



Understanding ‘new starters’ at the NSPCC



About the NSPCC:

With around 2,500 staff, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is the UK’s leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. It has been directly involved in protecting children and campaigning on their behalf since 1884.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Children’s charity the NSPCC is using an online questionnaire to better understand the views and expectations of new starters and to measure the effectiveness of its recruitment and induction processes.

Designed and hosted by TalentDrain, the questionnaire highlights the engagement levels of new starters and it reveals what they like about the organisation and any factors that might prompt them to leave. As well as providing useful feedback - including the need to manage the expectations of job candidates - the resultant data is helping the NSPCC to create the bedrock of a positive relationship with its new employees.

Considering the time and effort that organisations spend on recruiting the right people, it is surprising how many miss the opportunity to begin the process of employee engagement as soon as their ‘new starters’ actually join. The NSPCC is one organisation which appreciates the value of creating and maintaining a good impression.

“For us, employee retention is always an issue,” said Liz Booth, HR Director at the NSPCC. “We have a big brand but we’re a relatively small organisation. Good people will always be hard to get, particularly if you need specialists in their field like social workers, so it’s mission critical for us to retain and nurture our staff from day one. That means understanding their views and expectations so we can respond accordingly.”

To help achieve this aim, the NSPCC has introduced an online questionnaire from TalentDrain, called OnBoarder, which measures the effectiveness of its recruitment and induction processes, and identifies the drivers that affect whether new starters will stay or leave.

“We’ve had a long and happy relationship with TalentDrain so for any issues around employee engagement, we naturally go to them,” said Liz Booth.



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OnBoarder collects feedback from new starters on their satisfaction with each stage of the recruitment process, including aspects such as the information they received, the application form and their interviews as well as their induction process. It also assesses people’s early experiences of working in the organisation and it creates an ‘engagement profile’, showing percentage figures for those who want to progress their career, those ‘at risk’ who are undecided about whether to stay and those who are already planning to leave.

Using the resource

The NSPCC provides a list of salaried employees who join the organisation and TalentDrain emails these individuals, asking them to complete the 15-minute OnBoarder questionnaire online. TalentDrain provides a detailed analysis report on the results, containing hints and tips for improvement.

The NSPCC’s first survey - of 97 new starters - showed that 65 per cent were looking to progress their career with the organisation.

Paul Cross, Information Bureau Manager at the NSPCC, said: *“OnBoarder shows that the vast majority of our new starters are happy here and there’s a marked link between their own personal values and those of the organisation. However we found that a fairly significant percentage were classed as ‘at risk’, because they were undecided*

about their future career here, and this was clearly a concern. A consistent theme behind this dissatisfaction is a perception that there’s a lack of potential for progression in the organisation. This has raised a number of issues for us, such as whether we’re overselling jobs during the interview process.”

Liz Booth says this issue of managing the expectations of new employees is very important.

“Some people have a preconceived view of what working at the NSPCC will be like and sometimes that view is rose-tinted,” she said. “We’re trying to meet the expectations of new starters but where we can’t, we’re now trying to lower people’s expectations at the outset, so we’re not overselling. Part of our job is to give people a realistic view of what it’s like to work here.”

Recruitment and induction

The NSPCC has recently introduced an online recruitment process. This - and the society’s induction process - received positive feedback.

“With recruitment, there was a small issue about communication going cold once the job contract had been sent out,” said Paul Cross. “Once we’ve created a good impression with people, we have to ensure



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we don't lose it. We're now keeping in contact with candidates, once they've been selected, to let them know the status of our reference and safeguarding checks. The day-to-day aspects of inductions were fine but the questionnaire highlighted one or two things that we take for granted in-house that we need to emphasise more in our induction process, such as our pension plan and our child protection awareness programmes."

Data presentation

Liz Booth likes the structure and presentation of TalentDrain's OnBoarder report.

"The report is easy to read and it has tips and areas for further investigation," she said. "Most people, including our Trustees, just want a summary of how we're getting on, what we're good at and what we need to improve. The report gives this - as well as all of the detail - and it presents the data in such a way that you're much more likely to do something about it."

She also trusts the validity of the data.

"The fact that the data is collected anonymously - and by a third party - gives you extra confidence that it is an accurate reflection of what people really feel," she said. "A very high number of people complete the questionnaire, which shows it is easy and engaging to use. You could

have a wonderful survey but if people don't want to complete it, it's not going to tell you anything."

The NSPCC plans to re-run the OnBoarder questionnaire every six months.

"We're no different to a commercial organisation in that we have to run as efficiently as possible," said Liz Booth. "Retaining staff - and creating a lasting impression with new starters - makes good business sense, as constantly undertaking recruitment and inductions is expensive. Our mission is to end cruelty to children and every month around 800,000 ordinary people give us money to do that. We have an absolute duty to keep our costs low and to spend as much as possible of that money on front line activity."

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