



# THE DIGITAL LEARNING DIVIDE:

Leveraging New Hire Onboarding  
for Accelerated Digital Readiness

# Introduction

Over the past two years, many organisations have become increasingly digital in how they function. Today's rapid digitalisation of business processes has accentuated the increasing requirement for digital tech skills across Industries. Advancements in AI/ML, data analytics, and cloud technology have made the need for digital skills even more pressing.

However, skill gaps prove to be a significant challenge in front of companies. People Matters and Simplilearn's **The Digital Learning Divide: Leveraging New Hire Onboarding for Accelerated Digital Readiness** is a whitepaper that delves into the intricacies of onboarding and how companies can build impactful onboarding programs

Over 79% of companies surveyed as part of the People Matters and Simplilearn report said they experienced a digital skills gap in 2022. This frames the problems that HR leaders across the board face today. With the need for digital talent no longer limited to only tech companies, the talent pool for hiring qualified and skilled professionals has become increasingly difficult.

While upskilling remains a powerful tool, companies increasingly recognise the importance of onboarding to assess skill levels and kick off employees' learning journeys. By leveraging New Hire Onboarding, HR professionals can ensure the right candidate that matches the skill requirements of the company walks through the door. Few, however, manage to get it right.

By looking at the first 90 days of a company, the whitepaper will explore how companies can develop assessments and skill-building in their New Hire Onboarding. It also explores the pivotal role of mentorship and clear learning outcomes in making New Hire Onboarding impactful.

With insights from HR leaders from leading tech companies and supported by a far-reaching survey that unveils significant skilling trends, the whitepaper presents a handy guide for those who want to reimagine their onboarding programs to address skilling needs better.



# LEADER'S INSIGHT

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In a fast-paced world, more and more companies are recognising the importance of the onboarding experience and putting a lot of effort into onboarding processes and orientation of new hires. We at Happiest Minds aim to create a positive experience that promotes a strong association with the organisation and decreases the ramp-up time needed for the new hire to contribute and succeed in their role. The faster the new hires feel welcomed and ready for their jobs, the sooner they can contribute to personal and organisational success. Recognising that new hires lack some skills that would be prerequisites for the jobs and training them to adapt to the job role quickly.



**Impa Tejas**

Head People Practice Operations  
and Shared Service,  
Happiest Minds Technologies

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Onboarding is critical as it acclimates our people to their roles, creating a connection to our purpose and values and building a sense of understanding of our offerings. Additionally, it engages our people cultivating a sense of commitment to the company's success, and aids in the retention of new recruits by making them feel like a part of the team.



**Anjali Sinha**

Vice President People Strategy,  
Publicis Sapient

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For any software company, time to dollar is an important consideration. So the quicker our employees are productive, the better it is for our business. This is more pronounced when it comes to skilling freshers and new hires. Here skill building takes 2-3 quarters. Secondly, we are witnessing a near-constant disruption in the skill sets required due to newer technologies coming into the market. Thirdly, the speed and agility you cater to a highly diverse talent pool become a critical challenge today. Finally, the need to be physically present has gone away. So we need to update the way we approach skilling. It has to be in a global manner today.



**Dharendra Nath**

CHRO,  
SLK Group

# LEADER'S INSIGHT

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We have created multiple avenues for new hires through our structured programs. Leaders can nominate themselves as mentors for others across the organisation. In return, we create an environment and ecosystem where people can come together and learn from each other. A unique way to help create this regular connection in this hybrid world is a mix of weekly O3s (our special 1 to 1 program), and Manager 180 feedback. Our programs allow individuals to mentor and be mentored throughout their early days at Publicis Sapient.



**Anjali Sinha**

Vice President People Strategy,  
Publicis Sapient

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A mentoring program is one of the most powerful tools for organisations orchestrating an ecosystem of productive, engaged, and committed workforce. While mentorship programs enable the employees to sustain their growth needs by connecting with their peers, it is equally important for them to see the leaders actively participate. When the workforce witnesses that the leadership teams are actively participating in the program, they are more likely to follow suit. With such an elaborate onboarding process that involves mentoring and skilling, our employees are given the freedom to focus solely on learning the necessary skills for their profession. This helps our recruits set the right foundation for years ahead in this industry.



**Srikanth Karra**

CHRO,  
Mphasis

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Introduction to mentorship programs at an early stage helps focus on individual career development. Assigning a mentor to guide and focus them on their objectives (professional & personal) will enable them to shape their career better and help the organisation to have better visibility of their strengths, areas of improvement and overall performance. This collaboration also gives new hires a feeling of engagement with the company and leads to a better onboarding experience. At Happiest Minds, we have a strong Mentorship Program driven and monitored over a timeframe.



**Impa Tejas**

Head People Practice  
Operations and Shared Service,  
Happiest Minds Technologies

# LEADER'S INSIGHT

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At Mphasis, we ensure the employee learning journey during onboarding is successful. For this, we ensure a thorough and rigorous screening process. This is supported by a 3 months Delivery Readiness Program that is hands-on intensive with a series of continuous assessments & evaluations. To provide our new hires with a holistic learning journey, we organise leader connect sessions with delivery leaders to sensitise people to the nature of projects that will be working on and set expectations.



**Anjali Sinha**

Vice President People Strategy,  
Publicis Sapient

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People are at the centre of our strategy. One of the key leading metrics is listening formally and informally. For a program to be successful, feedback is key. Our onboarding program has an inbuilt system to continuously and regularly be in touch with new hires and listen to the voice on the ground. We use a variety of questionnaires and feedback mechanisms to ensure that our onboarding programmes are effective. The whole onboarding process is handled internally, collaborating with several teams.



**Srikanth Karra**

CHRO,  
Mphasis

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The goal of onboarding is to prepare new hires to be ready for the role. We start developing new hires by not just onboarding and orienting them, but also assigning different types of learning assignments and spreading it over the first few months of the joining, so that they complete some within the first week, some within the first month and others within the first 90 days. This approach helps learning be effective over the long term and enables each training to build on the previous ones.



**Impa Tejas**

Head People Practice  
Operations and Shared Service,  
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# Conclusion

A rapidly evolving business ecosystem and a hybrid nature of work put pressure on New Hire Onboarding processes to contribute to the company's skill demand. Their role in ensuring that from pre-boarding to the time an employee completes 90 days within the organisation successfully addresses hard and soft skills, making it an essential consideration for HR professionals. Done correctly, onboarding can orient learners to their roles and decrease the lag period it takes for the new hire to contribute to the company's growth. All while ensuring they have a positive experience that enhances their engagement.

The People Matters and Simplilearn The Digital Learning Divide: Leveraging New Hire Onboarding for Accelerated Digital Readiness whitepaper unpacks the growing importance of onboarding and explores practical insights from leaders who are innovating and finding new ways to address their digital talent concerns.

Companies leveraging the latent potential of New Hire Onboarding programs to address the digital skills gap stand to benefit the most. Companies can create impactful learning journeys, build mentorship programs into the mix, and leverage pre-boarding to kickstart the upskilling.

The faster a new hire learns about the organisation and their role, the more they will be able to accomplish in the critical first months. Effective onboarding also dramatically reduces failure rates and increases employee engagement and retention. But a lot depends on how companies bring their learning priorities closer to their onboarding process and ensure new hires pick new skills while remaining engaged.



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