the entire solution. (Saunders et al., 2009.)

3. SERVICE DESIGN

The following section provides an overview of service design, including its origin from design thinking. Design thinking is a methodical approach to defining and solving problems. It has evolved into service design, which can be utilized to improve the hiring and employee boarding process. (Linke, 2017.) Service design often uses this methodology to solve problems by putting users at the heart of a product or service design. (Butler, 2018.)

3.1. Service design thinking and process

Design thinking was introduced as a term by Tim Brown from IDEO (a global design and innovation firm founded in 1991) in 2008. He identified design thinking as a discipline that leverages the creativity and methods of designers to address people's needs using a practical methodology and a feasible business strategy. The goal is to explore customer value and identify market opportunities. (Brown, 2008.) Design thinking (Figure 4) blends user desirability with technological feasibility and economic viability. This approach employs innovative techniques, methods, and mindsets that allow people who lack formal design training to tackle intricate problems in a user-centered manner. (IDEO U, n.d.-a.) It enables designers to address complex real-world issues using a human-centered approach and requires individuals to be enthusiastic interdisciplinary collaborators. (Brown, 2008; Scheer et al., 2012.)

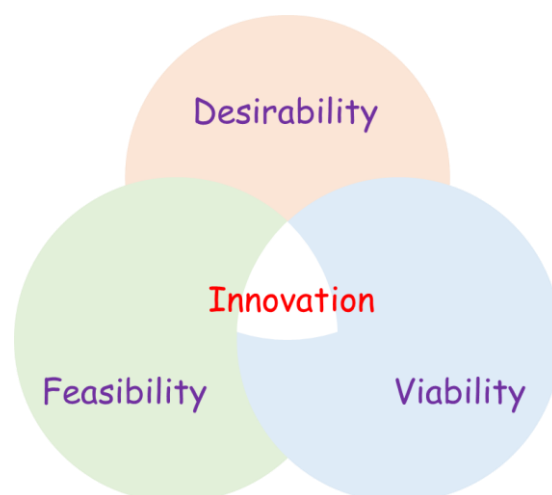


Figure 4. Design thinking framework.
Modified on Tim Brown's 'Change by design.' (Brown, 2009).

Design thinking involves adopting a designer's mindset and approaches to problem-solving (Butler, 2018). Designers' work processes are to systematically extract, communicate, understand, and apply these human-centered techniques to resolve challenges creatively and innovatively. (Dam & Siang, 2022a.) It is a methodology for understanding problems and developing solutions (Designlab, 2017). Design thinking emphasizes the identification of business prospects, customer requirements, and market trends while responding to the changes in the business environment brought by evolving technologies and other factors. (Ojasalo et al., 2015.) To adopt design thinking, one must acquire its mindset and apply it to comprehend the problem and its context. The approach's effectiveness lies in its mindset rather than its tools and techniques. Therefore, experience in design thinking is crucial. (Kurokawa & Frankl, 2015.)

Numerous design thinking processes have been modeled in the literature, with the Danish Design ladder serving as a notable example of this transformative approach. The Danish Design Ladder (Figure 5) is a model with four steps developed by the Danish Design Centre to assess the level of design activity in Danish companies based on their design attitudes. This ladder is a four-step model created by the Danish Design Centre to evaluate the level of design activity in Danish companies based on their attitudes towards design. The ladder aims to show how design can enhance creativity, innovation, and competitiveness, with higher rungs indicating the greater strategic value of design within the organization. The ladder also depicts four stages of design maturity, which can be progressively improved through design intervention programs over time. (Kretzschmar, 2003, p.28.)

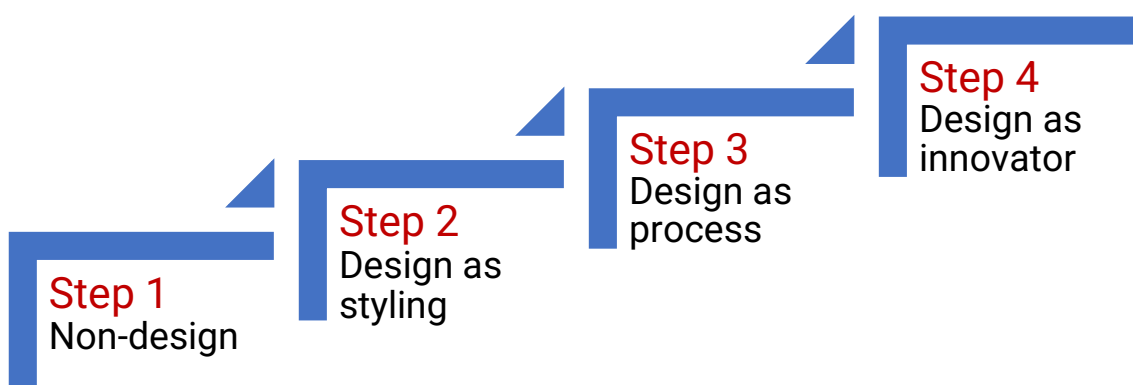


Figure 5. Danish design ladder.
(Kretzschmar, 2003).

Design thinking is introduced as a tool to enhance the hiring and employee boarding process. It is described as a dependable method for innovation that aids in creating fresh

concepts. (Kurokawa & Frankl, 2015, p.12). Design thinking is a methodology used for solving problems and improving products or services (Dam & Siang, 2022a). Applying human-centered techniques through design thinking helps businesses to focus on their customers and create better products, services, and processes. (IDEO U, n.d.-b.)

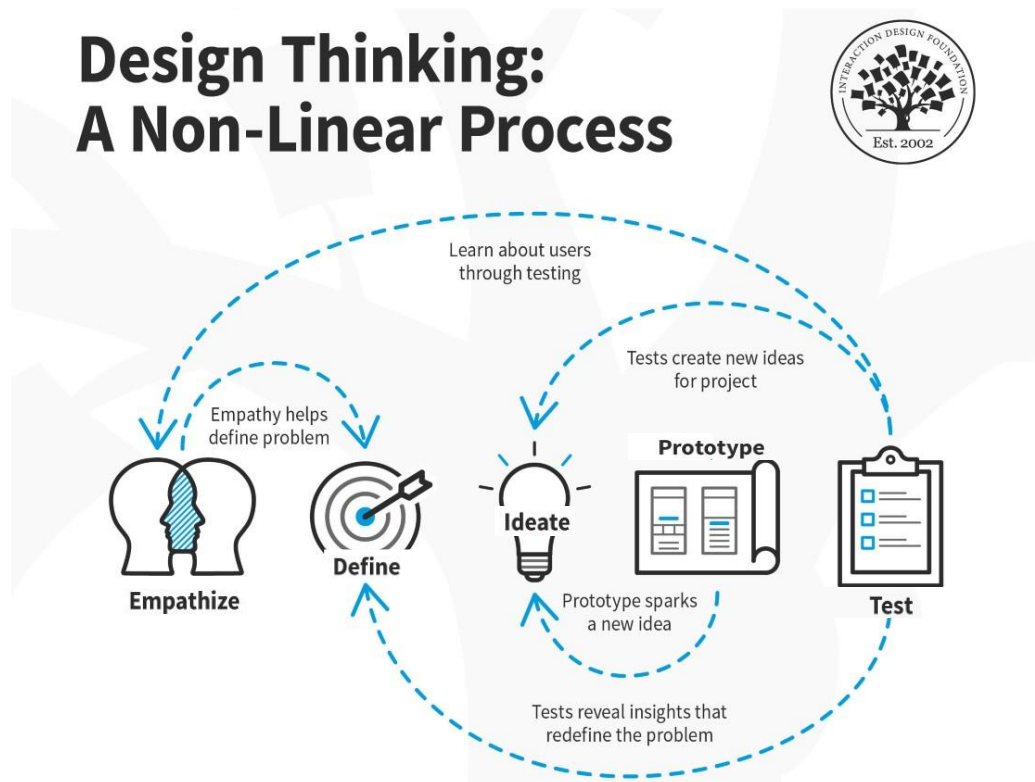


Figure 6. The five stages in the design thinking process. (Dam, 2022).

To improve the hiring and employee boarding process, it is recommended that the company adopt the design thinking process, which involves understanding and implementing effective measures. The Design Council's Double Diamond (Figure 7) process (2019) is a common approach to tackling complex social, economic, and environmental problems, which consists of 4 stages: discover, define, develop, and deliver. Another popular approach is the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford describes design thinking as a five-stage process (Plattner, 2010). It is a non-linear and iterative process (Figure 6). The design thinking process has five phases (Figure 6), 1. empathize, 2. define, 3. ideate, 4. prototype, and 5. test. Utilizing the five stages of design thinking will empower organizations to use the methodology to solve complex problems.

The service design process aims to discover the best practices for the hiring and employee boarding process to retain employees. Design Council's design methodology,

launched in 2004, the Double Diamond conveys a comprehensive and visual design process (Design Council, 2019). As stated earlier, this thesis combines the Design Council's "Double Diamond" model (Figure 7) and the Stanford Design School's five-stage process (Figure 6) (2010) to guide the research journey.

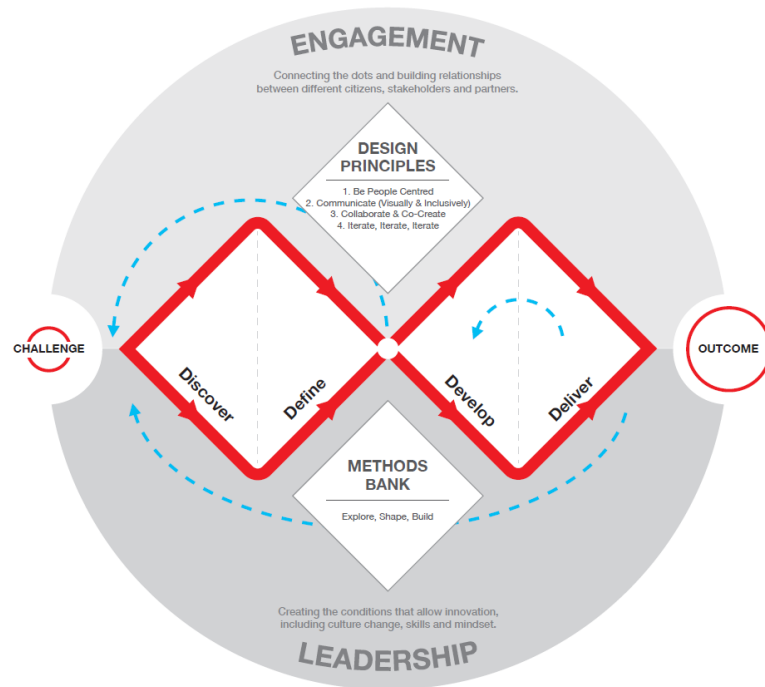


Figure 7. Double diamond.
(British Design Council, 2015).

Discover and empathize

The first stage of the design thinking process is getting to know the customers to improve processes/services/products they want and need (IDEO U, n.d.-b). It is user-centric research to gain an empathic understanding of the problem that people are trying to solve. (Dam, 2022.) It calls for divergent thinking to help the designer understand the problem. This phase requires the designer to speak to and spend time with users affected by the problems. (Design Council, 2019.)

Define

In the define stage, the researcher analyzes the information gathered during the Empathize stage to define the core problems. This is to frame the right problem to create the right solution. (Plattner, 2010.) The define stage will help the designer collect great ideas to solve the problem at hand. This phase is to converge the information into insights and define the challenge in a different way. (Stickdorn et al., 2018.)

Develop, ideate, and prototype

During the third stage, designers concentrate on generating ideas through divergent thinking. They look at the problem from different perspectives and ideate creative solutions to get to breakthrough ideas (Dam & Siang, 2022a). This phase encourages people to give different answers to clearly defined problems. The designer seeks inspiration from elsewhere and co-designs with a range of different stakeholders. (Design Council, 2019.) Making ideas into a prototype requires convergent thinking to identify the best possible solution for each problem found (Brown, 2008). This experimental phase investigates the ideas the designer has generated into scaled-down product/process/service versions. (Design Council, 2019.)

Deliver and test

The final stage involves “testing out different solutions at a small-scale, rejecting those that will not work and improving the ones that will” (Design Council, 2019). Designers thoroughly test the most promising solutions for products, processes, or services, refining prototypes and solutions, reframing the problem accurately, and seeking feedback. (IDEO U, n.d.-b). Repeating this process several times assists designers in refining broad concepts into specific details, examining, comprehending, and solving problems, and ultimately driving implementation forward. (Kimbell, 2009.)

3.2. Service design

Service design is a customer-oriented approach that focuses on creating seamless and quality service experiences while balancing the needs of the business. It uses a creative and human-centered process based on design thinking to improve existing services and design new ones. Collaborative methods involving customers and service delivery teams help organizations understand their services better and make holistic and meaningful improvements. (Miller, 2015.) It is to develop or improve services through the practical and innovative application of design tools and methods from the customer’s perspective (Wan, 2018). It often uses this methodology to solve problems beyond product and service experience. Service designers have a service-oriented worldview where all interactions between a brand and a user are considered services. They take a holistic approach to address the needs of all stakeholders, encompassing the entire service and business. (Oeveren, 2022.) Service Design is the practical application of design thinking to develop products/services.

Service Design is a human-centered approach emphasizing delivering good customer experience and service as the critical value for success. (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.-b.) Empathy is an essential part of human-centered design. It involves understanding people and their needs in the context of a design challenge. This includes understanding how they think, their emotional and physical requirements, and what is important to them. (Plattner, 2010.) It helps organizations see their product/service from the customers' perspective. Human-centered can also be called stakeholder-centered, as designers need to consider users, employees, and organizations. Stakeholder interaction involves engaging with users and staff to understand the service. Interviews, observations, and workshops are common approaches. (Segelström, 2013, p.142.)

Service design tools help designers reframe problems in a way humans can handle better. Service designers turn complex data into human-friendly visual stories and answer simple "How might we...?" questions. (Stickdorn et al., 2018.) Service design starts by investigating the needs of the user or customer. The designer uses a range of qualitative research methods to explore the "how and why" of the opportunity, understand the needs, and experiment with the prototyping to test possible solutions to redefine issues and generate insights quickly. Then, the prototypes evolve into pilots and finally implemented offerings. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p.13.) When designers have genuine insight into users, use technology and networks effectively, build resilience, and ensure consistency, services can provide value and a fulfilling human experience. Measuring service performance effectively can also demonstrate the efficient use of resources. (Polaine et al., 2013.)

Business service design involves creating a structure of service components, including production, management, support, and their interactions with the environment. This generates a business capability that provides customer value based on a strategy and business model. (Barros, 2016, p.129.) It is a process that involves orchestrating people, organizations, communication, and resources to create a distinctive brand experience and unlock the full business potential for all stakeholders. By leveraging these components, Service design can help businesses create value that benefits everyone involved with the product or service. (Oeveren, 2022.) The key to successful service design is identifying and understanding the right problem before developing solutions. This involves using divergent and convergent thinking and being open to iteration and adaptation throughout the process. It's important to look beyond individual tools and methods and consider how they work together. Rather than a step-by-step checklist, the process should be customized and continually evaluated to improve outcomes. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p.328.)

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

The following chapter illustrates the practical and methodological approach of this thesis. It describes how the research data has been compiled, categorized, and analyzed. The research aimed to develop a practical onboarding roadmap for new employees that not only leads to job satisfaction but also helps retain them in the long run. By utilizing service design methods and tools, leaders can provide a seamless onboarding experience that minimizes new employee attrition. According to Jansen and Warren (2020), researchers play a crucial role in addressing research aims and objectives by meticulously designing their studies to ensure effective and reliable outcomes. The research section will provide the details of the research approach, data collection method, and data analysis methods.

4.1. Research design and approach

A research design is a framework or blueprint for a research project. The research design outlines the procedures to gather information for developing or addressing research problems. (Burns & Burns, 2008.) Although researchers have various options, they cannot investigate all of them simultaneously. They must therefore prioritize their goals and strategies while being fully aware that picking one approach over another has an "opportunity cost" — the potential advantages that are forfeited by choosing one alternative over another. Effective resource allocation is essential for researchers to succeed. (Vogt et al., 2012.) This research uses an inductive approach to develop an understanding of the company hiring and employee boarding process with the present employees. Inductive reasoning helps produce meaning from the information the researcher has to collect from different sources. (Wong, 2020.)

4.2. Research methods

This section presents the research results of the tools and methods used to gather information and gain insights about the study topic. As stated earlier in section 1.5, the research process was divided into four phases: discover (empathize), define, develop (ideate), and deliver (prototype) (Figure 3). The chosen methods and tools are described in this section. The service design methods and tools applied to support a smooth hiring and employee boarding process were benchmarking, brainstorming, mindmap, personas, affinity diagram, stakeholder map, empathy map, new-hires journey map, and service blueprint. The research group consisted of personnel from the commissioner's

company based in the office and ordinary individuals recruited through social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Given the topic's sensitive nature, certain information is considered confidential and will be shared anonymously or referenced from publicly available sources. Anonymity is employed for the purpose of protecting the identity and confidentiality of individuals involved in the research. It ensures that their personal information is not disclosed, allowing them to freely express their opinions and experiences without fear of repercussions.

4.2.1. Benchmarking

Benchmarking entails evaluating and improving an organization's performance, technology, processes, competence, and strategy by researching competitors, industry leaders, or operators within the same sector or geographical region. (Kyrö & Kulmala, 2004) It is an ongoing process of identifying and adopting best practices that lead to superior performance when applied and integrated within one's organization. (Bogan & English, 1994, p.4.) Benchmarking allows organizations to improve performance by identifying, understanding, and adapting best practices within business areas or against competitors and industry peers. (Harper, 2019.) Usually, benchmarking information is gathered in the same or similar industry. The goal is to obtain information and insight into how other companies are providing their services or processes (Freytag & Hollensen, 2001, p.14-29). However, benchmarking can also be conducted across industries, comparing to direct competitors within the organization and addressing performance gaps, et cetera. It can inspire to improve processes and adopt practices in the needed areas. (Spiegel, 2020.)

Benchmarking is helpful for businesses to measure their performance against internal or external standards. It can track internal progress, compare performance against competitors, and assess how business processes rank against those of world-class organizations. (Fallon, 2023.) Organizations use benchmarks to help set and meet performance goals, monitor important metrics, and continue growing and improving. (Spiegel, 2020.) With the help of benchmarking, businesses can compare processes, performance metrics, services, and customer experiences from other companies to identify the best practices. (Curedale, 2013, p.49.)

This research utilizes competitive benchmarking. It is a type of external benchmarking that exclusively focuses on comparing the company's processes and metrics to that of a competitor or several other organizations. (Spiegel, 2020.) It allows the company to

identify why competitors succeed in the same industry. However, this approach can be highly valuable but often requires significant time and effort. (Harper, 2019.)

There are many world-class assemblers in the electronic manufacturing industry. Benchmarking aimed to find out, access, and gather best practices from competitors in the same trade. This thesis used benchmarking to compare company X against several competitors using a set collection of metrics to find examples of better performance that could be applied to one's own processes.

The benchmarking was done in November 2022. It focused on four renowned electronics contract manufacturers related to the same field of business. These manufacturers were Foxconn, Chicony, Delta Electronics, and Phihong Technology. The methods for finding information about competitive benchmarking were online research (Picture 1). The online investigation included analysis of their websites, the search engine Google and Microsoft Edge, and the content they provide on their pages and profiles.



Picture 1. Snapshot of the websites of Foxconn, Chicony, Delta Electronics, and Phihong Electronics.

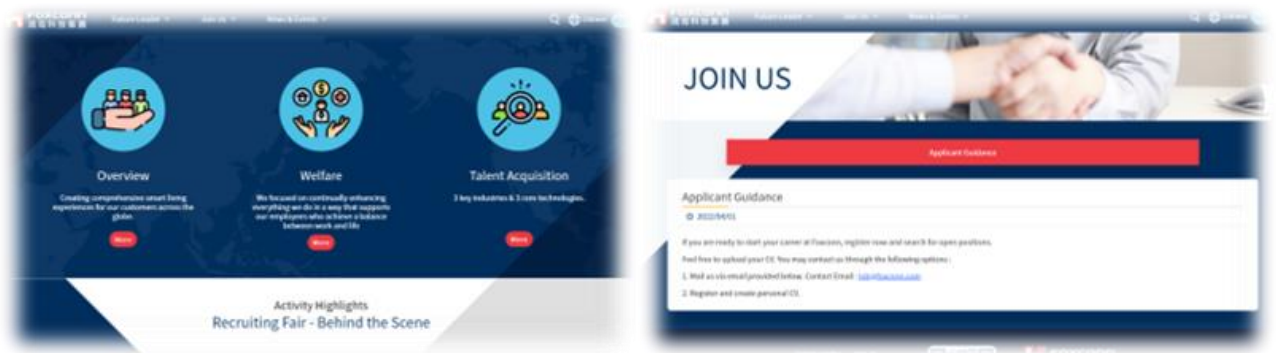
(Chicony, n.d.; ChiconyPower(群光電能), n.d.; Delta Electronics, n.d.-b; Foxconn, n.d.-c, n.d.-a; Phihong Technology, n.d.-a, n.d.-d).

Foxconn

Foxconn is a Taiwanese multinational electronics contract manufacturer primarily manufacturing Apple products (Feng, 2022). The world's largest iPhone factory is operated by Apple supplier Foxconn Technology Group (Gan & Liu, 2022). The company has gained global recognition since its inception, ranking 22nd on the *Fortune Global 500 list* in 2021 and 25th on *Forbes' Top 100 Digital Companies and World's Best Employers list* in 2019. Additionally, the company ranked 1st in Taiwan on *Forbes' World's Best Employers list* in 2021 and received the *Clarivate Top 100 Global*

Innovators award for five years in a row from 2018 to 2022, the only Taiwanese private company to achieve this. (Foxconn, 2022.)

An organization like Foxconn constantly needs workers in the production plants. Therefore, it has established an online recruiting portal (Picture 2) to attract talent worldwide. The recruiting website has detailed information regarding employee welfare, talent acquisition, hiring process, working environment, employee safety, and retirement system and implementation. The self-service portal provides step-by-step applicant guidance to register and search for open positions in the company. A clear and well-organized hiring process (Picture 1) is also posted on the company's website to guide prospective applicants through recruitment. The company also maintains a talent pool to build 'reservoirs of talent' to always have on hand.



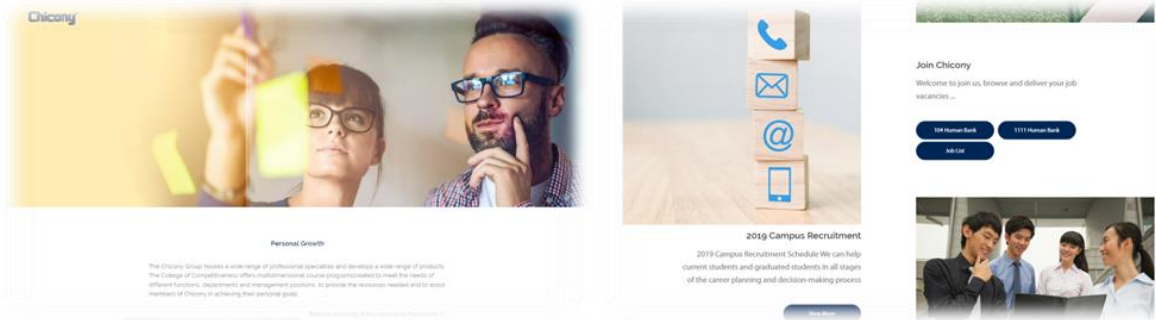
Picture 2. Foxconn online recruiting portal. (Foxconn, n.d.-b).

Chicony

Established in 1983, Chicony Electronics Co., Ltd. is a Taiwan-based multinational electronics manufacturer. Chicony specializes in peripheral computer products, including input devices, portable keyboard modules, video images, and camera lens modules. Its keyboards, IP cameras, and notebook camera modules are world-leading products. (LinkedIn, n.d.-b.) The Group has a worldwide presence with offices and plants across Asia, Europe, and the USA, with more than 30,000 employees worldwide. (Chicony Electronics, n.d.)

Chicony's website (Picture 3) presents employee welfare, employee training programs, career planning for retired employees, recruiting channels, job opening details, and campus recruitment. The company established a straightforward training system designed for their employees to grow their knowledge base and improve their job skills according to their functions in the firm. However, there is no job application self-service

portal to interact with the company. Interested job applicants can submit their resumes to recruiting channels through the website.

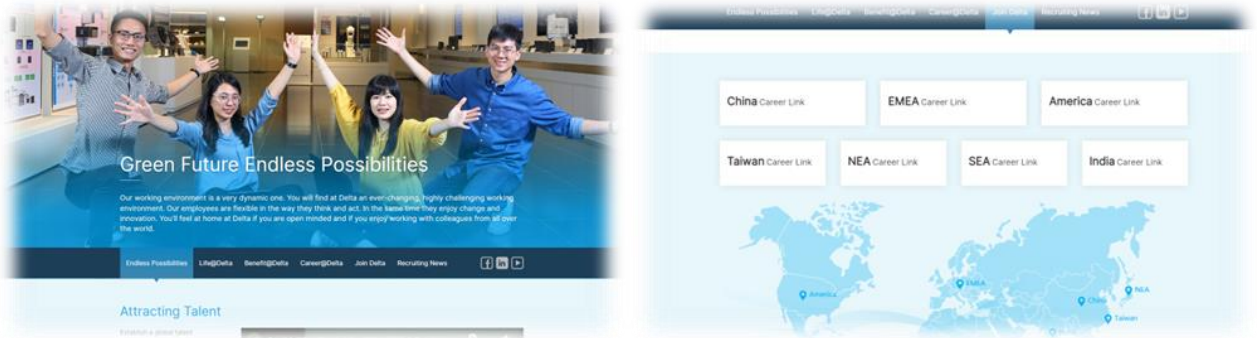


Picture 3. Chicony online recruiting portal.
(Chicony, n.d.).

Delta Electronics

Delta Electronics, Inc. is a Taiwanese electronics manufacturing company. It is a top manufacturer of advanced electronics and components, serving customers globally since 1971. Its high-power conversion efficiency and stable power management solutions are widely recognized in the communication, industrial, and power systems markets. (Dun & Bradstreet, n.d..) The company has worldwide research and development facilities in China, Europe, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and the U.S. (Delta Electronics, n.d.-a.)

The company (Picture 4) establishes a global talent platform to build an internship hub and create international courses for cultivating and attracting top talents by integrating industrial, government, and academic resources. Furthermore, it fosters talent development plans on campus to cultivate future talents in Taiwan and internationally. Job links on the company's website will redirect international job applicants to their local recruiter's service portal for hiring. Delta provides training courses for improving employee professional knowledge and skills. It established the "Delta Academy" online learning platform to connect online learning resources from different regions. Delta promotes employee health and well-being and incorporates health management by establishing a healthy, happy, and friendly work environment. It also provides a diverse and flexible employee compensation and benefits system and periodically updates its recruiting news on the website.



Picture 4. Delta Electronics online recruiting portal. (Delta Electronics, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

Phihong Technology

Phihong Technology is one of the largest power adapter manufacturers in the world and one of the top ten global power supply companies (Heading Power Limited, n.d.). It offers comprehensive power solutions for customers (Phihong Electronics, n.d.-b.). Phihong is a global leader in providing world-class power solutions, with annual revenue of \$500 Million. It has design labs, manufacturing facilities, and sales support centers in California, New York, The Netherlands, China, Japan, and Taiwan. The company has around 5,001~10,000 employees. (LinkedIn, n.d.)

The company’s website (Picture 5) has introduced Feihong’s salary policy, benefits, working environment, leisure, health coverages, training development, and new hires’ onboarding procedures. Employees are encouraged to voice their needs through human resources email. The easy-to-follow recruitment process guided intended job seekers throughout the process.



Picture 5. Phihong Technology online recruiting portal. (Phihong Technology, n.d.-c).

4.2.2. Interview

An Interview is a well-defined, organized, and structured conversation between the interviewer and interviewee (Purbey, 2022). It is a dialogue between two individuals, where one person (the interviewer) aims to elicit specific information from the other person (the interviewee) (Gillham, 2000). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that prepares a set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) beforehand within a predetermined thematic framework. (Curedale, 2013a.) Semi-structured interviews are often open-ended and allow researchers to investigate different aspects of the research question. (George, 2022.)

Interviews have traditionally been connected with qualitative research and the naturalistic method of data collecting because of the emphasis on examining human experiences and the significance of the relationship between participants and researchers. (Côté & Turgeon, 2005; Halcomb & Davidson, 2006.) By delving into the nuances of interviewees' experiences, researchers can gain insights into issues that are specific to each individual and their perspectives. It helps researchers understand how various phenomena are encountered and interpreted.

The interviews followed the inductive approach. It is a method that concludes by going through the collected data and searching for patterns (Bhandari, 2022). The semi-structured interview is a valuable research approach for gaining comprehensive insights into the current hiring and employee boarding process. It helps identify the advantages and disadvantages of current practices and explore a management perspective on the future ideal state for the company's success. The interview was designed so that two leaders and five company X employees could anonymize their hiring and employee boarding experience.

Due to the open-ended nature of many semi-structured interviews, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis. Many researchers who work with interview or focus group data consider coding a crucial element of qualitative research. The conventional coding approach requires audio or video data transcription before coding. (Parameswaran et al., 2020.) This often involves "coding" words, patterns, or recurring answers and categorizing them into labels for more detailed analysis (Medelyan, n.d.). To be able to analyze the qualitative data in the open questions, manual coding (Table 1) was used. The investigator hoped to identify common topics, ideas, or patterns when examining interview data. This could help draw preliminary conclusions about the participants' opinions, understanding, and experiences.

For the research, the researcher interviewed four company employees: the vice director, sales manager, HR/accountant, and one ex-sales manager. The aim was to find out the expectations of the representatives for an ideal hiring and employee boarding concept as well as the challenges and pain points in the existing process. To uncover current challenges experienced by users and to make suggestions as to what sorts of improvements would be needed or what kind of service concept would serve well to cater to the company's needs. To gain insights from employees concerning their motivations and needs for enhancing the hiring and employee boarding process.

All interviews were arranged virtually via Teams in November 2022. The length of an interview was from 30 minutes to 40 minutes, depending on how detailed the conversation deepened. Interviews were semi-structured, so questions were prepared in advance. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix 1. The structure of the interviews contained five sections: introduction of the study, current hiring and employee boarding practices status, user's main objectives and expectations, user's pain points concerning the process, and how to improve the process to be functional for the company. The first theme covered the existing practice of the hiring and employee boarding process at company X. The purpose of the interview questions was to get the participants' opinions about the current procedures and their perceptions of any difficulties encountered. The second theme concentrated on practical solutions to resolve the challenges. The questions also aimed to determine what kind of support the management would need during the hiring and employee boarding process. The last theme intended to explore what kind of proposals the leaders would have regarding enhanced or agile hiring and employee boarding concepts.

This section covers the results of company X's employees' interviews. The questions worked as guiding questions for people to express their onboarding experience in their own words. The data collected from the interview were qualitatively analyzed by the coding method. Interview insights concerning the status of hiring and employee boarding are organized into codes and presented in Table 1. These codes gave the researcher a condensed overview of the main points and patterns identified by the interview data. Then, these codes were organized into themes to reveal common concerns in responses. The anonymous interview consisted of seven open questions (Appendix 1).

The interviews yielded a total of 28 individual codes (see Table 1). These codes encompass a range of topics, such as future opportunities, job responsibilities, lack of company strategy, absence of KPIs or job goals, the need for knowledgeable personnel, workflow, job responsibilities, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and manuals, handover documents, feedback collection, abrupt decision changes, slow decision-

making, and the need for clear decision-making procedures. Senior leaders and managers should be involved in decision-making procedures, which should be standardized and clearly approved. Other areas covered by the codes include company culture, policies, org chart, introduction, confidentiality policy, resources and support, well-designed online recruiting portals, welcoming new hires, job training, and the need for structured job training.

The individual data were further sorted into nine basic theme groups based on the twenty-eight individual codes. These groups are the expectation, handover documents, improving process, decision making, standardized process, company information, support, team building, and training. It is important to show the new onboard what the company expects from them. What are their job responsibilities? What are the company's business strategy and goals? What are KPIs to evaluate their performances? New employees need leaders to tell them the company information about all aspects. Company information, including company introduction, company culture, company policies, org chart, confidentiality policy, and handover documents such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), manuals, or work documentation, should be passed to the new hires gradually. Company procedures like the approval process, management structure, and decision-making hierarchy should be stated clearly. Adequate management support and resources should be dedicated to welcoming the new onboards that help a work team evolve into a cohesive unit. Arrange training for new employees to increase their work knowledge and improve their job skills to become more effective in the workplace. The standard process of hiring and employee boarding should be established step by step for employees to follow up. Management seeks feedback from current and new employees through regular surveys or discussions so the company knows what and where to improve the hiring and employee boarding process.

The nine basic theme groups are further sorted into three organizing themes: information, procedure, and support. Table 1 shows that to have an efficient hiring and employee boarding concept, the company needs to provide the necessary information and set out a transparent process and procedure with specific steps to ensure usability. Lay out guidelines and expectations to support personnel recruiting, give guidance for decision-making, and streamline internal processes to provide a roadmap to bring uniformity to corporate operations.

Table 1. Interview coding.

Codes	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme	Global Theme
Future opportunities	Expectation	Information	Efficient hiring and onboarding concept
Job responsibilities			
Lack of company strategy			
No KPIs or job goals			
Need people can answer my questions			
Job responsibilities and workflow			
SOP and manuals	Handover documents		
Handover documents			
Collect feedback	Improving process		
Decision changed overnight	Decision making	Procedure	
Slow decision making			
Need clear decision making procedure			
Involve Senior Leaders			
Need clear approval process			
Involve management			
Poor decision-making process	Standardized process		
No clear processes			
Standardized process			
Company culture	Company information	Support	
Company policies			
Org chart			
Company introduction			
No confidentiality policy			
Resources and supports	Support		
Well-designed online recruiting portal			
Welcome new onboards	Team building		
Job training	Training		
No structured job training			

4.2.3. Survey

A "survey" is an approach that involves choosing a sizable subgroup of people from a predetermined population (sometimes referred to as the "population of interest") and gathering a sizable amount of information from them. Although this phrase has many different interpretations, it is often used to make conclusions about the larger population the researcher is interested in for a particular study. Therefore, survey research entails choosing a sizable sample of the community of interest, gathering data from them, and using that data to conclude the larger population. (Kelley et al., 2003, p.261.) Online surveys are an effective tool for preparing and collecting questionnaires, storing and visualizing data, and collaborating on work. They are low-cost and can be completed quickly, with the ability to pause and restart the survey as needed. Research studies have shown that online surveys are cost-effective and can be conducted within a short time frame. (Siva et al., 2019.) An employee survey can reveal the most relevant improvement areas for HR or leadership teams to concentrate on (Kuhn, 2022). The online survey was chosen as one method because it is an efficient and affordable way to collect data for the study.

The research contains two online surveys: one for employees and another for non-employees or ordinary working individuals. The survey had the following objectives: firstly, the survey (Appendix 2) for company employees (seven staff) was to understand the attitudes toward the company's existing hiring and employee boarding process. Secondly, the survey (Appendix 3) sent to working people through social media is to understand what fundamental factors/elements of a successful hiring and employee boarding process. The two online surveys were anonymous and included multiple choice, rating scale questions, and open questions. The selections in the multi-choice questions were created based on prior literature research. It provides a theoretical framework for the surveys.

Rating scale questions were designed to gain information from respondents regarding their attitudes and satisfaction level with their company's existing hiring and onboarding practices. The Net Promoter Score (NPS), introduced in 2003 by Fred Reichheld, originated from management research. It is based on a single question: "How likely would you recommend our company to a friend or colleague?" Participants can respond on a scale of 0 (not likely at all) to 10 (extremely likely). The assumption is that individuals who rate the company with a 9 or 10 are likely to give positive word-of-mouth advertising and are known as 'promoters.' Those who answer 7 or 8 are considered indifferent or 'passives.' On the other hand, individuals who give a score of 0-6 are likely to be

dissatisfied customers and are referred to as 'detractors.' (Reichheld, 2003.) The NPS is then calculated by subtracting the percentage of 'detractors' from the percentage of 'promoters.' NPS scores 0 to 6 count as -100, and 9 to 10 as +100. (Luck, 2022.) When the NPS score is above 0, it is regarded as a "good" NPS score. However, any score below 0 indicates a need for improvement. (Roldós, 2021.) The degree of importance question was designed to determine how significantly the respondents consider the hiring and onboarding process on a 5-point scale from very unimportant to very important.

By utilizing open-ended questions, respondents are provided with the opportunity to expound on their thoughts and opinions. Service design tools, such as a mindmap, a new hire journey map, and an empathy map, were utilized to gather and consolidate information and experiences. The analysis, maps, and conclusions were then integrated with the results from the survey and prior literature research.

The post-onboarding survey (Appendix 2) for company X's employees was conducted in November 2022 via Microsoft forms. It was designed to find out what happens after an employee has been hired and onboarded. The survey was done by sending a link through DingTalk (company X message app) on November 2nd, 9th, and 16th, 2022. The survey questions and link can be found in appendix 2. The anonymous online survey consisted of three multiple choices, two scaling questions, and six open questions. The multi-choice questions were created to get insights from employees, the scaling questions were to assess employees' feelings toward the existing hiring and onboarding practices, and the open questions were for people to express their onboarding experience in their own words. The survey was constructed in a way that both leaders and employees of company X could express their onboarding experience anonymously. Five out of seven employees answered the online survey from company X.

Respondents expressed concerns about lost or unclear information following a change in company ownership in response to questions about the current company onboarding process (Figure 8). They also noted the absence of a post-onboarding process, with only a basic process in place to meet operational goals. Interestingly, only one employee indicated satisfaction with the existing onboarding process.

2. How do you think the company onboarding process is currently working?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	There is room for improvement. At this point, some things are not clear, since company owner has changed. In addition, the process itself might need update.
2	anonymous	Only the basic process
3	anonymous	A lot of company's history has missed, because so many employee has gone. I mean so called quiet information.
4	anonymous	No post-onboarding processes.
5	anonymous	as for my experience, fine

Figure 8. Post-onboarding survey - question 2.

In the survey (Appendix 2), when asked what challenges employees had observed, four out of five respondents reflected that company X has no proper documentation. Two employees answered that there was no adequate training and handover process. Only one employee expressed no clear job expectations and guidance during the onboarding process.

The participants were asked to elaborate on what should be done to fix the existing onboarding process's challenges (Figure 9). Three out of five replied that the company needs to establish a clear process and approval system for the existing onboarding practice. HR should appoint one person to lead the onboarding process with the necessary information and documents for new employees.

4. Could you elaborate on what should be done to fix the challenges?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Create clear instruction on how hiring should be handled and who's approval is needed for each step of hiring process.
2	anonymous	We need a clear process and approval system
3	anonymous	draw up proper work instructions - of course, we are doing that all the time, so the situation is going better and better
4	anonymous	For example, HR nominated person who is the owner for the process for every new employee.
5	anonymous	please ignore answer "No proper documentation" in question 3. To finish this survey, I needed to tick one option

Figure 9. Post-onboarding survey - question 4.

In question 5 (Figure 10), the employees were asked how they could develop the onboarding process to increase efficiency and speed up the onboarding process. The participants replied that the onboarding process should be made clear with step-by-step procedures to follow up accordingly. IT (Information technology) department needs instructions from HR to establish an online recruiting portal to streamline the onboarding process.

5. How could we develop the onboarding process to increase efficiency and speed up the onboarding process?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Make clear instruction from hiring process. There are old instructions, but I think it would be good if its updated together with new company owner and approved by them.
2	anonymous	Need step-by-step stage to follow up
3	anonymous	-
4	anonymous	Either HR responsibility and/or automated web tool.
5	anonymous	-

Figure 10. Post-onboarding survey - question 5.

When asked about what information should be included in the onboarding process in question 6, five out of seven employees answered that job responsibilities, company culture, and policy are the most important information to present to new employees. Other information such as company products and services, company organization chart and approval process, job training, job-related manuals and document, and future opportunities are also essential to new hires. Team building is vital to acclimate new onboards to their new position in the onboarding process.

The respondents to question 7 in Figure 11 answered that the overall company introduction and the job expectations should be integrated into the existing onboarding process. Work knowledge, such as client information and software training, should be passed on to new employees to perform their job efficiently. Obtain feedback from current employees through interviews to continually improve the employee onboarding experience at the company.

7. What additional information do you think should be included in the onboarding process?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Overall introduce of the company and what is expected from new employee in this open position.
2	anonymous	Clients information
3	anonymous	Proper training to use softwares, for example: I haven't use SAP at all before I joined and there was no any training to this software. It is not efficient try to find info "how to do this" , and I think there are many things which I could do faster, if I knew SAP better.
4	anonymous	Another interview for new employees, how well he/she has been integrated inside the company (work, processes, people).
5	anonymous	nothing else comes to mind

Figure 11. Post-onboarding survey - question 7.

When asked whether or not the job goals are linked to organizational level in the survey in Figure 12, two respondents replied not clear, two reacted clear, and one responded yes and no. The top management should share corporate strategic direction information with all employees monthly and set performance goals according to the organization's targets to guide employees in delivering desired results.

8. Is it clear to you how your own goals are linked to the company's organizational goals?
What could be done to improve it?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Not totally clear. Hopefully can be improved in future.
2	anonymous	No, it's not clear. We should set performance goals inline with the organization's goals to guide us to deliver the results.
3	anonymous	I think it is clear.
4	anonymous	Yes and no. Top management's important duty is information sharing minimum monthly for all the employees to tell the direction of the company and current status.
5	anonymous	Yes

Figure 12. Post-onboarding survey - question 8.

Based on Figure 13, participants rated the importance of the onboarding process on a scale of 1 to 5. Two participants regarded it as very important (scale 5), another two rated it as important (scale 4), and one participant considered it not important (scale 2). The majority of participants deem the onboarding process to be of high significance.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

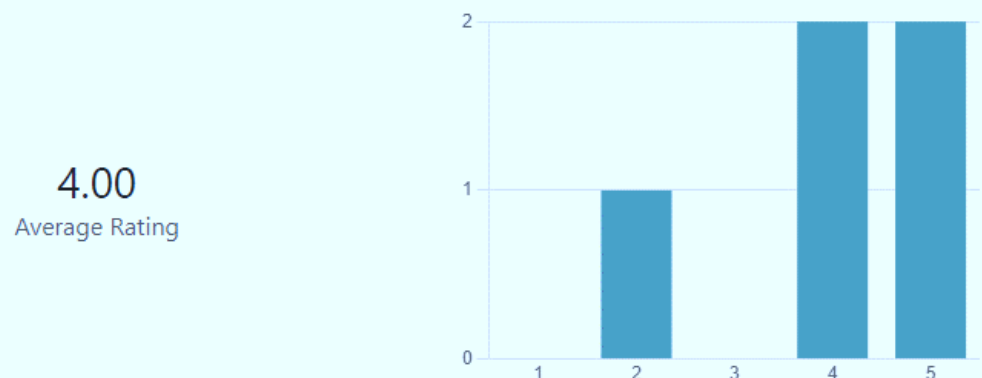


Figure 13. Post-onboarding survey - question 9.

In response to inquiries regarding the employee's perception of the onboarding process at company X (see Appendix 2), four out of five detractors scored 6 or below, while one passive respondent scored 8. The resulting Net Promoter Score (NPS) of -80 suggests

the need for improvement. These findings indicate that a majority of employees at company X express dissatisfaction with the current onboarding process.

While employees who joined the company prior to the ownership change reported a smooth onboarding experience without any challenges, the situation shifted after the transition. The organization's downsizing resulted in the loss of numerous business functions and impacted the onboarding process. The main challenges (Figure 14) that other respondents had during the onboarding process at company X were a lack of proper training with software, no clear handover process, and no transparent approval system. A nominated person by the company should oversee the onboarding process and acquire the necessary information and resources for the new hires. This designated person should reflect on the process periodically based on new employees' feedback to suggest an improvement.

11. What were the main challenges you had during the onboarding process?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	When I joined company there was no challenges, because there was a good team who helped me to get into my job and I had experience from similar job already, but things have changed since I joined company and now, there is room for improvement.
2	anonymous	No clear handover process. No clear approval system.
3	anonymous	I guess, new softwares - how to use these.
4	anonymous	Too many assumptions, no available one responsible person nominated to make sure all the needed things are done.
5	anonymous	I didn't have challenges; I had a smooth and long onboarding

Figure 14. Post-onboarding survey - question 11.

The hiring and onboarding expectation survey (Appendix 3) was to collect information about the attitudes, needs, and opinions of random working people concerning the topic. The survey (Microsoft forms) was shared via the author's LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, and school (TUAS) account in November 2022. The survey questions and link can be found in appendix 3. The anonymous online survey contained four multiple choices, four scalings, and four open questions. The survey was designed to reveal random working people's thoughts and experiences anonymously. There were twenty-two responses to the survey. Word cloud visualization was used to analyze the

qualitative data in the open questions to show the highest frequency text that appeared in the expectation survey.

When asked in the hiring process what factors are the most important (Appendix 3), sixteen respondents replied that the company should have a clear job description. Fifteen answered to have a professional interviewer conduct the interview. Fourteen participants suggested sending feedback to interviewees after the interview.

According to question 3 (Figure 15), what information should be included in the hiring process? Six respondents answered salary is the most critical information in the process. Other information such as company culture, benefits and packages, and a clear hiring procedure are also vital to new hires. In the hiring process, people want to know their salary and benefits and be informed of the interview results.

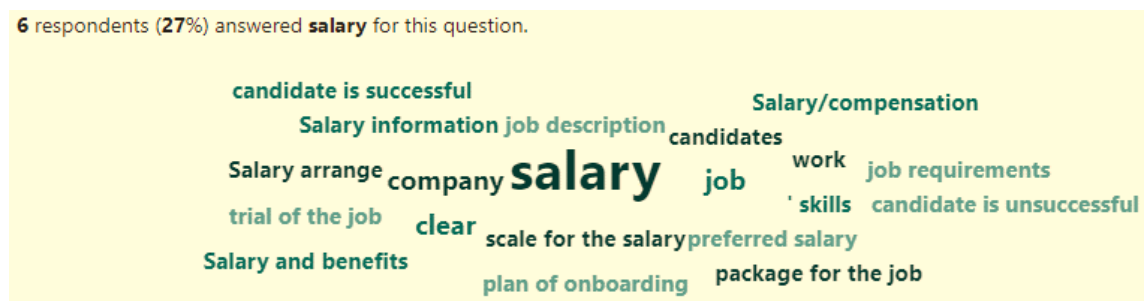


Figure 15. Hiring and onboarding expectation survey - question 3.

In question 4 (Appendix 3), the respondents were asked what factors are the most important in the onboarding process. Seventeen out of twenty-two respondents replied that a smooth handover process and good guidance are the key elements to a successful onboarding process. Fifteen out of twenty-two respondents suggested that a good training program helps new employees to acquire their job skills and become effective members of the organization.

The survey asked the participants to suggest what information should be included in the onboarding process (Appendix 3). Twenty respondents out of twenty-two replied that the company must present clear job responsibilities to the new hires during onboarding. Nineteen out of twenty-two people answered that company culture and policy, job training, and team building are crucial to familiarizing new employees with the company, strengthening their skills, and boosting their team spirits.

Question 6 (Figure 16) reflected what additional information respondents think should be included in the onboarding process. Three out of twenty-two participants answered company values and culture because it helps acclimate new employees to the

company's philosophies. Other valuable information such as working responsibilities, employee benefits, contact windows of HQ, or approval process will enable new hires to their job roles. Team building and warmly welcoming new onboard are also essential for making new employees feel at ease, creating strong peer relationships, and settling in quickly.



Figure 16. Hiring and onboarding expectation survey - question 6.

In the online survey question 7 (Figure 17), the participants were asked to elaborate on their hiring and onboarding experience in the past. Five out of twenty-two respondents replied that they have good onboarding experience, like giving enough time and information to go through the handover process, guiding new employees with a transparent process, and training with videos. However, some respondents shared some bad experiences as well. One replied, "The interview process was very long, with no information in between stages, and often ending up in 'ghosting' by the hiring party." The other respondents reflected that *"usually the approval process, manual, and documents are the weakest."* *"Well communication and understanding between employees and employers are crucial."*



Figure 17. Hiring and onboarding expectation survey - question 7.

In question 8 (Figure 18), the employees were asked how to design an ideal hiring and onboarding process. Six out of twenty-two participants responded "a clear process" is crucial to a successful hiring and onboarding practice. Need step-by-step instructions and processes to guide new employees. A designated mentor/contact person or buddy

who would introduce the company culture, functions, and products/services more laid-back to new employees. The other respondents suggested, "The first weeks are really important, so I would improve the guidance and sharing the information." "First day and week should be kept very light and allowed to note down all questions to go through in the coming weeks as it's impossible to remember everything in addition to all the other new information." "I will include more visual information such as videos." "It would be nice to have an interactive website portal."

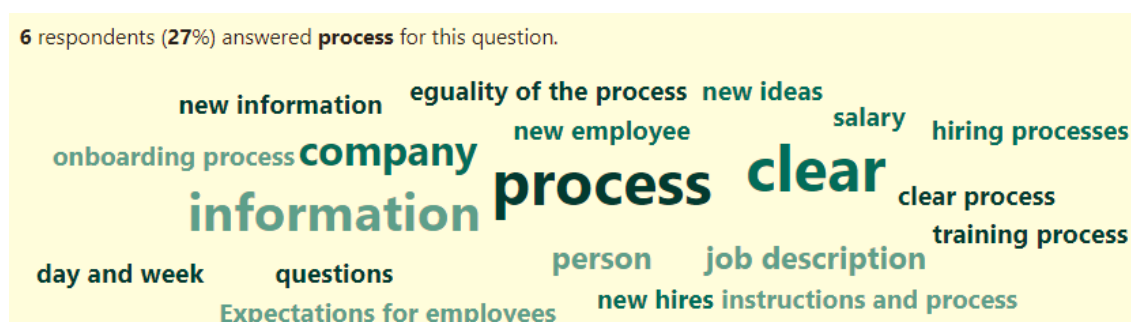


Figure 18. Hiring and onboarding expectation survey - question 8.

According to question 9 (Appendix 3), on a scale of 1 to 5, fourteen out of twenty-two respondents considered the hiring process very important (scale 5), another seven replied important (scale 4), and one answered average important (scale 3). The majority of respondents deemed the hiring process very important. According to question 11, on a scale of 1 to 5, seventeen out of twenty-two respondents considered the onboarding process very important (scale 5), another three replied important (scale 4), and two answered average important (scale 3).

When asked about how the employee thinks about the hiring process at their company in question 10 (Appendix 3), ten out of twenty-two respondents rated an average score of five. Nine passive participants gave a score of 7 or 8, and three promoters graded a 9 or 10 score. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is -31. This indicates most people are not happy with their company's hiring process. In question 12, people were asked how they feel about the onboarding process at their company, nine out of twenty-two respondents were detractors who rated a score of 6 or below, and ten passives were those who gave a score of 7 or 8. Only three promoters were those who gave a 9 or 10 score. The average Net Promoter Score (NPS) is -27. If an 'average' NPS score is negative, it suggests an overall negative feeling from users. Most people are unsatisfied with their existing onboarding process at the company. This shows that onboarding process improvement revamping is needed to eliminate bottlenecks in the company's operations.

4.2.4. Mindmap

The concept of mind mapping is rooted in a teaching approach that prioritizes a student-centered perspective. A mind map is a unique graphic that enables individuals to arrange and sort information and ideas in a map-like format. It typically includes a central image, with main themes branching out from it, and key images and words associated with those themes. The overall result is a connected nodal structure that helps to visually organize and make sense of complex information. (Buzan, 2005.) Mind mapping is a tool that enables learners to engage with and enhance their understanding of knowledge actively. By constructing a map, learners can visually represent their knowledge and develop it in a way that makes sense. This structure emphasizes how learners connect different concepts with a central idea. (Willis & Miertschin, 2006.)

For this research, the mind map is focused and ideated on the result of the interviews and surveys on the topic: What could be done to improve the hiring and onboarding process? The author uses mind mapping to break down and better understand the result of the interviews and surveys. It helps the author to organize information into a hierarchy of identified connections. Categorization helps the author to make sense of thoughts and ideas that might seem random.

The core focus of the mind map (Figure 19) is 'What could be done to improve the hiring and onboarding process?' According to the surveys and interviews, four subtopics branch out of the central topic: procedure, information, follow-up, and support. To improve the hiring and onboarding process, the company should enhance existing hiring and onboarding procedures, provide the necessary information, address follow-up actions, and emphasize hierarchy support.

The hiring procedure should specify an on-the-job training plan. The company should give the necessary training for the new hire to do their job better. The training video, standard operation procedure, and manuals should be provided to the new employees to facilitate their technical skills needed to perform the job efficiently and smoothly. Onboarding is a long process that introduces the new hire to all aspects of the company and their new role, including orientation, job training, goal setting, and company culture. (Valamis, 2022.) An adequately set employee orientation gives new employees important information about the company culture, workspace, equipment, and tools. New hires are also introduced to their coworkers, stakeholders, and clients during orientation through activities such as team building, which prepares them for their new team, department, and role within the company.

A supportive relationship with immediate and senior managers can create a high-performing team. Hierarchy support of HQ resources allocation through the right HQ contact windows facilitates employees' assigned tasks and helps deliver productive work. A clear approval process speeds up decision-making to help the team reach its goals. Another manager support, such as mentorship, is building rapport and understanding company strategies. It helps new hires feel comfortable within the firm, and this connection is critical to retaining new employees. Professional interviewers help the company to hire the right person for the job. A good interviewer can screen out motivated candidates who can do the job and are a good fit for the company.

The purpose of employee feedback, such as post-interview feedback and job expectations, is to help the company receive constructive criticism that allows both employees and the company to grow. It enables the company to gauge how employees feel about their work, the manager, and the firm. Following these unique business insights can help employees and the organization improve their performance. Performance review provides communication between the employee and the employer regarding job performance. This overall assessment allows employees to learn their strengths and weaknesses. It is vital to employees' ongoing development that helps workers put in their best effort on the job.

Job description information helps applicants determine whether this position aligns with their skill set before applying for the job. Other information such as salary, bonus, and benefits incentivize employees to exhibit behavior that generates new clients or reaches sales targets. Company introduction, like company products and services, mission and values, and company strategy, creates a vision and direction for the new employees. It ensures the new hires achieve the company's aims. The organization chart illustrates the reporting connections and chains of command within the organization. A code of conduct is essential to clarify an organization's mission and values that link employees to a set of rules around behaviors of professional conduct. KPIs are important because they indicate if employees are reaching their goals. A proper handover process ensures a smooth transition of task-relevant information to a new person to carry over the former's duties. Providing a safe workplace and the right tool to the employees enables them to do their job well and benefits their productivity. Career opportunities increase employee motivation and productivity. The company website showcases its services or products and generates customer awareness. The management should give necessary information through training and handover process to new onboards to ensure their performance aligns with the company goals and promote its business objectives.



Figure 19. Factors for improving hiring and employee boarding process.

4.2.5. Brainstorming and affinity diagram workshop

Brainstorming is a technique that designs teams use to foster ideas to reach solutions to practical problems in a controlled environment (Interaction Design Foundation, 2002a). Facilitators approach a problem by stimulating individuals' ability to produce creative solutions (Schlee and Harich, 2014). It helps stimulate the production of many ideas and draw links between them to find potential solutions (Al-Samarraie & Hurmuzan, 2018; Interaction Design Foundation, 2002a). The recommended number of participants for a brainstorming session is four to seven. A facilitator is required to keep the ideas flowing freely and encourage creative thinking. An effective brainstorming session will last from 15 to 45 minutes. (Brian Tracy, 2021.)

The affinity diagram is a method for collecting and categorizing information based on natural groupings. This process helps to organize and analyze many ideas by identifying their natural similarities. (Haselden & Algozzine, 2003.) An affinity diagram is a tool that is used to categorize data collected from a brainstorming session (Athuraliya, 2022). It allows researchers to declutter information/ideas from brainstorms in an organized manner. (Dam & Siang, 2022b.) It simplifies analyzing complex data by grouping them into meaningful categories. These categories are referred to as affinity sets or affinity groups. (Athuraliya, 2022.)

The brainstorming workshop was chosen as the primary data collection method because it generated many creative ideas. The participants can execute and comprehend this technique easily. The overall goal of the workshop was to get creative ideas on the hiring and employee boarding concept with all the invited stakeholders. The author used brainstorming to collect hiring and employee boarding-improving ideas from her colleagues. It is a group activity where each participant shares their creative ideas within a defined time in an online setting. After the session, ideas are categorized into the affinity diagram and ranked for follow-on action. The purpose of drafting an affinity diagram was to have a categorized image and an understanding of the brainstormed ideas. This helps the author make sense of insights gathered during the ideation session into organized themes for actionable points.

Four stakeholders (the vice director, sales manager, HR/accountant, and a sales assistant) in company X were invited to participate in the workshop by email and DingTalk (company X message app) on 18.11.2022. The workshop was conducted on 22.11.2022, wherein four participants co-created a brainstorming list and an affinity diagram for the studied topic. The online workshop tool used was Miro. It is a whiteboarding platform for cross-functional teams to collaborate, brainstorm, and visualize ideas.

The workshop started with an introduction of the project to the participants as well as the main goal of the workshop with detailed Miro whiteboard instructions, as shown in Appendix 4. Next, the facilitator warmed up participants with an icebreaker game: one word (Figure 20). The goal of the 'one-word' game is to ease the workshop participants into the workshop topic. The facilitator asked the participants to come up with a word to describe the ideal hiring and employee boarding concept.

Icebreaker

Come up with a **word** to describe what you think the ideal hiring and onboarding concept should be?

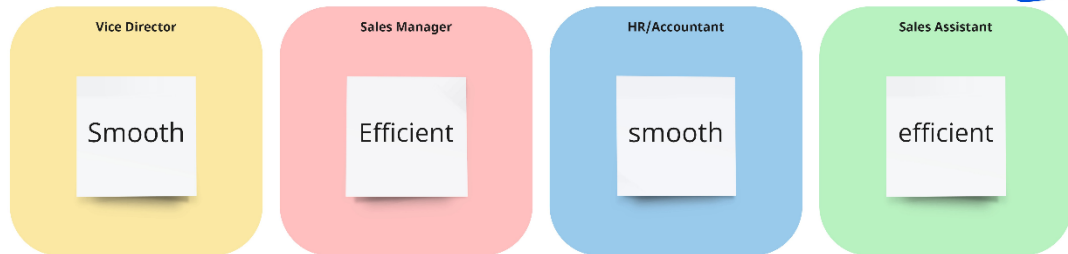


Figure 20. 'One-Word' game.
(Heathfield, 2020).

The participants were then asked to fill out their fresh ideas (Appendix 4) on their designated color stickers. This was done individually by the participants with background music. The brainstorming session lasted 5 minutes. The generated ideas from the brainstorming session were collected into a word cloud image (Figure 21) which grew into an immense insight into the collected data. Keywords were summarized into the word cloud to reveal the findings. The workshop focused on finding out what elements should be included in the hiring and employee boarding process. Another critical aspect was understanding what kind of themes the users care about.

Figure 21 shows that people wish key elements like salary, future job opportunities, proper training, the expectation of employees and employers, orientation, benefits, and company introduction to be included in the hiring and employee boarding process. These topics are important because it acclimates employees to their role, the company's philosophies, and what it offers.



Figure 21. Brainstorming word cloud.

Then, the participants proceeded to the “affinity diagram” part, where the facilitator encouraged them to sort out their sticky notes under different categories. Brainstorming ideas were grouped together by similarity or affinity. The process starts by moving all gathered data (sticky notes) to a wall (Miro whiteboard). Then the participants begin to form groups from the different topics in the materials. Finally, the common themes emerged, and the insights and ideas of the studied topic were gathered. All the data were categorized by affinity diagramming in a session with participants to gain a complete view of the researched data. The affinity diagram session (Figure 22) lasted 5 minutes.

There are 14 themes that the participants deemed important in the hiring and employee boarding process. They are assessment, atmosphere, benefits, culture, expectation, feedback, handover, information, networking, opportunity, policy, procedure, support, and training. The associated topics indicate that an effective hiring and employee boarding strategy should provide the new hires with annual job assessments, a comfortable and fun working atmosphere, a transparent benefit or bonus plan, clear job expectations, and unambiguous company policies and procedures. People like to work at a company with great culture as it impacts employee happiness, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Additional training or support should be given to new employees to familiarize themselves with their job responsibilities and promote better communication. A smooth handover process with necessary information and materials helps new hires do their job effectively and keeps business operations continuing with minimum disruption. Provide the new hires with the tools and resources they need to become a productive company member. Arrange a welcome lunch, introduction, or party to help the new hire integrate with their team. Career growth opportunities are significant because they motivate new hires and inspire them to do their best to achieve their

dreams and goals within the organization. Actively seek feedback from current employees to enhance the hiring and employee boarding process as the company evolves.



Figure 22. Workshop - affinity diagram.

Lastly, the participants were asked to evaluate the workshops through the feedback form. It is important to know how a workshop went in order to improve performance for upcoming ones. The survey feedback was collected at the end of the co-design workshop. All four participants responded to the survey. The survey's main purpose was to help the facilitator improve the future performance of the co-design workshop. The survey was conducted on 22.11.2022 via Microsoft forms, and the survey questions can

be found in appendix 5. The anonymous survey consisted of four multi-choice questions, one scaling question, and one open question. The multi-choice questions can reflect the objective response of the participants.

In contrast, the scaling question assesses participants' feelings, and the open question allows them to express their workshop experience in their own words. All four respondents gave the workshop a '5' rating. Therefore, the workshop is successfully implemented with an average rating of '5.' The workshop technical support, demonstration, and instructions were very clear too. Therefore, all four participants responded that the co-design workshop was very effective and useful. One attendee replied that the workshop should be longer because joining was fun. A workshop report about the overall workshop experience was sent to the participants on 23.11.2022 for reference.

4.2.6. Personas

A persona is a user model developed to depict a person's objectives and actions when utilizing a service or piece of software. This approach is intended to support the creation of new products. Although the persona model and user profiles are similar, the persona model is different in that it is an archetype that represents patterns of user behavior, goals, and motivations rather than a description of a single or average user. (Blomkvist, 2002.) Customer profiles (personas) represent a particular group of people, such as a group of consumers or users, a market segment, a subset of employees, or any other stakeholder group. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p.41.) It is a fictional profile representing groups of similar people in a target audience. Personas help the researcher relate to the prospects as real humans. (Slattery, 2020.) It can help the marketer figure out how to reach the target audience more personally while delivering the right messages, services, and products at the right time. (Castillo, 2018.) Effective personas illustrate the primary user group and depict users' expectations and needs as they come into contact with the brand. It is an efficient and inexpensive way of testing the functionalities throughout the development process. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p.178-179.)

Creating personas will help the author to understand the users' needs, experiences, behaviors, and goals of the hiring and boarding process. It can help the author to determine the appropriate and relevant content the new employee will value during the hiring and boarding process. It also helps improve the process by identifying and solving the target audience's problems.

Two personas were developed: one representing finance and personnel administration, commonly known as human resources (HR), and the other representing sales/product manager roles (as depicted in Figure 23 and Figure 24, respectively).



Figure 23. User persona type - finance and personnel administration.



Figure 24. User persona type - sales/product manager.

Two types of user persona have been created according to the company's department function. They were designed to understand which user groups the personas represent and their expectations for the process. They are presented in Figure 23 and Figure 24. These personas were sent to the commissioner on 10.11.2022 to get opinions on the relevance of the research project. They were updated accordingly from the in-depth information acquired from the interviews to reflect their goals, frustration, and motivation for the studied topic.

The primary duties of company X are boosting sales and giving financial services to HQ, as shown in Figure 23 and Figure 24. Their goals for finance and personnel administration are to do their job well and keep track of the company's financial status. They wish to have clear instructions and procedures to follow. However, they are not very expressive with their thoughts and opinions. They are unfamiliar with technology or may have difficulty using it. They may struggle using computers, mobile devices, and other electronic devices. In terms of designing the hiring and employee boarding process for them, the process designer should beware of establishing a simple process with necessary job training and documents handover for them to go along to reduce the new-onboard stress. Sales/product managers aim to get more sales to meet the sales target, explore more sales opportunities, and get a raise and promotion. They are frustrated if

they do not get responses from clients and support from the HQ. They are more than happy to express their thoughts and concerns. When designing the hiring and employee boarding process for them, the process designer should specify bonus incentives, future opportunities, and job expectations. To equip them with company products and services knowledge, approval procedure, company culture, policy, and company mission, vision, and values to play a pivotal role in the business's success.

4.2.7. Stakeholder map

Stakeholders are people, companies, or organizations that are internal or external parties interested in the project's success (Lopez, 2021). It is essential for successful risk assessment and management. It involves identifying stakeholders, assessing their position, engaging them in constructive dialogue, and identifying their potential ongoing involvement in the process. (Gilmour & Beilin, 2007, p.9.) Stakeholder mapping is a graphical illustration of the stakeholders of a project on a diagram. This stakeholder map shows key stakeholders and categorizes them in terms of their influence at a glance. (Usmani, 2022.) Stakeholder maps describe which stakeholders are involved in the service ecosystem. It reveals the relationships and networks between these stakeholders and uncovers unseen business opportunities. (Stickdorn et al., 2018b, p.59.) Stakeholder mapping classifies stakeholders based on their influence, interest, power, et cetera (Usmani, 2022). The author wanted first to understand what stakeholders are involved in the endeavor and find valuable information that can be applied to enhance the hiring and employee boarding process.

The employee hiring and employee boarding stakeholder map (Figure 25) presents different stakeholders into the core, direct, and in-direct stakeholders in order to show different relationships among various stakeholders of company X. Figure 25 shows the sorts of stakeholders according to their core, direct, and indirect influence on the hiring and employee boarding process. This figure shows what stakeholders need to be considered when improving the process. The stakeholder map was sent to the commissioner on 07.12.2022 for reference. The map comprised in-depth interviews with the existing employees to unearth key stakeholders and label them in the service ecosystem corresponding to their influence.



Figure 25. Company X hiring and employee boarding stakeholder map.

Core stakeholders: New employees play a central role in the hiring and employee boarding process, serving as the primary users and audience with specific needs that require attention and fulfillment. Given their active involvement in the process, close management is essential, and their feedback holds significant importance in shaping any revisions or improvements to the process.

Direct stakeholders are people in the company who are participating in building the hiring and employee boarding process. Their level of engagement may vary, but they all have an influence and interest in impacting the process because they are a part of the organization. The direct stakeholders are managers, existing employees, finance and accounting, human resources (HR-recruiting), outsourced IT functions (IT contractors), and the company itself. These stakeholders can impact project outcomes.

In-direct stakeholders refer to external entities impacted by the hiring and employee boarding process, even though they do not actively participate in its execution. These stakeholders include regional branch offices, clients, suppliers, finance auditors, headquarters (HQ), Kela (health insurance), banks, tax offices, pension insurers (pension insurance), and insurance providers (covering aspects like disasters and company property damages). While they hold influence over the process, they are not

directly involved in its implementation. New employees should be aware of these stakeholders depending on their job position and role.

4.2.8. Empathy map

Designed by Gray (2017), empathy mapping reveals deep, shared understanding and empathy for users. An empathy map is a collaborative visualization to articulate users' attitudes and behaviors. It is an excellent exercise for researchers to "get inside the heads" of users. (Brown, 2018.) It conveys understanding about users to create a shared knowledge of user expectations and helps decision-making. (Gibbons, 2018.) It also provides a more holistic view of the users' world and their problems or opportunity in the map to convey user experience. (Munro, 2020.) An empathy map contains six blocks that illustrate what the users hear, see, think, feel, say, and do and their gains and pains from their experience. (Janssen et al., 2016.)

The author utilized this instrument to build empathy for the targeted users. Based on both survey responses (section 4.2.3) and employee interviews (section 4.2.2), an empathy map (Figure 26) (Appendix 6 in larger size) was designed. It is a compilation of ordinary employees' thoughts, feelings, behaviors, pains, and gains. The author uses an empathy map to capture knowledge about an employee's behaviors and attitudes toward the existing hiring and employee boarding process. It is a valuable tool to help the management to understand the end users better and develop a meaningful process flow chart from the employees' perspective.

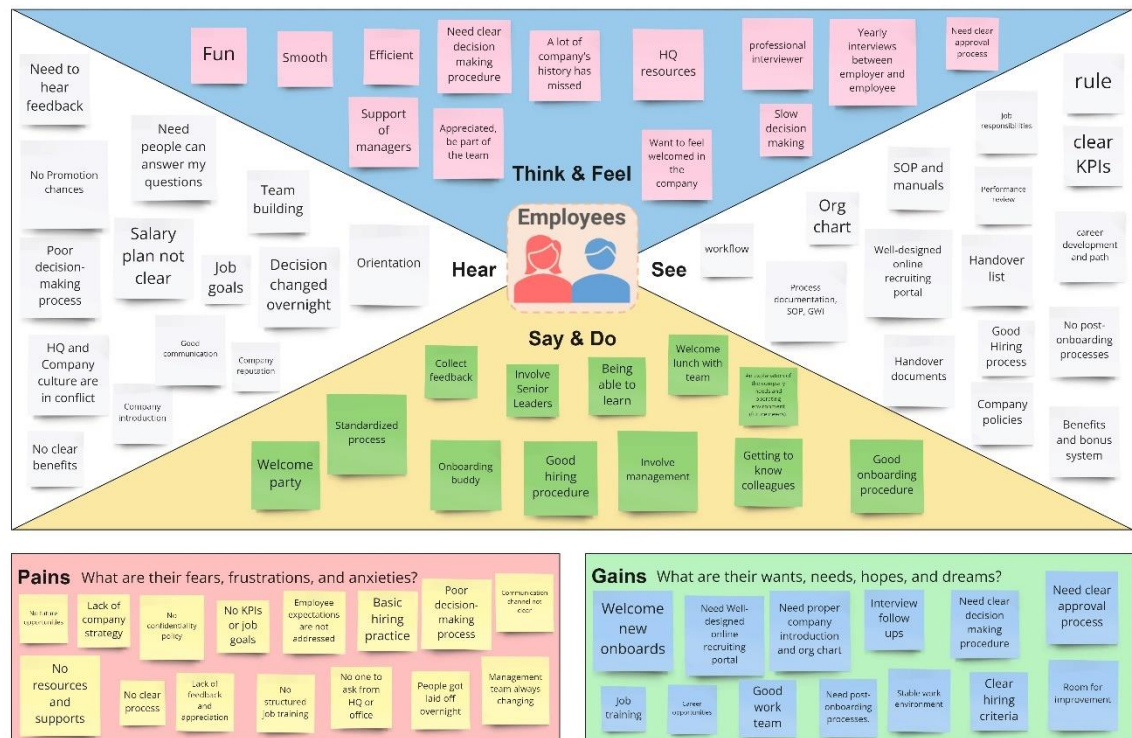


Figure 26. Empathy map based on the surveys and interviews.

The map was created by adapting the Miro template. It is a visual collaboration platform for cross-functional teams to collaborate, brainstorm, and visualize ideas. Information from both surveys and interviews was narrated in sticky notes to a Miro empathy map (Figure 26). It shows a summary of the employee side, which can be used in developing an onboarding flow chart.

The **empathy map's 'Think and Feel' quadrant** reflects users' sentiments. This block provides in-depth context about what a user thinks and feels while accessing the hiring and employee boarding service at their company. New employees want to have fun and be smooth in the process. They want to be interviewed by a professional interviewer. During the orientation process, they appreciate being effortlessly integrated into the company and being part of the team, with the support of managers, to build a transparent decision-making and approval process to facilitate the company business.

Quotes from the surveys and interviews:

“Create clear instructions on how hiring should be handled and whose approval is needed for each step of the hiring process.”

“We need a clear process and approval system.”

“Make clear instructions from the hiring process. There are old instructions, but I think it would be good if it is updated together with the new company owner and approved by them.”

The **‘Hear’** quadrant in the empathy map discloses what the user hears when hiring and employee boarding. This block focuses on audible phenomena. In a nutshell, it promotes transparent communication between the supervisor and the new employee to make new employees feel more confident in their performance. To facilitate faster adaptation, the company should provide new employees with information on job goals, company introduction, and company culture. It is crucial to regularly update the company strategy to inspire employee commitment toward achieving it. Employee feedback drives improvements in the overall user experience and can catalyze positive change within the company. Additionally, delivering fair salary and benefit plans to employees is essential for motivating them to remain engaged and maintaining high morale.

Quotes from the surveys and interviews:

“We should set performance goals in line with the organization’s goals to guide us to deliver the results.”

“Clear job description and expectations for the interviewer.”

“If a candidate is unsuccessful, telephone or written feedback on the interview.”

“Good communication and understanding between employees and employers are crucial.”

The **‘See’** quadrant in the empathy map allows the researcher to see what new employees’ experiences might be like. This block concentrates on visible phenomena. What do they see in the hiring and onboarding process? What do they see others saying and doing? What are they watching and reading? Some survey and interview respondents replied that interactive online recruitment portals are an effective medium for recruiting job candidates. A well-written rule like hiring and onboarding processes, KPIs, policies, organization chart, and workflow chart clarifies an organization's mission, values, and principles, linking them to desired business results. Training is crucial because it increases employees’ knowledge and skills to become more effective in the workplace. Performance reviews give a chance for employees to receive acknowledgment for a job well done or to pinpoint areas they need to improve. The

process of career planning helps employees to achieve the career they want in the organization.

Quotes from the surveys and interviews:

“Proper training to use software, for example, I haven't used SAP at all before I joined the company - and there was not any training in this software.”

“Another interview for new employees, how well he/she has been integrated inside the company (work, processes, people).”

“Some companies even provide training videos.”

“It would be nice to have an interactive website portal”

The **‘Say and Do’** fourth quadrant in the empathy map shows what actions and behaviors the user takes and what the user might be saying and/or doing while going through the hiring and onboarding process. An ideal orientation process makes new employees feel welcomed and supported. It clearly defines roles, job requirements, and expectations for the new hires to align with the company's goals. Work instructions should be made clear to ensure the quality performance of the new employees. Assigning onboarding buddies can help create a warm and supportive atmosphere in which new employees feel comfortable asking questions and taking responsibility. Personalized and standardized training helps new employees manage tasks individually and transition smoothly into their roles.

Quotes from the surveys and interviews:

“It would be nice to have group orientation days, where all new hires are gathered together, meet each other, and get introduced to the company culture, functions, and products/services in a more laid-back manner.”

“Good, clear, nice feeling of being welcomed. Enough documentation /information to get started.”

“A designated mentor/contact person, who would be briefed by the company about the mentorship and be given extra time to help the new employee.”

“Personalize the training process.”

The final two blocks are **'Pains'** and **'Gains.'** This is a vital part of the empathy mapping exercise. **'Pains and Gains'** are not simply polar opposites but resonate with each other. These segments organize collected information into a summary and help develop action points for improvement. The process designer should understand users' frustrations, fears, needs, and expectations are the foundation for empathizing with them. It provides a deeper understanding of how users perceive the hiring and onboarding process, ultimately leading to a more refined hiring and employee boarding concept design. With this valuable insight, the designer can develop more effective solutions that align closely with users' expectations.

Figure 26 shows that to have an efficient onboarding process, the company needs to give structured support during the onboarding process. New employees want to know their salary potential, like bonus and raise, job expectations, and company policies. The new and old employees' relationships are enhanced through team-building exercises. It is imperative to know the company's products and services and who its clients are to promote the products precisely and persuasively to the target customers. Job training equips new employees with the necessary knowledge and skills and improves their work performance. Good company culture increases employees' happiness and engagement and improves staff retention. Clear lines of authority and reporting within the company make employees accountable for results and provide a clearer understanding of employees' roles and responsibilities. Career opportunities are significant because it helps retain and grow talents and increase employee commitment.

Quotes from the surveys and interviews:

"Hiring: very long process, no information in between stages, often ending up in 'ghosting' by the hiring party."

"We need a clear process and approval system."

"Draw up proper work instructions."

"Top management's important duty is information sharing minimum monthly for all the employees to tell the direction of the company and current status."

4.2.9. New-hires journey map

The practice of customer journey mapping (CJM), a tool in strategic management, is gaining popularity among academics and practitioners due to its effectiveness in understanding a company's customer experience. (Rosenbaum et al., 2017, p.143.) It outlined a series of interactions between the customer and the service system. These interactions are called touchpoints through which the customer comes into contact with the service. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2012, p.48.) Touchpoint maps describe all the interactions that a customer has with a service system. It outlines the entire interaction experience with service periods. This allows companies to discover crucial points in the customer's journey that they might miss out on but can enhance in the future. (Davey, 2018.) Customer journeys are usually based on a user persona, a fictitious character representing a particular group of people. A persona is created through research insights gathered from various methods, such as stakeholder maps, surveys, or interviews. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2012.)

CJM is a tool that illustrates the steps customers go through when interacting with a service organization from start to finish. It identifies all the contact points customers may encounter during the process. Understanding these touchpoints allows management to collaborate with teams and develop strategies that improve the customer experience at each stage, ultimately resulting in enhanced interactions between customers and service providers. (Rosenbaum et al., 2017, p.144.) It helps address customer needs and pain points at all touchpoints and across all channels. It contains all the stages and actions in the customer journey and can be used to develop the process. (Stickdorn et al., 2018.)

It is crucial to map out customer journeys across several user personas when building a service process. This will enable the author to see the interactions from the user's perspective. The more effectively the author can cater to the users' experience and demands, the better the author will understand consumers' expectations. Because of this, it is simpler to identify areas of the hiring and employee boarding process that may be enhanced to boost employee satisfaction.

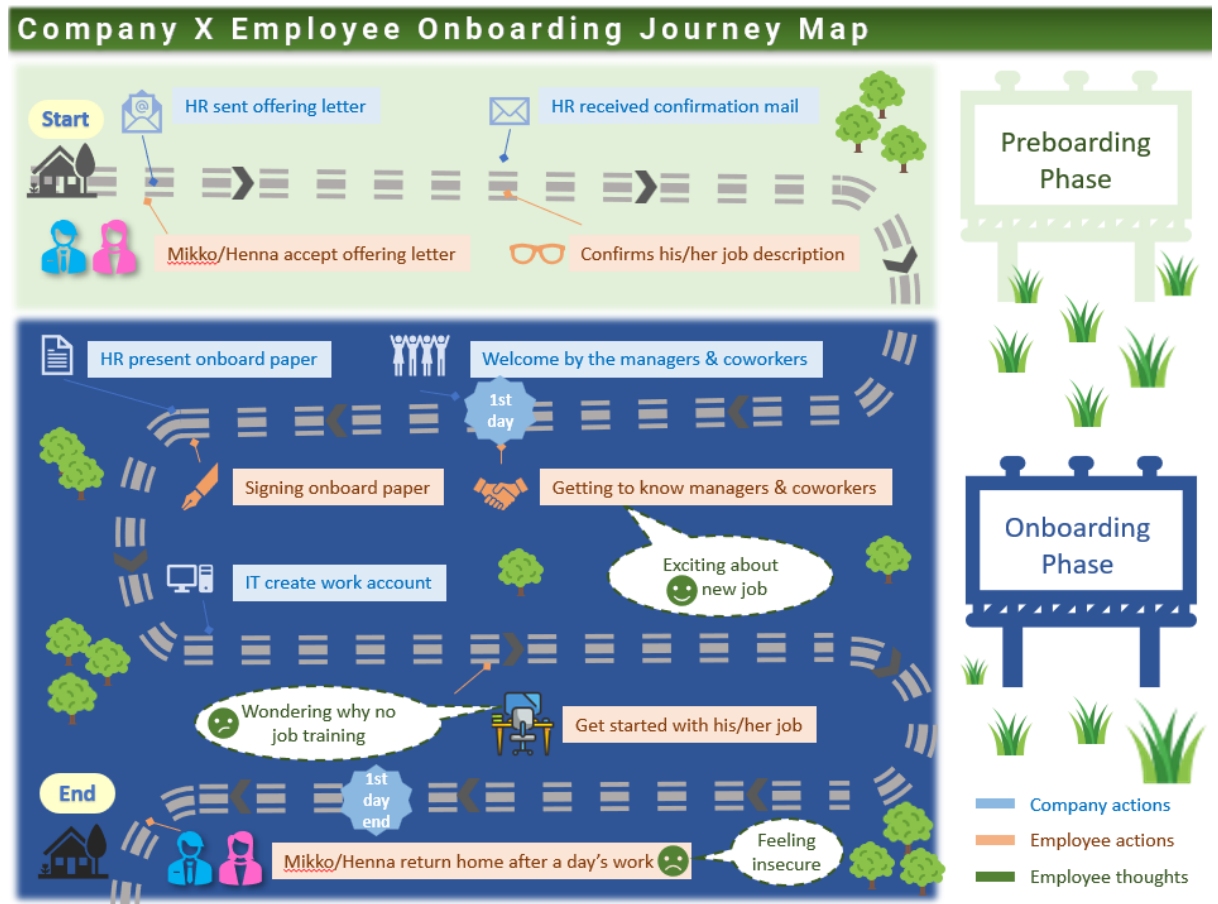


Figure 27. Company X employee onboarding journey map.

One customer journey map (Figure 27) was created in November 2022 for the project. It showed what the recruits went through when they joined company X. Using insights from interviews and personal experience, the author created a map that visually depicts each step in the process, including the customer's emotions and main challenges. The map served as a valuable tool by identifying the bottlenecks in the current process and highlighting opportunities for improvement. The customer journey map was submitted to the commissioner for review on 22.11.2022.

The employee onboarding journey map (Figure 27) is divided into two phases: preboarding and onboarding phase. Preboarding is when new hires accept an employment agreement and their first day. During this period, the company can ask new employees to complete the required paperwork and send an introductory email to the entire business. (Heinle, 2022.) This period may be a few days or even up to a few months (Ismaili, 2019). However, onboarding means the candidate has started working in the company (Heinle, 2022). Onboarding encompasses formal and informal practices, programs, and policies initiated by an organization or its representatives to assist new employees in adjusting to the workplace. These measures are implemented by the

management or HR department to create a structured early experience for new hires, thereby easing their socialization into the organization. (Klein & Polin, 2012, p.268.)

As shown in Figure 27, after the candidate passes the interview, company X's HR will send an offering letter to the new recruit in the preboarding phase. Upon the applicant accepting the job offer, company X's HR will process and prepare the necessary documentation before the new hire arrives. During the onboarding phase, on the new employee's first day, company managers and colleagues welcome the new people, IT creates a working account, and the new hire signs necessary documents, including tax, bank information, et cetera. Then, HR orientates new employees with the predecessor's work materials and on-the-job training. It is up to the new hires to adapt and acquire the necessary work knowledge of the company.

There is no clear hiring and employee boarding procedure at company X, Salo office. The existing recruiting and orientation process is rudimentary. The emotions in Figure 27 demonstrate that new employees felt insecure when there was no proper job training or structured orientation process. To improve the process, the company should provide the new hires with training, information, and resources to be successful in their new position fostering better employee commitment, job satisfaction, and higher employee retention. A clear hiring and employee boarding process will provide the recruit with a sense of comfort in their new work environment.

4.2.10. Service blueprint

Service blueprints were first introduced by Lynn Shostack in 1982 in the *Harvard Business Review*, a management magazine. It visualizes service processes to enhance how a service delivers a user experience. It visualizes the interactions between different service elements, such as people, physical components, digital software, and processes. (Gibbons, 2017.) A service blueprint allows organizations to test their assumptions on the blueprint and identify problems before its implementation. It is most useful to researchers to create new services. (Shostack, 1984.) A service blueprint is an extension of a customer journey map. A customer journey map depicts all a customer's interactions in the service periods with an organization. However, the service blueprint goes deeper and looks at the customer journey, the touchpoints, the backstage process, and the support processes to improve service. Blueprinting is ideal for experiencing an organization's service, underlying resources, and processes. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2021.)

To improve the employee's experience of the hiring and employee boarding process at the company, the author developed a service blueprint to explore all the issues inherent in enhancing or managing a service process. It allows the author to work out details on paper to test the quality of the process and find improvement ideas for the procedure. The blueprint framework helps the author condense and simplify the service by involving multiple touchpoints or requiring a cross-functional effort. The service blueprint visualization provides for the innovation and creativity of solutions in the strategic part of the process.

This service blueprint elaborates the new-hire journey map, which was developed for two personas: finance and personnel administration (i.e., HR management) and sales/product manager. In company X, the recruiting and orientation process is basic, so both personas had similar experiences in their customer journey. As a result, the service blueprint highlights the standard requirements and assistance needed by both personas.

The service blueprint in Figure 28 outlines five stages (need recognition, hiring, recruitment, pre-boarding, and onboarding) in the existing company X's hiring and employee boarding practice. It depicts the actions the new hires took and the emotional journey the applicant went through during the hiring and employee boarding process. It also describes the channels utilized in the process and the coordination between the front and backstage departments. Delivering excellent hiring and employee boarding experiences depends on the supporting infrastructure, which involves utilizing platforms, software, resume data pools, et cetera for every phase. Improvement suggestions are recommended based on literature reviews, research results, interviews, and online surveys. Recommendations are listed under each stage to enhance employee experience, productivity, and retention and foster successful employment.

In the hiring stage, the company is suggested to create a well-planned hiring and employee boarding procedure, obtain HQ hiring resources, and set up a handover document database (documents, images, and videos) to streamline the hiring process. During recruitment, it is essential to have a well-trained interviewer, establish a reputable employer brand, build a database of past applicants, utilize social media for recruitment, create an employee referral program, and speed up the recruitment process to attract and obtain suitable candidates.

Before the new employee reports to work, the company is recommended to show preboarding information, develop proper orientation and establish a suitable training plan for each new employee. Also, it is important to send out a welcome email or kit by utilizing

virtual introductions to the new onboards beforehand. The company needs a clear strategy and goals for the new hires to act upon to achieve desired business results.

During the onboarding period, the company is advised to assign an onboarding buddy to help the new hires undergo the handover process smoothly and utilize a virtual onboarding program to provide required software training to new hires to make them productive as quickly as possible. Setting clear KPIs and goals allows employees to have role clarity and to perform well in their roles. This process may help create a smooth transfer from an outgoing employee to a new hire. Following up on employee feedback, such as post-interview feedback and job expectations, is to help the company collect constructive criticism that helps both employees and the company grow. These processes may help the new replacement succeed in their new position and help those who fill the position in the interim know what to do in this role.

In the absence of an offboarding process in company X, it is highly recommended to establish an offboarding plan to ensure a smooth transition when employees depart. This plan should encompass various aspects, such as knowledge retention, to preserve valuable job information and prevent knowledge loss. By implementing a structured offboarding process, the company can efficiently transfer responsibilities, gather feedback, conduct exit interviews, collect company property, update records, and provide support to departing employees. This facilitates a smooth transition and contributes to maintaining a positive employer brand and fostering employee satisfaction throughout the employment lifecycle.

Company X Hiring and Onboarding Service Blueprint Map

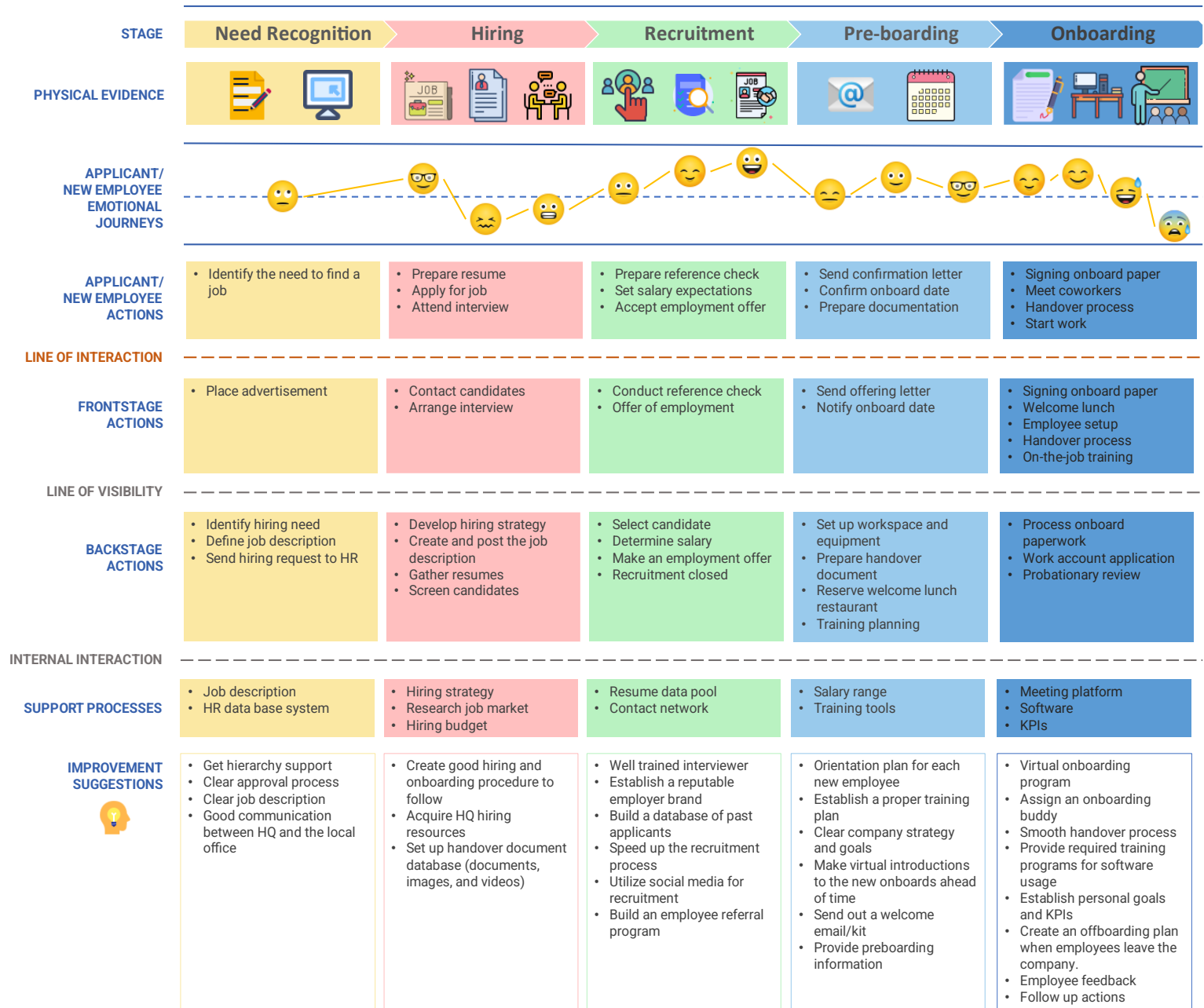


Figure 28. Company X hiring and employee boarding service blueprint map.

4.3. Validity and reliability

Benchmarking:

Benchmarking is a common practice in industry and research, making the research design reasonable and valid. Benchmarking was used to compare company X against four renowned electronics contract manufacturers: Foxconn, Chicony, Delta Electronics, and Pihong Technology. The methods for finding information about competitive

benchmarking included online research, analysis of websites, and search engines like Google and Microsoft Edge. These methods are commonly used for gathering information and are considered valid data sources, especially when they come from reputable organizations or industry-specific platforms.

Interview:

The content explains that interviews were conducted virtually via Teams in November 2022 and provides the structure of the interviews and the interview questions. It also explains how the qualitative data were analyzed using coding and thematic analysis. This transparency and clarity in data collection and analysis methods validated the reliability of the research findings.

Survey:

The survey data offers insights into the challenges and recommendations for enhancing the onboarding procedure. The content presents detailed information about the research methodology, including the types of survey questions and survey instruments. The content also includes visual representations, e.g., figures and tables, to support the findings and enhance the understanding of the results.

Mindmap:

The information presented in the mind map is derived from the collected data from interviews and surveys. It provides an overview of the main themes and subtopics from the research. The categorization of thoughts and ideas into a hierarchical structure helps to visually represent the connections and relationships between different aspects of the hiring and employee boarding process. The visual structure helps readers understand the relationships between different elements and make sense of gathered information.

Brainstorming and affinity diagram workshop:

The brainstorming workshop was used to generate creative ideas for improving the hiring and employee boarding process. The workshop process is in a detailed manner, including the use of specific tools such as Miro for online collaboration. The steps followed during the workshop, from the introduction and icebreaker activity to the brainstorming and affinity diagramming sessions, align with established practices for facilitating creative idea generation and organizing data. The inclusion of specific details, such as the date of the workshop and the participants' roles, enhances the reliability of the information provided. The word cloud image and the affinity diagram help to

summarize and categorize the ideas generated by the participants, providing a clear and organized representation of the findings.

Personas:

Personas (finance/personnel administration and sales/product manager) were created to understand users' needs, experiences, behaviors, and goals in hiring and employee boarding. It provides valuable insights into the target user's preferences and helps tailor the employee hiring and boarding concept and process accordingly. The personas were updated based on in-depth information acquired from interviews, ensuring they reflect the goals, frustrations, and motivations relevant to the hiring and onboarding process. The personas are presented in a visually appealing format, making them easily understandable and accessible.

Stakeholder map:

The stakeholder map helps identify and understand the different relationships and influences among stakeholders in the hiring and employee boarding process. When enhancing the process, consider various stakeholders' needs and perspectives. The inclusion of labels and icons representing different stakeholders adds clarity to the map and facilitates understanding. This visual representation enhances the reliability and accessibility of the information.

Empathy map:

The visualization demonstrates validity by utilizing an empathy map (Figure 26) to capture and summarize ordinary employees' thoughts, feelings, behaviors, pains, and gains in the hiring and employee boarding process. This approach helps the author empathize with the targeted users and develop a process flow chart from the employees' viewpoint. The explanation of each quadrant aligns with its intended purpose, allowing for a consistent understanding of the presented information. This visual representation enhances the reliability and accessibility of the insights gathered.

New-hires journey map:

The customer journey map was created based on insights from interviews and personal experience. It is very important mapping customer journeys across different user personas when designing a service process. By considering the interactions and experiences from the user's perspective, the author can better understand consumer expectations and identify areas for improvement. Figure 27 visually represents the steps, emotions, and challenges recruits face during onboarding. It adds credibility and

transparency to the information presented. It allows readers to visually follow the onboarding process steps, understand the emotions involved, and identify the main challenges. The visual format enhances the reliability and accessibility of the insights conveyed.

Service blueprint:

The description of the five stages (need recognition, hiring, recruitment, pre-boarding, and onboarding) and the recommendations provided for each stage are coherent and consistent with the objectives of improving the employee experience. A clear explanation of the service blueprint's purpose and components and improvement recommendations for each stage enhance the content's reliability. The recommendations align with best practices in human resources and employee boarding, contributing to the reliability of the information presented. The inclusion of various data sources such as literature reviews, research results, interviews, and online surveys enhances the reliability of the recommendations by considering multiple perspectives and insights.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This Master's Thesis focused on designing an effective hiring and smooth onboarding concept for company X to operate efficiently and create cost savings where the author worked. The thesis aimed to develop a thorough employee boarding and hiring process that would guarantee a smooth hiring process and enhance long-term employee retention. This chapter will summarize the study by narrating the critical research findings corresponding to the research aims and questions. Hence, a hiring and employee boarding flow chart was proposed and composed based on the key findings to illustrate the improved hiring and boarding process sequence at company X. This recommended flow chart is conducive to enhancing communication and increasing coordination among company departments and the headquarter.

5.1. Key findings

To enhance its hiring and employee boarding process, Company X should focus on various aspects such as improving document management, implementing electronic job application forms, prioritizing employee welfare, establishing a talent pool, encouraging employee feedback, planning for future opportunities, streamlining orientation workflow, creating a self-service job opening portal, and organizing comprehensive training programs for both new and existing employees. The company can effectively identify suitable candidates by standardizing the hiring process while saving valuable time, money, and resources. Additionally, setting realistic job goals or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for employees plays a crucial role in measuring performance, facilitating appropriate training initiatives, and fostering increased productivity and personal growth. (Appendix 6 – benchmarking summary).

Feedback from interviews and surveys indicated that to establish a seamless and effective hiring and employee boarding process, the company needs to develop well-defined recruitment guidelines, provide relevant information to new hires, and offer decision-making guidance, team building, and training opportunities. It is crucial to have a clear process, approval system, and step-by-step procedures for onboarding, along with designated personnel overseeing the process and seeking continuous improvement based on employee feedback. Address follow-up actions based on the feedback. Survey respondents suggested including information about duties, company culture, and future opportunities in the employee boarding process. New hires should be supported by

assigning onboarding buddies, organizing team-building activities, and addressing bottlenecks in company operations.

The brainstorming workshop identified 14 important hiring and employee boarding themes: assessment, atmosphere, benefits, culture, feedback, information, networking, policy, support, and training. To ensure an effective hiring and employee boarding approach, it is essential to provide clear job expectations, transparent benefit plans, a comfortable working atmosphere, unambiguous policies and procedures, and necessary training or hierarchical support. By offering these elements, organizations can establish a solid foundation for successful recruitment and seamless integration of new employees. Integration with the team, career growth opportunities, and obtaining feedback from employees is also crucial for process improvement. For a successful onboarding process, it is essential for the company to offer clear introductions to both new hires and senior managers. Additionally, providing training to the HR department to enhance their interview capabilities plays a significant role in finding suitable candidates and facilitating their smooth integration into the company.

To create an effective process, it is essential to take into account the goals, frustrations, and motivations of different personas, such as finance and personnel administration and sales/product managers. Clear communication, support, fair compensation, training, and career development opportunities are vital for new employees. The company should consider stakeholder expectations and the employees' behaviors and attitudes toward the hiring and employee boarding process. Establishing lines of authority, conducting team-building exercises, and ensuring understanding of the company's products, services, and clients contribute to smooth integration and employee success. It is imperative for the company to maintain strong communication between headquarters and the local office, design a comprehensive hiring and employee boarding process, and utilize various recruitment techniques. A clear and structured onboarding process is necessary to increase employee commitment, satisfaction, and retention. The current process should be improved by providing adequate knowledge and support. By considering these factors, a well-designed onboarding process can be developed to meet the needs of diverse individuals within the organization.

Given the absence of an offboarding process within the company, it is strongly advised to develop an offboarding plan when employees depart to retain crucial job information and ensure a smooth transition. By implementing this plan, the company can systematically capture and preserve valuable knowledge, facilitate knowledge transfer, conduct exit interviews, collect company assets, update records, and support departing

employees. This proactive approach safeguards critical information, promotes a positive employee experience, and upholds the company's reputation.

A well-planned hiring and employee boarding process helps reduce new hire stress and contributes to business goals by increasing productivity and fostering success in new roles. By providing a structured and comprehensive employee boarding experience, companies can create a supportive environment that allows new hires to quickly adapt to their responsibilities and thrive within the organization. This, in turn, leads to improved performance and enhanced job satisfaction and ultimately contributes to the business's overall success.

5.2. Recommendation - hiring and employee boarding flow chart

By utilizing service design methods and tools, this study aims to identify the needs and expectations of new hires to develop an effective hiring and employee boarding concept for company X in the Salo office. The implementation of such a concept can lead to a smooth onboarding experience that reduces new employee attrition. The author of this study has conducted literature reviews, interviews, surveys, and workshops. Based on the findings, the author has proposed hiring (Figure 29) and employee boarding process (Figure 30) for company X to consider.

The following are suggested guidelines that a company can adhere to for an effective hiring process (Figure 29):

1. **Identify company/department needs:** This is crucial for finding the right candidate, aligning roles with organizational goals, and reducing potential conflicts.
2. **Recruitment approval:** A company needs to approve recruitment to ensure that the hiring process aligns with its goals, values, and budget and that the new hire will contribute to the organization's success.
3. **Recruitment budget:** A company needs to approve the recruitment budget to ensure affordability and alignment with financial goals.
4. **Define the job requirements:** Clearly define the job responsibilities, qualifications, and required skills for the position.
5. **Create a job posting:** Write an accurate job description and post it on job boards, the company website, and social media channels.
6. **Collect resumes:** Create a system to collect resumes and cover letters through an online application process or email.

7. **Set up criteria for screening:** It helps to ensure that the applicants meet the minimum qualifications for the job, saving time and resources in the hiring process.
8. **Screen resumes:** Review resumes and cover letters to determine which candidates meet the minimum requirements for the job.
9. **Archive unqualified applicants' resumes in the talent pool for future needs.**
10. **Conduct initial interviews:** Schedule and conduct initial interviews with the most qualified candidates to further assess their qualifications and fit for the position.
11. **Conduct a second round of interviews:** Bring back the top candidates for a second round of interviews with the hiring manager or other team members.
12. **Check references:** Contact the candidate's references to verify their work history and get feedback on their performance.
13. **Make an offer:** Once the company has identified the top candidate, make an offer and negotiate compensation and other terms of employment.
14. **Onboard the new employee:** Provide the new employee with the necessary paperwork, training, and introductions to team members and company culture.
15. **Probation review:** Probation review evaluates new hire performance, ensures standards are met, and informs decisions on employment.

It's important to keep in mind that the hiring process may vary depending on the company's size, industry, and specific needs. Additionally, it's always a good idea to follow legal and ethical guidelines in the hiring process.

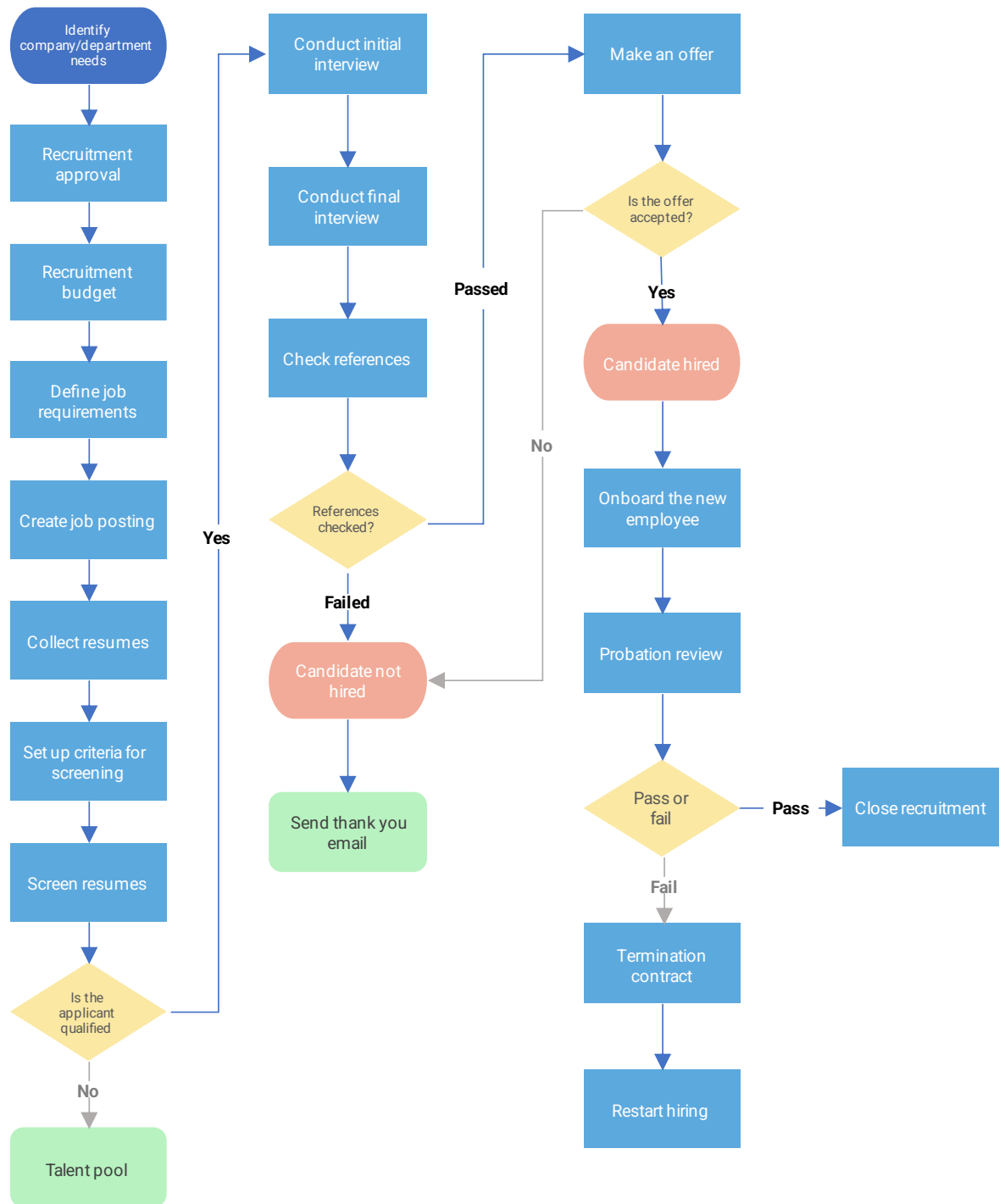


Figure 29. Hiring process flow chart.

For a smooth onboarding process, the following suggested guidelines can be implemented by a company (Figure 30):

Pre-boarding stage:

1. Before the employee's first day, **send them an email or message welcoming them** to the company and providing them with any necessary information, such as the dress code, parking details, and the schedule for their first week.
2. **Communicate with the new hire:** Once the hiring decision has been made, reach out to the new employee and send them an offer letter, contract, or any necessary paperwork. This will establish a line of communication and set expectations early on.
3. **Send welcome materials:** Before the new employee's start date, send them a welcome packet that includes an introduction to the company culture, employee handbook, benefits package, and any other relevant materials. This will help the new hire feel prepared and excited for their first day.
4. **Assign a point of contact:** Assign a point of contact within the company to the new hire, who will be responsible for answering any questions and providing guidance throughout the onboarding process. This could be their manager or a designated HR representative.
5. **Schedule a meet-and-greet:** Before their first day, schedule a meet-and-greet with the new hire's manager and team members. This can be done virtually or in person and will help the new employee feel welcome and connected to the team.
6. **Provide equipment and access:** IT ensures the new employee has all the necessary equipment and access to company systems and resources before their first day. This includes providing a computer, phone, email account, and any essential software or tools.
7. **Prepare the workspace:** If the new employee is working in an office or other physical space, make sure that their workspace is clean, organized, and equipped with everything they need to do their job.
8. **Set clear expectations:** Before the new hire starts, provide them with a clear understanding of their job responsibilities, goals, and expectations. This will help them hit the ground running on their first day.
9. **Establish a training plan:** Create a comprehensive training plan, including on-the-job training and any necessary orientation or training sessions. This will help the new employee get up to speed quickly and feel confident in their new role.

10. **Follow up regularly:** Regularly check in with the new employee during their first few weeks to ensure they are adjusting well and have everything they need to succeed.

A comprehensive and effective preboarding process is essential for setting new employees up for success from day one. It helps to ensure they feel valued, engaged, and prepared, ultimately improving retention rates and productivity for the company.

On-boarding stage:

11. **First-day orientation:** On the employee's first day, provide an overview of the company, its mission, and its culture. Review their job responsibilities and provide them with any necessary equipment or supplies. Introduce them to their team members and give them a tour of the office.
12. **HR documentation:** Have the employee complete all necessary HR paperwork, including tax forms, benefit enrollment forms, and employment agreements.
13. **Job training:** Provide the employee with job-specific training, such as software or equipment training, safety training, and compliance training.
14. **Regular check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins with the employee to answer questions and ensure they adjust to their new role.
15. **Mentorship:** Pair the employee with a mentor or buddy to help them acclimate to the company culture and navigate any challenges they may face.
16. **Performance reviews:** Conduct performance reviews annually to provide feedback and ensure employees meet their goals and expectations.
17. **Team building:** Host activities and events to help employees build relationships with their colleagues and feel more connected to the company.
18. **Ongoing development:** Provide opportunities for continued growth, such as training programs, conferences, and mentorship, to help employees grow and develop their skills.

Providing a welcoming and supportive onboarding process is crucial for employers. It helps new hires adapt to their role, team, and company culture, improving job satisfaction, productivity, and retention rates.

Off-boarding stage:

Based on the literature review, the offboarding flow chart is designed to facilitate a smooth and respectful transition for departing employees. It encompasses several essential steps that companies can follow to ensure an effective offboarding process. Here are some general guidelines to consider:

1. **Communicate the Departure:** Inform the employee's team and relevant stakeholders about the departure, emphasizing confidentiality and respect for the employee's privacy.
2. **Prepare offboarding checklist:** The purpose of preparing an offboarding checklist is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to smoothly and efficiently transition a departing employee out of the company.
3. **Conduct exit Interviews:** Conduct a confidential exit interview to gather feedback on the employee's experience with the company. This can provide valuable insights into areas that may need improvement or adjustment.
4. **Collect company property:** Collect any company property (e.g., laptop, phone, keys) from the employee, and ensure that they return any property they may have taken home.
5. **Review final compensation and benefits:** Ensure that the departing employee has been paid all outstanding salary and benefits and that all taxes and other deductions have been correctly calculated and paid.
6. **Update HR and IT records:** Ensure that the employee's HR and IT records are properly updated to reflect their departure, including deactivating their accounts and removing access to sensitive information.
7. **Provide support for next steps:** Offer support to the departing employee for their next steps, such as providing information on unemployment application, connecting them with outplacement services or a career counselor, or providing references or recommendations.
8. **Communicate the departure to customers or clients:** If applicable, communicate the departure of the employee to customers or clients, and ensure that any necessary transitions or handoffs are made smoothly.

It's important for a company to ensure that the off-boarding process is handled professionally, transparently, and with empathy, as this can impact the departing employee's experience and their perception of the company.

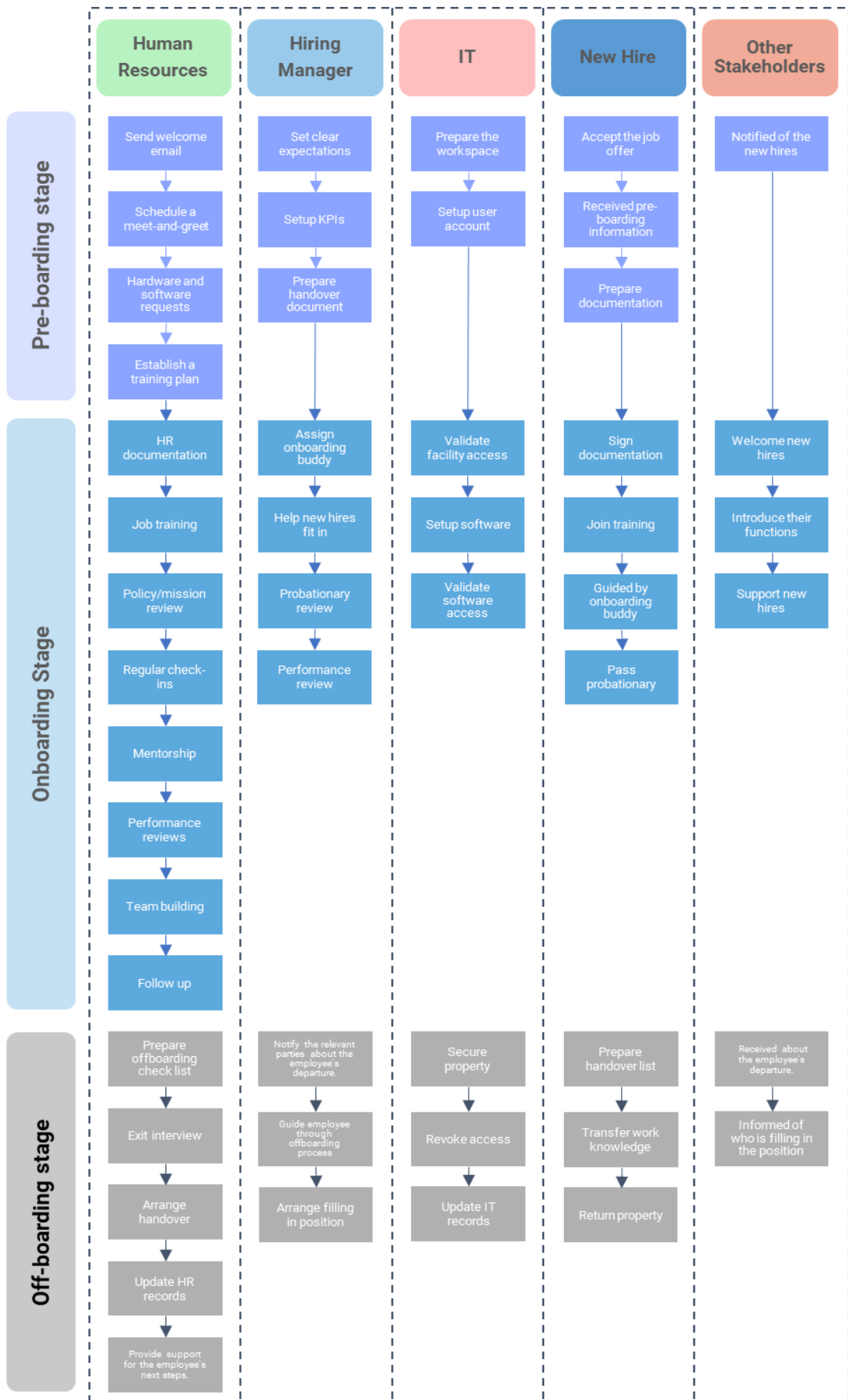


Figure 30. Preboarding/onboarding/offboarding process flow chart.

A strong hiring and employee boarding process are crucial elements of a company's workforce strategy. A well-executed hiring process attracts qualified candidates who align with the brand identity, accelerating organizational goals and preventing future problems. Effective employee boarding programs help new hires adjust faster, fostering a sense of belonging, encouraging innovative contributions, and reducing employee attrition. These processes significantly impact employee engagement, retention, productivity, goal achievement, and cultural alignment. By implementing a robust hiring and employee boarding process, companies can build their businesses, achieve objectives, and mitigate potential challenges by selecting the best candidates, reducing turnover risks, enhancing the employer brand, and increasing overall productivity.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary and synthesis of the main findings and contributions of the research. It brings together the study's various aspects and draws meaningful conclusions based on the research objectives and questions. The concluding chapter also offers an opportunity to reflect on the significance and implications of the research, discuss any limitations or challenges encountered, and suggest areas for further study or future research directions.

6.1. Answers to research question

This study aimed to design a smooth hiring and employee boarding concept for company X in the Salo office. The research and service design process has shed light on improving the hiring and employee boarding concept and revealed the needs and expectations of the new hires at company X in the Salo office.

One main research question has been designed according to the research objective:

- What kind of hiring and employee boarding concept helps company X in achieving operational efficiency and cost savings?

To answer the main research question, two research sub-questions were identified to guide the research:

1. What are the company's current practices and challenges in hiring and onboarding new hires?
2. What valuable insights can service design methods and tools reveal about developing the hiring and employee boarding concept?

The first sub-question focused on evaluating company X's hiring and boarding practices to identify any challenges encountered during the process. The interview, survey, and workshop outcomes reveal that the company's hiring and employee boarding process is not well-established. The hiring process at the Salo office commences only when a job opening arises. Due to limited resources and personnel, no comprehensive recruitment and orientation plan exists. To retain new employees, enhance employee engagement, and improve work performance, it is crucial for company X to develop a robust recruitment and orientation program.

According to the results obtained through service design methods and tools, it was discovered that a significant amount of information was lost during the company's change in ownership, and there is currently no proper handover process in place when employees resign from the company. To ensure the retention of critical job information, it is advisable for the company to establish an offboarding plan when employees depart. This plan will help facilitate a smooth transition, allowing for the transfer of knowledge and responsibilities, preserving institutional knowledge, updating records, and providing necessary support to departing employees. Other challenges include the absence of a clear reporting and approval procedure, no structured hiring and employee boarding process, insufficient software training, lack of hierarchy support, and more (refer to section 5.1 key findings for further details). The company is advised to develop comprehensive procedures and processes to address the current challenges and align employees with the company's strategy.

The second sub-question was to improve the hiring and employee boarding concept by applying service design methods and tools. The service design methods and tools have revealed many challenges faced by company X. A collaborative service design approach established communication across company departments and encouraged much-needed improvement in the existing hiring and employee boarding concept. Visualizations such as mindmap, stakeholder map, empathy map, new-hire journey map, and service blueprint have mapped out employees' behaviors and attitudes toward the existing hiring and employee boarding process. Further findings also showed that a properly set employee orientation gives new employees important information about the company culture, job responsibilities, company products and services, mission and values, and company strategy, preparing them for their new team, department, and role within the company.

The main research question can be effectively addressed by analyzing the research findings obtained from the two sub-questions. In light of these findings, company X should embrace industry best practices to attract the most suitable talent and enhance operational efficiency, ultimately leading to significant cost savings. To successfully achieve this goal, the business needs to build a transparent and well-organized hiring procedure that seamlessly merges multiple stages and incorporates necessary data to enable a smooth transfer. By implementing a well-defined and efficient hiring process, company X can ensure prospective candidates receive all the necessary details and support for seamless integration into their roles and the company's culture. Moreover, emphasizing the importance of providing comprehensive and relevant information during recruitment will significantly contribute to onboarding and transitioning new employees.

This requires providing people with crucial information regarding their responsibilities, tasks, and the values and objectives of the organization.

By applying a design thinking approach and utilizing service methods and tools, the company gains valuable insights into hiring and employee boarding challenges and devises effective solutions to address them. This iterative process fosters a deeper understanding of the issues at hand, empowering the company to develop innovative strategies that enhance the overall hiring and employee boarding experience. By implementing these recommendations and integrating industry best practices, company X can attract exceptional talent, improve operational efficiency, and achieve significant cost savings.

6.2. Limitations and future research directions

Even though this work has made substantial contributions to both academic research and real-world applications, certain limits still need to be acknowledged. First off, company X is a small branch office with just seven employees in Finland. Therefore, the researcher was only able to speak with four of them for the interview: the vice director, the sales manager, HR/accountant, and one former sales manager. Additionally, two online surveys were carried out, one for employees and the other for non-employees or regular workers. Due to the requirement for anonymity, only five out of the seven employees could answer the survey.

On the other hand, the survey attracted twenty-two replies from individuals outside the business. It is vital to recognize the limitations of this study, including insufficient access to data, cultural bias, and restrictions in research design, to ensure more representative results. These restrictions may impact the findings' generalizability. To address these issues, future research should strive to increase the sample size.

A literature review, employee and non-employee surveys, and interviews were conducted to collect the research data. The service design methods and tools that were utilized to facilitate a seamless hiring and employee boarding process included benchmarking, brainstorming, mind mapping, personas, affinity diagramming, stakeholder mapping, empathy mapping, new-hire journey mapping, and service blueprinting. It is crucial to consider that the data relied solely on self-reports, potentially leading to biases and undermining the research's validity. The service design methods and tools were implemented between late 2022 and early 2023. The study does not

provide information regarding any subsequent changes or developments. As a result, the absence of current circumstances may limit the findings' applicability and relevance.

Throughout this study, the author extensively explored hiring practices, preboarding practices, onboarding practices, offboarding practices, the role of human resources, service design thinking, and the service design process. As the study nears its conclusion, it suggests exploring several potential future research directions that merit further investigation. These areas offer opportunities to delve deeper and expand knowledge in "Building an Effective Hiring and Smooth Employee Boarding Process."

As remote work has become more prevalent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual onboarding has become increasingly popular to conduct the onboarding process. Virtual onboarding utilizes technology to provide virtual tours of the workplace, online training, and video conferencing. Artificial intelligence (AI) is also being utilized to streamline the recruiting process by sorting through resumes, assessing candidate fit, and scheduling interviews. The use of AI can eliminate bias in the hiring process and ensure more objective hiring decisions.

To attract top talent, employers are emphasizing their organization's culture and reputation through employer branding. This can include showcasing company values, employee testimonials, and benefits packages. Creating a positive candidate experience is another way organizations attract top talent. This involves providing timely communication, transparency throughout the hiring process, and creating a welcoming environment for candidates.

Companies have recently realized how crucial promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace is. Initiatives for diversity and inclusion seek to promote an environment that honors and respects individual differences and fosters equal opportunity. These approaches include addressing prejudices, improving representation, and creating an inclusive organizational culture.

Regarding the hiring and employee boarding procedures at company X, this study has included the opinions of both employees and leaders. When creating a successful employee boarding process, it is critical for businesses to give priority to and respectfully consider the thoughts and needs of their workers. Companies should work to maintain open and transparent communication throughout the process in order to accomplish this. This can entail answering frequent queries and worries, like what data and paperwork are needed and how to train staff successfully. Companies may develop an efficient and streamlined onboarding process that is advantageous to both employees and the company as a whole by giving priority to these elements.

The workforce is an organization's most valuable asset, making it imperative for companies to prioritize a well-structured and seamless hiring and employee boarding process. This process should foster a sense of commitment and achievement among new hires while effectively communicating the company's unique corporate culture. By implementing a comprehensive hiring and employee boarding procedure, businesses can boost staff morale, reduce employee turnover, and ultimately enhance productivity. A well-executed hiring and employee boarding concept can significantly contribute to company X's attainment of operational efficiency and cost savings.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Company X Employees

I understand that the interview asks for personal information and those treated confidentially and with due regard for data protection issues.

Interviewee:

Date:

1. What do you think about our existing company hiring and onboarding process?
2. What are the hiring and onboarding challenges you have observed?
3. Could you elaborate more on what should be done to resolve the challenges, if there are any?
4. How could we develop the hiring and onboarding process to increase efficiency and speed up the onboarding process?
5. In your opinion, what information should the company provide in the hiring and onboarding process?
6. What kind of support do you need during the orientation period?
7. How important do you think the hiring and onboarding process is?

Appendix 2: Employee Survey

Survey link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hrwyq_ISOEUyYsV3WYLiQTQnjhg7GAFHqMDrYX3hRCNUNVdBUkxVV0pSN0IOTjExSldZQkpXUzQ5Sy4u

Post-onboarding Survey

To provide a smooth onboarding roadmap to new employees that leads to job satisfaction and long-term employee retention.

* Required

1. *The content of this questionnaire is confidential and intended for research purposes only. All information will be disclosed anonymously.* *

- I agree
- I disagree

2. How do you think the company onboarding process is currently working? *

Enter your answer

3. What challenges in the onboarding process do you think we have? (Can choose multiple answers) *

- No proper documentation
- No job training
- No handover process
- No clear job expectation
- No guidance

4. Could you elaborate on what should be done to fix the challenges? *

Enter your answer

5. How could we develop the onboarding process to increase efficiency and speed up the onboarding process? *

Enter your answer

6. What information should be included in the onboarding process? *

- Job responsibilities
- Company culture & policy
- Company products & services
- Company organization chart & approval process
- Job training
- Job related manuals & documents
- Future possibilities
- Introduce to the team

7. What additional information do you think should be included in the onboarding process? *


Enter your answer

8. Is it clear to you how your own goals are linked to the company's organizational goals? What could be done to improve it? *

Enter your answer

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the onboarding process? *



10. How would you rate the onboarding process at our company? * 

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Extremely bad

Extremely good

11. What were the main challenges you had during the onboarding process? *

Enter your answer

Post-onboarding Survey Result

Post-onboarding Survey

5 Responses	23:24 Average time to complete	Active Status
----------------	-----------------------------------	------------------

[View results](#)

Open in Excel ...

1. The content of this questionnaire is confidential and intended for research purposes only. All information will be disclosed anonymously.

[More Details](#)



2. How do you think the company onboarding process is currently working?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

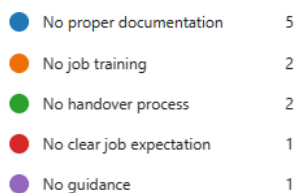
"as for my experience, fine"

"No post-onboarding processes."

"A lot of company's history has missed, because so many employee has gone..."

3. What challenges in the onboarding process do you think we have? (Can choose multiple answers)

[More Details](#)



4. Could you elaborate on what should be done to fix the challenges?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"please ignore answer "No proper documentation" in question 3. To finish thi.."

"For example, HR nominated person who is the owner for the process for eve..."

"draw up proper work instructions - of course, we are doing that all the time,..."

5. How could we develop the onboarding process to increase efficiency and speed up the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"-"

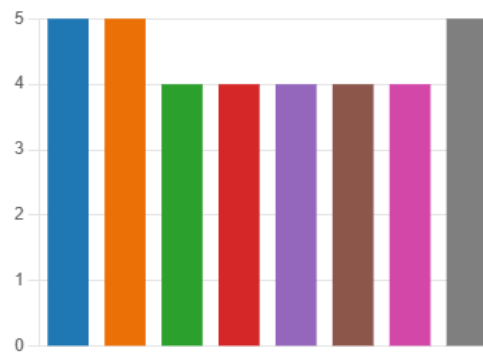
"Either HR responsibility and/or automated web tool."

"-"

6. What information should be included in the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

● Job responsibilities	5
● Company culture & policy	5
● Company products & services	4
● Company organization chart & ...	4
● Job training	4
● Job related manuals & docume...	4
● Future possibilities	4
● Introduce to the team	5



7. What additional information do you think should be included in the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"nothing else comes to mind"

"Another interview for new employees, how well he/she has been integrated .."

"Proper training to use softwares, for example: I haven't use SAP at all before..."

8. Is it clear to you how your own goals are linked to the company's organizational goals? What could be done to improve it?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"Yes"

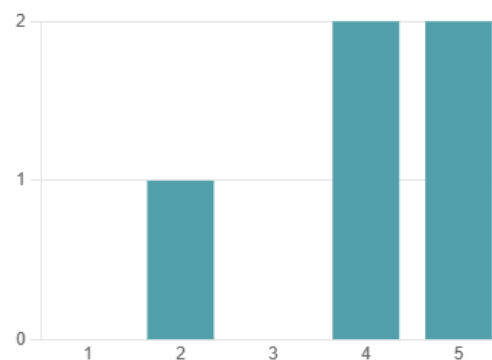
"Yes and no. Top management's important duty is information sharing mini..."

"I think it is clear."

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

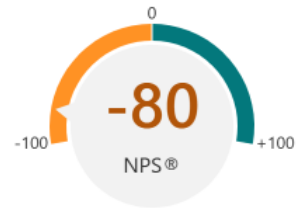
4.00
Average Rating



10. How would you rate the onboarding process at our company?

[More Details](#)

Promoters	0
Passives	1
Detractors	4



11. What were the main challenges you had during the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"I didn't have challenges; I had a smooth and long onboarding"

"Too many assumptions, no available one responsible person nominated to ..."

"I guess, new softwares - how to use these."

Appendix 3: Hiring and Onboarding Expectation Survey

Survey link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hrwyq_ISOEUyYsV3WYLiQTQnjhg7GAFHqMDrYX3hRCNUM0FIVUpYVEw3SVBPS0pBQzFFV1dOOU1LQS4u

Hiring and Onboarding Expectation Survey

To provide a smooth onboarding roadmap to new employees that leads to job satisfaction and long-term employee retention.

The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

* Required

1. *The content of this questionnaire is confidential and intended for research purposes only. All information will be disclosed anonymously.* *

- I agree
- I disagree

2. What are the most important factors in the hiring process? (Can choose multiple answers)

- * A clear job description
- Advertise the Position
- Professional interviewer
- Clear job expectation
- Post-interview feedback

3. What additional elements do you think should be included in the hiring process? *

Enter your answer

4. What are the most important factors in the onboarding process? (Can choose multiple answers)

- * Proper documentation
- Job training
- Smooth handover process
- Clear job expectation
- Nice supervisor (guidance)

5. What information should be included in the onboarding process? (Can choose multiple answers) *

- Job responsibilities
- Company culture & policy
- Company products & services
- Company organization chart & approval process
- Job training
- Job related manuals & documents
- Future possibilities
- Introduce to the team

6. What additional information do you think should be included in the onboarding process? *

Enter your answer

7. What was your overall experience of the hiring and onboarding process in the past? *

Enter your answer

8. What if you could design an ideal hiring and onboarding process? What would you add, change, or want to see improved? *

Enter your answer

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the hiring process? *



10. How would you rate the hiring process at your company? *

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Extremely bad

Extremely good

11. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the onboarding process? *



12. How would you rate the onboarding process at your company? *

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Extremely bad

Extremely good

Hiring and Onboarding Expectation Survey Result

Hiring and Onboarding Expectation Survey

<p>22 Responses</p>	<p>09:06 Average time to complete</p>	<p>Active Status</p>
--------------------------------	--	---------------------------------

[View results](#)

Open in Excel ...

1. *The content of this questionnaire is confidential and intended for research purposes only. All information will be disclosed anonymously.*

[More Details](#)

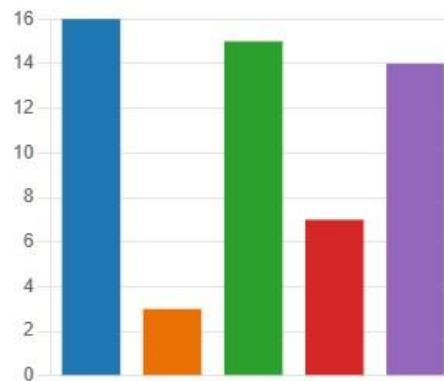
● I agree	22
● I disagree	0



2. What are the most important factors in the hiring process? (Can choose multiple answers)

[More Details](#)

● A clear job description	16
● Advertise the Position	3
● Professional interviewer	15
● Clear job expectation	7
● Post-interview feedback	14



3. What additional elements do you think should be included in the hiring process?

[More Details](#)

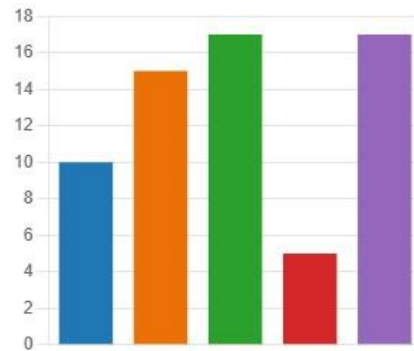
22
Responses

Latest Responses
"What's the package for the job "
"A clear procedure "
"Benefits "

4. What are the most important factors in the onboarding process? (Can choose multiple answers)

[More Details](#)

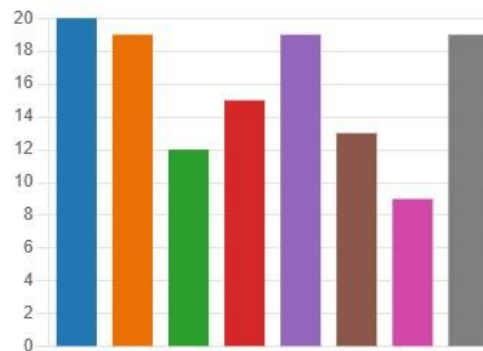
● Proper documentation	10
● Job training	15
● Smooth handover process	17
● Clear job expectation	5
● Nice supervisor (guidance)	17



5. What information should be included in the onboarding process? (Can choose multiple answers)

[More Details](#)

● Job responsibilities	20
● Company culture & policy	19
● Company products & services	12
● Company organization chart & ...	15
● Job training	19
● Job related manuals & docume...	13
● Future possibilities	9
● Introduce to the team	19



6. What additional information do you think should be included in the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

22
Responses

Latest Responses
 "Team building "
 "Approval process "
 "Introduction with other conducted teams also "

7. What was your overall experience of the hiring and onboarding process in the past?

[More Details](#)

22
Responses

Latest Responses
 "Some companies even provide training videos "
 "Most of them are basic."
 "6/10"

8. What if you could design an ideal hiring and onboarding process? What would you add, change, or want to see improved?

[More Details](#)

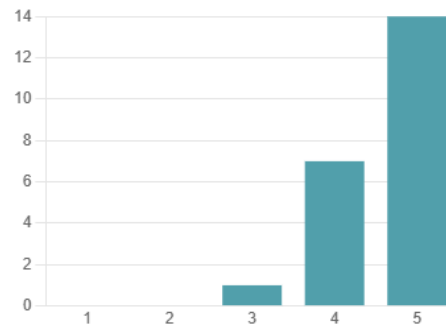
22
Responses

Latest Responses
 "It would be nice to have an interactive website portal "
 "I will include more visual information such as videos "
 "Introduction of company clear job description & responsibilities "

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the hiring process?

[More Details](#)

4.59
Average Rating



10. How would you rate the hiring process at your company?

[More Details](#)

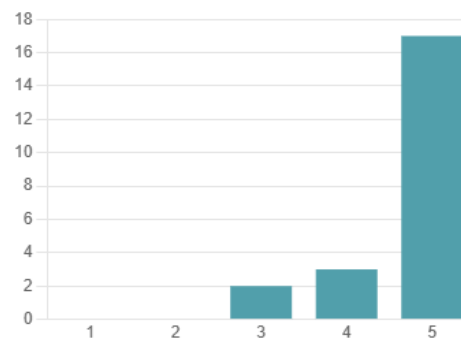
Promoters	3
Passives	9
Detractors	10



11. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you consider the onboarding process?

[More Details](#)

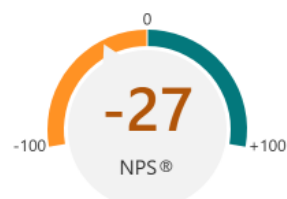
4.68
Average Rating



12. How would you rate the onboarding process at your company?

[More Details](#)

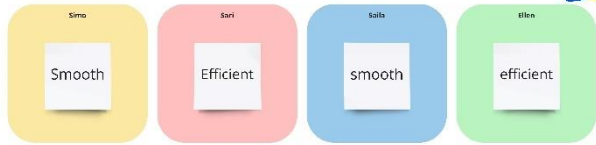
Promoters	3
Passives	10
Detractors	9



Appendix 4: Brainstorming and Affinity Diagram Workshop

Icebreaker

Come up with a **word** to describe what you think the ideal hiring and onboarding concept should be! 



1 Generate ideas:
What elements do you think should be included in the hiring and onboarding process?

2 Capture as many insights, ideas, or other concepts as you can.
10 minutes

Miro Basics **START**

Sticky notes

Click on the icon and then the board to place a sticky note.

Find it



Left toolbar

See it



Try it

- Click the sticky note icon (left toolbar).
- Sticky note will float. Click 'M' on keyboard.
- If the cursor is blinking, you can type to add text.



Moving around

Hold spacebar then click and drag to move around.

Find it



Hold spacebar then click and drag to move around.

See it



Try it

- Hold spacebar until you see a hand.
- Place your cursor over the sticky. If it clicks and drags.


① scroll the board when your cursor looks like a pointer (P). Press arrow keys to the board (N).



Zooming in and out


Use the plus and minus keys on your keyboard to zoom in and out.

Find it




Use the plus and minus keys on your keyboard.

See it




Try it

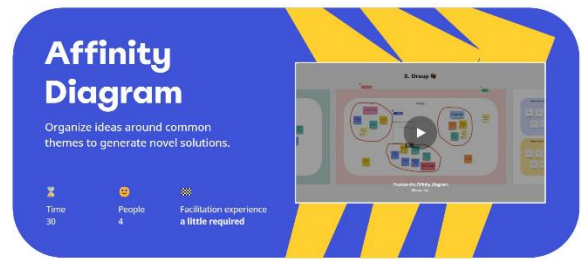
- Circle your numbers, scroll wheel below.
- Use the plus and minus keys to zoom in and out. If it works.



1. Brainstorming



Participant 1 Vice Director	Participant 2 Sales Manager	Participant 3 HR/ Accountant	Participant 4 Sales Assistant
Salary	Salary	salary	Promotion
training	Orientation	work opportunities	Salary
introduction	Promotion	orientation	benefits
meet up with team	Career opportunities	training	handover document
company benefits	Training possibilities	company culture	training
expectations	Organisation introduction	getting to know colleagues	welcome party
other opportunities	Company introduction	su	professional interviewer
yearly interviews between employer and employee	Employee expectations	working methods	HQ resources
	Employer expectations	follow ups	good hiring procedure
	Process documentation, SOP, GVI		Good onboarding procedure
	Company rules		handover list
	Good Hiring process		fun
	Benefits and bonus system		support of managers
	Welcome lunch with team		clear KPIs



Plan ahead of time

Assign homework to participants so they come prepared with many diverse ideas.

Remix it

Once everyone's ideas are gathered, provide time to build on each other's ideas, creating even more solutions.

Get inspired

Add depth to your idea set with a [Lightning Decision Jam](#) by AJ&Smar, then generate a variety of ideas using the [Crack 3x](#) approach.

3 Organize stickies into themes, using the [Pen](#) or [Shape](#) tools to clarify groupings.

15 minutes

4 Connect themes to call out relationships like dependencies and sequence.

5 Discuss ideas and additional questions based on the themes & connections your team has discovered.

20 minutes



Appendix 5: Brainstorming and Affinity Diagram Workshop Survey

Brainstorming and Affinity Diagram Workshop

Building An Effective Hiring and Smooth Onboarding Process

* Required

1. *The content of this survey is confidential and intended for research purposes only. All information will be disclosed anonymously.* *

- Agree
 Disagree

2. How many stars would you give for the workshop? *



3. Do you think the workshop was effective? *

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

4. Was everything clear from technical side? *

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

5. Were all the workshop instructions clear to you? *

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

6. What additional information do you think should be included in the customer journey map?

Enter your answer

Appendix 6: Benchmarking Summary

	Company X, Salo office	Foxconn	Chicony	Delta Electronics	Phihong Electronics
Document Management	Minimal	V	V	V	V
Electronic Forms	X	V	V	V	V
Employee Welfare	X	V	V	V	V
Establish Talent Pool	X	V	Information Not Available	V	Information Not Available
Employee Feedback	X	V	X	V	X
Future Opportunities	Maybe	V	V	V	V
Orientation Workflow	Basic	V	V	V	V
Realistic Job Requirements	V	V	V	V	V
Self Service Portal	X	V	X	X	X
Standard Hiring Process	X	V	V	Information Not Available	V
Task Management (Clear KPIs)	X	V	V	V	V
Training Management	X	V	V	V	V

Appendix 7: Empathy Map

