



COMMUNICATION PLANNING



CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Improving the Employee Onboarding Experience at a US Federal Government Agency

A large United States Federal Government Agency (FGA) set out on a mission to improve the employee onboarding experience for both permanent and seasonal employees. This is the story of how gothamCulture teamed up with our contract partners to help FGA accomplish that goal.

In December 2019, FGA leadership noticed that delays and impediments in the employee onboarding experience were negatively impacting productivity, work performance, engagement, morale, and retention for both their seasonal and permanent employees. The FGA then engaged their trusted consulting team, who then called upon gothamCulture (gC) to help better understand the onboarding experience and design solutions to address existing impediments. gC gathered thousands of data inputs by conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews with FGA employees from all across the agency's regions and functional areas, then used these inputs to provide analysis and data-driven recommendations. These recommendations resulted in the FGA enacting change initiatives such as:

- piloting technology to improve communication between a new hire and their hiring manager
- simplifying the onboarding process by reducing redundancy
- allowing unrelated procedural steps to occur simultaneously instead of linearly, increasing the frequency of human-to-human touch points throughout the process, and
- establishing a feedback mechanism to measure and monitor improvements.



The Need

FGA leadership noticed that delays and impediments in the employee onboarding experience were negatively impacting productivity, work performance, engagement, morale, and retention. As a result, poor onboarding practices impeded the agency's ability to accomplish mission objectives and increased the agency's costs to recruit, hire, train, and effectively retain and manage the workforce.

The FGA created a "New Hire Experience Tiger Team" consisting of key stakeholders from across all of the agency's regions and functional areas. The Tiger Team's goal was to streamline the new hire onboarding process with a seamless tool set that would create an onboarding experience consisting of visibility

and accountability for all steps in a way that is inviting, easy to follow, quick, secure, and user-friendly.

The FGA retained gothamCulture as a member of this Tiger Team in (December 2019) to administer surveys and focus groups with new hires, hiring officials, and former employees to better understand the onboarding experience from the point of view of the new hire. Our analysis included the weeks leading up to the new hire's first day on the job through their first six (6) months.

The Intervention

To better understand the onboarding experience from the perspectives of those who go through it, gC created and administered five (5) surveys to collect data from permanent employees, hiring officials for permanent employees, seasonal employees, hiring officials for seasonal employees, and prior employees. gothamCulture also facilitated five (5) focus groups to map the existing onboarding process from the user's perspective, understand pain points, and gather solutions. Using a design thinking approach, we used the results of each group as inputs for the ensuing groups to maximize learning and insight. This allowed us to build solutions based on the needs of the people and the team's requirements for success.

The Impact

gothamCulture surveyed over 6,500 new hires, hiring officials and prior employees to better understand the onboarding experience from their perspective and use their inputs to build recommendations on how to improve. The surveys focused on the employee's experience receiving equipment, support, and communications during the time period starting from the application process through the first six (6) months on the job. gothamCulture combined this survey data with our focus group and interview data to generate actionable and impactful recommendations to the Tiger Team and the FGA leadership team.

As a result of gothamCulture's recommendations, the Tiger Team implemented a series of measures to improve communication channels with new employees, remove internal

administrative and logistical process barriers, and establish accountability for the agency's onboarding process. Specifically, the FGA began implementing process changes to deliver essential equipment and system access in a timely manner, while allowing for unrelated tasks to occur simultaneously.

They also began piloting a communications platform to improve the communication relationship between a new hire and their respective hiring official. The FGA is also looking at longer-term actions that include establishing a feedback mechanism that will help Agency leadership monitor improvements to the onboarding process and identify additional opportunities to optimize it going forward.

"I appreciate the great support we've had from gothamCulture throughout the Tiger Team project, which helped us to make the business case that influenced leadership decisions to (a) resource a future state onboarding tool and (b) continue onboarding as a permanent agency program. This has truly been a successful partnership!"

- Senior Federal Government Executive



The Future

Looking ahead, our contract partners continue to support the FGA by piloting a new service that enhances communication between employees and their hiring officials. They are also focusing efforts on implementing an end-to-end technology solution to automate certain steps of the onboarding process, provide insight to an employee's onboarding progress, streamline hiring efforts across the Agency, and reduce the time and expense associated with onboarding new employees.

gothamCulture[®]

HELPING NAVIGATE CHANGE

About gothamCulture

gothamCulture is a management consulting firm that draws on our associate's comprehensive expertise and experience in the areas of culture, leadership, and people strategy to provide innovative solutions and client-service excellence. Our work is guided by our deeply held shared values, including a commitment to each other and our clients, unwavering integrity, the pursuit of excellence, relatable expertise, and authentic community.

For more information, visit www.gothamCulture.com