

Electronic Supplementary Material for

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Table E1. Interview questions

Interview number	Topic	Interview questions
1st interview (during the 1st month after organizational entry)	1	<p>Before taking up a new position, applicants usually go through a selection process. You probably also went through such a process before you started.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was this recruitment process like for your current position? <p>After you successfully went through the recruitment process, you were able to start your new job. We are now interested in how you experienced your start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was the time like between the acceptance and your first day at work? ▪ What happened on your first day at work?
	2	<p>Joining a new organization means changing the work environment you are familiar with. This is often accompanied by various challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What challenges did you experience around the time you joined your new employer?
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which of the above-mentioned activities, that took place during your recruitment process and up to now, have helped you to overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ What else helped you overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ Did you have the opportunity to contribute to overcoming these challenges? In what way?
	4	<p>Please think about activities you have performed before your current employment. These may be full- or part-time jobs, as well as internships or other professional experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which of these activities are comparable to your current job? In what way? ▪ How long have you performed these activities? ▪ Are these experiences having an impact on your current job? In what way?
2nd interview (during the 3rd month after organizational entry)	1	<p>In our last interview, we already discussed some topics concerning your start in this company. Thus, when answering the following questions, please only think about the period between our last meeting and today's conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What activities have been conducted in the meantime that are specifically designed for new employees?
	2	<p><i>Stimulated recall:</i> In our first interview, you mentioned ... and ... as challenges during your organizational entry. <i>[Interviewer repeats the challenges the interviewee mentioned in the 1st interview.]</i></p>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which of the above-mentioned activities, that took place between our 1st interview and today, have helped you to overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ What else helped you overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ Did you have the opportunity to contribute to overcoming these challenges? In what way?
3rd interview (during the 6th month after organizational entry)	1	<p>In our last two interviews, we already discussed some topics concerning your start in this company. Thus, when answering the following questions, please only think about the period between our last meeting and today's conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What activities have been conducted in the meantime that are specifically designed for new employees?
	2	<p><i>Stimulated recall:</i> In our first interview, you mentioned ... and ... as challenges during your organizational entry. <i>[Interviewer repeats the challenges the interviewee mentioned in the 1st interview.]</i></p>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which of the above-mentioned activities, that took place between our 2nd interview and today, have helped you to overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ What else helped you overcome these challenges? In what way? ▪ Did you have the opportunity to contribute to overcoming these challenges? In what way?

Table E2. Coding manual

Main level	Sublevel	Coding rule	Examples from the literature ¹	Examples from the data
<i>RQ 1: Which challenges do newcomers perceive when starting with a new employer?</i>				
Professional	–	Code text passages in which newcomers describe deficits in the knowledge and skills needed to perform the new job, difficulty understanding their new role, or performing their new job duties. In each case, the challenge is rooted in the job itself or the newcomer's job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities. Third parties are not involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ deficits in technical knowledge, deficits in professional experience, and difficulties in transferring existing knowledge to the new work context (Lim et al., 2016; Unson & Richardson, 2013) ▪ lack of knowledge about processes and existing conventions, lacking or even inadequate documentation, as well as a lack of technical background knowledge (Balali et al., 2018; Steinmacher et al., 2019) ▪ lengthy processes, difficulties in finding an appropriate task, high complexity of one's new job duties (Balali et al., 2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „Getting to know the new processes and simply how to behave in specific cases. The topic is completely new to me. Requesting resources is completely new for me. That was never a problem before. In the old company, there were two of us who used to be administrators, which meant that I was allowed to do everything. I had access to everything and was allowed to do everything. Now [my permissions are limited].” (P05 – <i>understand the new processes</i>) ▪ “A challenge is definitely the new topic I am working on now. I previously worked [in the same field, but for other end products]. The current area is something completely new in terms of the topic.” (P09 – <i>familiarize with the new topic</i>)
Social	Inter-personal	Code text passages in which the newcomers describe difficulties in interacting and building relationships with actors in the new work environment that are either purely social or address job-related collaboration with the actors of the new work environment. Anyway, interpersonal challenges always involve two or more parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conflicts with co-workers or supervisors (Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016) ▪ lacking support, delayed feedback, or rude responses (Steinmacher et al., 2019) ▪ insufficient social competence, different levels of professional experience, age differences, cultural backgrounds, or an overall harsh project atmosphere (Balali et al., 2018) ▪ different ethical, moral, or cultural attitudes (Unson & Richardson, 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „First of all, to work with other people – that is obvious, I think. Because of the situation I am coming from, I wondered if I even get along with anyone in the office.” (P06 – <i>working with new colleagues</i>) ▪ “The normal thing. Getting to know each other first (...) getting into the processes, getting into the topics – the normal thing (...) So for me it is also difficult, I want to function – patience is my problem.” (P04 – <i>getting to know the new colleagues</i>)
	Intra-personal	Code text passages in which newcomers describe challenges related to their personality traits, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, or norms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lack of self-confidence or difficulties in learning new things (Unson & Richardson, 2013) ▪ impatience, underestimating the new job duties, or lacking communication skills (Steinmacher et al., 2019) ▪ too ambitious to settle for easy tasks, shyness, disinterest, or unable to deal with criticism and conflict (Balali et al., 2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „And perhaps the great variety of topics that exist here. I am already confronted with many topics. Of course, I have been used to it for the last few years, I know what is going on and I am familiar with it, and of course, I can start working right away and be proactive. And now I can't do that at all. There are so many new things. And it takes 1.5 to 2 years to get used to it because there is so much. And I am noticing that now. I first have to get used to the fact that I am allowed to learn and don't have to deliver immediately. But it is a good thing that there is such an induction and training phase. It is an intrapersonal adjustment.” (P10 – <i>have patience for training</i>)

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Contextual	Organizational culture	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes having difficulty understanding, appropriately implementing, and/or identifying with cultural norms in the new work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and implement the values and norms of a new work environment (Unson & Richardson, 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „It is hard to say. I come from a completely different industry. There, everything is hectic, everything fast, everything yesterday, everything immediately, into the cold water, learning everything on your own. Here, it is all about winding down, slowly coming in, and making sure everything runs accurately. Unlike the industry, I previously worked in, where everything is superficial, and you don't know what you will end up doing. Here, learning is required and you have a good feeling. More of a positive challenge.” (P04 – <i>internalize the new work culture</i>)
	Work setting	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes having problems settling into the new organizational work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in work conditions, such as the weekly workload (Unson & Richardson, 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „Another challenge is the understanding of how the whole company is structured. Who the holding company is, where the IT department is, what committees there are etc. The whole organization behind it.” (P02 – <i>understand organizational structure</i>) “The building itself and finding my way around. I am glad that I found my workplace at all because I didn't know my way around at all and it is a big building, and everything looks the same.” (P10 – <i>find your way around in new premises</i>)
	Private sphere	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes having problems in his or her private context that are due to the new job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adjustment of private living conditions (Polach, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „And the private side. I have moved here, so of course I had to get used to the surroundings a bit and settle in and so on. (P08 – <i>settle in a new place of residence</i>)

RQ 2: How does onboarding help newcomers overcome perceived challenges during organizational entry?

Onboarding	Inform – Communication	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes communication efforts undertaken by agents of the new employer. This includes the provision of one-way messages and opportunities for two-way dialogues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code text passages in which the newcomer describes communication efforts undertaken by agents of the new employer. This includes the provision of one-way messages and opportunities for two-way dialogues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a brochure during recruitment outlining benefits and opportunities. Scheduling a conference call question and answer session for new hires. Meet representatives from Human Resources or a senior leader. The supervisor blocks time to spend with the newcomer.
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Main level	Sublevel	Coding rule	Examples from the literature ¹	Examples from the data
	Inform – Resources	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes the provision of materials or support. Unlike communication efforts, the new employee must take the initiative to access these resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code text passages in which the newcomer describes the provision of materials or support. Unlike communication efforts, the new employee must take the initiative to access these resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a section of the company website just for a new hire with things like a glossary of company terms and a list of key contacts. Having a newcomer hotline. Providing an initial plan outlining development opportunities. The workplace is fully equipped (including all supplies, materials, and equipment).
	Inform – Training	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes activities to systematically acquire skills, behaviors, and/or knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code text passages in which the newcomer describes activities to systematically acquire skills, behaviors, and/or knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal orientation programs (online or classroom-based, company-wide or specific to the work unit). Attending a session where presentations were given by fellow associates who were experts on certain tasks or procedures. Training on job skills (on-the-job or off-the-job). Watching a new employee video. Observing fellow associates for a while. Having a tour of company facilities.
	Welcome	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes activities that provide opportunities to meet and socialize with other members of the organization and/or in which the newcomer’s arrival is celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned activities to ensure new hires meet their coworkers and other key individuals. Receiving a welcome phone call/email/letter from a senior leader an executive/the supervisor. Receiving a welcome kit, company t-shirt, or other items with the company logo or name on them. Participating in an exercise/ a gathering/ welcome lunch to meet and get to know fellow associates. Having a welcome celebration for newcomers. Inviting newcomers to participate in a social event or activity outside of work. Announcing the newcomers’ arrival in an email, on the company website, or in a company newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Yes, attending the team meeting [when I was still in the hiring phase]. That is where I got to know the people, and that is when you can tell if the chemistry is right if there is someone who doesn’t like you at all.” (P01, <i>day-to-look-in</i>) “The introduction round was not just to me, but also the colleagues. They told me ‘I am here, if there is anything you want to know, just ask. Feel free to ask me 100 times.’ It was all very frank.” (P04, <i>introduction round</i>) “Another thing that has helped very well with the private issue [are] group events. [...] We have been playing soccer golf more often in the last few weeks, so you see the people again and you can link up privately.” (P08, <i>group event</i>)
	Guide	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes activities that serve as a personal guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A formal ‘buddy’ system that assigns an experienced coworker to each new hire. A welcome coordinator oversees all aspects of the orientation process. Being assigned to a mentor of higher rank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In the daily meetings my colleague and I have with our buddy, we also learn about the technical area. It is not just about organizational stuff, but also professional or technical topics.” (P03, <i>buddy</i>) “For the topic of getting to know contacts and interfaces, the induction plan helps; it also contained information about which departments and people we work with.” (P08, <i>introduction plan</i>)

Main level	Sublevel	Coding rule	Examples from the literature ¹	Examples from the data
Individual factors	–	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes how he or she has helped overcome perceived challenges through his or her efforts.	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I ask questions, that is, to probe deeper when they were presenting their topics. So, taking the initiative is important.” (P08, <i>information seeking</i>) ▪ „Well, there are some private activities I do. [...] Usually, I listen to music loudly on the way home, that is a good 20 minutes that I have. And while I am doing that, I can relax a little bit, but also do some good reflecting.” (P05, <i>relaxation techniques</i>)
Other activities	–	Code text passages in which the newcomer describes activities that helped overcome perceived challenges and do not represent onboarding activities or individual efforts.	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „I got a microwave in the break room.” (P10, <i>received extra equipment</i>) ▪ „The activities that I would assign to ‘getting to know colleagues’ [are] simply being there and working with them. Nothing was already there as an activity, but the work itself, and that is how I got to know my colleagues. And that has worked perfectly.” (P10, <i>doing the job</i>)

Note. ¹ For RQ2, examples from the literature are adopted from Klein & Heuser (2008), p. 319, and Klein & Polin (2012), p. 270, for all onboarding categories.

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