

Bonds between new hires lead to early success

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Settling into a new job is no easy task, but the connections made among other newcomers in the beginning days could be key to early success.

That's what the latest research from four faculty members at the

University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management suggests. Amid the "Great Resignation" during the COVID-19 pandemic when more people are rethinking jobs and starting new careers, these findings offer tangible advice for a changing workforce.

While there have been previous studies looking at the impact of relationships between veteran employees and newcomers, this research specifically looked at the importance of relationships between fellow newcomers. Co-authored by Associate Professor Betty (Le) Zhou, Professor John Kammeyer-Mueller, Associate Professor Priti Shah, and Assistant Professor Elizabeth Campbell, and published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the paper found:

- New hires' relationships with other newcomers in their core unit helped them learn their jobs more quickly
- New employees should avoid excessive [networking](#) because it can slow their adjustment

The researchers conducted two studies. The first involved tracking 189 new hires in a Fortune Global 500 conglomerate in South Korea over their first 100 days on the job and reviewing their job performance and the firm's turnover data. The second study followed U.S.-based students in the first semester of their master's degree programs and noted their interactions with their peers.

"For these newcomers [in both settings], it's more beneficial if they can first concentrate on getting to know newcomers in their unit because the connections they make outside the unit, at least within the time window we studied, there's not a particular benefit," said Zhou, the lead author.

The research shows there's a balance between being a social butterfly and staying inside one's shell. The two studies found newcomers achieved role clarity faster in their jobs when they had a medium

amount of relationships with their new peers. Quicker growth in role clarity led to higher job satisfaction and performance, and less turnover within the first three years.

Zhou says creating these relationships allows for rookies to become a sounding board and a learning partner for each other as they come to understand their new positions.

"If you have another person who's also seeing this for the first time, you might say, 'Oh, what do you think that means? Is that what we're supposed to do? And does that make sense?'" explains Zhou. "It's a perspective and learning process that is different from talking to a person who's already been there a while."

The findings suggest companies should continue investing time in new hire orientations, Zhou says. Though, she reiterates, these programs should offer focused networking opportunities, so [newcomers](#) don't branch out too much too early.

"At the end of the day, in the first few months, understanding your job, mastering your tasks, so you can do what you're hired to do, I think that's always a priority," she says.

More information: The paper is available on a paid basis at psycnet.apa.org/buy/2021-45250-001

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