

# **Human Capital Strategist Practicum**

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## **Who We Are**

Ultimate Software is a leading provider of unified human capital management (HCM) Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions for global businesses. Ultimate markets its award-winning UltiPro® solution as an on-demand service through SaaS. As comprehensive HCM, UltiPro includes talent acquisition, onboarding, payroll, HR compliance, benefits enrollment and management, compensation planning, performance management and reviews, learning management, business intelligence, and time management. Based in Weston, FL, Ultimate employs more than 1,100 professionals and has more than 2,100 customers representing diverse industries and organizations such as Adobe Systems Incorporated, The Container Store, Elizabeth Arden, Major League Baseball, The New York Yankees Baseball Team, and Ruth's Chris Steak House.

## **What We Do**

Comprised of both technical and functional consultants, our Consulting Services department employs approximately one-third of the employee population. Consulting Services is responsible for the activation of our product offering. As consultants, we provide project management, subject-matter expertise, and guidance on the automation of business processes. Our customers look to us for information about industry trends, best practices, and solutions to common business challenges. We often help customers identify inefficiencies in their current HCM practices and streamline their process for maximum return on investment (ROI) on their HCM solution choice.

## **Talent Management Department**

The Talent Management department of Consulting Services focuses specifically on the following from our UltiPro product features: UltiPro Recruitment, UltiPro Onboarding , UltiPro Performance Management, and UltiPro Learning Management. We are comprised of 12 System Consultants, having both technical backgrounds and practical human resources experiences. Many team members find the Human Capital Institute (HCI) a resource for HCM information that can be useful in their consulting roles and leveraged knowledge from HCI on onboarding practices before introducing our newest offering, UltiPro Onboarding, that became available for sale in August of 2008. The Talent Management team was tasked with completing the initial activations of the new feature, with our first customer launching UltiPro Onboarding May 8, 2009.

## **Our Challenge**

Having an understanding of how the onboarding process impacts the success of making new talent rapidly productive, in addition to increasing new-hire satisfaction levels and improving talent retention, Ultimate included onboarding functionality in its unified HCM. Our initial

question was how the new feature could best serve our customers as a complement to our existing comprehensive HR, payroll, and talent management features, but that became instantly clear with our increased knowledge of the importance of onboarding and its influence on all other areas of HCM. Adding onboarding to our unified solution was a part of our strategy and commitment to develop continuously evolving HCM technology to meet the needs of the entire employee life cycle.

HCM leaders advocate the management of employees from the perspective of employees as an organization's most valuable assets rather than payroll liabilities on the general ledger. The attraction, acquisition, and retention of top talent have a direct and immediate impact on the company's bottom line.

HCM research supports that onboarding has a wide-reaching effect on the success of an HCM strategy. Our practicum describes each of the talent lifecycle stages, the impact onboarding has on each stage, and how our product supports a comprehensive and effective onboarding process.

This practicum will serve two purposes:

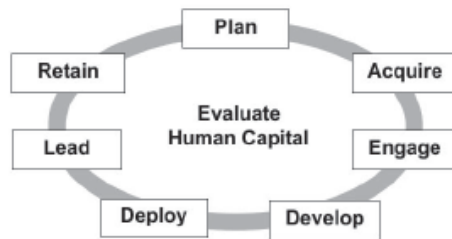
1. As a supplement to our activation tools, it will expose our customers to onboarding best practices and support their decision to purchase UltiPro Onboarding.
2. It will serve as a tool that will help consultants provide expert statements, as well as reveal consistent, repeatable activation experience for our customers.

## **What is onboarding?**

A well-defined onboarding process re-affirms the new hire's employment decision by helping them to become a productive, contributing member of the organization more quickly. This is achieved through the three basic elements of onboarding: Provisioning, Orientation, and Socialization. Provisioning ensures that a new employee has all of the necessary tools, both physical and virtual resources, to do his/her job on the first day of employment. Orientation acclimates the new employee to the company, the department, and the job, including communication of key job requirements and performance expectations. Finally, socialization provides the employee an introduction to the informal structure of the company, key contacts, and most importantly company culture. The end result is fully engaged, committed employees who are instant contributors on day one.

## **Onboarding and the Talent Lifecycle**

Each stage of the talent lifecycle is affected by the onboarding process. Since no one person is responsible for all phases of the talent lifecycle, a well-defined onboarding process can smooth the transition from one stage to the next.



**Talent Acquisition** focuses on acquiring needed talent to meet business needs. Onboarding starts during the acquisition process as the selection process introduces the candidate to the company culture and values. Onboarding is facilitated by ensuring that all company representatives deliver a consistent tone and message starting during the recruiting cycle. Below are some ways in which UltiPro Onboarding supports talent acquisition.

- Allows for new hires and corporate representatives to complete all new hire paperwork prior to the employee's first day of work. This includes all required government and procedural paperwork, company-specific acknowledgements, procurement requests, direct deposit forms, plus personal and demographic information required to hire a new employee. Our solution allows our customers the flexibility to gather this information before the employee's first day of work. Automating this process ensures a consistent candidate experience, standardizes the new-hire paperwork process across the company, and mitigates the risk of legal exposure due to non-compliance of federal and state regulations. It also conveys company culture as communicated through policies and procedures, the employee handbook, and other company documents.
- Supports communication throughout the acquisition phase. Through email notifications, customers can introduce new employees to the company culture, ensure that each employee receives a consistent message from the company, and provide answers to the most common new-hire questions. Candidates also have access to a corporate representative prior to their first day of employment, facilitating the engagement of the new employee during the initial onboarding process.
- Promotes employment branding efforts by allowing the company to reiterate important value propositions and reinforce the image of the company as a great place to work.
- Allocates both physical and virtual resources prior to the first day of work, reducing the new employee's time to productivity. Common provisions include badges, business cards, expense accounts, office space/furniture, computers, e-mail protocols, telephone extensions, etc. UltiPro Onboarding allows procurement of materials from both internal and external resources via automated notifications to ensure that all necessary provisions are acquired.

**Talent Engagement** is the extent to which employees feel connected to the company and is indicative of the level of effort employees will put forth to ensure success of the company. Talent engagement is a leading indicator for increases in employee productivity, reduction in turnover, and increased profitability. Onboarding does not end until the employee is fully engaged. The following table describes some of the elements required for employee engagement:

### **Engagement Criteria**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Importance of the job
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clarity of expectations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunity for development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognition for performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	“Do what I do best”
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong collegial relationships
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proper resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective relationship with manager

UltiPro Onboarding contributes to engagement in the following ways:

- Reduces the amount of time spent filling out required paperwork, thus allowing more time to focus on socialization. Employers who have their new hires complete their new-hire paperwork from home prior to their first day of work can begin day one discussing such topics as the informal structure of the company, how things “really” get done, key people to know, and performance expectations and rewards. This shifts the focus of orientation from reviewing paperwork and policies to familiarizing new hires with the company, the department, and the job. More emphasis on reminding new employees that they are part of a great company and explaining why their job is important leads to improved levels of engagement.
- Key contacts and mentors can be assigned to new hires and communicated through notifications prior to the first day of work, easing the transition into a new company. If employers have a defined schedule of activities that will take place during the first week or weeks of employment, that schedule can also be communicated via notifications from UltiPro Onboarding.

**Talent Development** is the process of informal and formal learning activities such as stretch assignments and on-the-job training. Onboarding is the first step in talent development, providing the foundational knowledge for career success. Development opportunities and career paths can also be communicated during the onboarding process. With the use of UltiPro Onboarding, employers can:

- Provide preliminary instructional material to employees throughout the onboarding process, allowing new employees an opportunity for independent learning or preparing them for formal training.
- Send reminder emails of scheduled meetings and events to new hires and managers. These events might include department meetings or team activities, sessions with a mentor or team member, or meetings with Human Resources and other support groups.

**Talent Deployment** is ensuring that employees are properly placed within the organization based on both employee career objectives and company business objectives. Whether an internal transfer or a new hire, the employee will go through an onboarding process. If this process is not managed effectively, it can result in decreased productivity. UltiPro Onboarding supports this transition in the following ways:

- Provides employees access to job descriptions that align with company goals.
- Informs employees of defined career path options.
- Communicates internal application procedures.

**Talent Leadership** rests solely on managers and involves not only recognition of employees' strengths, but also placing employees in roles that allow them to excel. Talent leadership is exhibited when a manager takes responsibility to develop their employees even if it means potentially losing the employee to another department. The leader's role is crucial to the onboarding process and cannot be delegated, as it sets the stage for future development and coaching activities. UltiPro Onboarding promotes talent leadership as follows:

- Facilitates the manager's involvement in the onboarding process even before the employee's first day. Tasks can be delegated to the manager allowing the manager to begin developing a relationship with the new hire before he or she reports for work.
- Reminds leaders, through the use of notifications, of various resources available to assist in the onboarding process. Common resources include use of a web portal, access to other online tools, or access to physical resources/people.

**Talent Retention** is the ability to retain top talent. A poorly managed or non-existent onboarding process can adversely impact retention. In fact, studies reveal that up to 15% of employees consider quitting after a bad experience on the first day. UltiPro Onboarding allows customers to ensure that the new hire's initial experience is successful by:

- Creating employee engagement even before the first day of work.
- Allowing HR and managers to gauge employee engagement throughout the Onboarding process by providing access to third-party surveys (Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, etc.) at regular intervals so that potential issues can be headed off.
- Providing formal, structured onboarding processes to ensure that each employee has a consistent new-hire experience.
- Notifying employees of their job expectations to ensure that they are prepared for success out of the gate.

## Concluding Remarks

The onboarding process impacts every stage of the employee life cycle. As such, companies must invest in a formal onboarding process that:

- Ensures an accurate representation of the company culture and values and a consistent experience for all new employees
- Decreases time to productivity
- Quickly engages employees
- Provides a knowledge foundation for career success
- Aligns new hire's skills with company objectives
- Communicates expectations and career paths

UltiPro Onboarding automates the onboarding process, allowing company representatives to spend more time engaging new employees—leading to higher productivity, faster socialization, and a smoother transition for both the company and the employee.

*Ultimate Software is a leading provider of unified human capital management SaaS solutions for global businesses. For more information, please visit [www.ultimatesoftware.com](http://www.ultimatesoftware.com).*



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