



silversoft
CORPORATE PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTIONS

On Boarding & Training Sales Staff In The Enterprise

11/3/2010

By Donna Ann Peck & Karsten Becker

Silversoft Solutions Ltd | Enterprise Solutions

www.silversoft.com

On Boarding & Training Sales Staff In The Enterprise

Training new employees to assume productive roles within large companies can be costly, time consuming and difficult. There is no facet of the enterprise where the advantages of a streamlined training solution are more evident than in the hiring of new members of the sales-force, where a proficient sales team is an integral part of any company's success.

In companies with multiple products and complex sales cycles, new sales staff need to understand both their company's products and those of their competitors. The price tag for this learning curve is significant and with no set business process in place new staff do not get access to the information they need to get up and running as quickly as possible. Moreover, with no governance capability managers are unable to assist or delegate oversight to more responsible roles when problems arise.

The result is a long and costly training process, that when multiplied by thousands of employees can have a significant impact on the business. It is clear to see that the traditional means of training staff are not cost-effective in today's multinational companies who have massive, global workforces. Getting new employees properly trained and integrated is an area where new insights are needed.

Enterprise Training in a Connected World

Behind any visionary advancement is a clearly defined process and a set of tools. This paper advocates bringing new employees on board by means of a systematic, managed approach that utilizes a web-based on-boarding solution that brings governance to large workgroup training procedures.

In Fortune 500 companies, new sales hires typically train for up to four months. An On-Boarding solution can shorten that life cycle by delivering the infrastructure employees need to excel in their first few months. A dedicated on-boarding solution will not only save money on salaries, but by shortening life cycle of the learning process your investment in your staff will pay out sooner.

Benefits of a Web based On Boarding Solution

In today's multinational companies, employees work out of multiple offices across the globe, and the key to their success is access to information. The company's knowledge management and training teams generate and translate huge sets of documentation that come with every product release and acquisition, the key is getting this information into the right hands in a timely and accurate manner.

Most training material is created in a single location and is then distributed to local managers who also receive procedures for new hires to follow. Training materials can include product information, videos, meetings and tests. This information is usually located across the corporate intranet and the overall process of distributing these assets in a free form manner has no real governance.

A on-boarding solution streamlines this process by allowing for the distribution and tracking of multiple assets across thousands of users, while simultaneously tracking end user completion data, giving you the ability to train a global workforce from a single location.

Benefits of a web based on-boarding solution
It provides a unified solution across multiple teams in multiple locations.
It allows a company to expand its talent pool with minimal costs.
It supports the distribution of training material across multiple languages.
It allows for real time updates to documentation, links and attachments.
It provides a global reporting system regardless of the size of the workforce.
It allows you to track and monitor the progress of each trainee

By implementing a tool that can streamline and bring governance to your training process while simultaneously organizing the delivery of training material with visible deadlines, you can significantly reduce the time it takes to get a new employee out on the road.

Saving on Costs and Accelerating Revenues

Because hiring and training are key factors in a company's financial performance, on-boarding has a long-term impact on profitability and performance. One can easily quantify the direct savings that are generated by accelerating the training process. While a streamlined on-boarding system reduces the time it takes to get sales people to where they are generating revenues, the immediate savings occur on salaries. In the technology industry, the cost of recruiting and training a single sales person can run as high as \$50,000 USD. With a streamlined on-boarding solution in place, large companies can save up to one month's salary per employee.

- Take, for example, a new sales person who earns \$70,000 a year. The salary saving of accelerating their training by one month would be \$6,000.
- For a global company which, on average, takes on 1,000 new trainees a year, the aggregate savings would be upwards of \$6,000,000 a year.

Understandably, sales managers want new staff members to be productive in less time. Consider the new revenue generated by a sales person who is properly trained and out the door fully prepared to grow their pipeline one month earlier than expected.

- On a yearly sales quota of \$1 million USD a year, two weeks of revenue is approximately \$40,000 USD.
- For a global company that takes on 1,000 sales trainees a year, the extra revenues impacted would be upwards of \$40,000,000 USD a year.

Benefits for Employees

For an on-boarding solution to work effectively across large workgroups, the delivery system must provide a minimal learning curve for the end users. The focus is on access to information, and as such employees work using task lists that are intuitive and universal. A task list allows you to break down complex training material into a list of tasks, with assets as attachment. These lists can then be distributed to new employees and can be tracked and monitored.

Employees are more motivated to attain company goals if they are given an easy-to-use tool. No one should be required to master a complex training system to produce revenue. A simple, intuitive tool removes the first barrier to entry; that is, mastering the training system itself. When training a large workforce, it is crucial to remove such barriers. The ‘getting started’ training list below is a high level example of the first week’s activities for a new hire:

John Brown First Month Activities, Week 1		2 of 4 done, 50% complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Global sales framework review		(link to document)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Foundations training		(link to test)
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting to know your manager		(link to map with location)
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Acumen video		(video attached for viewing)

A simple, intuitive tool based on a checklist has a low learning curve speeding adoption and allows employees to handle an intricate level of steps and unrelated events with ease. This allows them to monitor their progress as they move forward. By giving employees feedback on each step of the training process they can work with autonomy, and will feel motivated as they complete their tasks.

An on-boarding solution also gives managers the ability to access localized completion data for new team members in real time. When managers receive timely and accurate data about new recruits, they are no longer in the dark about uncompleted activities. They know who is currently in training, how far along they are, and who needs assistance. The ability for local managers to access training completion data for new team members and for upper management to review the training procedures across the entire organization brings true governance to the on-boarding process.

On Boarding and Your Business

With an On Boarding solution in place, the benefits and savings for the company, management team and new employees are manifold. As you build your talent pool and invest in your staff, it is vital that you help them acquire the skills and competencies they need to be successful in your company.