iCIMS' 90-Day Onboarding Helps New Hires Feel Less Overwhelmed

iCIMS

Best New-Hire Onboarding Program

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Company Background

Year Founded	2000
Revenue	$150 million-plus
Employees	iCIMS employs approximately 700 individuals across the organization.
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	iCIMS supports the recruitment initiatives of more than 1.8 million users around the world. iCIMS supports 3 million job posts, 61 million applications and 238 million candidate profiles globally each year. The majority of iCIMS' clients purchase the software in the United States, but many of iCIMS' customers utilize the product globally. As a result, iCIMS customers are using iCIMS in more than 70 countries. iCIMS maintains offices in the United States, as well as the United Kingdom.
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	iCIMS is a leading provider of cloud-based recruiting software for businesses of every size. iCIMS' talent acquisition platform enables organizations to manage their entire hiring lifecycle within a single platform. iCIMS supports 3,500-plus customers worldwide. iCIMS' client base is highly diversified and no client accounts for more than 2% of recurring revenue.
Industry	Software
Stock Symbol	N/A
Website	http://www.icims.com

Budget and Timeframe

Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	iCIMS utilizes numerous groups throughout the company to implement their onboarding program. Interdepartmental teams are used to support software, hardware, building and parking access, space planning, scheduling and executing curriculum. In addition, iCIMS' internal distribution list, when alerting the company of a new hire, consists of approximately 50 recipients. This number only reflects the employees directly operating iCIMS' onboard portal. These individual contributors and teams work together to ensure a seamless new hire experience.
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	Various employees across departments provide operational and technical support, curriculum design and subject matter expert input. This includes infrastructure shared services, talent development, compensation and benefits, talent management, talent acquisition, CEO and executive team, product marketing, product management teams and partner development teams.
Timeframe to implement	The passport program officially launched in May 2016 and continues to improve with curriculum additions. The entire redesign, including branding, took one year to complete.
Start date of the program	May 2016

Business Conditions and Business Needs

The accelerated growth of iCIMS' organization (in both customer base and headcount) directly influenced the recent expansion of the company's talent development training department. Four years ago, iCIMS' training team was a department of only one person. But with the company growing so rapidly, iCIMS was compelled to increase its expectations for professional development and enhance how its employees receive their training. Senior leadership, aligned with iCIMS' cultural commitment to company values, invested heavily in the training department, growing the department from one trainer to nine.

iCIMS' new-hire onboarding program has vastly improved due to this investment. iCIMS has methodically adjusted the company's onboard program since October 2014, aligning all content to iCIMS' execution framework in May 2015. This was done primarily in response to survey results and informal feedback from employees, who said they were impressed with the onboard program itself but felt the company was sharing too much information too fast.

As a result, the talent development department launched a 90-day company-wide assimilation initiative to avoid the "fire hose" analogy of overwhelming new hires. iCIMS' revamped program is complete with a passport system, which includes various learning checkpoints with several teams and stakeholders in the business. Knowing that the first 90 days of employment are the most integral to a new hire's success, iCIMS limits information by breaking its onboarding down into digestible sessions (i.e., what is key for the first week versus what can be offered at the 30- or 60-day mark to help refresh and retain information). All sessions are ultimately geared to allow new hires to better understand the company's strategy, get a good sense of the company culture (through iCIMS' required core competency courses), feel less overwhelmed and have more fun during their first 90 days as they ramp up functionally.

At the 90-day mark for new hires, talent development and human resources business partners hold a working session with each new hire class to celebrate the completion of the program, while exploring areas of triumph and opportunity from a development perspective. New hires are surveyed and encouraged to share feedback of their onboarding. Through this session, iCIMS is able to not only grasp assimilation but also set expectations on how new hires will progress past their "new hire" phase.

Overview

At iCIMS, the company's talent development department uses iCIMS' in-house product, iCIMS Onboard, to onboard all new hires into the organization. The onboarding tool is the first step in an employee's touchpoint experience at iCIMS. iCIMS Onboard seamlessly moves a candidate from the recruiting process into onboarding by utilizing task management and form management. iCIMS is able to engage with the new hire and create enthusiasm through a branded "Welcome" email which lets them know that their talent development specialist (or onboarding specialist) will be in touch with relevant information and details shortly. This portal also allows for them to take demos of iCIMS' products, learn more about the area surrounding the company's office and watch interviews with iCIMS' CEO.

iCIMS' new-hire program has been branded as a passport curriculum aligned to the company's execution framework. Each section or course iCIMS offers is categorized as one of these five offerings: "Strategy," "People," "Process," "Systems" or "Metrics." Each session is considered a checkpoint on their passport. Talent development leverages gamification for new hires through participation in the "Passport Challenge." As new hires attend trainings, they can have their passport stamped. The goal is to be fully assimilated to the company and culture at iCIMS and stamp all the checkpoints on their passport guide. The company also provides autonomy by allowing new employees to choose the core competency courses they would like to take, which allows for class collaboration outside of just the "new hire" pool.

iCIMS Onboard provides new employees with the ability to "hit the ground running" on day one with early exposure to important documentation and the opportunity to complete paperwork online. Once a hire is made, the company uses iCIMS Onboard to automate all the tasks and forms required to seamlessly transition a candidate into the business — creating a great experience for the new hire, ensuring organizational alignment and supporting more successful outcomes. With Onboard, iCIMS' new hires experience enhanced HR productivity by eliminating reliance on paper forms and providing iCIMS' HR personnel with a direct view into tasks that require completion, bridging the gap between departments involved in the onboarding process.

An important feature of iCIMS' tool is the New Hire Onboarding Portal — where new hires have access to all their assigned tasks and forms. In addition to supporting task management, the portal includes important procedural and benefit information and helps iCIMS acclimate new hires to iCIMS' corporate culture through video blogs and presentations. By providing a window into corporate culture, iCIMS can assure that new hires feel they are immediately part of the organization. These Onboard features benefit new hires in terms of productivity, retention and engagement at iCIMS.

Overall, iCIMS' goal in creating an easy-to-use and easy-to-digest Onboard program was to avoid providing too much information too soon by streamlining what is given to new hires at any time. With the addition of new trainers to the TD team, this has been a harmonious relationship that helps new hires not only meet their expectations for company-wide training, but also to sharpen or gain the skills for their new role.

Design and Delivery

To redesign and improve iCIMS' new-hire onboarding program, iCIMS reviewed current content by creating a storyboard of the company's existing offerings and then aligned them to iCIMS' execution framework. The second stage was to determine what information was necessary to provide to new hires within their first week, first 30 days, first 60 days and then by their 90th day. This was based on formal and candid feedback from new hires, hiring managers and executives.

While redesigning the onboarding program, iCIMS sought to provide autonomy with the company-wide class offerings. One of the goals of a strategic enterprise organization is to consistently display common characteristics that drive results. As such, iCIMS identified seven core competencies that iCIMS employees strive to embody. These core competencies are what differentiates iCIMS from competitors and is at the heart of iCIMS' employment brand. Consequently, iCIMS' talent development team has developed training on each of the core competencies.

All employees are exposed to these training opportunities during their first 90 days at the company and are encouraged to continue their training on an ongoing basis throughout the employee's tenure. During the first 90 days, new hires are put on a "special track" dedicated to new hires. New hires are required to take two core competency courses within their first 90 days, but the new hire has their choice of which ones to take. (New hires can take more than two courses within their first 90 days, if desired.) Additionally, iCIMS' talent development department engages stakeholders to develop and enhance training programs and initiatives. iCIMS' C-Suite has acknowledged that these competency-based trainings enhance employee engagement and align both new hires and tenured employees to the company's mission.

The next step in redesigning the iCIMS Onboard program was creating new content. This included bringing in various departments and groups to engage with new hires and share their department strategy, as well as leveraging content design delivered by the customer training services team. Through this evaluation and restructuring, iCIMS has found that holding introductory sessions with other departments after day 30 proves to be less overwhelming for new hires while still allowing them to make connections throughout the organization.

In addition to in-person training sessions and meetings, iCIMS' talent development department also started to introduce a blended learning approach by creating more

eLearning courses and resources. The company is dedicated to utilizing multimedia learning platforms to leverage best practices. To accomplish this goal, iCIMS utilizes numerous social learning opportunities, including an intranet site called the iWatercooler where trainers can communicate the strategy and programming of the talent development department. The social platform is a great way for employees in talent development to highlight programs that are offered through iCIMS' Learning Management System (LMS) and to map them to iCIMS' training catalog of offerings. Through this page, talent development trainers include book recommendations and mapped Lynda courses to the corresponding topics of instructor-led courses. After each course ends, a triggered e-mail sends to the participants to reinforce the learning goals. Further, iCIMS hosts a quarterly infographic with templates, job aids, checklists and other resources.

In addition to iCIMS' employee intranet site, iCIMS flexes its strategy to meet current trends in the talent development industry. Accordingly, the company's talent development department is adding more non-classroom offerings such as white papers, video posts and micro learnings (hosted on a department-specific site or posted globally on iCIMS' intranet, depending on content) and Yammer (the vehicle that the company uses for social engagement). On Yammer, iCIMS has a Development Academy page that the entire company is invited to. It highlights webinars, Lynda courses, articles and blogs from the training industry and more. Management-specific courses have their own private Yammer group as well, so that after each class they can continue engaging informally regarding topics. Employees have really taken to this vehicle to share their feedback on courses, using them as a sounding board for best practices and creating a sense of community around the topic.

Within the classroom, trainers leverage *Kahoot!* and *Poll Everywhere* to engage the audience in polls and information retention, as well as quizzes and surveys. Employees can use their desktops or phones to complete these. These practices are great to "break the ice" with new hires. To further aid in assimilating new hires, iCIMS' talent department introduced a mobile scavenger hunt during the new hires' first week where they can share and post pictures on social sites to win points and drive brand recognition. iCIMS also leverages this vehicle for trivia questions and overall retention of the information they received over the week.

As iCIMS flexes its company strategy to the trends of the industry, iCIMS' talent department is also adding more non-classroom offerings, such as white papers, video

posts, micro learnings and Yammer (the vehicle the company uses for social engagement). As the company curates more of iCIMS content into iCIMS' LMS, it has become easier for trainers to target specific audiences, although for now iCIMS markets them to the entire organization.

Finally, iCIMS utilizes eLearning trainings created in-house, as well as Lynda.com trainings, to offer as pre- and post-work. The company finds that offering both internal and external training opportunities helps with comprehension and sustainability of the training programs offered, especially within those crucial first 90 days. Each live session can be paired with an online resource for additional learning outside of the classroom.

Engagement

While redesigning the Onboard program, challenges surfaced with building new content and aligning it all with the company mission, vision and strategy. Luckily, iCIMS has dedicated support from iCIMS leaders

who participate in the Development Academy programming either as guest speakers or facilitators for several in-house programs. Leaders also actively participate in talent development by benchmarking learning expenditures, success and activities. iCIMS' director of talent development appears in front of the C-Suite to present how the department is performing against its objectives and how it is impacting the organization's strategic goals and reviews successes and changes. iCIMS also keeps open lines of communication with hiring managers during new-hire onboarding sessions and created a training curriculum for hiring mangers that aligns with the expectations of new hires.

The iCIMS talent development team has had the autonomy to break this program down and build it back up, improving it with every single 90-day session that trainers hold with new-hire classes by collecting feedback. iCIMS' dedication to improving the program time and time again may create work but it is necessary work that will ultimately impact iCIMS employee base and retention rates. In everything iCIMS does, the company strives for scalability. Anything that iCIMS' trainers may create for the classroom could also be paired with a job aid or eLearning that will be able to support knowledge retention.

Measurable Benefits

To gauge measurable benefits of iCIMS' newly revamped onboarding program, iCIMS surveys employees after their first week, after their core competency courses and at their 90-day session. Based off survey scores in the past year, iCIMS has found the following:

- 92.73% of participants *strongly agree* that they feel engaged with the iCIMS culture while participating in the program (7.27% *agree*).
- 85.45% *strongly agree* that they had a comprehensive understanding of curriculum content while 14.55% *agree*.
- 99% of participants feel that their first week curriculum positively impacted their ability to assimilate to their roles at iCIMS.
- After their first week going through onboarding, 100% of survey takers would recommend iCIMS as a great place to work.
- Core competency courses consistently receive scores of 8 and above (out of a scale of 10).

At the 90-day mark, iCIMS holds a session with each class, as well as with the company's human resources business partners (HRBP) and iCIMS' talent development director. iCIMS uses this time to provide the class with prompts that they answer live and tabulates them in a spreadsheet that helps the company keep track of what needs to be improved, communicated or introduced to the program. Some of the themes iCIMS keeps top of mind include training time, visibility in the business, product knowledge, manager support, etc. After this session, talent development debriefs with the human resources business partners and assigns action items as needed. While celebrating that 90-day point is important, iCIMS also wants to make sure talent development trainers are getting to the root of what worked and what didn't in terms of the new-hire onboarding experience. iCIMS uses this data to help trainers and developers continue to improve upon the company's already successful program.

iCIMS also looks to survey hiring managers about their satisfaction of a new hire going through this program. In June 2017, the entire manager base was surveyed. 81.38% of managers scored 8s through 10s on new-hire onboarding program satisfaction, while 9.38% of managers selected N/A as they did not hire new people in the year prior. After each new hire hits their 90th day, iCIMS uses its in-house platform to survey hiring

managers on their new hires' assimilation to iCIMS via the onboarding program. Results have also been favorable with 90% selecting *agree* and *strongly agree*.

Overall

Lessons learned: While iCIMS has created a curriculum that seems to surpass expectations, iCIMS always will be evaluating and improving upon it. With kaizen (or continuous improvement) as one of the company's core competencies and with access to valuable new hire feedback, iCIMS has decided to continuously refine the program to align with the best interests of employees and the business. To avoid the need for another major revamp, the talent development team is committed to maintaining iCIMS' materials and will continue to iteratively make updates to content, strategy and process.

Next/future outlook: iCIMS plans to constantly update content based off feedback and industry trends. In addition to evaluating employee feedback, iCIMS is planning the following:

1. Adding additional courses and improved automation into iCIMS' eLearning library.
2. Continuing to leverage social tools like Yammer and Kahoot to drive more engagement to the TD brand.
3. Continuing to build relationships throughout the business so that the talent development team can incorporate their participation into the onboarding strategy — whether through live classroom information sessions, eLearnings or videos.

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