

CYBRARY | FOR TEAMS

TRANSFORM NEW HIRE ONBOARDING:

Best Practices for Cybersecurity Leaders

Your Team Onboarding Challenges, **Solved**



Top 10 Q&A with
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What are the most important qualities you look for in a candidate?

This is highly dependent on the role, the need of the team, and team culture. But overall (spanning roles), the most important qualities I seek are strong communication skills, critical thinking, and flexibility. Listed in order of importance, those three skills are vital building blocks to developing a potent team. However, you might have different qualities needed for your team; I recommend you limit the qualities you actively measure to 3 or 4. Any more than that, you run the risk of looking for that elusive "purple squirrel," and to be honest, are just harder to track.



How do you know when an applicant is the right fit for your team?

When vetting new candidates, transparency is key. Start with the best applicants and know exactly what you're looking for. Once you've gotten a clear understanding of what a candidate wants and expects out of the position, and you've determined they have what you need and are a good fit for company culture, you should have a general consensus.



What types of interview questions should you ask to gauge a candidate's true intentions?

Whatever questions you choose, try to create a situation in the interview that lowers the candidate's guard and stress level. This will help you to see how they react to an unanticipated situation as well as who they are once they are acclimated. Once the applicant feels more relaxed in the situation, the truth behind their thoughts and responses becomes more apparent.

What can companies do to engage new hires and prime them for success?

- Set Goals: What is success in this role, team, or company?
- Benchmark Progress - Poll at the beginning and end of onboarding...and repeat. This helps set the stage for an effective feedback loop.
- Implement Executive Oversight - Get buy-in from leadership. Effectively implementing widespread change is a top-down approach.
- Create a Safe Space - Embrace learning and feedback without negative repercussions.

At my organization onboarding is driven by HR and is more of a compliance exercise, how would you suggest I push to change that?

The answer here is dependent on the situation, but generally speaking you won't be able to change the compliance component, and that's not the objective. The real question here is how to improve a mandated aspect and augment it into something that's well run and beneficial to the organization and new hires. There are many options you can take with this, but crafting a vision and building out a strategy are good first steps to improving what's already in place.

Is there a guideline for how long or detailed an onboarding program should be?

Onboarding should be considered as part of the overall development process. Assessing where people are throughout onboarding will help you gauge the effectiveness of your program and what people may need.

What would you say is the biggest challenge to navigate in building an effective onboarding program?

Spanning my years of experience, it is the lack of a vision put into the onboarding process. Onboarding is often an afterthought, principally used as a “check the box” exercise designed to meet compliance requirements. The best program is thoughtfully crafted with a larger, more inclusive vision of enhancing the employee experience.

What are common challenges people face when conducting onboarding?

- Forced mentorship or non-prioritized mentorship. Mentorship is something that should be thought out beforehand and well organized. Ensure there are people who are willing to be mentors and have the time to devote to it. There's nothing satisfying about getting paired with someone who isn't interested or can't fulfill expectations.
- No oversight. If the expectation for onboarding is to “set it and forget it” then your program is doomed to fail. Onboarding is an iterative process in which all parties should always be learning and improving.
- Overly focused on compliance alone. Compliance is a critical element in many programs, so don't try to remove it. The aim of the game is to be compliant with everything else you're trying to do in the program.

How has the shift to remote working impacted how you onboard new hires?

It has definitely made the process more challenging. One of the biggest challenges has been the limitation of our ability to communicate (especially nonverbal). Being remote hinders reading body language, seeing subtle facial queues, being visibly available to answer questions quickly, etc. When someone struggles to understand a complex concept, not being able to read the situation makes it very challenging. So we have combated this by using video as much as possible, using technology like Slack to strive for real-time communication, and over-communicating (saying an idea more than once via multiple mediums).

How can managers create an environment that fosters innovation and growth?

Creating an environment where individuals feel safe and heard while providing the foundation for development helps lead to innovation, but a top contributor is having a diverse group of people with different backgrounds and opinions. Ultimately, diversity helps challenge the status quo and bring about innovative thinking, and promotes growth.

Key Takeaway:

Finding the right employee is only a part of the equation. You need a thoughtfully curated onboarding process to keep new hires engaged and inspired, leading to an environment that fosters innovative thought and action, and overall growth.