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[**The 6 Salesperson Onboarding Mistakes That Can Lead to Disaster**](http://www.ere.net/2011/10/18/the-6-salesperson-onboarding-mistakes-that-can-lead-to-disaster/)

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When a sales candidate accepts a job offer, everyone is all smiles. Yet, those smiles can quickly turn upside down if you are making any of these salesperson onboarding mistakes.

1. **Not having an** [**onboarding**](http://www.ere.net/tags/onboarding) **program**. When salespeople aren’t performing, few trace the issue back to how the salesperson was assimilated into the organization. Yet, that is oftentimes the foundation of the problem. Salespeople arrive at a company with potential. The onboarding program should be designed to ensure the potential becomes a reality.
2. **Not having onboarding objectives**. Many, once they recognize the prudence of having an onboarding program, start by creating content. If you start by creating content, how will you know your program is designed to position your salesperson for success? The onboarding starting point is the end. Document the expectations you have of those who successfully complete your onboarding program and create content that leads to those expectations being met.
3. **Having *an* onboarding program**. This may seem like circular logic given the first two points. The issue is the word “an” and thinking of onboarding in the singular form. You may hire from within the industry, outside of the industry, transfer an employee to the sales team, or hire someone just out of school. Each of these backgrounds requires a unique onboarding experience. The expectations of those who successfully complete onboarding doesn’t change, just the path to ensure they are met.
4. **Turning on the fire hose**. We would all love for the new salespeople to be able to effectively sell for us yesterday, but that’s not realistic. Plus, they don’t need to know everything on day one or even week one. Identify when proficiency is required in their tenure and structure the program accordingly. Keep the pace such that the knowledge and skills are retained.
5. **Not assessing proficiency**. You put your salesperson through a glorious onboarding experience and then send them off to sell. Something is missing: proficiency assessment! At the end of onboarding, have an assessment program that gives the new salespeople the opportunity to show their stuff. This can come in the form of a written exam, simulated sales call or group presentation, and/or a CRM practical. The end of onboarding is a key milestone to ensure your new salesperson is positioned for success.
6. **Not soliciting feedback**. Onboarding can always be improved. At the end of onboarding, conduct participant surveys so you get the information you need to continually enhance the programs.

Turn these six mistakes into your competitive advantage. Top-performing companies don’t think of adding headcount to the sales team as hiring. They see it as an investment in revenue. Use onboarding as your strategy to protect the investment and ensure a high rate of return.