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Development Onboarding
Checklist

Sure, every first day on a new job starts with HR paperwork and an office tour, but to create a culture where developers specifically are set up to thrive, we recommend going a few steps beyond the basic onboarding. Within the first day or two on the job, after showing your new development hire where the coffee is, set them up for success with the points on this onboarding checklist.

Introduce New Hires to Those Who Can Answer Questions

When you're new to a job, you naturally need to ask a lot of questions to get acclimated. By introducing your new hires to their coworkers and telling them which people can answer questions about where code is kept, how deployments work, and who can help when they get stumped, you're not only providing them with valuable resources but are also signaling that it's okay to ask questions more broadly.

Set up Meetings for New Hires to Learn What Other Departments Do

Most project teams have nontechnical members and there are often many other departments in an organization whose work directly or indirectly touches development projects. Offer new hires a way to learn what these other departments and roles do, so they have a clear picture of how everything fits together. We call these "Get to Know Aptera" meetings in our office, and new hires are introduced to the head of every department within their first two or three weeks.

Share Examples of Practices that Reinforce Your Mission Statement

If your company has a guiding mission statement, giving your developers concrete examples of which practices you employ to reinforce your mission statement can help them see how the mission drives your work. For example, our mission is to "empower team members to help clients transform their business through software development" and we teach all our new hires how our practices bear that out. From how our requirements are written to the goals we have when we offer recommendations, everything is geared to helping clients transform their business.

Explain How Much Time Can Be Given to Innovation and Education Versus Billable Work

If your company values innovation and continuing education (which you should to retain strong developers), you'll want your developers to be able to spend time working on those pursuits in addition to billable work or, if you're not a consultant, their main workload. By setting expectations from the start, your employees will be empowered to manage their time accordingly and also be tacitly assured that it is okay to spend some amount of work time on education and innovation.

Share How to Propose New Ideas

To foster growth, you want your organization to be open to new ideas. Set the immediate expectation that new ideas will be heard and share where to voice them with new employees. Having just worked somewhere else, they might have great insight into practices they previously employed that could be of benefit to your company. For example, we use an app where employees can anonymously submit feedback on quarterly initiatives. On a more one-on-one level, every employee also has a weekly improvement meeting (WIM) with their manager, which is a great forum for employees to voice ideas or concerns.

Make New Hires Aware of Supplemental Groups to Join

If available at your company, make sure your new employees know how to join professional groups, educational meetings, or even group outings that take place within the organization. This can include activities that are just for fun as well. For example, Aptera hosts weekly "Nerd Lunches," which are lunch presentations for ongoing technical education, and has a Women in Technology advocacy group which is personal and professional, and some groups just for fun like volleyball teams and a pool league.

Start New Hires in an Onboarding Academy or Training Program

The last step to onboarding is to get your new hires set up in your company's training program. This should be a way to fill in skill gaps they might have as well as to learn the shared vocabulary of working on your development team. Learn more about our Aptera Academy and even how to create your own academy in our tutorial.

We believe that taking the time to make sure your developers know expectations and where they can get help and share ideas will help them flourish. Give the points on this list a try at your company!

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Have a project that can't wait while you go through the hiring process?

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