



Zoom's Onboarding Case Study

What was the problem that we needed to solve?

Living and perpetuating the core values associated with Zoom's culture is a business imperative and we needed assurance that every single new Zoomie (Zoom employee) was deeply connected to those before being "unleashed" into the organization. Onboarding 150-200 people per month globally is a daunting responsibility for a company that is growing exponentially and scaling at lightning speed. Zoom's orientation has been focused on in-person training, which meant added cost for travel to headquarters and inconsistent participation. In addition, we wanted to move away from learning the technicalities of products, HR-focused logistics, systems and benefits. We wanted new hires to leave day one with a confirmation they made the right decision to join Zoom, a sense of pride to be a part of this community and a vigor to immediately contribute to our success.

Zoom decided to create an innovative and memorable experience that was aligned across the globe by focusing their onboarding on learning about, as well as experiencing, Zoom's culture and values. They believe wholeheartedly in the power of their tool, and so have evolved their day one orientation to leverage their product for multiple modalities of learning, and to create an engaging, interactive and impactful experience for new Zoomies.



The Framework

How did we approach the situation?

Prior to COVID, Zoom was already exploring ways to streamline and scale the onboarding experience with the goal of creating an aligned orientation for all employees worldwide. When COVID hit, this meant the two things for Zoom. One, the already evolving onboarding solution was expedited. And two, it needed to include content that helped new hires to understand their roles and responsibility in helping to keep the world connected. To address this, Zoom focused on the following areas:

Connect new hires to Zoom's culture, values, brand and community by allowing them to experience it firsthand with multi-modality learning.

Add customer stories that embodied the essence of how we're keeping the world connected through our product.

Reduce the anxiety new hires may feel on their "first day on the job" by creating a fun and welcoming vibe that increased their ability to learn and retain the information provided during the orientation

Leverage Zoom's platform to facilitate the orientation experience and use the time to teach employees about the tool's features. New employees have the opportunity to play with several interactive elements, learn about each feature's value proposition, and interact with each other in a fun learning environment.

Create an inclusive environment, where all new hires across the globe experience who we are, what we do and why we do it. They get to experience this together, on an equal playing field regardless of location, function or level.

Format

Zoom leveraged its own tool to facilitate an engaging and interactive learning experience around culture for new hires. Orientation was restructured from a full-day, in-person training, to five hours of multi-modality learning. In surveying new hire participants, some of the commentary included:



I was pleasantly surprised at the level of engagement in a virtual space. I feel like I got to connect with as many people in other business segments as I would in a classroom setting."



Great experience. It is amazing to see everyone live the Zoom culture, not just sharing information. Extra amazing how it took place over Zoom so you really got a taste of the product as well."

Additionally, new hires attend separate sessions for IT training and systems setup as well as a mid-week overview devoted to benefits. The intention is to ensure the focus of the true cultural orientation maintains its focus and doesn't get diminished by the logistics of a new hire's first day or week.

Lastly, to top off a focus on Zoom's culture, new hires are invited to spend an hour with Zoom's founder and CEO, Eric Yuan, within their first month during which they're able to ask him questions on any topic. It is a true reflection of Eric's commitment to culture and to ensuring a meaningful onboarding for every single new hire at Zoom.

Zoom applies a "freedom within a framework" mentality when it comes to aligning the experience for orientation in each region. With the ever increasing global workforce, Zoom has standardized materials and elements to be delivered, but has supported each region in molding to the experience their unique cultures and locations as well. To paraphrase the company's philosophy on diversity, they not only want to invite everyone to the dance, but also allow them to dance to their own music.

Challenge

Simply put, Zoom has leveraged their tool to create an engaging orientation experience. 98% of new hires surveyed said they felt the virtual orientation was "engaging" to "very engaging". The use of the breakout rooms feature has been a hit with new hires, allowing them to interact in smaller, more intimate groups across functions and locations right away. Additionally, they use a combination of small group activities, large group discussions, chat, annotation, reactions, polls and even adjusting their visible name to include the function they'll be joining to help them get to know each other.

A particular favorite has been the gamification of the experience, getting new hires excited about volunteering answers or role playing in activities such as an elevator pitch about "what is Zoom?". We believe that everyone sells for Zoom and if you are approached by someone at the grocery store who noticed your Zoom sweatshirt and engages you in conversation, that you use the opportunity to learn more about them and "pitch" how Zoom can add value to their work life. Winners have the opportunity to win credit to the employee swag store -- who doesn't love an incentive for a little extra Zoom swag in your first week!



Personalization

The orientation experience should be confirming for each individual what attracted them to Zoom, as well as validating for each individual that they made the right decision to join the company. Zoom strives to create an experience that not only evokes those "warm and fuzzy" feelings about the culture, the mission and the values, but also empowers each individual to understand their role in the bigger picture and the impact they can make. Zoom believes that through effective onboarding every individual will walk away feeling inspired to go forth with gusto to do the work they were hired to do!

What did we learn?

Emotion is key

Inspiration and the connection to community and culture should remain consistent even as format, elements, and activities evolve.

More fun means more learning

Inspiration and the connection to community and culture should remain consistent even as format, elements, and activities evolve.

Travel is not required

Zoom saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel expenses by going virtual without noticeable difference in learning, connection, and inspiration.

Separate the technology and benefits training from the culture training

Both are important so they each need their space

You can't teach everything on the first day

But you direct them to where they can find information at later date on their own

Democratize the experience

Virtual orientation provides an equal opportunity for acclimation to Zoom's culture and a great sense of inclusion of all Zoomies across the globe, irrespective of role, level or location.

What's next?

Zoom is in the early stages of building out a comprehensive onboarding structure and strategy that will support employees beyond the first 90 days. Updates include adding touchpoints to pre-boarding and guidance to help managers prepare for their new hire with the goal of keeping new hires engaged leading up to their first day and providing a seamless transition into the company. Resources and push notifications to both employee and manager will be leveraged to help build the relationship and guide conversations over the course of their first year at the company. Zoom believes that a continued focus on acculturation, not just performance, throughout an employees first year will set new hires up for success and create a sense of belonging, inspiration and commitment to Zoom's mission moving forward.