26 ORIENTATION IDEAS

TO SET NEW HIRES UP FOR SUCCESS



DEDICATING TIME TO ONBOARDING NEW HIRES IS CRUCIAL to helping them settle into their new positions at your organization. A thoughtful orientation process can make the onboarding experience much more educational and enjoyable for both management and new employees alike, which can also boost your new employee's confidence in their role. Below are 26 ideas to consider including in your orientation process to effectively onboard new employees and foster a welcoming environment that sets them up for success. Going the extra mile to show new hires you care will make them feel comfortable and welcome from day one.

1. Get to know the area

Whether or not your employees live in the surrounding area, there's a good chance they don't know where the best Taco Tuesday deal is, that there's a farmer's market nearby on Thursdays, or that there's an affordable dry cleaners less than a block away. Make them feel part of the neighborhood faster by sharing the discoveries that employees who have been there for years have uncovered. Some examples include:

Where to eat: casual/affordable options, formal options, common team meeting and happy hour locations, etc.

Where to walk: parks, walking paths, hikes, gyms, tennis, batting cages -- any nearby places where employees can exercise or destress.

Where to run errands: local dry cleaners, drugstores, grocery stores, malls, etc. can establish familiarity with the area and help with errands they may need to run.

2. Job duties

Too often, new hires don't save the job description they saw in the initial job posting. By the time a new hire starts their first day on the job, it's likely been weeks or several months since the hiring process began. Refresh their memory by making the job description and responsibilities available for review during their first week in the role.



3. Goals of the department

New hires need to understand their place in the organization. The more context you can provide them with early on, the better. Start by establishing the goals of the department, which can help them understand how their position fits into the bigger picture. Gaining an understanding of how their day-to-day responsibilities fulfill the department's objectives can help new hires feel both motivated and valued during orientation.

***Bonus:** The first few weeks are an ideal time to schedule meetings or arrange email introductions between new hires and key contacts in their department or related departments. By familiarizing new hires with future collaborators, they can establish important relationships early on.*

4. Goals of the position

Defining the goals of the position allows new hires to have a clear understanding of what they're working towards, which can provide them with a greater sense of purpose in their daily tasks. It can also be helpful for managers to create timelines that are shared with the new hire, track progress, and ensure that they are meeting deadlines, growing in their position, and making a positive impact on the team as a whole.

5. Get to know leadership

Oftentimes, new hires aren't in direct contact with leadership, and many don't have the opportunity to get to know members of leadership personally. Providing a bio, picture, and/or a video introduction from each member of the leadership team can add a human element to personalize the orientation experience. It can also create a more perceived flat organizational structure that affords employees the opportunity to feel they can have face time with important stakeholders within the organization.

6. Get to know the departments

Getting to know the various departments that make up an organization can help new hires develop a sense of how each team operates together, as well as provide them with information they may need about other departments for future collaboration. This is especially beneficial when it comes to departments outside of their own with which an employee will frequently work. Something as simple as including pictures of each department and a summary of what they do can be extremely helpful for new hires to reference as they soak up information during their first few days and weeks on the job.

7. Building map

Many people tend to feel lost and overwhelmed when they begin a new job. It may take a couple of months to truly feel at home. Equipping new hires with a building map that includes where meeting rooms, bathrooms, exits, elevators, kitchens, common areas, etc. are located will make the transition period smoother as they adjust to working in a new location.

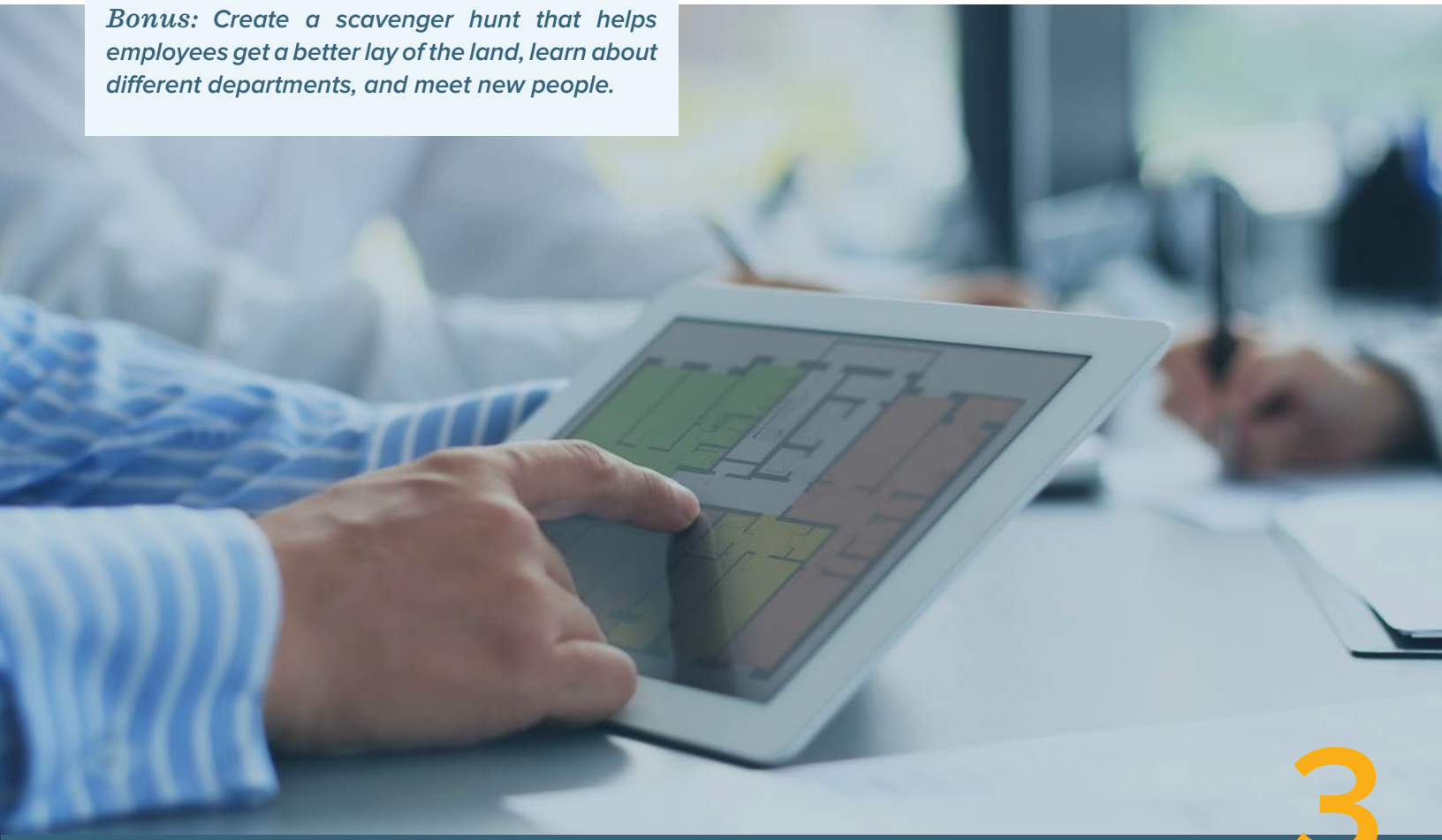
Bonus: Create a scavenger hunt that helps employees get a better lay of the land, learn about different departments, and meet new people.

8. Phone and email directory

Getting to know where to reach or locate colleagues, management, and important contacts from other departments can be a challenge when getting settled into a new role. During their first few weeks, new hires will be inundated with plenty of introductions and new names to learn, and it may be difficult to remember all of them right away. Adding a phone and email directory for new hires to reference can save time and allow them to access contact information when they need it.

9. Department portals

Developing a strong employer brand helps define the style, culture, and atmosphere of an organization. The same goes for individual departments, which frequently have a vibe of their own that separates them from their peers in other departments. Empowering leaders to create their own department portals or resource pages for their teams can highlight key departmental knowledge and upcoming meetings or events for new employees to keep track of.



10. Make the organizational chart available

Making the organizational chart available to new employees can give them a better understanding of where they fit into the overall workplace ecosystem, and where they may aspire to go from here. Knowing who reports to who and who leads each department can serve as inspiration for their own career paths. It can also provide cues to the politics of an organization, which even if nuanced are usually present.

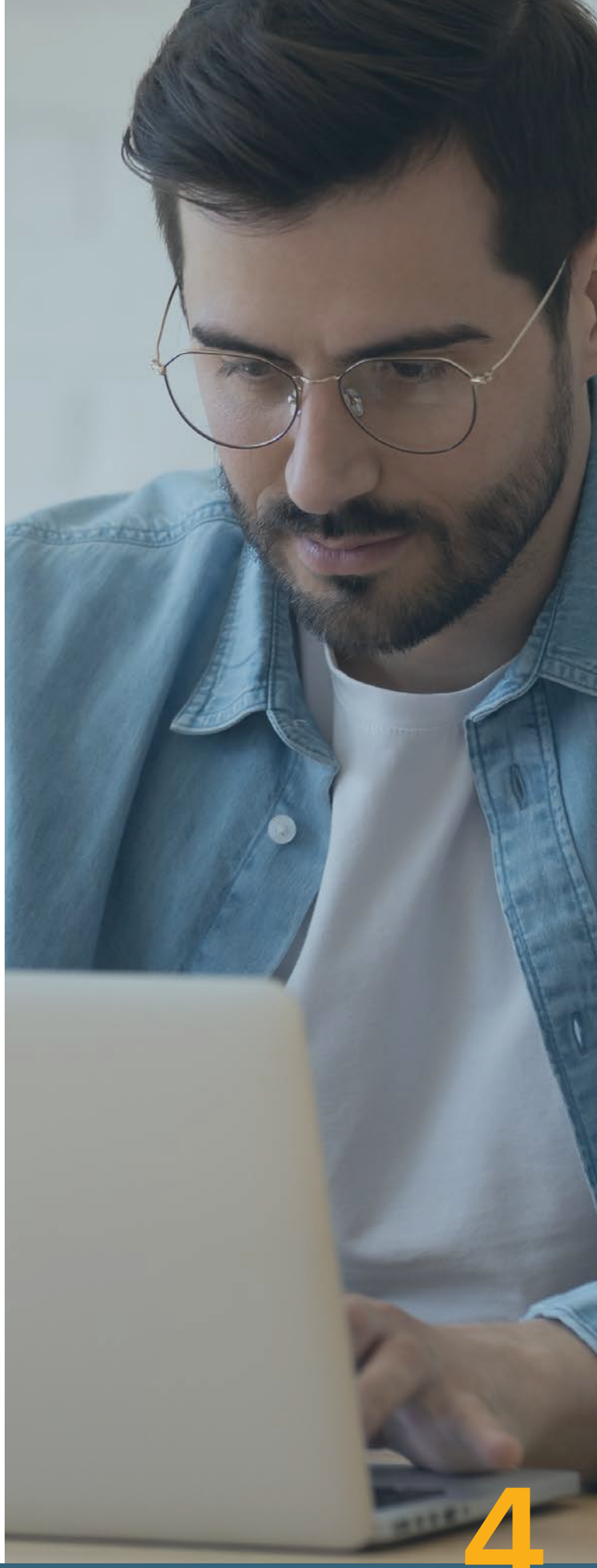
11. Have an executive or the leader of your organization record a welcome message

Oftentimes, starting a new position at a new organization can involve many moving parts, which can be stressful at first. Having a warm welcome message (customized to the employee) from the executive or leader of the organization on the first day or week that they begin can be a reassuring personal touch that helps new hires feel more at ease. It also establishes that more senior members of the organization are concerned with and available to new hires, which engenders trust and a sense of belonging for new employees.

12. Information about your local government

It helps for new hires at government agencies to be well versed in how local government operates, in addition to knowing which key leaders they will need to familiarize themselves with at the organization. Providing descriptions or documents of these procedures can be vital in getting new hires up to speed with your local government's processes. It may also be beneficial to include the information of community leaders and elected officials within the larger government operations, especially if they have influence or direct contact with the agency.

Bonus: Create a quiz to test their knowledge of your local government and see how much they've learned after their first few weeks on the job.





13. Helpful videos

Helpful videos that go beyond just the duties of the role can allow new hires to build the confidence they need to succeed. For instance, while they might not know all of the ins and outs of daily operations at first, knowing which soft skills are important to the organization (such as emotional intelligence, honesty, integrity, etc.) can help them better understand the workplace culture and which skills they should focus on fine tuning in order to thrive in their role.

14. Go beyond your mission statement

Many public sector employees are drawn to working in the field because they're committed to serving their community and making a difference. By going beyond the overall mission statement to explain how each department and position contributes to the organization's values, new hires can rest assured that your organization is putting its values into action -- and the possibility of doing their part can be the motivation they need to feel empowered in their new position.

15. Values of the organization

The values of your organization shape your workplace culture and overall organization -- defining workplace values on day one can be an excellent opportunity to highlight what makes your organization stand out as a great place to work.

16. Add a mentorship system

Developing a mentorship system can create an immediate connection between new hires and their colleagues. Someone who looks out for a new hire in their first few weeks on the job can help them build confidence and encourage them to ask questions as they learn the ropes of their new role.

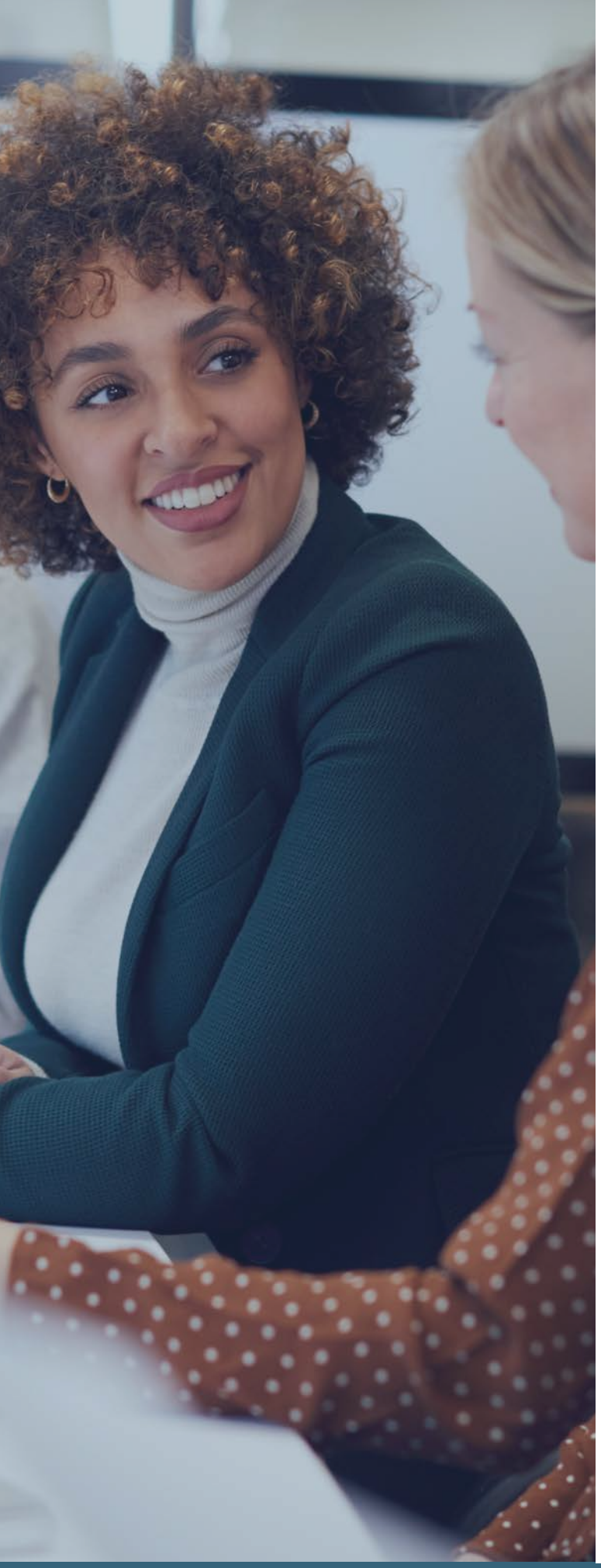
Bonus: Establish quick ways for new hires to get in touch with mentors (via chat, text, call, email, etc.) to ensure that new hires receive the support they need in a timely manner.

17. Holiday and half-day calendar

Providing a calendar for all organization-wide holidays and half-days can be a helpful reference for new hires who may have questions about which days they can expect to have off, versus which ones they may need to plan in advance for if they would like to request time off.

18. Process for requesting time off

Requesting and taking time off can look different between organizations and departments within each organization, which makes establishing time off request processes from the beginning an important step to alleviate any confusion new employees might have.



19. Pay dates

Making sure new hires are familiar with your organization's pay schedule, terms of payment, when they should be receiving their first paycheck, etc. can minimize confusion and ensure that they thoroughly understand the process.

20. Create an FAQ

There's no doubt that new hires will have plenty of questions as they get familiar with their new role at your organization. Creating an FAQ that includes where to get/request office supplies, who to contact for IT help, answer account access questions, etc. can limit frustration for both new hires and their teams.

Bonus: Get together with your team or other colleagues and think of the questions you had on your first day; collecting these queries and their respective answers is a great way to anticipate and provide solutions to your new hire's questions.

21. Promote referrals to open positions in the organization

Promoting referrals to open positions within the organization can signal to employees that their employer is open to their input when it comes to hiring, and encouraging new hires to get involved can make them feel included in your workplace's community. Plus, given that internal referrals often lead to increased employee retention, reduced time to hire, and a more engaged workforce, it's a win-win situation for everyone.

22. Commitment to diversity

Aside from hiring diverse employees, including photos of people from different backgrounds on your organization's website and/or internal communications can show that your organization honors its commitment to diversity by representing people from diverse backgrounds. This can help foster a more inclusive environment for underrepresented new hires, add to your organization's overall mission statement, and strengthen your DEI commitments.

23. Employee spotlights

Employee spotlights demonstrate that your organization cares about new employees and wants to shine a light on them, which shows new hires that they're recognized and welcome. Additionally, employee spotlights can also be used to highlight the accomplishments of employees as they grow in their roles and reach new milestones. From spotlighting new employees in your departmental meetings, highlighting their accomplishments in organizational newsletters, giving them shout outs at all hands meetings, etc., there are plenty of ways to uplift your new hires and showcase their accomplishments.

24. List employee events and clubs

Any groups or committees that employees have created within the organization, such as potlucks, book clubs, happy hours, etc. will be helpful to include for new hires. Not only does it give them a better idea of your workplace culture, but it also promotes a greater sense of community within the workplace.

Bonus: Encourage new hires to inquire about joining clubs they're interested in or get in touch with club leaders to gain more insight about how they operate.

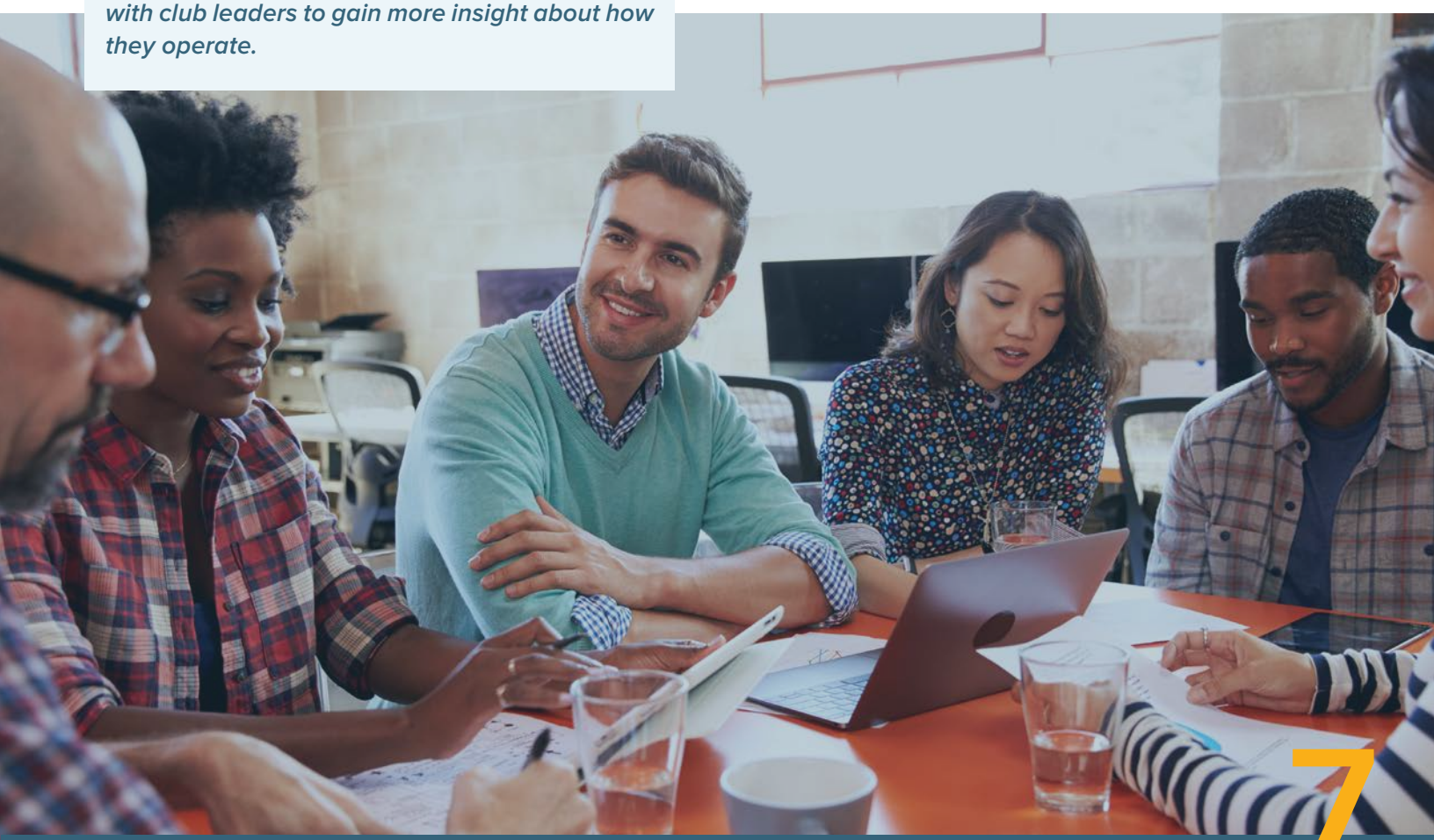
25. Include social channels and ask employees to join them

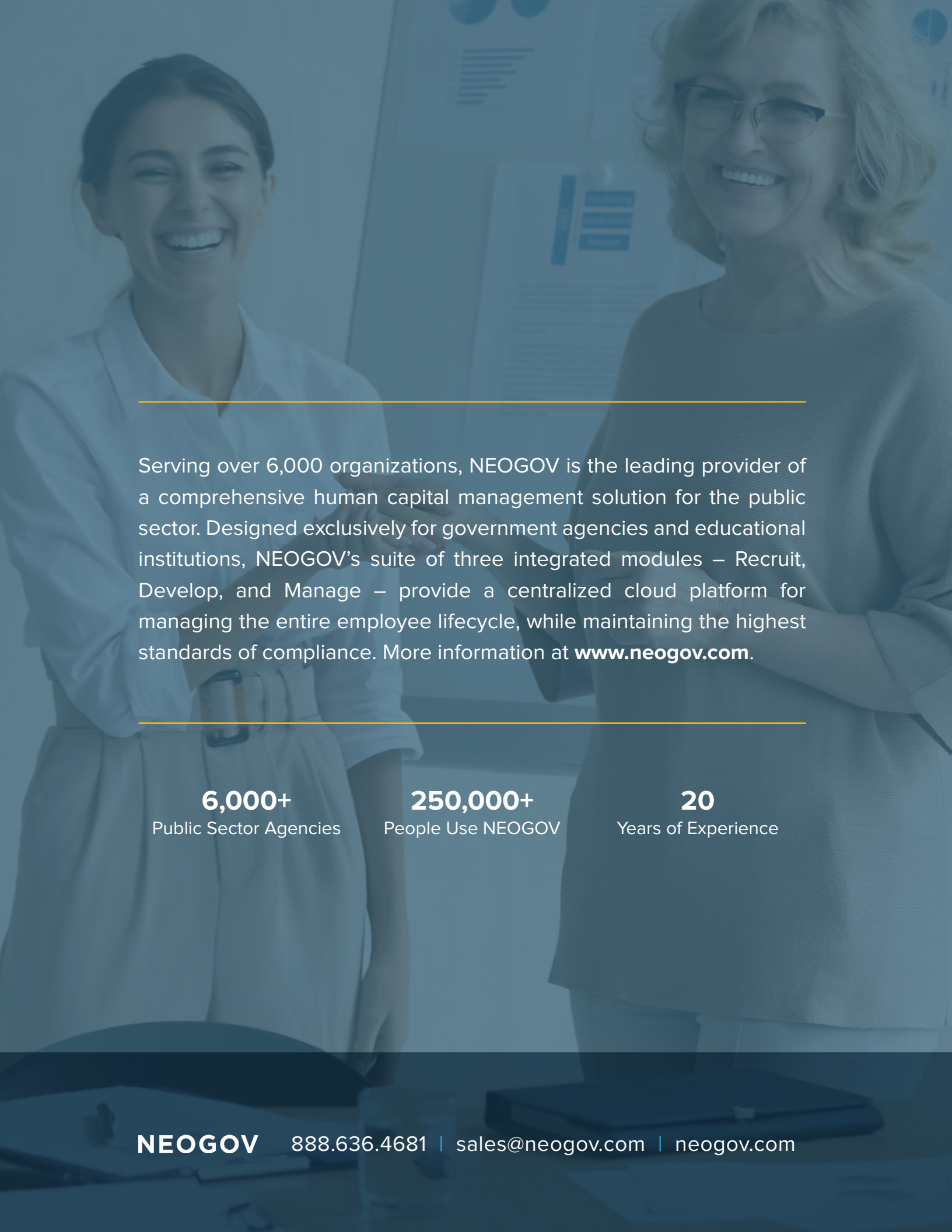
Social channels can provide employees with the latest company updates, relevant news, exciting developments, and more, which will help new hires stay up to date and get more involved as they adjust to their new workplace.

26. Personalize the welcome message

Personalization can go a long way throughout the orientation process -- making the onboarding experience more engaging and welcoming allows new hires to develop the knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in their new role.

While it doesn't happen overnight, the right tools and resources can help your organization simplify and speed up the process. Using an online orientation and onboarding management system such as NEOGOV's Onboard solution can help you welcome, manage, and train new hires throughout the entirety of the onboarding process.





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