

Executive On-boarding

What is On-boarding?

On-boarding is the process of successfully and quickly integrating an executive into a new role.

High failure rates for newly appointed executives

A recent survey showed 40% of newly appointed executives in the US fail within 12/18 months. Another found the current average life expectancy of CEOs in the UK to be just three years and three months.

Discomforting statistics for high flyers, and expensive ones for employers. Senior recruitment, frequently repeated, costs serious money. But the consequences to the organisation of ineffective personal performance at senior level are significantly more costly.

Why so bad?

What are the reasons for these failures? Unrealistic expectations? Simple lack of ability? Lack of support?

In Pitkeathley's view, the root cause can often be traced to poor, or too slow, integration into the new role. In other words, getting to know the turf: establishing landmarks, absorbing the new culture, identifying key people, getting to know the team, understanding expectations.

Pitkeathley believes On-boarding is an essential discipline in its own right, often taken for granted. But it should not be. The complexity of modern executive roles, and the often huge leap from a previous position as a result of delayering within the organisation, create dangerously steep and long learning curves which pose real threats to the success of any new role.

Need to stand back

It is easy to be pulled in every direction at once by the demands of a new role. But, at such a time, it is even more essential than ever to be able to stand back and take an objective view.

How can coaching help?

Coaching – the support and guidance of an experienced third party – can be particularly valuable during the On-boarding process.

Good coaches understand the special demands of those first few months, where time is precious but where, paradoxically, it can so often be spent unproductively. They can help bring a clarity, a perspective, to the process which can make a critical difference to success.

In this paper, Bill Pitkeathley reviews On-boarding and the priceless support coaching can bring to the process. He also includes a number of specific tips on how individuals and organisations can deal with this crucial, and often most testing, period.