

New Hires Need More Than a Welcome Pack to Succeed

Robert Walters research finds one in five junior employees say onboarding experience made them more likely to leave

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One in five (21%) junior employees say their onboarding experience made them more likely to leave their role, according to new research from global talent solutions partner [Robert Walters](#).

Just 25% said they felt very supported by their manager during onboarding, while 15% said it took them more than six months to feel effective in their roles.

By comparison, 45% of middle managers said they felt very supported by their manager during onboarding and only 8% said they felt fully effective in their roles after more than six months.

Andrew Powell, Chief Commercial Officer at Robert Walters, says, "A lot of attention is rightly being paid to the challenges early-career talent is facing in securing a role. In addition to a highly competitive jobs market, the expectations placed on junior employees once they start a job are changing rapidly. They are often being asked to contribute sooner, navigate AI advancements and develop skills that have traditionally been associated with more experienced professionals. Effective onboarding plays a critical role in helping young people build confidence, understand expectations and become productive more quickly."

The research also found that 30% of junior employees said training and role clarity were lacking during their onboarding experience.

The findings come at a time when entry-level opportunities have become increasingly competitive and expectations on early-career professionals continue to evolve. Recent research from PwC's 2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer determined that many entry-level roles are becoming increasingly "seniorized", with employers placing greater emphasis on skills such as judgment, communication and leadership earlier in an individual's career.

Onboarding continues to influence retention and productivity

Onboarding remains an important factor in shaping employee experiences across the wider workforce. While 45% of professionals rated their onboarding experience as good or excellent, more than one in five (21%) described it as poor or very poor.

More than a quarter (26%) said their onboarding experience made them more likely to stay with their employer, while 14% said it made them more likely to leave.

Andrew adds, "Onboarding is often seen as an administrative process focused on policies, systems and compliance. In reality, it is one of the most important stages of the employee experience.

"The first few months in a role shape how employees feel about their manager, their team, future career opportunities and the organization as a whole."

Training and role clarity remain the biggest gaps

When asked which aspects of onboarding were most lacking, 43% of professionals cited training and role clarity, making it the most commonly identified weakness. This was followed by manager support (29%), while 23% pointed to team integration.

Among middle managers, half (50%) said training and role clarity were lacking during onboarding, while 45% said communication before their start date could have been improved and 39% experienced challenges accessing the tools and systems needed to perform their role effectively.

"Many organizations continue to focus heavily on administrative onboarding tasks instead of seeing it as an opportunity to strengthen communication, development and support", says Andrew.

What good onboarding looks like

To help organizations strengthen onboarding outcomes, Robert Walters has launched its Complete Guide to Onboarding outlining the principles that underpin successful onboarding programs.

Recommendations include:

- Make onboarding human by prioritizing connection, belonging and trust alongside technology and process
- Focus on manager capability by equipping leaders with the tools, training and frameworks needed to support new hires effectively
- Create structured consistency through clearly defined onboarding stages, responsibilities and milestones
- Design for culture immersion by helping employees experience company culture through behaviours and leadership visibility
- Extend onboarding beyond the first week, recognizing that integration and productivity develop over months rather than days

"The organizations seeing the strongest onboarding outcomes recognize that onboarding is not

a one-day induction or a first-week checklist," says Andrew. "It is a structured process that helps employees build relationships, understand expectations and develop confidence over time.

"At a time when many organizations are focused on building future talent pipelines and developing critical skills, onboarding has become a far more strategic business priority than many may realize."

The Robert Walters Complete Guide to Onboarding is available to download here: [A guide to best-in-class onboarding](#)

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About Robert Walters

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