



WHITE PAPER

MAKING ONBOARDING & NEW RECRUITS COUNT

By working voices

FACTS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STAFF AFTER ONBOARDING

Clerical workers achieve full productivity after eight weeks in a new job. Professionals take just under five months (20 weeks) and executives just over six months (26 weeks), according to research by the Mellon Financial Corporation. That's an awfully long time for new recruits to get up to speed and start properly contributing to organisational success, particularly those in executive positions.

ONBOARDING PROCESS



Research by the Mellon Financial Corporation

That's why so many organisations now run onboarding programmes and why networking is an integral part of many of them. It is really important that new employees are introduced to the people they need to know as soon as possible. There are so many new people to meet and relationships and connections to forge, both internally and externally, but if recruits aren't pointed in the right direction, it takes a lot longer for them to settle in.

New employees need to learn the ropes, attune themselves to the working culture of the organisation they have just joined and find out where to go to get the information they need in order to fulfill their role effectively. "Who better to learn from than the people who have been at an organisation for longer?" says Jennifer Logue, executive vice president and head of the training service at Working Voices.

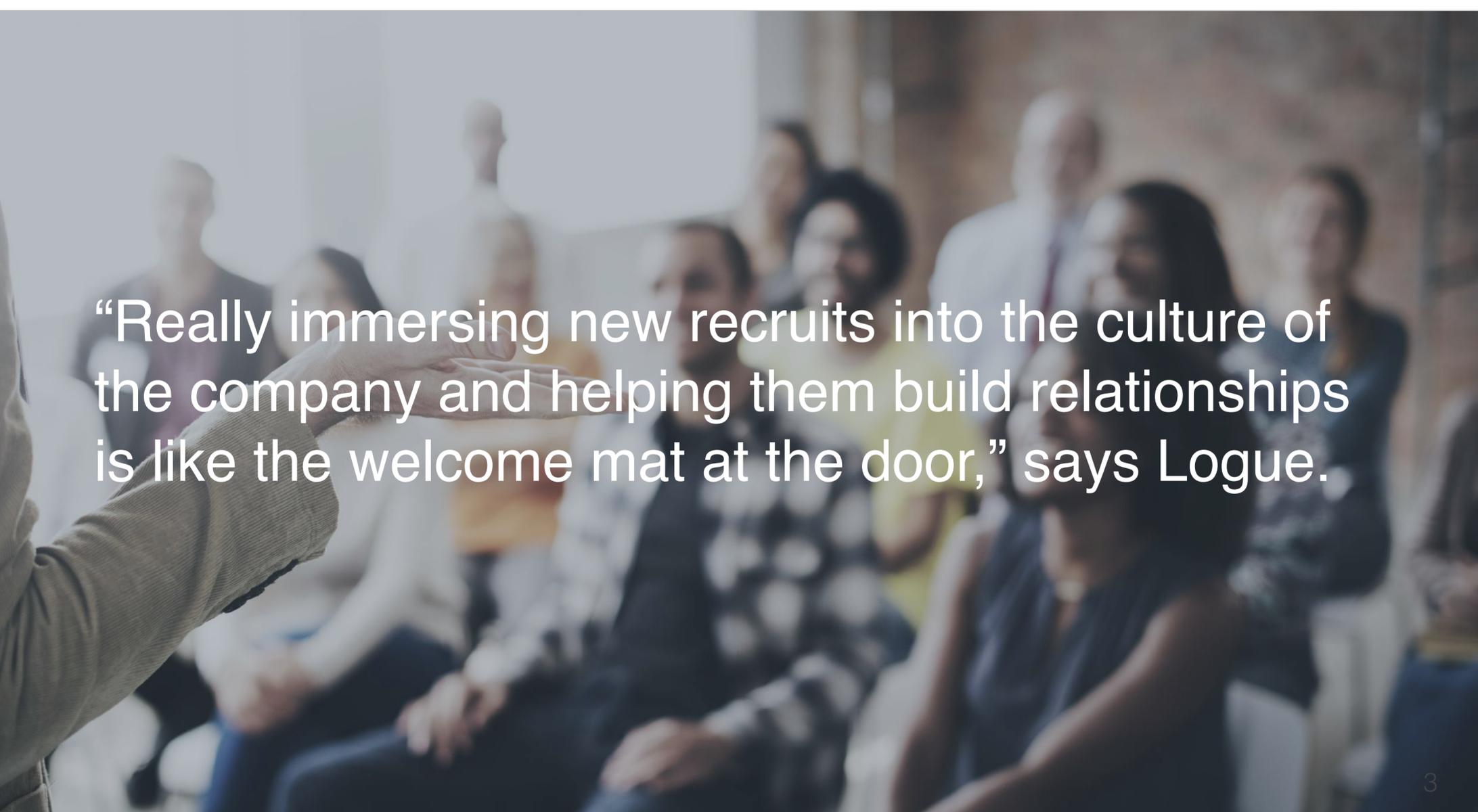
ONBOARDING & NETWORKING

Having a good, supportive network helps new recruits achieve productivity faster, more easily and more effectively. That's good for them and good for business.

It's easy for old timers to take all of this for granted and neglect to pass on essential information to new recruits. Even line managers sometimes overlook the importance of introducing new hires to those all important contacts and social groups. That's why it really pays for employers to actively and formally promote and facilitate networking opportunities for all new employees, from the word go.

WHEN SHOULD IT START?

Some onboarding programmes begin before new hires have even turned up for their first day at work. Organisations kickstart those opening conversations by linking incoming employees with a few key internal people, either face to face or virtually. This could take the form of inviting them along to a departmental social or team event, ahead of joining. Or setting them up on a virtual network where they can make contact with people they will soon be working with. It helps individuals feel like they are joining a team and familiarises them with company culture.



“Really immersing new recruits into the culture of the company and helping them build relationships is like the welcome mat at the door,” says Logue.

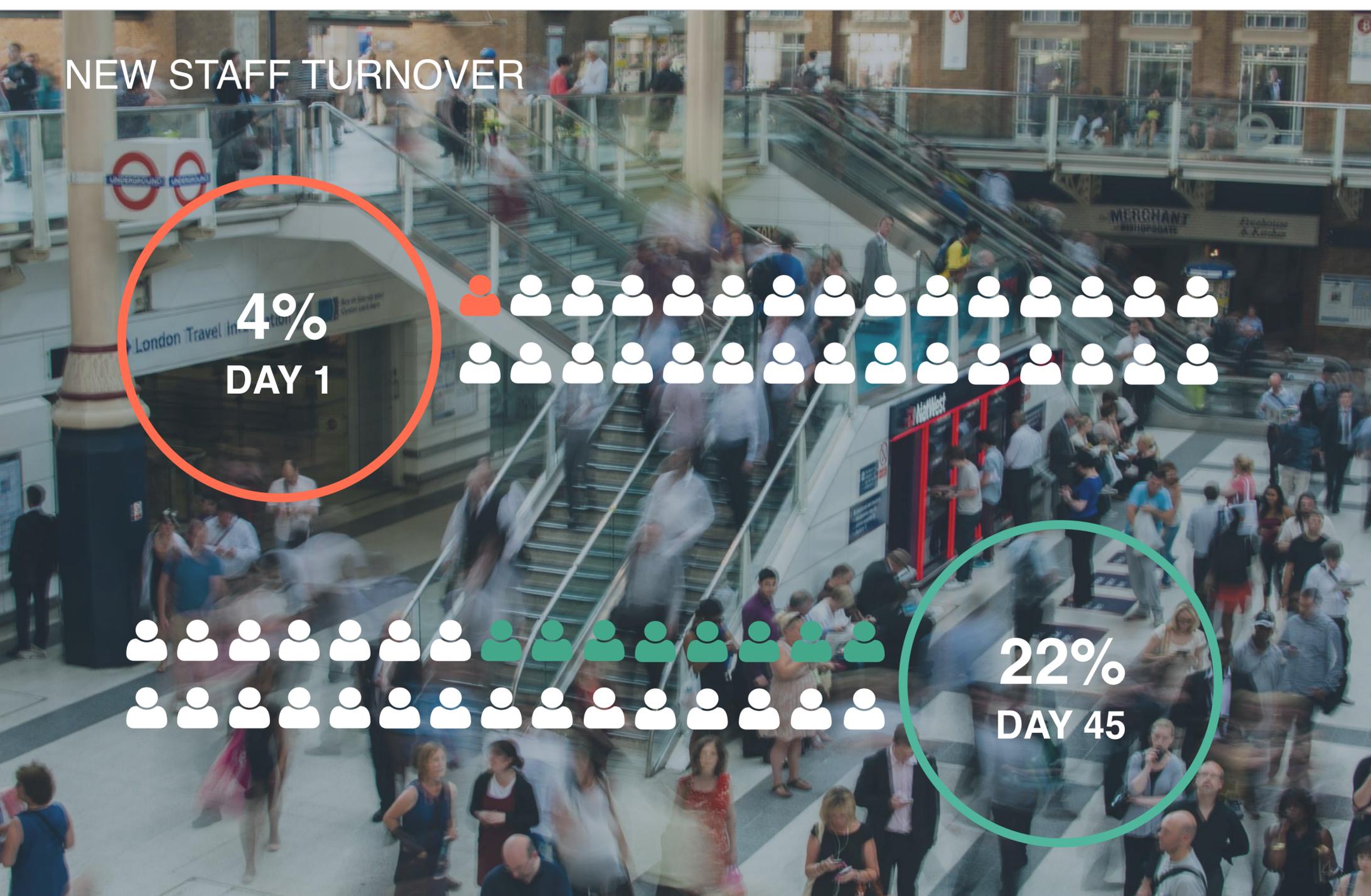
MAKE IT PART OF COMPANY CULTURE

Logue thinks that doing this helps set the right tone, a tone that demonstrates that an organisations cares about its employees and that connections are important. “No matter what business it is, what is going to make the business effective is the relationships people have,” she says.

Tom Cassidy, EMEA trainer at Working Voices, agrees that helping newbies establish good relationships as soon as possible makes great business sense. Leaving people to flounder about unaided, not knowing who to turn to for advice or information is not good for anyone – the employee, customers, clients, the people they have to work with or the organisation that hired them. “Onboarding is a critical time and it is so useful to have input in those first 100 days,” says Cassidy. “People are out of their comfort zone in a new job, so it is important in terms of building confidence. Networking in those first few days and weeks really helps with the wellbeing and confidence of individuals. Because we are human beings, we like to connect.”

Four per cent of new employees leave their job after a disastrous first day and 22% of employee turnover happens in the first 45 days of employment, according to figures from the consulting and coaching organisation, The Wynhurst Group. These statistics demonstrate just how important it is to make employees feel welcomed, comfortable and confident in their new environment so that they want to stay and start contributing.

NEW STAFF TURNOVER



It creates a good impression for them of their new employer and colleagues. In turn, feeling confident and comfortable helps them to give out the right vibes and create a good impression back. “People want and need to have a big impact when they start a new job and it’s so important how you come across in those first impressions,” says Cassidy. “It can be a real struggle to have a good influence after making a bad first impression.”

THE HALO / HORNS EFFECT

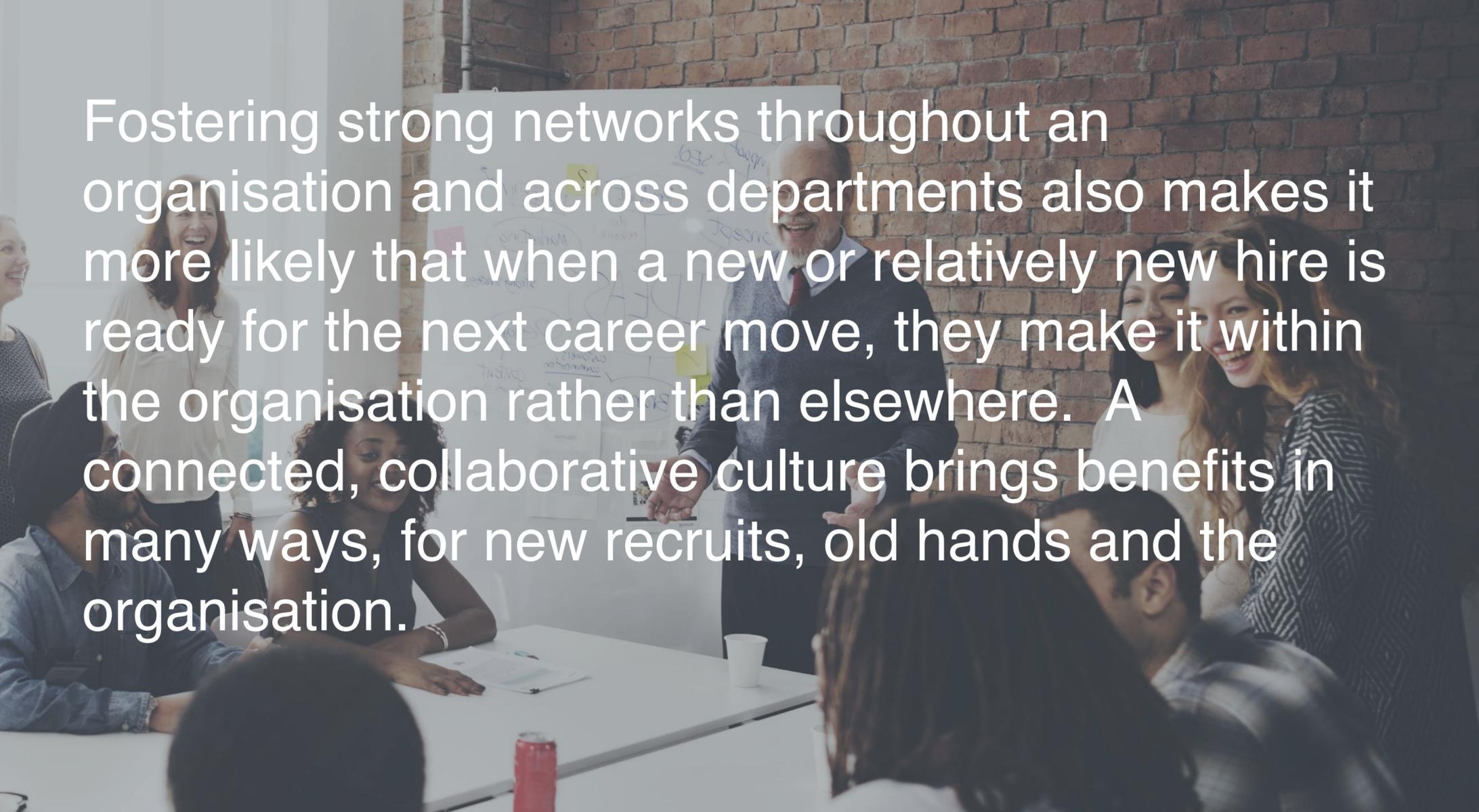
Cassidy talks about that well known phenomenon: the halo/horns effect. It’s a cognitive bias that refers to first impressions and how those first impressions often last. Let’s explain. If a new recruit creates a good first impression – the halo effect – then chances are that positive glow will stay with them and those they work with are predisposed to think well of them and their work. If the first impression falls in the horns category, then the lasting perception is likely to be a negative one. It can be very hard to shake off the horns effect.

It’s a lot easier for new hires to create the halo effect if they feel confident and positive about their place in their new environment.

JOB TRANSITIONS

It’s not only people joining a company that need help in building effective connections though. Those transitioning to a new role within the same company or a new department also benefit from a networking boost. This is especially true if it’s a career move or a big promotion, such as from middle management to senior management. In these instances, the newbie needs to develop a whole new web of contacts to add to their existing one. In particular, people may need introductions to their peers in other departments or other organisations. “It’s important to have lots of contacts in the business community,” says Jay Rhoderick, US trainer at Working Voices. “By doing this they gain insights, it makes people more politically savvy and as well as being nice for individuals, it’s a smart and strategic thing for organisations to do.”

Organisations need to be smart and strategic in this agile world. Business agility is critical for success and part of that is helping new hires become productive as quickly as possible. This is particularly important when it concerns people in business critical role. Also, as employee churn is so much quicker now, speed to competency has become even more imperative. The last thing employers want is for it to take six months for an executive in a key, critical role to become properly operational and six months later, they jump ship.



Fostering strong networks throughout an organisation and across departments also makes it more likely that when a new or relatively new hire is ready for the next career move, they make it within the organisation rather than elsewhere. A connected, collaborative culture brings benefits in many ways, for new recruits, old hands and the organisation.