

Learnovate's Remote Onboarding Project Summary Report

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1. Onboarding in the Online Environment (OBOE)

1.1. Background & work completed

Learnovate's Onboarding in the Online Environment project, renamed OBOE, kicked off in 2020 as a response to the global pandemic and the move towards online working and learning. With organisations having to onboard employees remotely, a number of challenges were identified as part of our initial piece of research such as a one-size-fits-all approach to onboarding and a lack of personalisation as well as feelings of isolation for new employees working remotely, leading to disengagement and often a lack of understanding about when to do certain tasks or even what needs to be done. Information is often pushed onto new employees instead of them accessing information if and when they need it, which is a challenge even in the face-to-face working environment.

Also, we found that the social element of onboarding is often overlooked, with explicit opportunities for employees to socially engage with each other often absent from the experience. The lack of 'water cooler moments' is one that a number of organisations began to see as a challenge, and not just in relation to onboarding, but in relation to the change to remote working in general.

Learnovate conducted a State of the Market review as part of this initial piece of research to identify what solutions currently existed in the market, and whether one solution existed that addressed all of the challenges identified as part of the research.

While a large number of solutions existed, with many more HR-focused tools moving into the onboarding space as a result of the pandemic, Learnovate found that while many of the tools and technologies were addressing a number of areas and issues, no one solution existed that would provide the optimum onboarding experience for a new employee that was focused solely on onboarding.

Also, as part of this initial piece of work, Learnovate developed an infographic for its members to provide insight into the elements of an effective onboarding experience (see Appendix & also available on Member Connect).

Following on from Stage 1 and our initial research work, the project moved to Stage 2 which consisted of Jobs-to-be-Done workshops to develop out the personas of the relevant stakeholders in the remote onboarding experience; namely, new employees, those responsible for onboarding in their organisations, and C-suite managers with a more general responsibility for employee engagement and productivity.

We worked closely with our Research Working Group (RWG) to identify key challenges, barriers, motivations, and personality traits of our personas with which we could ‘get out of the building’ and test our assumptions through semi-structured interviews and surveys.

This work was conducted over a number of weeks with key insights added to Stage 2 report prior to holding Solution Workshops with our RWG. As part of these workshops, we brainstormed, ideated, and prototyped potential solutions to some of the challenges we had identified and validated. It should be noted that all of these workshops were conducted remotely using an online whiteboarding tool, as we were still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and had RWG based at a range of international locations.

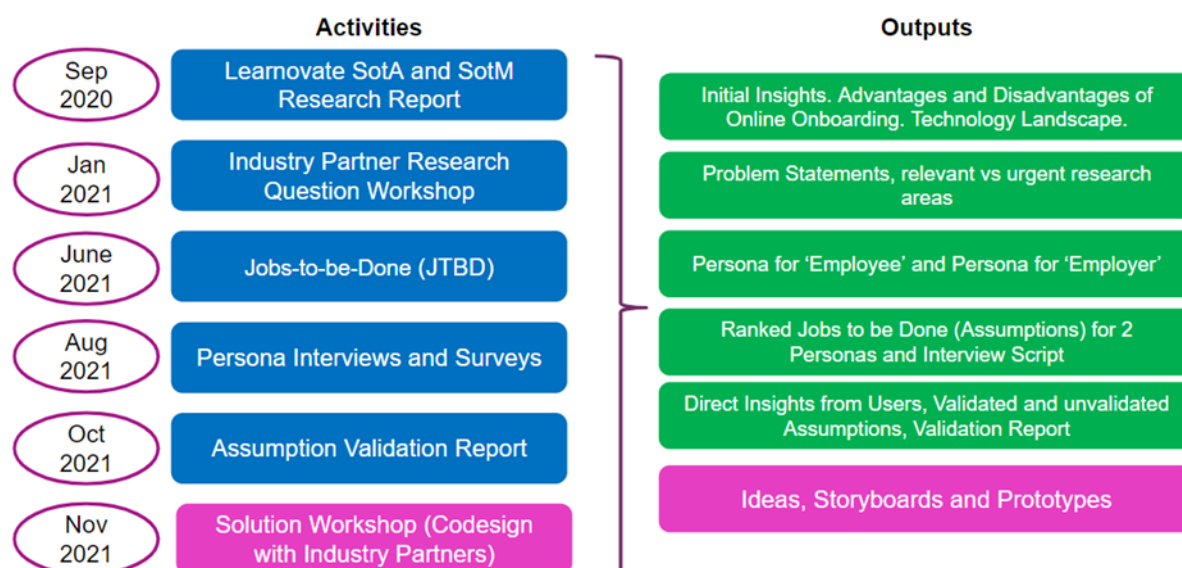


Figure 1. OBOE Work 2020-2021

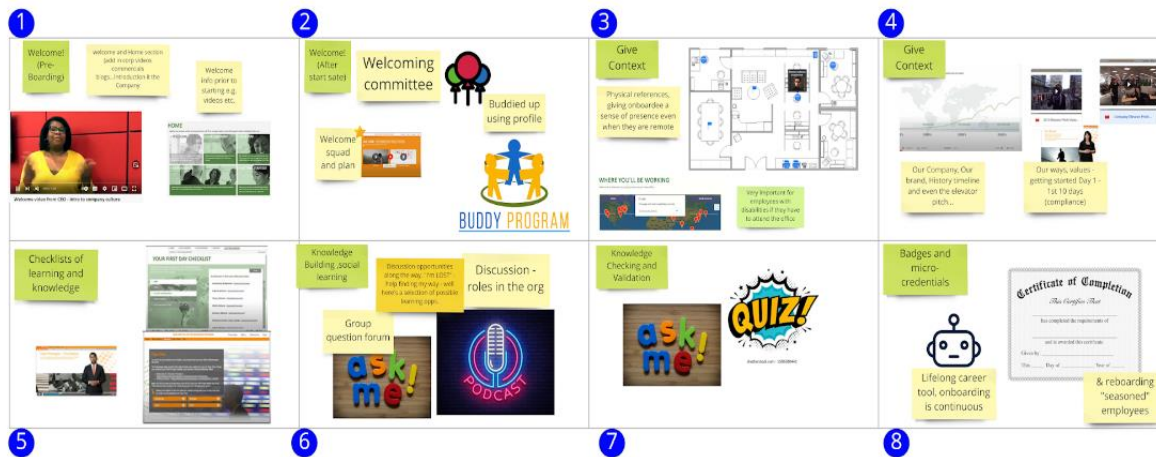
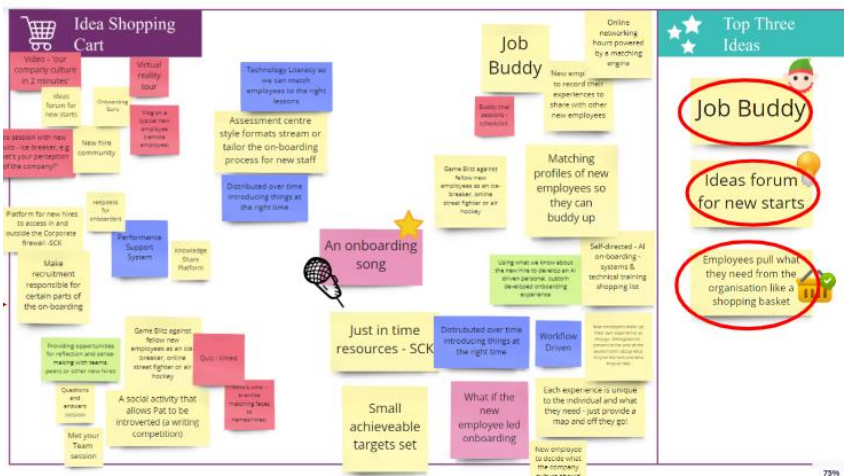


Figure 2. Initial Solution Workshops (examples of outputs)

The work also resulted in Learnovate developing wireframes for an onboarding solution that addressed all the challenges identified and prototyped as part of the work to date.

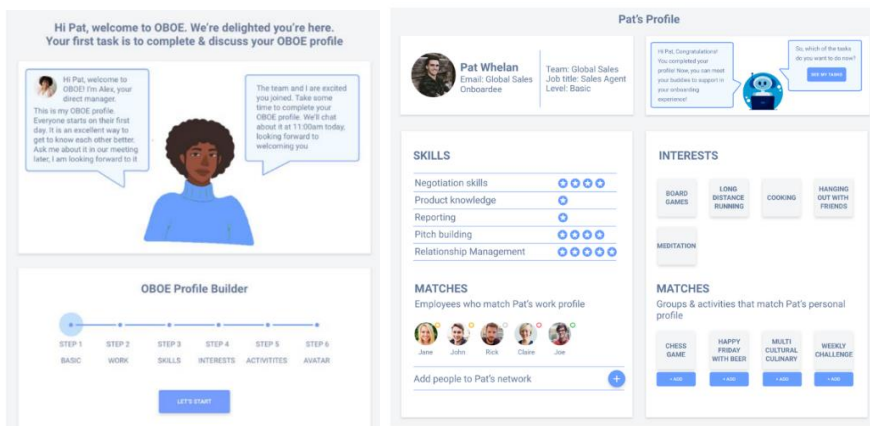


Figure 3. Examples of OBOE Wireframes

2. The move to OnboardBuddy

In May 2023, we decided to revisit the remote onboarding project to identify if there were elements of the solution that may be further developed, based on changes since the pandemic, particularly in relation to new approaches and the potential use of new technologies.

Learnovate facilitated a number of solution workshops to help to focus in on these potential tools and features, and to work with the RWG to identify a particular area of interest and one that may hold commercial viability.

There was certainly a more tech-focused approach this time around, with many participants referring to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it might be used to take some of the burden of onboarding away from employees without losing the personal touch and the social elements of the experience.

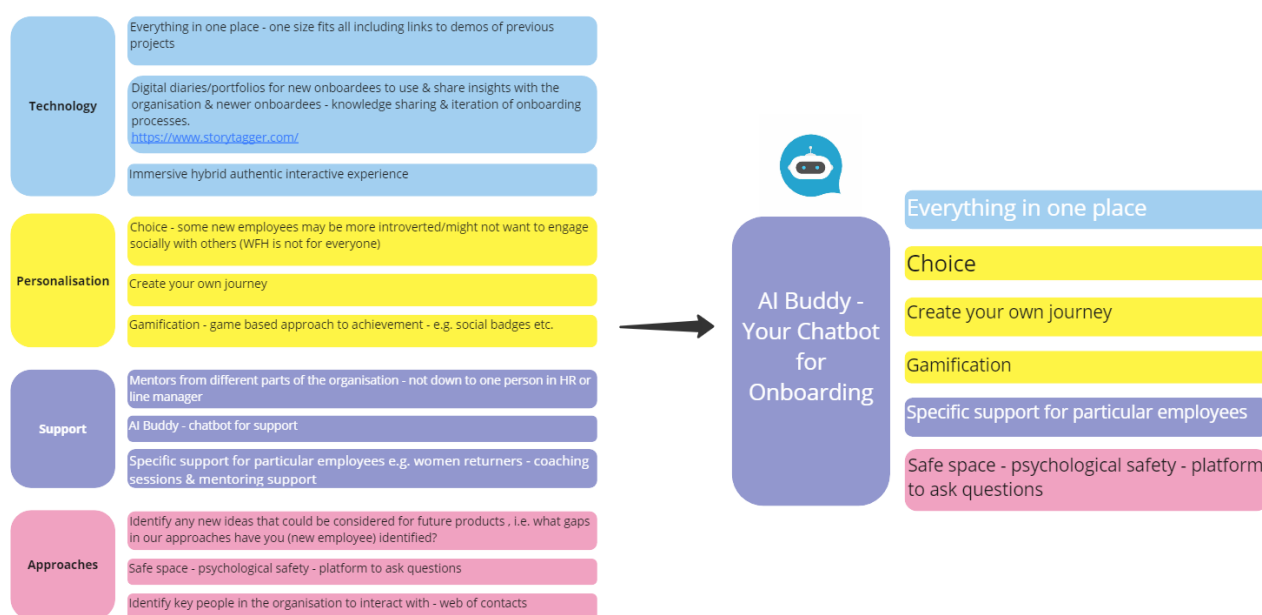


Figure 4. Insights from follow-on solution workshops

The Learnovate team worked with our in-house design team to develop a logo to complement the move from OBOE to OnboardBuddy (see below). This is still a work in progress as we gather feedback from our RWG.



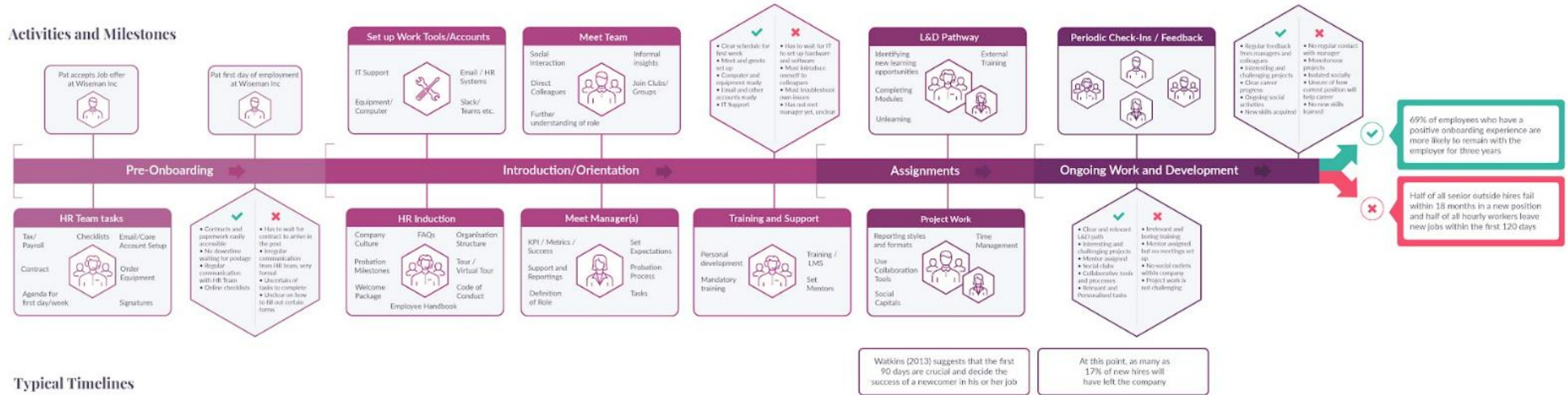
Figure 5. OBOE logo & tagline & new OnboardBuddy logo

Currently, we are working to identify potential commercial partners who are interested in working with us to move this project forward, and to build the OnboardBuddy solution with a view to integrating it into an organisation's existing HR or onboarding platform or Learning Management System.

3. Appendix: Onboarding Infographic



Activities and Milestones



Typical Timelines



Useful Tools for Online Onboarding

