



# The Cambridge Perspective

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## Executive OnBoarding: Secure Your Search Investment



Last year, Canadian companies spent over \$3 billion on executive search services to locate and recruit the best talent available, but research conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) indicates that up to 60% of the executives hired had significant difficulty adjusting to their new roles. Why? Because most organizations do little or nothing to support their newly hired executive's integration.

Even the most talented executives can find themselves frustrated and wondering why they moved, particularly when facing uncertainty and a perceived lack of direction or support in their first six months.

Yet, many organizations are simply unaware of the need for guidance, assuming their new executive will work it out on his/her own,

and as a result, they often left to fend for themselves, often with poor results.

### Who Needs OnBoarding?

Certain critical roles can pose significant and unexpected challenges because of their ambiguity, sensitivity, complexity, etc. For example, a new executive from outside the organization assumes a key leadership position during a turbulent period; a technical expert with limited managerial experience assumes a broader leadership role; a new leader's department is experiencing difficulties; or the executive is filling a newly created or an evolving position.

Most organizations simply assume that their executives will "hit the ground running" and repeat their past successes on their own.

But they fail to recognize that the executive's past success may have been attributable, at least in part, to the support and direction provided by their previous employer. Is it reasonable to expect a new individual to lead and make important decisions without clear direction and support?

At some point in their careers, most executives will meet unexpected roadblocks they simply don't have the tools to overcome on their own. For some, it is role ambiguity; some are unprepared for their new organization's cultural environment, while others struggle

with building their teams to reach peak performance goals.

### What's the Problem?

Based on research conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council, as well as our own work with clients, we have identified several common challenges that can cause executives to derail at new companies, or in new roles in their existing organizations.

These common derailers include:

#### Jumping the gun:

New leaders can often charge in too quickly, and assume everything is "broken", instead of identifying small, quick wins to build positive momentum and lay a foundation for future initiatives.

#### Leader arrogance:

Some newly placed leaders don't take the time to understand their new organization, and pay respect to its history and successes.

**Building relationships:** Many new executives do not invest proactively in building relationships with key stakeholders at every level.

**Leadership style:** New leaders may not adapt their leadership style to fit their new team and organizational culture.

**Clarity of expectations:** New leaders often misread and misjudge the dynamics, expectations and requirements of their new organization and role.



2323 Yonge St., Ste. 203  
Toronto, ON, M4P 2C9  
Phone: 416-484-8408  
Fax: 416-484-0151  
mail@cambridgmgmt.com  
www.cambridgmgmt.com



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**Cultural Misalignment:** Many new leaders don't invest the time to learn about the organization's culture, systems and political landscape, and are unable to make an impact.

### Reduce Your Risk

The costs of losing a critical executive are substantial, from direct replacement costs of 200-250% of annual compensation for executive positions to less quantifiable costs related to business opportunity loss and poor morale.

The good news is you can reduce the risk!

We have developed a systematic process that involves a Cambridge Coach actively working with the new leader, his or her hiring manager and others who are important to the new leader's success. We refer to this process as Executive OnBoarding. It reduces the risk of failure and accelerates the executive's climb to peak performance.

By providing Executive OnBoarding Coaching, you can improve your new executive's chances of success in the new role, and secure your considerable executive search investment. Our Executive OnBoarding process helps to build a platform for new leaders to accelerate organizational learning and offers the new leader::

- A timely, in-depth understanding of the culture;
- Organizational knowledge that clearly defines the needs and expectations of their peers and subordinates;
- A political roadmap to avoid political potholes and leverage relationships with key stakeholders;
- Feedback and coaching on their leadership style, strengths and development needs to

support success in their new role; and,

- Practical advice on how to produce the strategic results he/she was hired to accomplish.

Our Executive OnBoarding process combines the benefits of executive coaching with assessment, structured feedback and facilitated meetings with key stakeholders, and focuses the new leader's attention on those areas that need to be mastered and managed effectively for successful integration.

The overall OnBoarding process combined with a needs assessment and our understanding of your organization involves a series of steps and key activities to build the relationship with the new leader, address potential derailers and create impact. Typically, these activities occur in four phases over the course of 3 to 6 months but each engagement is carefully tailored to meet each client's specific needs.

### The Benefits of OnBoarding

In addition to enhancing leadership capabilities in general, Executive OnBoarding Coaching:

- Solidifies the relationship between the new leader and his/her boss by clarifying and defining key objectives, skills and issues to focus on in the first month, the first quarter, and the first year;
- Accelerates the new leader's learning curve by focusing on critical objectives necessary for success;
- Strengthens the relationship building process among the new executive,

his/her team, and key stakeholders in order to gain the support necessary to achieve goals;

- Builds a practical twelve-month roadmap that outlines clear goals and ways to achieve them, and provides ongoing coaching to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

### A Proven Record of Success

Cambridge Management Planning offers a comprehensive and personalized approach to Executive OnBoarding Coaching. We don't just work with individuals - we start with the organization of which they are part. We take the time to understand the role and its relevant goals and issues and then work with your executive to maximize their effectiveness in the new role, keeping them consistently focused on the critical steps required to succeed.

Investing a fraction of the recruitment cost to support a new leader's transition is a sound, practical business investment. Call us to discuss how we can help secure your search investment by providing Executive OnBoarding Coaching support.

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**Cambridge Management Planning offers a full suite of services including Executive Search, Director Search, Interim Management, Executive Coaching and Career Transition services. Call us for more information:**

Graham Carver, President - Ext. 203  
Elesha Browne, Partner - Ext. 226  
David Howes, Partner - Ext. 210  
Chris Poole, Partner - Ext. 205  
Peter Shrive, Partner - Ext. 204  
Terry Wray, Partner - Ext. 202

2323 Yonge Street, Ste. 203  
Toronto, ON M4P 2C9  
Telephone: 416-484-8408

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**Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy with the proof.**

*John Kenneth Galbraith*

*Proud member of*

