



Secrets for Successful Employee Onboarding in Construction

Building a Foundation
for Productivity and
Engagement

ARCORO
THE BRIDGE TO BETTER HR

The construction industry faces some unique workforce challenges.

Even before the pandemic, finding skilled employees wasn't easy.

There are real demographic [issues](#) at play that are specific to construction.

1. Skilled people dropped out of the industry in the Great Recession or are now retiring, leaving open positions in their wake.
2. Fewer young people are going into construction or the trades, so up-and-coming talent is harder to find.

Even in the face of fewer skilled workers, demand continues, leaving construction companies looking for better ways to attract and retain employees.

One strategy that can help is creating a robust [employee experience](#).

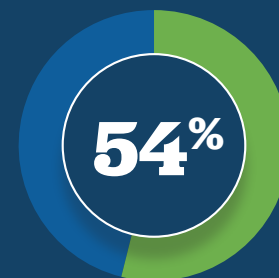
This isn't just a catch phrase for Fortune 500 businesses; managing the relationship with employees to ensure engagement and productivity is smart no matter the size of your company.

In this guide, we'll look at one component of that experience—onboarding—and discuss some best practices and techniques construction employers can use to help with productivity and retention.

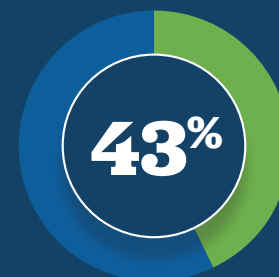
We'll cover:

- ✓ **Construction's unique onboarding challenges**
- ✓ **Why a strong onboarding experience is important**
 - Prioritizing safety
 - Maintaining compliance
- ✓ **Best practices for construction onboarding**
- ✓ **How onboarding software can help**
- ✓ **What construction employers can do now**

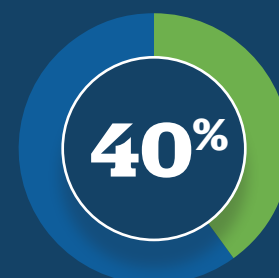
According to [AGC's 2021 Construction Outlook](#)



of companies are finding it hard to fill positions



are concerned about a shortage of workers



are concerned about the quality of workers

Onboarding is a critical element of the new-hire experience.

When done right, onboarding enables a company to fully integrate new employees into their role while introducing them to the company culture. Employees finish the process fully prepared to perform their work and with a positive first impression that will help foster loyalty to the organization.

The secret to delivering a great onboarding experience for employees is to cover the basics—like completing necessary paperwork—while also offering required training and helping the new worker learn the ropes and company culture. Onboarding software is a powerful tool that can help you meet these objectives while maximizing the return on your company’s investment in the onboarding process.

Construction’s Unique Onboarding Challenges

1. **Employees are likely starting on the jobsite.** It might not make sense to bring new workers into a central office to complete their paperwork and any necessary training. Onboarding needs to happen where employees are.
2. **Licensing needs tracking and management.** Some of your new employees probably have professional licenses that you need to have on file, and that will need to be updated as they are renewed.
3. **Safety is a key.** New construction employees are often operating heavy equipment in an environment where safety must come first. That means onboarding for these employees needs to include time for proper training, in addition to the time needed to get the documentation required to keep you compliant.

What works well in other industries isn’t well-suited to construction, with its need for in-the-field access and functionality. Onboarding construction employees requires an approach that meets new employees where they are, providing them with the tools to ramp up quickly and effectively.



Only
12%
 of people say
 their company
 does a good job
 of onboarding.

Why a Strong Onboarding Experience is Important

Onboarding is more than having an employee complete paperwork, it is about forging a strong connection from day one.

What successful onboarding accomplishes:

- Introduces your new employees to their roles, your company's mission, goals, processes and culture.
- Engages employees from the first day, creating a workforce that's connected and invested in your company's success.
- Keeps retention rates high and reduces turnover costs.

Prioritizing Safety

Construction hires often require specific training on safety procedures, proper equipment handling and project processes. Not only is this training necessary to meet regulatory requirements, it also helps protect your company from potential loss. In [2019](#), workplace injuries cost nearly \$59 billion in wages and productivity losses, \$35.5 billion in medical expenses and \$59.7 billion in administrative expenses. Including safety training during onboarding helps mitigate injuries by teaching employees the correct way to handle potential workplace safety hazards like falls, slips and trips.

Maintaining Compliance

While safety training helps protect construction workers from unnecessary injury, being in [compliance](#) protects your company from costly fines. This is vital for federal contractors since the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) exists to ensure federal contractors adhere to non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of the employee life cycle.

State and federal law requires employers complete forms that help classify and properly compensate employees. These include:

- W-4 for employees or W-9 for contractors
- I-9 Employee Eligibility Verification form
- State Tax Withholding form
- Direct Deposit form
- E-Verify system that verifies employee eligibility in the U.S.



The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requires that employers keep all personnel records for one year.

Best Practices for Onboarding

For onboarding to be successful, communication is always a priority.

Focus on Strong Communication

- **Assign a “buddy” to your new employee.** This is an effective way for a new worker to get questions answered and learn more about their role in the company and on the jobsite. A work buddy can show new employees the ropes while being a resource on company policies and procedures. Ideally, the work buddy is on the same jobsite so they can provide real-time guidance. If that’s not possible the work buddy should connect with the new employee by phone or video chat to introduce themselves and discuss how they’ll work together.
- **Host a toolbox talk.** OSHA’s Safety Training and Education standard requires employers to instruct employees on how to recognize and avoid unsafe working conditions to control or eliminate hazards. One way to do this is by hosting a toolbox talk, which is an informal safety meeting that focuses on specific issues. Holding one for new employees is a fantastic way to introduce new employees to safety standards and even refresh the topic for current workers. These can be done online using video conferencing tools or recorded informational sessions.
- **Use technology to effectively communicate and manage projects across locations.** Once your employee start works, quickly get them up to speed on how your staff works together. Whether you are using software for project management, collaboration tools, filing share systems, or other forms of collaboration, make sure your new employees get the training they need to get started and feel comfortable using your systems.



OSHA requires employers to instruct employees on how to recognize and avoid unsafe working conditions to control or eliminate hazards.

Keep the Onboarding Experience Simple and Easy

If employees feel onboarding is difficult, your new hires may be reluctant to finish it, and they are starting their new job with a negative impression of your company.

- **Provide easily accessible onboarding resources.** A cloud-based onboarding system, like [Arcoro's onboarding software](#), can be accessed from anywhere including a laptop, desktop, mobile device or kiosk. When a system is 100% paperless, it can streamline the entire process and eliminate any data input errors. It's also less cumbersome for the employee and HR staff.
- **Make sure the new employee is moving through the process.** Onboarding provides a lot of information your new employee needs to know and it can seem overwhelming. Break down the information you need to communicate into smaller sections and touch base with the new hire after each segment is complete. Using software enables you to track the employee's progress, ensuring they get all the information they need for success and to ensure compliance.

After Onboarding, Keep Connectivity Consistent

Onboarding is the first step in the employee journey, but it's not the last. Once onboarding is over, it's important to keep employees connected.

- **Keep effective communication lines open.** A weekly check-in or quick team meeting keeps everyone on the same page and ensures expectations are clear. Also make sure employees know how to easily connect with their direct manager when needed.
- **Offer appropriate ongoing training.** To keep people's skills and knowledge up-to-date, provide regular development opportunities. Not only can training enhance the productivity and effectiveness of workers, it also serves as a retention tool.
- **Provide ongoing performance management.** Performance management helps keep employees engaged on a consistent basis. [Performance management software](#) provides the framework for your employees to be their very best by providing them with regular, actionable feedback. Regular performance reviews also allow for peer-to-peer, outside-organization and project-based feedback to put your workforce in a position to improve both in the short term and the long run.



Performance management helps keep employees engaged on a consistent basis.

How HR Onboarding Software Can Help

A well-thought-out talent management strategy combined with automated HR solutions can help support your efforts in strengthening your employer brand. With a great reputation, obtaining and retaining talent becomes much easier.

HR Software Enhances the Onboarding Process

To help support a greater onboarding initiative for your company, you should be combining your strategy with technology. HR software with dedicated onboarding tools will free you from the most tedious manual processes, while cutting down on the use of paper. You can create new efficiencies, enhance transparency, and attain and retain top talent more effectively with this type of technology.

With a dedicated, cloud-based onboarding solution, you will be able to hand off your administrative and manual responsibilities to an automated tool, built to streamline those efforts for you. It transforms the entire process for both HR administrators and managers, as well as for the new hire journeying through it.

HR software, with a dedicated onboarding module, can streamline the following workflows with automated efficiencies built in:

- Send communications to new hires with helpful information including logins, schedules and training.
- Send state and federal forms and employee handbook for review and digital signature even before workers start their first day.
- Create a self-service hub for your new hire to access with all helpful information easily available.
- Integrate with any internal/external technology including other HR automated solutions, payroll, and ERP systems to share data instantly.
- HR administrators are alerted of new employee actions, allowing them to approve and move the person forward in the process.
- Store all important documents in a secure, cloud-based system, giving employers the ability to access them anytime.
- Set up ongoing training and development for the new employee to become more accustomed to their role more quickly.



With a great reputation, obtaining and retaining talent becomes much easier.

For construction companies seeking to successfully address the challenges of recruiting and retaining skilled employees, a strong onboarding experience and approach can be key. Helping employees effectively ramp up provides a positive first experience that improves performance and retention.

The realities of a managing a skilled workforce that may be operating at various job sites makes onboarding different for construction companies. The right, cloud-based onboarding software can help address the unique attributes of construction, ensuring the process is efficient and effective for you and your new hires.

Steps to take now

If your current onboarding program consists simply of collecting paperwork and offering mandatory training, there's room for improvement. Take these steps to determine if you need to ramp up your onboarding.

1. Review best practices to make sure you are including them in your onboarding plan.
2. Perform an analysis of your onboarding process to identify areas for efficiency improvements from both an employee and HR perspective.
3. Survey recently hired employees and ask them to rate and give feedback on their onboarding experience.
4. Ask yourself what employees really need to know to perform well in their new role. Make sure you offer relevant training, even beyond what is required to keep you compliant.



Want to learn more about HR onboarding software and how it can help facilitate an easier onboarding experience for your employees and create additional benefits for you?

This blog is a great place to start: [Support Efficient Employee Onboarding with HR Software](#)

[Arcoro's Onboarding solution](#) makes a great first impression and ensures new employees are ready before day one with a smooth, stress-free onboarding system. Our 100% paperless, cloud-based Onboarding module streamlines the process and eliminates data input errors. Its multiple, easy-to-use features benefit both managers and employees. If you're ready for an upgrade, contact us to [schedule a free demo](#).