

Organized Onboarding: Using the Canvas Learning Management System to Streamline the University of Colorado Cancer Center Onboarding Experience

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1. Background

Organizations that commit to improving their current onboarding and offer an efficient onboarding process have a direct impact on new employees' experiences. Some benefits of an onboarding process include providing direction to new employees to know their roles in the company, and introducing the company's mission, vision, values, and opportunities. Effective onboarding engages employees from the beginning and increases productivity (Bell, 2021).

Over half of onboarding survey responses (57 percent) from staff included criticisms about the onboarding experience. Staff asked for an easy-to-follow process where training is prioritized in the order required. An opportunity was identified for a centric, user-friendly platform to provide deeper instructions on what needed to be accomplished and how.

2. Goals

The main objective was to centralize onboarding in one location that provided clear instructions, easy progress tracking and reduce the time it took to complete onboarding. Another major goal was to improve communication and on-going support with new staff members by utilizing a Learning Management System (LMS) to create an asynchronous onboarding experience.

3. Solutions and Methods

Many staff members used Canvas (LMS) throughout their education, which is available to university members at no additional cost making it an appealing option. The courses in Canvas were developed to include detailed instructions, sequential modules, and role specific training guides. Canvas simplified the onboarding process for end users and is accessible to all in-person and remote staff.

A pilot group was introduced in July 2023, and feedback was collected. Once the pilot group demonstrated a favorable outcome, incoming staff were enrolled to the course on their first day of employment.

4. Outcomes

Since implementation of Canvas, completion times have decreased 34.5 percent (23.8 days; n=32) on average, and staff have expressed the ease at which they can follow the training requirements. The metrics used to identify success were qualitative, onboarding survey responses, and quantitative, reduction in time to complete onboarding requirements.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Throughout the process, a need was identified to demonstrate navigation through the course and offer opportunity for questions. As a continuous improvement measure, an overview of Canvas is given during the first day orientation for this purpose. Additionally, a homepage was developed in Canvas to provide a broad overview of the course and clarify how to navigate.

Category: Training, Career Development, and Staff Retention – Completed project

As we move into the future, we will use the data collected from Canvas to identify the points of onboarding that delay staff members in completing the requirements. We will also expand our progress to include a course specific to Investigators. Our efforts will be leveraged by the Anschutz Research Workforce Development Initiative to expand across all university clinical research.

Reference

Bell, T. (2021, July 27). Onboarding: Improving Employer and Employee Relations Onboarding: Improving Employer and Employee Relations. *Certified Public Manager® Applied Research*, 2(1), 1-8.