Insights

How to Ace Onboarding New Team Members to a QI Project

Welcoming new team members is an exciting part of team turnover. While it can be stressful to lose someone with great insight and historical knowledge, a fresh face could help spark some new ideas or momentum in a quality improvement (QI) initiative.

The key to ensuring that recent additions to the team become strong contributors is to have an effective onboarding process. Everyone has their own learning method, but having a standard procedure to start acclimating people will help them flourish in the long run.

Make these steps part of onboarding to ensure that new team members can thrive.

1. **Share the project scope early –** It's hard to support an initiative without knowing it's background. Compile all the high-level information, including aims, goals and measures, and share it in an easy to read format like a slideshow so team members can learn why this initiative is underway and where it's intended to go.
2. **Connect with stakeholders –** Chemistry and working relationships affect how groups mesh and operate on an everyday basis. Encourage stakeholders and key team members to introduce themselves early on so new additions can learn who's who and everyone's responsibilities to better understand how they'll collaborate.
3. **Review past milestones –** Earlier components from the project can shed light on current strategies and plans for the future. Share data on how work has progressed, show past Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles and current tests of change.
4. **Explain the rules –** Lay out the general rules to act as clear guidelines for proper behavior in the early going. Beyond the organization's actual rules, also share the specific approaches and processes used by the smaller team.
5. **Teach the vernacular –** Unless someone is returning to a team or organization, they might not be familiar with all the lingo that experienced contributors use. Instead of hoping context clues define jargon, explain what key phrases mean so they can become secondhand sooner rather than later.
6. **Track progress and check in –** Monitor the team member as they get their feet under them and determine whether they're on a healthy pace for the position. Remember to touch base frequently to answer questions and see if there are any concerns that should be addressed before they start to become long-term challenges.

Remember to be flexible and adaptable throughout the onboarding process. A system is a great place to start, but learning each new team member's personality, learning method and work style will help tailor the approach so they can start making an impact on your QI work.