

Background

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, **high rates of staff turnover continue**. Feelings of **not being valued** and **not belonging** are **top reasons** employees choose to **leave** an employer.

A **structured, organized onboarding program** can help ameliorate those feelings and **build employee engagement**.

From 2018-2021, the **Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center (SKCC) Clinical Trials Office (CTO)** had no dedicated staff to onboard new employees. Those years coincided with our turnover rate doubling. **Experienced engaged staff are indispensable to our CTO's success**.

Goals

To create a **structured** and **consistent** training and **onboarding** experience for newly hired SKCC-CTO staff.



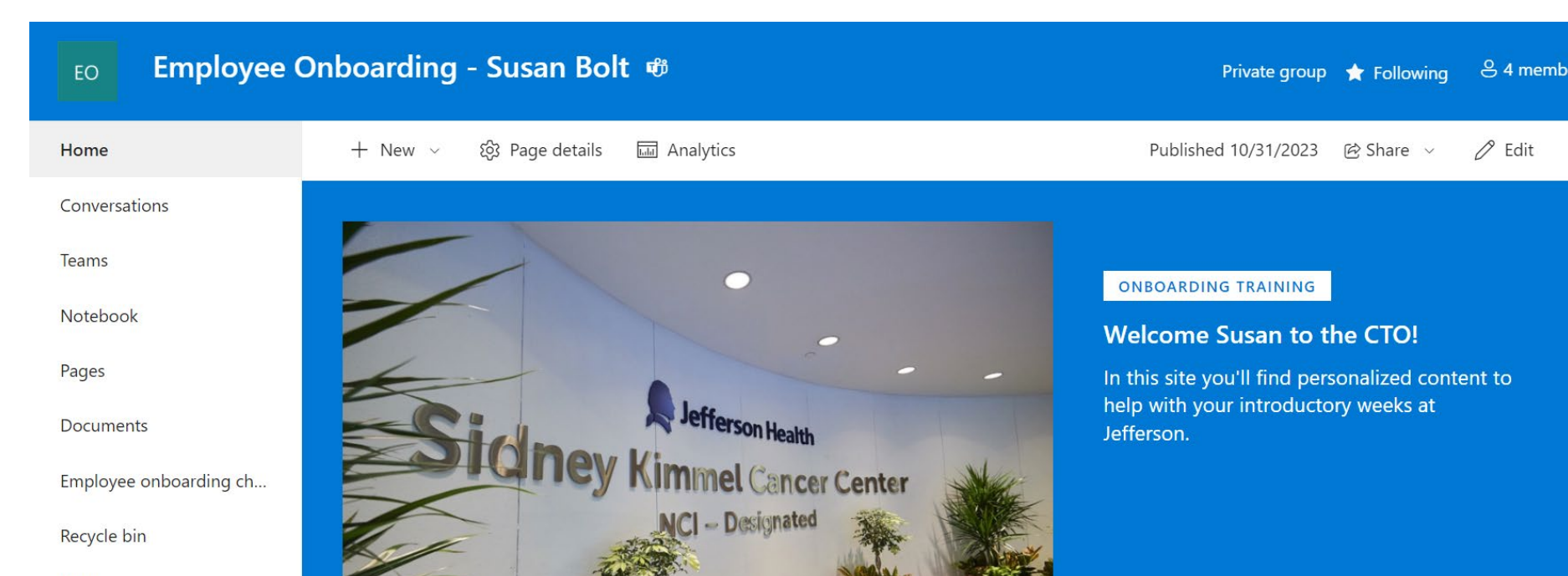
Solutions and Methods

A dedicated **Clinical Research Educator (CRE)** was hired in June 2021. The new CRE interviewed employees, including directors, managers, and clinical staff, about their onboarding experiences and training needs.

Greater structure and having a **“go-to” person** to contact for help were **chief concerns**. This feedback informed the new onboarding program.

Outcomes

- Upon offer acceptance, the **CRE** meets with the **hiring manager** to discuss onboarding plans and tailor the education strategy.
- **Constant communication** between the **CRE, manager, administrative coordinator** (for equipment and system access needs), and even **directors** bolsters an efficient and productive entry.
- Prior to starting, **new employees** receive a **welcome email** from the **CRE** with **instructions** for their first day.
- Much of a new employee's **first week** is spent **with the CRE**, who provides essential information and spends time getting to know them as a person. This helps **new employees feel welcomed** and **valued** and allows their **managers** to focus on **higher-level content**.
- Paper **training materials**, formerly presented in an unwieldy and expensive 4-inch binder, were converted to **digital content**. The new system involves **cloud-based digital storage**, allowing these materials to be accessed anywhere.



Administrative Onboarding Checklist

Task	Timeline	Completed
HM to notify CRE and AA of new employee's:	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment Type (Direct or contractor [if contractor specify which agency])	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
State date	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
HM confirms campus key has been generated and notifies AA and CRE	ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRE to create New Employee Onboarding employee SharePoint page	2 weeks before	<input type="checkbox"/>
HM meets with CRE to discuss onboarding plan of new employee	2 week before	<input type="checkbox"/>
HM requests the following equipment from AA for new employee	2 weeks before	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcomes (cont.)

- **Interactive digital checklists** were created to ensure nothing is overlooked and to provide new employees with a sense of **structure, organization, and empowerment** as they track their own onboarding.
- **Detailed orientation schedules** are created and shared with new employees, their managers, and selected others, detailing their first weeks.
- The schedule and checklist are stored on a **personalized private onboarding webpage** so that everyone works from common documents.

“I feel like your roles really made a difference.”

-recent new-hire to CRE at the end of their first week

“Both [new contract employees] have had raving reviews on their onboarding experience, the team's warm welcome, and are really happy to be on the team.”

-recruiting manager for contract agency in email to CRE

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

New employees appreciate the **structure** and **ease** of accessing their onboarding content. A second educator was hired recently to **expand** the current onboarding program, provide more **individualized attention**, and create **new materials** and **continuing education**. We continue to improve our onboarding checklists, **clarifying expectations** for the whole team in the onboarding process.

In **collaboration** with our **CTO Engagement Committee**, an onboarding **satisfaction survey** is being developed that will be administered at designated time points to ensure new employees' needs are being met.

Aware of potential information overload during onboarding, we have begun inviting current employees to attend **refresher sessions** and **monthly continuing education**. We hope to expand the range of topics, work with employees **longer** and **more closely**, and **collaborate** with other staff to create a more **comprehensive** experience.