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HAPHAZARD ONBOARDING PRACTICES CAN JEOPARDIZE NEW MANAGEMENT HIRES *MRINetwork™ finds strategic onboarding improves executive retention*

Philadelphia – In too many companies new managers experience a less-than-rewarding introduction to the job, according to **MRINetwork**, the world's largest search and recruitment organization. Strategic onboarding programs are either non-existent or executed poorly, observes Michael Jalbert, president of **MRINetwork**.

Onboarding is a formal process for integrating new hires into their roles with the organization. The best programs include a high level of personal interaction and are customized to meet the needs of the individual and the position. "Taking this approach can increase the effectiveness of the new manager and help companies get a better return on their recruiting investment," said Jalbert.

"A good onboarding program is not to be confused with the new employee orientation approach that most of us have suffered through during the course of our careers," he said. "It is based on clear and measurable goals that are communicated to everyone involved in the process and it involves much more than providing a work space, a computer password and office supplies." Although he notes, these practical necessities shouldn't be overlooked either.

The goals of the onboarding program, according to Jalbert, should be to:

- Support the company brand as a good place to work.
- Reduce the time it takes new employees to become productive.
- Determine how best to manage individual new hires.
- Keep new employees from changing their minds.

"The onboarding process should begin during the recruitment process and extend beyond the first few days the employee is on the job," says Jalbert. "It should be treated as a partnership that includes the new hire, an HR professional and a manager who is either senior to or on the same reporting level as the new hire."

Jalbert has found the elements that characterize an effective onboarding strategy include:

- **Clear vision of the position.** "It's surprising," says Jalbert, "how often management has differing – and even conflicting – views of the position that is being filled. This situation should be identified early and resolved before the new hire comes on board."
- **Defined deliverables.** "New hires should be absolutely clear about acceptable timelines for deliverables," says Jalbert, "and if they are not delivering on time, this should be discussed and handled as soon as possible."
- **Participation of key constituents.** "The onboarding process should involve both supervisors and subordinates," advises Jalbert. "New hires should meet with and at least identify all stakeholders, clients and team members in a timely manner." He notes that although it can be helpful to have the outgoing employee participate in the handoff, an extended overlap can become counterproductive.
- **Involvement in a peer group.** "New employees should meet other new hires on their level, especially those who have successfully integrated within the last year," says Jalbert. "These people act as both a resource and a support system."

Most importantly, doing a good job of onboarding means that management keeps in touch with new hires as they integrate into the organization, says Jalbert. "The process should make it easy for them to ask questions and express their concerns. Otherwise these things may first come out during an exit interview six months into the job."

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