# High-tech, high-touch: using automation to win the 90-day retention battle

Transform your onboarding process with automation and a personal touch. Discover strategies to boost retention in the critical first 90 days.

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The first 90 days of an employee's journey are the most decisive.

This is the window where confidence is built or quietly eroded, where expectations either align with reality or begin to drift apart, where a new hire decides (often subconsciously) whether this is a place they can see themselves staying.

And yet, many onboarding experiences still feel stuck in another era. Long email chains, static PDFs, delayed responses, and disconnected systems slow down the process and can leave new hires questioning efficiency.

Without realizing it, organizations are sending a message: *This is how we operate and this is what you can expect.*

For clinical managers, operations leaders, and recruiters, that message matters more than ever. Because today's workforce expects something different. They expect speed, clarity, simplicity, and above all, a sense that their time and experience are valued.

Fortunately, technology has made it possible to deliver on those expectations. When paired with the right human touch, it can transform your entire retention strategy.

## Why the first 90 days matter more than ever

There are only a few moments in the employee lifecycle that truly define long-term retention. The first 90 days sit at the top of that list.

This is when new hires are forming habits by learning systems, navigating relationships, and understanding how work gets done.

If that experience feels chaotic or unclear, it creates friction that compounds quickly. Small frustrations turn into larger doubts. And before long, disengagement begins to take hold.

On the flip side, when onboarding is structured, supportive, and intuitive, something very different happens. Employees gain confidence, they feel capable, and they begin to see a future within the organization.

## Outdated onboarding creates barriers

It's easy to underestimate how much friction still exists in many onboarding processes.

Think about the typical experience:

A new hire receives multiple emails with attachments. They're asked to download, print, complete, and return forms. They log into different systems that do not communicate with each other. They wait for responses that may take hours or days.

Each step adds a little more effort, a little more confusion, and a little more delay.

While each piece may seem minor on its own, together they create a very clear impression: *This is harder than it should be.*

For field-based clinicians in particular, this friction is amplified. They're not sitting at a desk. They are moving between patients and managing schedules on the go.

If your onboarding process is not built for that reality, it becomes a barrier instead of a bridge.

## The power of SMS and mobile-first engagement

One of the most striking insights from recent workforce data is the gap between how organizations communicate and how employees respond.

Email response rates often sit around 10 to 12%. Text messaging, on the other hand, sees engagement rates **closer to 90%.**

That is not a small difference. It's a complete shift in how communication should be approached.

For operations leaders, this is where technology can immediately change the game. Moving onboarding communication and document collection to mobile-first platforms removes friction and meets employees where they already are.

Instead of waiting for an email to be opened, you can:

- Send onboarding steps via text with direct links
- Enable document completion on a mobile device
- Provide real-time updates and reminders
- Allow candidates to respond instantly

The result is a smoother, more intuitive experience that feels aligned with how people live and work today. And when that experience starts on day one, it sets the tone for everything that follows.

## Designing a 30-, 60-, and 90-day roadmap that works

Retention requires structure, visibility, and ongoing support. That's where a clearly defined 30-, 60-, and 90-day roadmap becomes essential. The most effective organizations are building intentional milestones that guide employees through their early journey.

**Day 30: building technical confidence**
The first 30 days should focus on one core outcome: competence.

New hires need to feel confident using the tools, systems, and workflows required for their role. This includes everything from EMR documentation to scheduling and communication platforms.

At this stage, success looks like:

- Completing tasks independently with minimal friction
- Understanding daily workflows
- Gaining comfort with core technology

This is also where many onboarding programs fall short. If training is too theoretical or disconnected from real-world scenarios, confidence never fully develops.

Which is why *how* you train matters just as much as *what* you train.

**Clinician-led training builds trust faster**
One of the most impactful shifts organizations can make is rethinking who delivers training.Too often,

technology training is led by someone who understands the system, but not the reality of using it in the field.

That disconnect creates hesitation. New hires may understand the steps, but not how to apply them in real situations. And that gap can lead to what many experience as imposter syndrome.

The solution is simple, but powerful: **have clinicians train clinicians.**

When training is led by someone who has lived the day-to-day experience, it becomes immediately more relevant. They can speak to real challenges, offer practical tips, and provide context that goes beyond the screen.

It also builds trust. New hires feel supported by someone who understands their role, not just the system they are using.

That combination accelerates confidence in a way that traditional training often cannot.

**Day 60: strengthening connection and culture**
By the 60-day mark, the focus should begin to shift.Technical skills are developing and workflows are becoming more familiar. Now the question becomes, do they feel connected?

This is where culture and peer relationships come into play.

One of the most effective strategies is introducing non-supervisory mentorship. Someone who is not their manager, but who can act as a guide, a sounding board, and a resource. This creates a safe space for questions that might not otherwise be asked. It also reinforces a sense of belonging within the team.

At this stage, successful organizations are intentionally creating opportunities for connection:

- Peer mentorship programs
- Informal check-ins
- Team-based collaboration

**Day 90: reinforcing value through leadership touchpoints**
Reaching 90 days is a critical milestone. Employees who make it this far are significantly more likely to stay long term. But that doesn't mean the work is done.

In fact, this is the perfect moment to reinforce their value. One of the most effective ways to do this is through leadership touchpoints. Not just from direct managers, but from broader leadership within the organization.

When employees hear directly from leadership, it sends a powerful message. You matter here, your work is seen, and you are part of something bigger.

These conversations don't need to be long or formal. What matters is that they are intentional and personal. A simple check-in can have a lasting impact on how an employee perceives their future within the organization.

## Automation should enhance (not replace) the human experience

There is often a misconception that automation removes the human element from onboarding and engagement.

In reality, the opposite is true when it is done well. Automation handles the repetitive, administrative tasks that slow everything down. It ensures consistency, reduces errors, and speeds up communication.

It also creates space for managers to have meaningful conversations, for mentors to build relationships, and for leadership to connect with employees in a more intentional way.

The goal is not to replace human interaction, but to elevate it. When technology and human connection work together, onboarding becomes both efficient and deeply personal.

## Finding the leaks in your retention bucket

If retention is a challenge, the answer is rarely a single fix. It's usually a series of small leaks that may not seem significant. But together, they create enough friction to push employees away.

The organizations that are winning the 90-day retention battle are the ones willing to look closely at each step of the journey. To ask where delays exist, where confusion happens, and where engagement drops off.

Then technology and thoughtful design should be used together to close those gaps.

## A smarter way to onboard and retain

There is no shortage of tools available today, but tools alone are not the solution. It's how they are used, how they are integrated, and how they support a broader strategy that truly makes the difference.

This is where platforms like Viventium come into play. By bringing together recruiting, onboarding, communication, and workforce management into a single, connected experience, organizations can reduce friction and create a more seamless journey from candidate to long-term employee.

Meet employees where they are, support them intentionally, and design every step of the experience with their success in mind.

Is your onboarding process truly mobile-ready? Are you engaging employees in the way they expect? Are you setting them up for success in those critical first 90 days? Now is the time to find out.

Schedule a consultation to uncover the hidden gaps in your onboarding process and start building a retention strategy that works from day one.

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