

Welcome Aboard! Supporting the Process of Integrating New Staff with Onboarding Tools

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1. Summary

The onboarding of new employees is a difficult and complex task because a lot of organization-specific information about workflows, contact persons and regulations has to be communicated. Nonetheless, universities often lack structured workflows for the integration of new staff, especially in the faculties. This leads to inefficient work processes, a high number of avoidable support tickets and frustration among the new employees caused by missing or incomplete information. Our idea is to support the onboarding process with IT tools such as an interactive welcome portal and a configuration wizard that guides new employees through the initial setup.

2. Extended Abstract

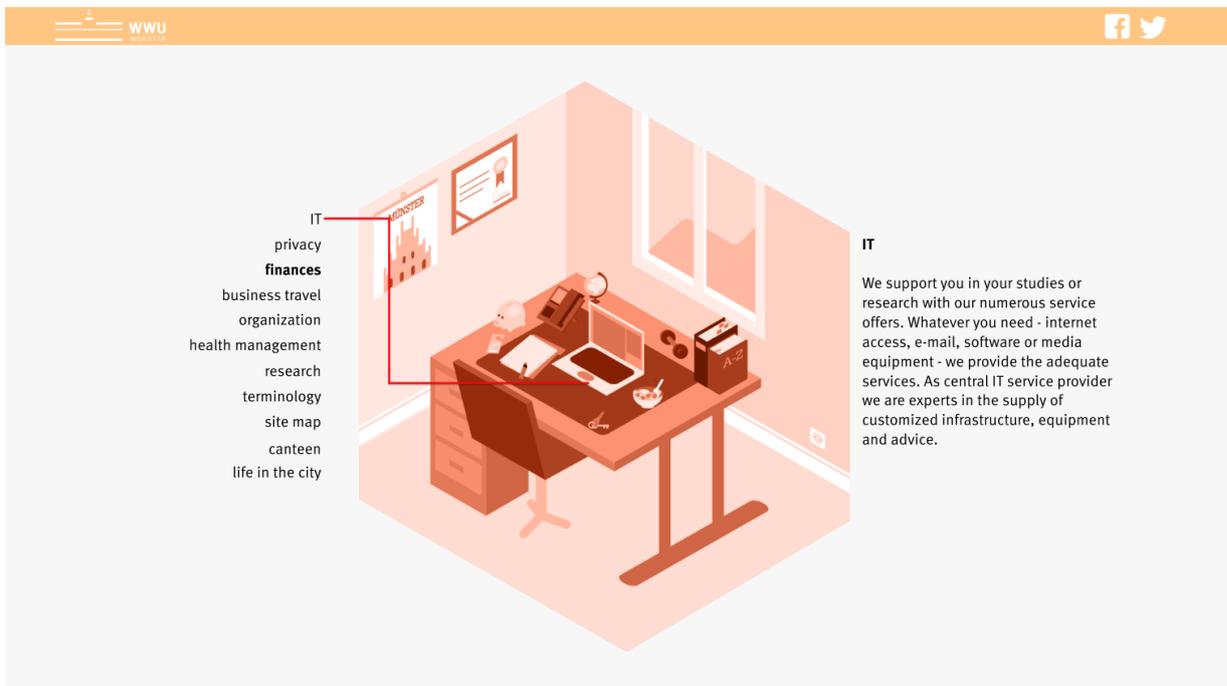
The onboarding of new employees, i.e. the initial process of integrating newly hired staff into an organization, is a complex but very crucial task. In this process, new employees learn how the organization is built, what tools are used and what rules apply. They take in the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors which they need to fulfill their roles effectively. If the organization fails in this task, several problems are likely to occur, including ignorance of important policies, ineffective workflows, employee dissatisfaction, and termination of employment during the probationary period. On the other hand, a well thought-out onboarding process can reduce support tickets by providing all relevant information in advance, secure the knowledge of and compliance with the organizational rules, and boost satisfaction simply by giving new staff the feeling of a warm welcome.

Unlike in large enterprises, the onboarding process at universities often is not very formalized, especially for employees outside the administration. In the faculties, for example, the quality of the onboarding depends on the commitment and knowledge of the responsible boss or colleague and is therefore rather random. The content provided on the intranet is often not suitable for new employees because they lack the experience to filter out relevant details from the mass of information. For new students, the situation is even worse and as they solely depend on information provided by student council and lecturers. In consequence, information that is not faculty-related but focusses on IT, library and campus management processes is not covered. At this point, IT can be a tremendous support.

At Münster University, the IT Center, the Department for IT and Process Management, the Department for Personnel Development, the Website Team and the faculties formed a task force, which promotes an onboarding portal. Initially, the focus of the task force's work is on new faculty staff, but the results can be used for other groups such as students at a later stage.

The project has two different objectives: First, it aims to ensure that new employees receive the most important information directly and in a condensed and motivating form, so that they can internalize it quickly and easily. Secondly, it aims to ensure that new staff and students make some important

settings (i.e. set a new password, register for central services) and acknowledge crucial rules (i.e. terms of use for the university IT system).



Picture 1: Screenshot of the planned onboarding website.

To achieve the first objective, an onboarding portal is planned. Every new employee is invited by e-mail to visit the portal. The information is presented in form of an interactive drawing showing an office in which each object represents a relevant topic (see picture 1). To name a few examples: a computer represents the university IT, a globe stands for business trips, and a cup refers to the cafeteria. The selection of topics is limited to the essentials, so that the portal remains manageable in terms of content. In this way, new employees know directly what is important and have a much easier start into their daily work at the Münster University than in the past. Some modifications of the portal are thinkable: In order to internalize the information, a classic e-learning approach could be chosen in which information units are activated one after the other (e.g. on a daily basis). This could be combined with gaming aspects in the sense of rewards for completed units.

The second objective is addressed by a multistep wizard, which addresses legal aspects, security aspects, and selected service information. During the process, users have to agree to the university IT's terms of use and change their central password. Optionally, they can take precautions against password loss and adjust their e-mail settings. Then, a limited number of IT services is presented (including the printing service, the cloud storage service, software provision, and IT courses) and the user has the opportunity to register directly where applicable. The wizard is displayed to each user the first time they log-in to the university's IT systems - and, if necessary, at every new login as long as the wizard has not been completed. Of course, users can change their settings at any time in the university IT's selfcare portal "MyZIV". Since MyZIV itself provides many additional, sometimes very special options and is therefore not very suitable for new users, the wizard will be an ideal complement.

3. AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

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