

What Is an Onboarding Buddy?

An onboarding buddy is a current employee who helps to support a new hire through their onboarding experience. They can assist new hires in acclimating to the company culture and their specific roles.

Incorporating a buddy system can help new hires navigate their questions and concerns when adjusting to their new work environment.

Lastly, a buddy is a peer to the new employee and is not responsible for their performance or approving their actions. There is no direct reporting relationship between the two parties and the buddy should not assume or replace the role of a manager, mentor, or training program.

Benefits of Assigning New Employees a Buddy

Familiar point of contact:

One of the benefits of assigning a buddy is to have the new employee feel a connection with someone other than their manager from the first day. Because buddies are generally in the same work group or team, the new employee can comfortably get help on an “as needed” basis, which is important in the first few months of employment.

Boosting productivity:

Allowing new hires to shadow current employees, encouraging them to ask questions about the job and collaborate on initial tasks via the buddy system can help them feel comfortable and boost productivity early in their time with the company.

Improving new employee satisfaction:

Pairing a new hire with a current employee who has experienced success in the role can help ease the new employee’s nerves, better train them on their responsibilities and improve overall satisfaction in the role.

Checklist for hiring managers.

☐ Define Buddy Responsibilities

The buddy's key responsibilities include:

- **Acclimate:** Showing the new employee how to find their way around, including where to find resources or how to use technology (e.g., office tour, GasLines overview, MS Office).
- **Answer Questions:** Answering any questions the new employee may have in general or about the role and inviting questions from the new employee.
- **Networking:** Forming connections between the new employee, their team, and other key contacts.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Sharing personal experiences, offering advice, & providing information. They also assist in familiarizing new employees with team norms and help them acquire necessary skills through job shadowing.
- **Training:** Referring the new employee to the appropriate resource (a buddy does not necessarily provide the formal training).
- **Meet-ups:** Meeting once a week for the first month, then meetings continue to be held but the buddy and new employee have the flexibility to decide how often they meet.
- **Duration:** One month minimum, then depending on new employee's needs.

☐ Select a Buddy

When selecting the buddy for your new employee, consider the following factors:

Compatibility	Individual Skills & Competencies
• Similar role and level of responsibility • In current role for at least one year • High performing • Understands team processes • Understands SoCalGas mission & values • Well-connected across various teams, functions, and departments • Capacity, location, & other logistical details	• Organizational awareness • Relationship building • Teamwork and collaboration • Communication • Emotional intelligence • Inclusion • Patience • Listening skills

The following are some tips to keep in mind when selecting a buddy:

- Try to match the buddy to the new employee based on similar interests, goals, and shared experiences.
- Be conscious of matching employees solely based on their level of similarity (e.g., background, gender, ethnicity). It is beneficial to hear and learn from diverse perspectives.
- Keep track of buddy assignments to avoid buddy burnout and ensure the role is being fairly spread across team members.
- For cross functional buddies (e.g., due to resourcing constraints or small team sizes), reach out to other teams with whom the new employee will interact regularly in their role.

☐ **Communicate with the Selected Buddy**

- Explain why the buddy was chosen and the benefits of the role to them (e.g., opportunity to demonstrate leadership, strengthen emotional intelligence, leverage existing skills, assist SCG in making this critical period a successful & positive experience for the new hire).
- Outline the buddy's responsibilities clearly (see page 2).
- Review the tasks and set a timeline for the length of the buddy relationship.
- Ensure the buddy understands the new employee's role and the work they will be doing.
- Allow the buddy to opt-in or opt-out of the role.
- Answer questions the buddy has and address any concerns.

☐ **Assign Buddy in My Info** (before the new hire's start day)

Day One and Beyond

☐ **Communicate with the New Employee**

- Set up an introduction for the new employee and buddy on the first day.
- Inform the new employee on the role of their buddy.

☐ **Check-ins**

- During the first month, check-in with the buddy and new hire for compatibility.
- Answer any questions the buddy has about the process or their involvement.
- Determine if additional support is needed on either the buddy or new employee's side.
- Recognize the buddy for a job well done (both formally and informally).
- Monitor the relationship for any red flags, such as recurring no-shows.
- Reassign buddy if appropriate and address team dynamics associated with reassignment.