

Concentrix's Swagatam Online Tool Allows New Hires to Onboard Before Start Date

Concentrix Corporation

Best New Hire Onboarding Program

November 2019



Company Background



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| Company-at-a-Glance | Concentrix, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SYNEX Corporation, is a technology-enabled global business services company specializing in customer engagement and improving business performance for some of the world's best brands. Every day, from more than 40 countries and across six continents, Concentrix's staff delivers next-generation customer experience and helps companies better connect with its customers. |
| Headquarters | Fremont, CA |
| Year Founded | 1983 |
| Revenue | \$4 billion-plus |
| Employees | 225,000-plus |
| Global Scale | Presence across six continents, 40-plus countries, providing services across 11 Industries |
| Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered) | Concentrix offers solutions related to Customer Lifecycle, Management, Marketing solutions, Automation and Process, Optimization, Analytics and Insights, Consulting, Finance and Accounting, IT Services and Technology Assets to clients |
| Industry | Industries: Automotive, BFSI, Consumer Electronics, Energy and Public Sector, Healthcare Services, Insurance, Media and Communication, Retail and Ecommerce, Technology, Travel Transportation and Tourism |
| Stock Symbol | SNX |
| Website | www.concentrix.com |

Budget and Timeframe

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| Overall budget | Tool Development was totally in-house, however, \$3,000 per month is the server cost |
| Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation? | Eight |
| Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation? | 10 |
| Timeframe to implement | Six months |
| Start date of the program | July 2017 |

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Concentrix is one of the world's fastest-growing business process outsourcing service providers, experiencing an exponential increase in headcount in just a few years. In 2015, the company had 54,000 staff globally. Due to aggressive recruiting, acquisitions, and organic growth, the company more than doubled its headcount to 110,000 by 2018. And then in October 2018, two BPO industry titans integrated to become a combined global staff of 225,000 — once again, more than doubling the growth in less than one year.

With the fast-paced growth, the need to recruit and retain staff is even more critical. A well-designed, fun and engaging onboarding process is one of the first opportunities to create a superior employee experience.

Concentrix discovered room for improvement in the onboarding experience:

1. The onboarding and induction process was monotonous, boring and lengthy, merely sticking to getting the mandatory activities completed, leaving the candidates jittery, tired and sometimes confused about the way forward.
2. The Recruitment Division was responsible for both hiring and onboarding and had been focusing most of its energy on hiring and recruitment.
3. There was no formal process of handover from the recruitment team to the onboarding team and a complete lull period between offer rollout and onboarding, often making the new hire feel completely left out during this lull period.
4. Concentrix was missing out on an opportunity to brand the organization while making a good impression and connect with the new hires to reaffirm the decision to join.

5. Despite standardization attempts, candidates had different onboarding experiences depending on location.
6. The onboarding journey lacked an effective feedback mechanism.
7. The leadership team missed an opportunity to embody the culture of the organization in a meet-and-greet presentation to make New Hires feel special.
8. Onboarding needed to engage staff from day one.

The quality of the onboarding experience also affects the following areas:

- **Onboarding to Productivity Time** — One of the key elements that defines the profitability at early stages is how soon an employee gets assimilated in the system and becomes productive. In the BPO industry, hours matter and some onboarding had been delayed by days.
- **Employer Brand** — The current onboarding process was negatively impacting Concentrix' reputation as a top employer. BPO is a manpower-driven industry; negative onboarding experiences act as a catalyst and spread, pushing the recruiting cost higher. Positive word-of-mouth is the lowest recruiting cost channel and companies in this industry constantly compete for the best candidates.
- **Attrition** — A study showed 15% of employees said the lack of an effective onboarding program aided in their decision to quit.
- **Culture Engagement** — Lack of alignment with the culture left new hires confused and demoralized.

Overview

To enhance the candidate experience, aid retention and built efficiency, the team conceived Swagatam: Anytime Anywhere Any Device onboarding project. This is a portal-based hi-tech onboarding technology, wherein the candidate can onboard themselves virtually even before the actual start date. This resulted in highly engaged and motivated employees; it aided retention, saved productive hours and increased the profitability of the respective processes. Any phone or computing device can access the tool, even in low signal-strength areas through the streaming server. Swagatam has the built-in ability to cater to any kind of hiring volume. It can be customized and is completely scalable for future requirements and additions.

Swagatam not only addressed the business woes but also created a better experience for the new hire. By changing the manual processes to a digital experience, Swagatam reduced inefficiencies. By allowing new hires to begin their own onboarding experience

from the hire date, it gave HR a chance to address any issues before day one, reducing downtime. This extra time also introduced the new hires to the company culture and to some of their new peers, which made everyone's first day a little less confusing and daunting. The new system also addressed issues related to new hire salary, access delays and unproductive employees, giving the organization an edge against its competitors. Swagatam also appealed to the tech-savvy workforce by providing a compelling and engaging web-based portal to virtually onboard through plug-and-play videos and interact with their peers through the chat option. All of this can occur before the official start date of the new hire.

Key Results

- **Engagement and Motivation** — After the tool launched, the employee engagement scores trended around 94-95% for employee satisfaction.
- **Reduction in Employee ID Creation Turnaround Time** — New hires cannot engage in productive work until they receive an employee ID. Employee ID creation turnaround time decreased 65% from 3.48 days to 1.2 days in the very first month.
- **Improved Retention** — The attrition between 0-15 days showed an improvement of 27.11% and 0-30 days showed an improvement of 41.8%.
- **Better Communication** — Swagatam also introduced an email-based platform to address new-hire queries before joining. New hires lacking mandatory documents need to be sent home to retrieve them. With this better communication tool, HR can inform and address the absence of these documents prior to the start date.
- **Low-Cost Recruitment Channel** — The better Swagatam experience spreads through word of mouth, building the Concentrix brand. Happy new hires are more likely to encourage their friends and family members to join the organization. Referrals are the lowest-cost recruitment channel.
- **Automation** — Swagatam automated many manual driven processes which reduced the induction hours from 9 hours to 6 hours.
- **Efficiencies** — The efficiencies enabled a reduction in IT and HR teams' headcount by 73%.
- **Future Revenue Opportunity** — Concentrix is working to sell the tool as services to various clients. Deployment time of this tool has been reduced 50% from six months to three months, including concept and testing.

Design and Delivery

The leadership team of Concentrix wanted to ensure that each new hire's first day was as flawless as possible, to lay a solid foundation for employee morale and cohesion with the company culture. The leadership team even considered outsourcing the onboarding to a third-party vendor.

After revisiting the entire process with a step-by-step analysis, the leadership team decided to keep onboarding in house but recognized the necessity of a complete overhaul. The team wanted to leverage technology to reduce paperwork and make the onboarding experience more pleasant and engaging. Overhauling the process to create something simple yet efficient, innovative, scalable and cutting-edge would improve retention rates and help new hires become productive more quickly. Because all staff go through the onboarding experience, upgrades improve the overall work environment.

The people requirement was managed through resource support from the internal IT Team, Corporate Communications, HR and the Onboarding Team. Key staff with required skills from the HR team were given the opportunity to create the entire media and content, UI design. The In-house team of functional experts included Content Writers, Onboarding Subject Matter Experts, Developers, IT experts, Recruitment Team, HR professionals, a Graphic Designer and a Photographer. The team also included Transition Manager to help manage time, cost, quality, change, risks and issues needed to implement a range of management processes. The Project Champion identified the resource requirements, reaching out to functional heads across Concentrix locations explaining the exact requirements and requesting them to identify the best of the resources within the team. The Project Leader built a highly motivated team with the right skillset. Building the team from existing Concentrix staff provided cost savings.

Despite the initial investment of the project, Swagatam promised long-term savings through efficiency benefits. For example, the existing system often caused delays in assigning employee IDs. Employee IDs have a crucial role in many HR and other job-related functions, so delays in assigning IDs had a ripple effect. Not only were staff wasting time waiting for HR to secure the IDs, the enforced idleness caused anxiety, which contributed to low morale and higher attrition. The negativity slowed productivity and crippled efforts to create a positive brand identification. Fixing even this one issue promised to benefit the company financially. This and the strong alignment of the project with the vision of the organization aided in securing approval to make the necessary investments within the company. Swagatam also brings automation, from GPS-enabled messages of the onboarding venue to pre-populated form filling. The automation not only reduces the overall onboarding duration but also substantially reduces the workload of the onboarding team.

Swagatam was identified as a high-impact project and as a result was given stringent timelines for project completion, especially because the organization was heading toward the high hiring season. The estimated timeline was six months and the in-house team delivered the solution on time; the solution was deployed across India with very low cost and optimized resources.

Swagatam automated many manual processes, which decreased the workload of the onboarding team and increased the team's efficiency. Using pre-populated forms and reducing the induction hours from 9 hours to 6 hours allowed more time for improving the customer experience.

This tool allowed the organization to move from damage-control mode to providing a best-in-class experience. The reduction in onboarding workload changed the team from reactive to proactive; instead of being overworked and constantly addressing concerns, the team could now dedicate themselves to creating a positive impression of the Concentrix brand.

Swagatam strengthened the brand value of the organization. The positive impression left by the Swagatam system improved the reputation of Concentrix as an employer. A built-in reporting mechanism provides better analytics. Accurate, real-time reports are available at any point in time for data analysis and take less time to produce. Swagatam also standardizes onboarding practices. Automating the high volume of data and the other benefits of this program give Concentrix an edge over its competitors.

Swagatam has a real-time feedback mechanism, just not about the onboarding experience but also about the portal. This feedback allows the development team to further refine and improve to bridge the gap between new hire expectations and what is being offered. With introduction of Swagatam, the reports that were taking hours are now available instantly, resulting in sharper and more accurate analytics.

Engagement

In the original onboarding experience, one of the challenges revolved around productivity delays and attrition from staff who felt disoriented about their new work environment. Swagatam bridges the gap between offer rollout and onboarding by providing new hires with a compelling and engaging option to go through Swagatam and explore the Concentrix world. This, in turn, mitigated the risk of losing the resource to competitors.

Swagatam uses gamification to introduce new material, a strategy which keeps new staff engaged during the onboarding process. Gamification provides an effective and engaging learning experience, providing the user with a sense of achievement. Gamification has been shown to increase both learner enjoyment and learning retention. New hires can

earn points for remembering presented information. Swagatam offered an insight of who's who in Concentrix, the different employee programs, an overview of the organization and explanation of their salary structure through short interesting animated videos.

Figure 1: Onboarding Simplified



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Also, in the earlier onboarding system, one of the major escalations points was salary not getting processed in time, creating lot of unrest in new hires. Swagatam gave more time to the onboarding team for finishing the back-end work, which resulted in timely creation of the employee ID and resulting in timely salary processing of new hires.

As part of the development strategy, Swagatam incorporated a robust feedback mechanism, which puts the process on a path of continuous improvement. This, in turn, gave an opportunity to further enhance the process, know the pulse of new hires and work toward opportunity areas.

Initial signs showed an improvement in the new-hire experience; the feedback received was formidably motivating. During multiple interactions, staff shared their views on how exciting the portal was, the engaging way the content was explained, the easy navigation and they already felt that they were part of the organization. New hires already had a fair idea of what to expect, where to go, whom to meet, the location site map, the lull period between offer roll-out and onboarding was taken care of. Some staff were able to make work friends prior to their start date by interacting with each other through the Swagatam chat system.

Other Elements to Increase Engagement

- **Standardization** — Swagatam standardized onboarding practices. With Swagatam in place any new hire experiences the same kind of onboarding experience in Concentrix, regardless of location across India, and eventually, across the globe.
- **Socialization** — New hires can chat with their new peers, which can calm their anxiety about starting a new job.
- **Orientation:** — A highly engaging self-paced eLearning platform uses self-explanatory animated videos to convey information.
- **Ice-breaker** — Ice-breaking sessions make employees feel comfortable through team building exercises. Staff can have fun and win rewards through quiz competitions.
- **“Wow” Experience:** — The novelty of Swagatam enabled a positive candidate experience aligned with the culture and value system, spreading positivity and aiding retention.

Measurable Benefits

Engagement and Motivation

Effective Onboarding program helps in early engagement among new hires, which in turn cuts down the recruitment to productivity time. After the tool launched, the employee satisfaction scores trended around 94-95%, ensuring speedy and hassle-free assimilation with the system.

Reduction in Employee ID Creation Turnaround Time

New hires cannot engage in productive work until they receive an employee ID, therefore any delay in issuing this ID directly impacts productivity. With the automation and efficiency Swagatam has built in, the employee ID creation turnaround time decreased 65% from 3.48 days to 1.2 days in the very first month.

Improved Retention

The attrition between 0-15 days showed an improvement of 27.11% and 0-30 days showed an improvement of 41.8%.

Better Communication

Swagatam also introduced an email-based platform to address new-hires queries before joining. New hires lacking mandatory documents have to be sent home to retrieve them. With this better communication tool, HR can inform and address the absence of these documents prior to the start date. This also helped us to improve the offer-to-join ratio.

Low-Cost Recruitment Channel

The better Swagatam experience spreads through word of mouth, building the Concentrix brand. Happy new hires are more likely to encourage their friends and family members to join the organization. Referrals are the lowest-cost recruitment channel.

Automation

- Swagatam automated many manual driven processes, which reduced the induction hours from 9 hours to 6 hours and making the process more 33% more efficient than the existing one.
- Deployment time of this tool has been reduced 50% from six months to three months, including concept and testing.
- The efficiencies enabled a reduction in IT and HR teams' headcount by 73%

Concentrix Revenue Opportunity

Although this tool was built to support incoming staff, it will be soon available for purchase as stand-alone solution for clients and other organizations, opening another revenue-generating opportunity for the organization.

Staff Feedback

- *"I like the Portal of SWAGATAM this was the easiest learning tool which I liked very much."*
- *"Portal of company was outstanding because easy to access and simple to learn company information, policies from anywhere."*
- *"The induction you had given about the company and my job was really helpful and useful for me. Because of you I came to know more about the company. The way you explained about each and every point was much more understandable. Now I got a clarity on the SWAGATAM and came to know how and when to use the forums available in SWAGATAM. I felt very comfortable and convenient with you during the process. Really very thankful to you for giving me valuable information about the company and about my job role and everything. Last but not the least really thank you so much for the simple and traditional food. Thank you, sir."*
- *"The content and all the sessions of the induction program was awesome and quite knowledgeable."*
- *"Amber has saved us probably a week's worth of work, since now we don't have to dig around for our own answers and can easily get it through SWAGATAM."*

Overall

Implementation is the longest and toughest phase of a project. The Swagatam team did come across technical issues, sync issues, issues with recruitment tools, candidates not able to access portal owing to password issues, etc. Problems getting the Wi-Fi installed at all onboarding venues and technical glitches in the tool also cropped up. To expedite the implementation and overcome the challenges, a Transition Manager was brought in to build a stronger communication network and overcome the issues being faced. The Transition Manager supported communication with all the required teams through strong follow-up on pending issues, quick action and resolution to the issues being faced.

Candidate awareness about Swagatam was a challenge in the starting phase despite a robust communication plan being in place. Based on feedback, the team introduced more robust interventions such as setting up a Swagatam helpdesk in the hiring center and appointing Swagatam Ambassadors. HR also briefed candidates in the hiring centers

about Swagatam and offered quick tips to navigate the portal once the candidates were offered a position.

To further expedite the implementation process and have visibility across the country, a WhatsApp group was created having OB Team and the Tech Team, sharing real-time feedback and deployment tips. The team used this feedback to innovate solutions to issues as they occurred.

While there was 24x7 support available from the core team, the team had decided to set up a daily call to discuss feedback, improvements, technical issues or any bottlenecks at the ground level. The team recorded meeting minutes and action items to ensure each issue was dealt with promptly. They created “Quick Rescue Guidelines” to troubleshoot any small technical issues quickly, based on the common issues reported daily.

A better understanding of the issues and probable resolution provides a deep understanding and confidence of cutting down the implementation of the tool in other geographies in a much shorter duration. The real-time feedback discussion also helps the team broaden the horizon and innovate to implement — a suggestion given by the end user.

Future Plans

- **Global Implementation** — After the successful launch and implementation in India, the tool has already been replicated and is live in China and North America. In the next phase the team is preparing to go live in the Philippines (April 2019), U.K. (May 2019), Australia and New Zealand (April 2019). Concentrix has also received overwhelming response from clients, who wish to buy and replicate the tool in their respective organizations.
- **Chatbot Integration** — The next step is to leverage chat bots to help the new joiners get quicker answers to questions. Chatbots will significantly decrease the average time to respond.
- **On-demand Onboarding** — While the Swagatam has been able to reduce the onboarding time from more than 9 hours to 6 hours, the vision is to increase the capacity to two onboarding sessions in a single day. Eventually, the goal is to move to self-paced learning, which in turn will support in executing the agenda of on-demand onboarding.
- **Go Paperless** — New hires consistently leave feedback about the requirement of carrying photocopies and photographs on the onboarding day. The new goal is to explore the feasibility of document submission through portal in a way that adheres to statutory regulations.

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