

Introduction: You're at a Crossroads	B
What We Found, In a Nutshell6	5
Post-Acute Care Onboarding Isn't Doing Any Harm. Or Is It?	3
So, What Makes for a Good Onboarding Experience16 — and What Can Make It Great?	5
Great Post-Acute Care Onboarding Is About Key Moments	3
It's Time for a Re-Think: Digital Optimization for	2
About the Viventium Caregiver Onboarding Experience Report 36	5



# Introduction: You're at a Crossroads

# The post-acute care industry is at a crossroads, and managers and administrators are in the eye of the storm.

The Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) reported last year that the workforce shortage in home-based care has reached "crisis proportions." It says the gap between the number of patients and families seeking assistance and the availability of workers to provide that care is "accelerating at an unsustainable pace." The widening chasm is the result of several factors, including the projected doubling of the number of Americans over 65 years old in the coming decade.

Home-based care providers are already turning away over 25% of referred patients due to staff shortages, according to the HCAOA report.

KFF, the health policy research organization, reported in late 2022 that a widespread workforce shortage is the biggest challenge facing state Medicaid home- and community-based (HCBS) programs. KFF cited reduced numbers of potential

workers and an increased demand for services since the pandemic in all 50 states and D.C.

The organization cited in another report that employment in nursing care facilities is about 13% lower than before the pandemic. One reason is that "both home care jobs and institutional setting jobs [are] pulling from the same workforce pool."

Other reasons for the shortage are the same ones that post-acute care companies and other sectors that rely on hourly workers have always faced. A Great Place to Work® market survey last year of 4,200 hourly employees found the top four reasons hourly workers fail to thrive are the lack of:

- 1. Fair pay
- 3. Meaningful work
- 4. A workplace that is psychologically and emotionally healthy and safe

But, unlike any other industry, additional risks faced by post-acute care organizations make it even more challenging to stay competitive — maybe even to survive. Unlike other sectors, post-acute care leaders also contend with high employee turnover (a staggering 77% in 2022, according to the 2023 HCP Benchmarking Report); the inability to intake clients and grow revenue because of a lack of qualified staff; incredibly slim profit margins; and a tradition of having HR responsibilities handled by managers and administrators who have been asked to take on that role or gradually assumed more HR-related tasks. In short, HR departments in post-acute care are often not well oiled, well staffed, nor well certified.

#### So, what are managers and administrators in post-acute care organizations supposed to do about all of that?

After all, they probably feel helpless to control many of the challenges facing their organizations. And, they're already as busy as chameleons on plaid, trying to manage the myriad of responsibilities and tasks for which they're responsible day in and day out. Our latest research found that the "primary responsibilities" of post-acute care administrators are (with the most commonly cited first):

- Employee benefits
- Employee performance
- Employee training
- Managing payroll
- Employee satisfaction and engagement
- Employee records
- Employee grievances
- Onboarding
- Recruiting
- Compliance
- Offboarding

But, Viventium believes — and our new research shows — that managers and administrators can nonetheless have a huge impact on the steps that any home-, facility-, or communitybased care organization can take to better engage, motivate, and retain its caregiving staff. Additionally, we also found that a proactive and highly supportive approach from managers and administrators can only happen when the business decides to create an employee-first experience starting with every employee's first day on the job.

In fact, we infer from our findings a complacency among post-acute care administrators and an acceptance among caregivers toward onboarding that, together, have created the perfect scenario in which to break the script on onboarding in the post-acute care industry. Put simply, we're talking about raising the bar for onboarding standards in post-acute care.

And yes, you want to get onboarding right. Getting it wrong can be expensive, lead to employee disengagement, and have a significant, negative impact on business growth.

#### **BUT, GETTING IT RIGHT REAPS BIG REWARDS.**

82% better new hire retention

A well-known study for Glassdoor by the Brandon Hall Group found that a strong onboarding process improved new hire retention by 82% and improved the productivity of new hires by over 70%.

50% more productive

The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) found that at organizations that have a standard onboarding process, new hires are 50% more productive.

10X more likely to stay

Other research found that employees who have positive experiences in their first 90 days at a company are 10 times more likely to stay.

The good news for post-acute care organizations of all kinds is that making onboarding an experience that engages and helps retain employees can very much be put within the grasp of harried managers and administrators.

And, in an industry where administrators or even their companies can't control a lot of the employee work experience - little variation in pay, minimal options for career advancement, poor patient attitudes, shift work — onboarding is one critical area where managers and leaders can make a remarkable and measurable difference.

We believe an employee-first onboarding experience can be a game-changer and a competitive differentiator. We're talking about an onboarding experience that has a human touch and offers the right balance between teaching the mechanics of the job and connecting new hires with the culture of the organization and its people.

To see if this belief holds water, we decided to go straight to the source to truly dig into and bring to the surface a clear understanding of the dynamics of onboarding in the post-acute care landscape. What's working? What isn't? How do attitudes and beliefs differ between caregivers who spend their days on the frontline and their administrators back at the office?

Read on to learn what's wrong with onboarding in the post-acute care industry and how you can improve your process to gain a competitive advantage, reduce costs, get new hires to perform at their peak more quickly, and keep them with you longer.



# What We Found, In a Nutshell

Our survey of 175 administrators and 220 caregivers working in the post-acute care industry across the United States, including home-, facility-, and community-based care, uncovered five very clear, overarching, and related takeaways that gave us pause. We also believe every savvy industry leader should seriously ponder these.

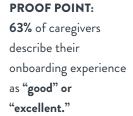
When caregivers feel they have a good onboarding experience, there's a much greater likelihood they'll have positive feelings both toward the company (brand perception) and toward their work (employment perception).

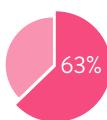
**PROOF POINT:** Caregivers who feel they have a good onboarding experience are

88% more likely to feel secure in their employment (which will translate into greater engagement and lower turnover).



Most caregivers in post-acute care believe they have had at least a "good" onboarding experience.





What passes for a "good" onboarding experience is a shockingly low bar that can be easily improved upon to the benefit of caregivers and their HR leaders.

> PROOF POINT: Only 49% of caregivers at Onboarding Leaders (organizations that create a good or excellent onboarding experience) received a warm welcome; only 48% felt communication was clear and that their questions were adequately answered.

#### **WARM WELCOME**



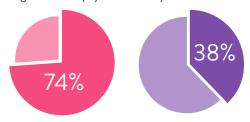
#### **CLEAR COMMUNICATION**





When you compare caregivers at Onboarding Leaders to those at Onboarding Laggards (organizations that create a mediocre or terrible onboarding experience), you see very clear - and clearly actionable differences in how caregivers feel about a wide range of onboarding and work-related topics.

> **PROOF POINT: 74% of caregivers** at Leaders vs. 38% of caregivers at Laggards feel confident in their organization's payroll accuracy.



By re-thinking the nuts and bolts of post-acute care onboarding, companies can give caregivers and administrators more time to focus on what matters most.

> **PROOF POINT:** Post-acute care administrators spend an average of 49 to **68 hours** to fully onboard a single new hire.



#### It's that simple. Or is it?

Let's dig into our findings and our suggestions based on them.

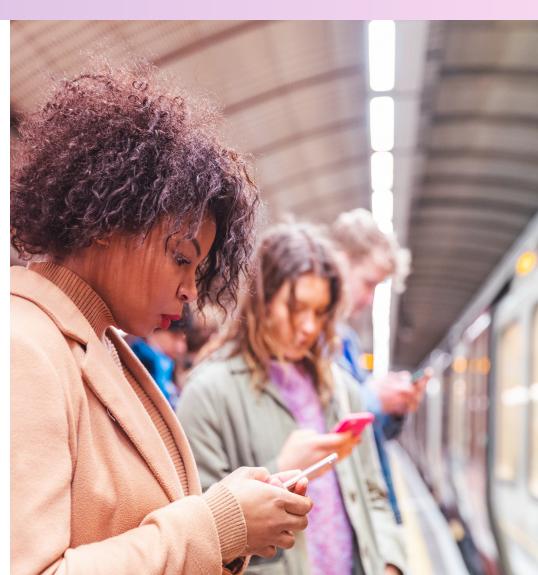
# Post-Acute Care Onboarding Isn't Doing Any Harm. Or Is It?

### First, let's set the stage:

Our survey found a definite connection between a good onboarding experience and caregivers having a positive view of their employer (employer brand) and their day-to-day work (employment perception).

In short, good onboarding correlates to stronger employee-employer relationships, which research has shown drives greater employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and higher retention.

Of course, it's likely that companies that invest more resources to create a better onboarding experience will be more likely to invest in other areas of the employee work experience. Our findings don't conclude that onboarding is the sole driving force in an employee's view of their employer. But, our findings do show that post-acute care is facing ongoing hurdles for most leaders to overcome in this high-turnover industry.



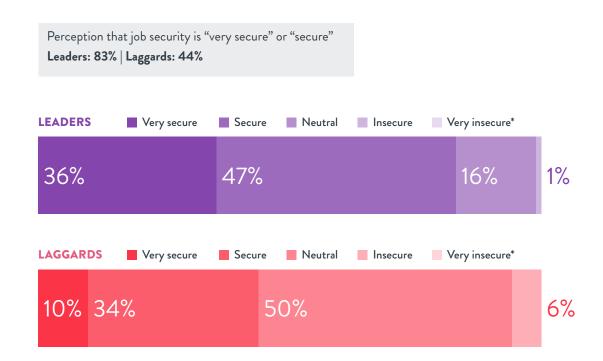


## Differences in Seven Key Drivers of Employer Brand and Employment Perception

We measured perceptions in seven dynamics of employer brand and employment perception. In every instance, Onboarding Leaders score much higher than their Onboarding Laggard counterparts.

## Job Security

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are nearly twice as likely than those at Onboarding Laggards to feel "very secure" or "secure" about employment with their current organization. Looking at it another way, half of caregivers at Onboarding Laggards feel neutral about career security at their current organization.

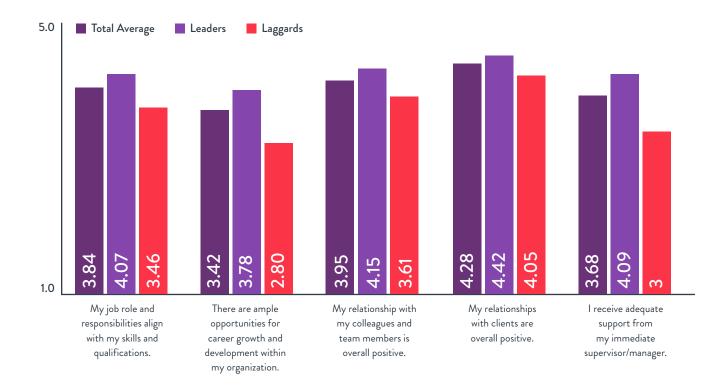


# 2 Career Advancement

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are more likely to feel they have opportunities to advance in their careers.

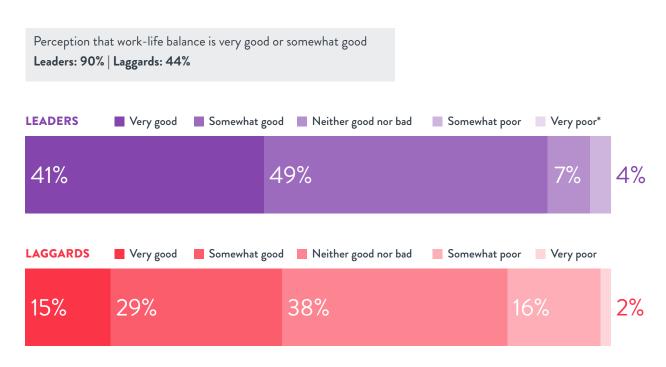
Positive perception of career advancement opportunities

Leaders: 3.78 | Laggards: 2.80



# Work-Life Balance

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are more than twice as likely to rate their work-life balance as "very good" or "somewhat good."

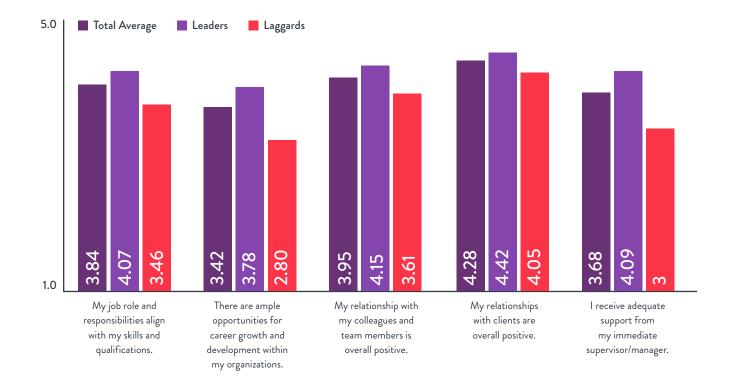


# Leadership Support

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are 36% more likely to feel they have support from their immediate leaders.

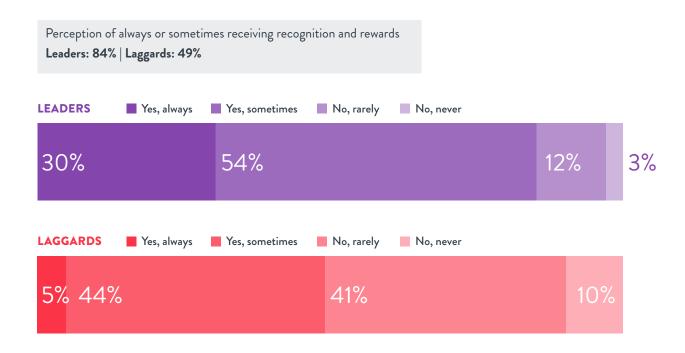
Perception of having adequate support from immediate leaders

Leaders: 4.09 | Laggards: 3



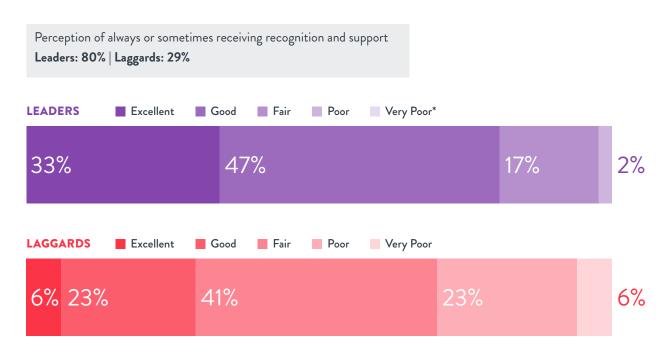
# 5 Recognition and Rewards

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are almost twice as likely to feel they are "always" or "sometimes" adequately recognized and rewarded for their contributions to the organization. Looking at it in another way, 1 in 10 caregivers at Onboarding Laggards feel they are never rewarded nor recognized for their contributions to the organization.



# Communication and Transparency

Caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are 2.75 times more likely to rate company communication and transparency as "excellent" or "good."



# Job Commitment

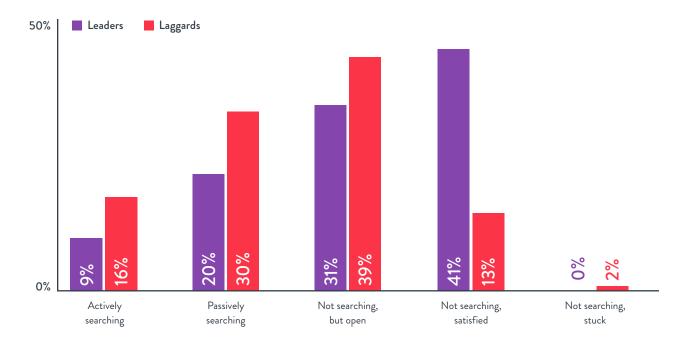
Based on how likely they are to be looking to move to another employer, caregivers at Onboarding Leaders are much more likely to be satisfied with their current organization and not looking to leave.

Actively or passively searching to change employers

Leaders: 29% | Laggards: 46%

Not searching/satisfied with current employer

Leaders: 41% | Laggards: 13%



# So, What Makes for a Good Onboarding Experience — and What Can Make It Great?

As we said above, the onboarding bar is surprisingly low in the world of post-acute care employment. That doesn't mean onboarding in post-acute care is a great experience. It just means that it's OK.

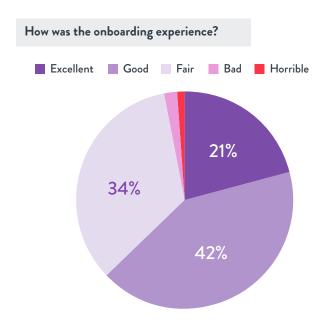
Unfortunately, OK simply isn't going to be good enough for companies that hope to remain competitive or thrive in an industry that's wrestling with a critical dilemma: having chronic retention problems while being a high-growth industry. The upshot is that it's now critical for you to retain good people — not only to grow your business but also to serve the vulnerable populations you cater to. Failing that, you will offer subpar service, which for the population you serve should be considered unacceptable.

Fortunately, as we look more closely at our findings, you'll see it can be pretty easy to start moving the needle to create more Onboarding Leaders in an industry that struggles to keep employees in their seats.

But first, let's look at five indicators we found that prove onboarding of post-acute care workers is at least "OK."

Nearly two-thirds of caregiver respondents had an "excellent" or "good" onboarding experience with their current employer.

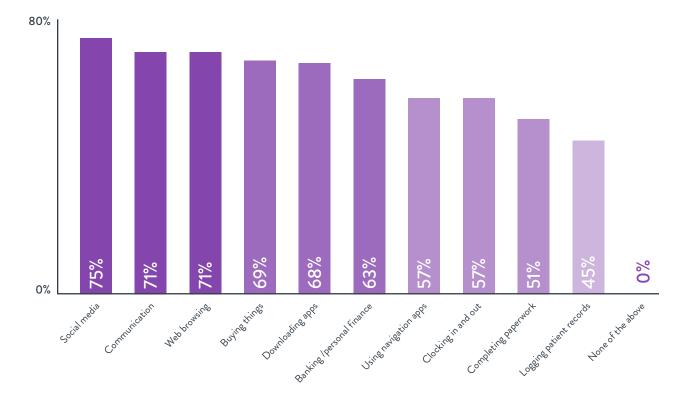
Negative experiences were rare.



## Every caregiver respondent felt comfortable performing at least one tested task on a smartphone or tablet.

In fact, 97% of caregiver respondents took this survey on a smartphone or tablet.

Comfort level using a smartphone or other mobile device (e.g., a tablet)



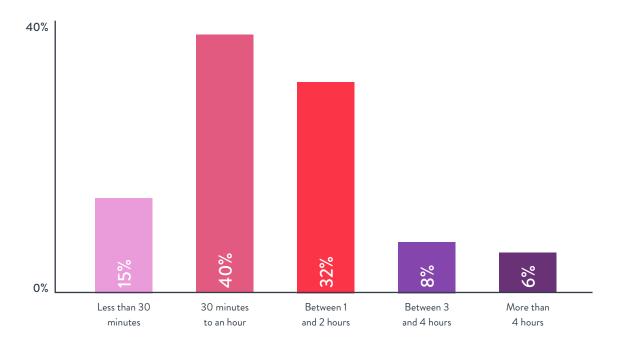
## Most caregiver respondents felt the onboarding process was clear.

We asked participants how they felt about six areas of onboarding from being very confusing to being very clear. "Very confusing" occurred rarely. Even "somewhat confusing" fell far behind "somewhat clear" and "very clear."



# Most caregiver respondents spent less than two hours on onboarding paperwork on their first day.

#### Time spent on onboarding paperwork



#### AN INTERESTING INSIGHT

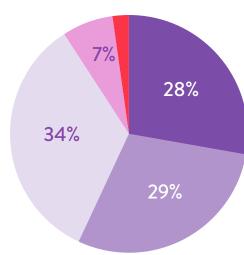
When we unpacked this aspect of onboarding and looked at it against other questions we asked, we found that respondents who spent three or more hours on onboarding were:

- More likely to rate their onboarding experience as neutral or negative
- Less likely to endorse adequate support from their supervisor
- More likely to give their company a lower eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score)

5 Caregivers are generally confident about their employers.

Employer confidence







## So, what's wrong with the current picture?

Even though caregivers give onboarding generally high ratings, they don't get even the most basic forms of attention and support that you would think could make a huge difference in their perceptions of the employer brand and employee experience.

#### Our research finds that:

- Post-acute caregivers have shockingly low expectations of onboarding. Fewer than half of those at Onboarding Leaders said they received a "warm welcome."
- Administrators have a sunnier outlook of the process (which shouldn't be surprising; administrators have pride of ownership over the function).

We tested for 15 elements that are common to strong onboarding experiences. The findings were disheartening. Among caregivers at Onboarding Leaders:

Fewer than half (49%) received a warm welcome

#### Even fewer (48%) felt:

- Communication was clear and transparent
- Their questions were answered promptly and helpfully
- Training they received during onboarding was comprehensive

Less than 4 in 10 (38%) reported receiving detailed information about health and wellness benefits

### Onboarding shortcomings are even more pronounced when you compare responses between caregivers at Onboarding Leaders and Onboarding Laggards.

	ALL	HOME- BASED*	FACILITY/ COMMUNITY- BASED*	LEADERS	LAGGARDS	DIFF.
I received a warm welcome.	41%	47%	35%	49%	27%	22%
Communication was clear and transparent.	40%	43%	36%	48%	26%	22%
My questions were answered promptly and helpfully.	38%	40%	35%	48%	21%	27%
Training was comprehensive.	37%	40%	34%	43%	27%	16%
I received detailed information about health and wellness benefits.	33%	28%	38%	38%	24%	14%
Leaders reached out to welcome me.	29%	33%	25%	36%	17%	19%
The onboarding process was structured and well organized.	29%	37%	21%	36%	17%	19%
I received detailed information about employee assistance programs.	26%	28%	25%	31%	18%	13%
I received detailed information about employee support services.	26%	28%	24%	31%	17%	14%
Payroll/HR provided an opportunity for me to offer feedback on the onboarding process.	25%	26%	25%	28%	22%	6%
My teammates reached out to welcome me.	25%	28%	21%	32%	12%	20%
Orientation included information about well-being.	24%	26%	23%	27%	20%	7%
Orientation included information about self-care.	24%	22%	25%	28%	18%	10%
Orientation included information about work-life balance.	24%	24%	23%	28%	16%	12%
I was invited to social events to meet people in the organization.	14%	11%	16%	17%	9%	8%
None of the above.	9%	8%	9%	1%	21%	-20%

<sup>\*</sup>Home-based included home health and home care caregivers; facility/community-based included skilled nursing, assisted living, independent living, and hospice care caregivers.

# Great Post-Acute Care Onboarding Is About Key Moments — It's Personal, Personable, and Never One Size Fits All

How can leaders respond to the story of onboarding simply being OK? How can Onboarding Laggards begin changing their story? The answer according to our research is to pay attention to the defining moments of the onboarding experience — the key moments that make a clear difference in a new hire's perception of their employer and their job. This translates into an onboarding experience that is both personal and personable and that is flexible enough to be molded to the needs, expectations, and work history of the individual new hire.

These are defining moments — the "rich" onboarding experiences that embrace significant social, logistical, and personal effort and drive better outcomes for employees and the organization.

While our research proves this point for the post-acute care sector, it's a sentiment that has been proven across other industries.

Gallup research has found one of the most impactful improvements companies can bring to onboarding is better personalization and a stronger HR connection.

- When managers take an active role in onboarding, employees are 3.4 times more likely to strongly agree their onboarding experience was exceptional.
- Companies with greater new-hire satisfaction do a better job of expressing company culture during onboarding and "provide immersive experiences that let employees feel your values, not just be able to name them."

In our research, when we asked caregiver participants to rank the most common pain points in their onboarding process, the two most common were that the process wasn't offered in their native language and their questions weren't clearly answered during pre-onboarding or orientation.

- The first pain point, not having the process in their native language, speaks loudly to the importance of embracing the social aspects of the onboarding experience for caregivers.
- The second pain point, not having questions clearly answered, gets to the heart of embracing the logistical aspects of onboarding.
- Both pain points can meanwhile be transformed into rich onboarding experiences with a more personal approach by onboarding leaders and team managers.

## Focusing on creating rich onboarding experiences:

Our research and findings around the most common pain points in the onboarding process provide clarity into where HR leaders and administrators in post-acute care organizations can begin identifying situations to do things a little differently, maybe find a more proactive onboarding solution, and start changing the impact of their onboarding process.



#### Here are eight key moments in the onboarding experience that our research says are ripe for re-thinking and re-modeling.

- 1. Be sure you speak their language, literally. We found that 40% of respondents regularly speak a language other than English at home. It seems to make sense that onboarding would be enhanced if documents are offered in multiple languages, with translation services or software available if necessary.
- 2. Provide personal, live support. This matters even if the onboarding experience is mostly done online. Over 3 in 10 new-hire caregivers (31%) complete their onboarding paperwork digitally, downloading and uploading PDFs.
- 3. Make onboarding part of the flow of work. Think of it as an introduction to the organization. Just over 4 in 10 new hires (41%) in post-acute care jobs perform onboarding paperwork independently, on their own time. Just over half (54%) do onboarding fully in person (vs. virtually or in a combination of in-person and virtual steps).
- 4. Offer personal support to provide clarity and answer questions promptly. 4 in 10 caregiver respondents said their new-hire paperwork was "somewhat clear." Tax documentation was the biggest challenge: 27% said they found this step "very" or "somewhat" confusing.
- 5. Put in personal effort by managers to imbue the organization's culture and mission. While 44% of caregivers said the company policies and expectations were "very clear," 16% said they were "very" or "somewhat" confusing.
- 6. Connect new hires with peers and team members for support and assistance where the rubber meets the road. Training on company technology was the area where new caregivers needed the most help during onboarding — but help with tax documentation wasn't far behind. Support from managers and leaders can also make the onboarding process much faster, which our survey correlates to having a better perception of support and a greater brand perception.
- 7. Enhance the human touches. Although caregivers said tax documentation and skills training were two of three onboarding tasks that were mostly performed in person, they were also the areas in which caregivers reported struggling the most.
- 8. Make sure your caregivers know how they get paid. Most caregivers lack strong confidence in how they are paid. Only 40% strongly agree that they understand how their employer calculates their pay, and only 41% strongly agree that their employer calculates their pay accurately.

## Bridging the gap between administrator and caregiver perceptions:

Despite how caregivers perceive the onboarding experience, administrators have their own perceptions of how things are going. Here are seven key takeaways from our research.

# Their technology works.

Nearly half of all administrators we surveyed feel their tech stack is ahead of competitors, and nearly one in five considers theirs to be industryleading. They're overall surprisingly confident about their technology.





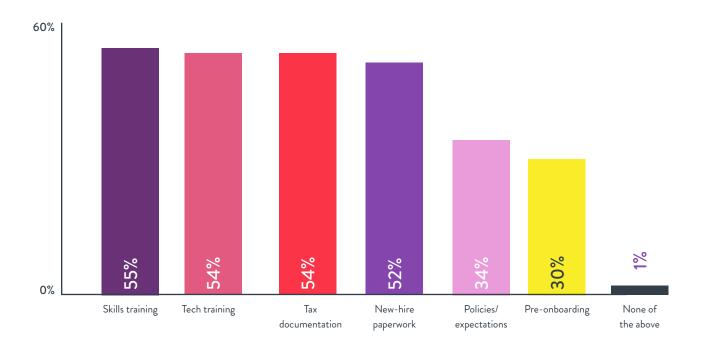
# 2

## Most onboarding processes are automated.

Only two survey respondents didn't have at least one of the tested stages of the onboarding process fully automated. Over half of our respondents have fully automated processes for:

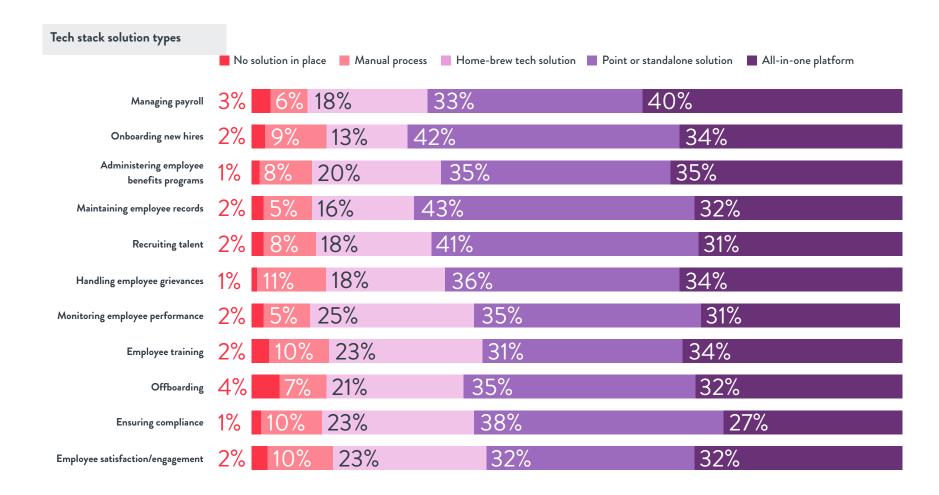
- Skills training
- Tech training
- Tax documentation
- New-hire paperwork

#### Onboarding automation



## Point solutions are the go-to option, but home-brew and manual systems still play a significant role.

Point, or standalone solutions, are the most common tech product for every function we asked about, with the exception of payroll. Most organizations are using an all-in-one platform to manage payroll. Meanwhile, employee performance, training, satisfaction, and ensuring compliance are the most common home-brew or manual solutions.



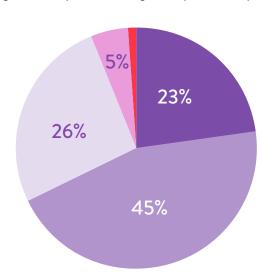
# They're positive about the onboarding experience.

Unlike caregivers, administrators are overwhelmingly positive about their organization's onboarding processes.

#### Administrators' onboarding perspective

■ Industry-leading ■ Ahead of competitors ■ Comparable to competitors

■ Lagging behind competitors ■ Significantly behind competitors



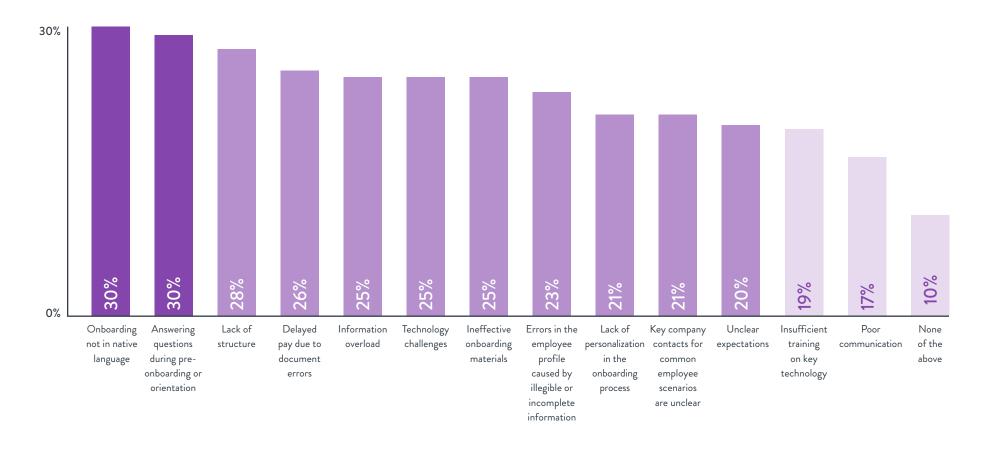




# Their onboarding pain points: same as caregivers.

Just as with their caregiver workforce, administrators feel that the lack of native language support is the No. 1 onboarding pain point, followed by not getting questions answered during pre-boarding or orientation.

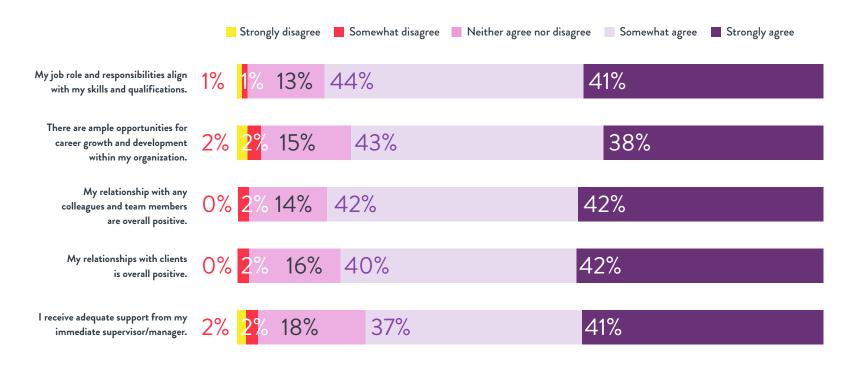
#### Administrator onboarding pain points



# Their job is going well.

Overall, administrators in post-acute care organizations have very positive perspectives of their skills and qualifications, opportunities for growth, relationships with colleagues and clients, and support from leadership.

#### Administrator job perceptions

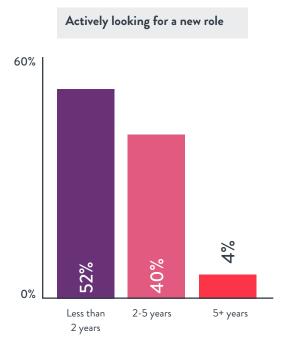


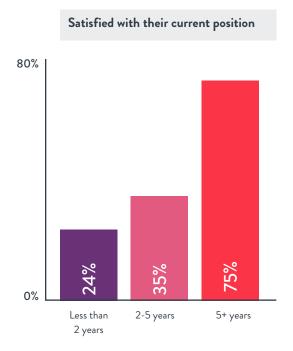
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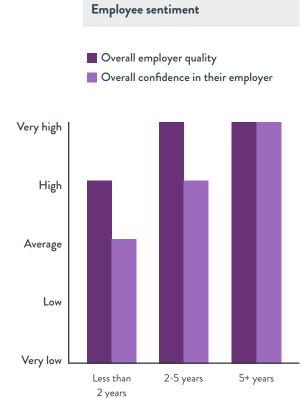
## Longer-tenured administrators are more satisfied with their jobs.

The reasons weren't clear from our survey, but longer-tenured administrators (especially comparing those with five or more years in their current role against those with less than two years) are:

- Much less likely to be actively seeking another position
- Much more satisfied with their current position
- Much more likely to have a higher opinion of the "quality" of their current organization
- Much more likely to have higher overall confidence in their organization







# It's Time for a Re-Think: Digital Optimization for a Stronger Employee-First Connection

It's clear that the best approach to onboarding that works for the post-acute care world is a hybrid onboarding experience.

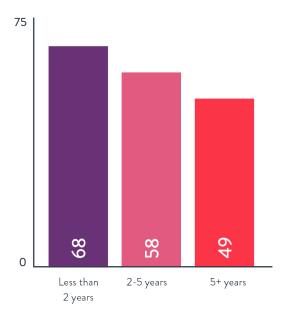
#### THE SMART MOVE IS TO:

- 1. Efficiently automate the pieces of the process that are paperwork dependent.
- 2. Provide easy, accessible online communication for new hires where it makes sense and is appropriate, such as for certain areas of training and benefits enrollment.
- 3. Offer greater in-person, one-on-one time with managers, colleagues, and company leadership.
- 4. Make onboarding as specific to each new hire's personal needs and professional experience as possible.



Our research found post-acute care administrators spend an average of 49 to 68 hours to fully onboard a single new hire, depending on the administrator's job tenure.

#### Hours spent onboarding a single new hire



When you consider the turnover in the post-acute care industry and anticipated job growth over the coming years, the numbers become truly astounding.

This finding and the others from our research point to one logical conclusion: Post-acute care onboarding needs a re-think and digital optimization. More specifically, it needs a shift toward processes, relationships, and touchpoints that will ease the manual lift for administrators and caregivers. This, in turn, will create greater bandwidth for HR leaders to focus on more strategic parts of their job and, at the same time, create more of the rich, personal, and personable onboarding experiences that will enhance the employee experience from day one.

## Improved onboarding doesn't require an all-or-nothing, now-or-never reboot:

As our research found, much of what spells the difference between Onboarding Leaders and Onboarding Laggards are the relatively little things. For example, you might re-think how you literally welcome people into your organization on their first day at work and how you try to emphasize key moments in the onboarding experience from a personal level.

- 1. Are you leveraging the potential of social connections between new hires and their peers and managers?
- 2. Are your managers and administrators sitting down with them to discuss whether they have language preferences, transportation restrictions, or other concerns that embrace logistical areas of their new employment?
- 3. Are they greeted by their immediate manager, introduced to peers and new team members, or even given support to navigate any social media or intranet platforms the organization might have to embrace the importance of personal effort on the part of managers?

## A little further out but still attainable - technology to streamline the onboarding experience:

Imagine the benefit of onboarding technology that could return hours that administrators are now spending onboarding new hires. Here, too, organizations don't need to take a scorched earth, all-or-nothing strategy to make a measurable impact on the lives of administrators and caregivers.

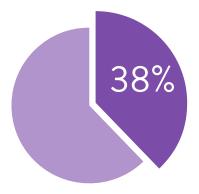
- Does your onboarding technology partner make it possible to offer the necessary materials in a new hire's native language?
- Does it allow you to customize the flow of the onboarding process or, more specifically, the various forms new hires need to complete?

For example, our research identified tax documentation as the greatest onboarding pain point for both groups and found that, among Onboarding Laggards, only 38% of caregivers feel confident in their organization's payroll accuracy.

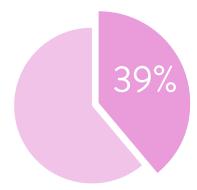
We're not surprised. Payroll in the post-acute care industry is incredibly complicated because of the multiple pay rates, ongoing instances of retroactive pay and overtime, and complexities at the state and local levels. No wonder 39% of caregivers have doubts about the accuracy of their pay. All of which could explain why payroll management is also the onboarding area that is most often handled through an all-in-one platform rather than a point solution or home-brewed or manual system.

A cost-effective solution that can enhance the employee experience for caregivers and administrators alike might be flexible software that addresses the post-acute care industry's unique pay calculations, with experienced, industry-dedicated support.

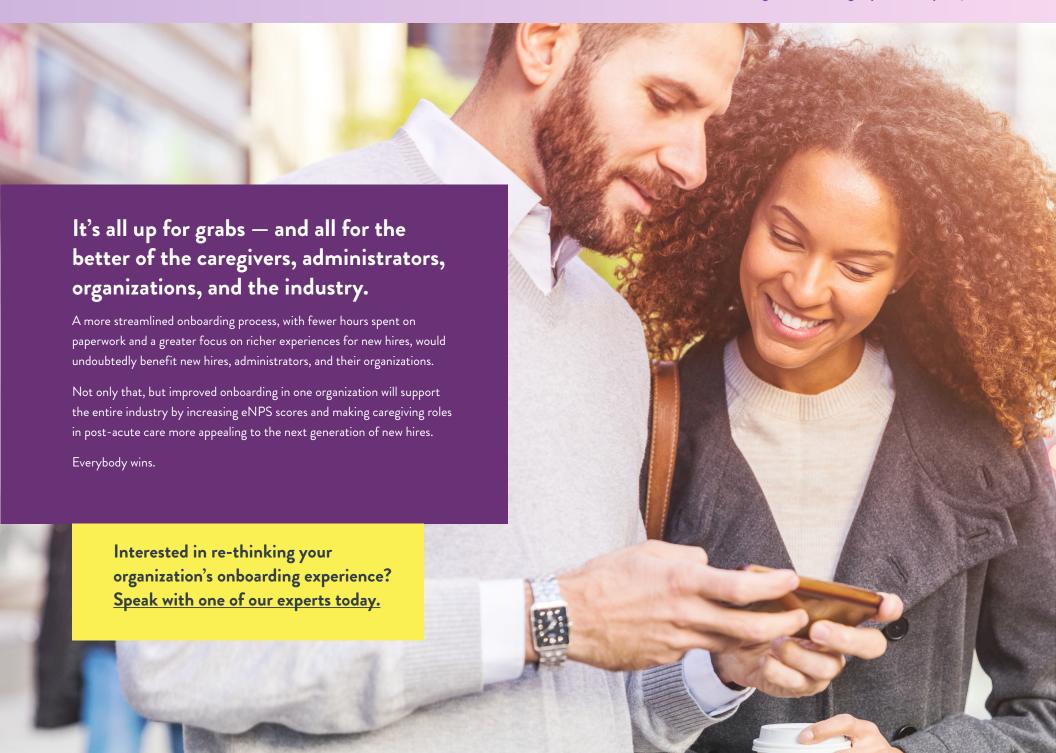
You don't have to rehaul your entire onboarding experience, and the result is that you've turned one potentially harmful situation into a positive key moment of the onboarding experience.



Caregivers that are confident in payroll accuracy



Caregivers that have doubts about the accuracy of their pay

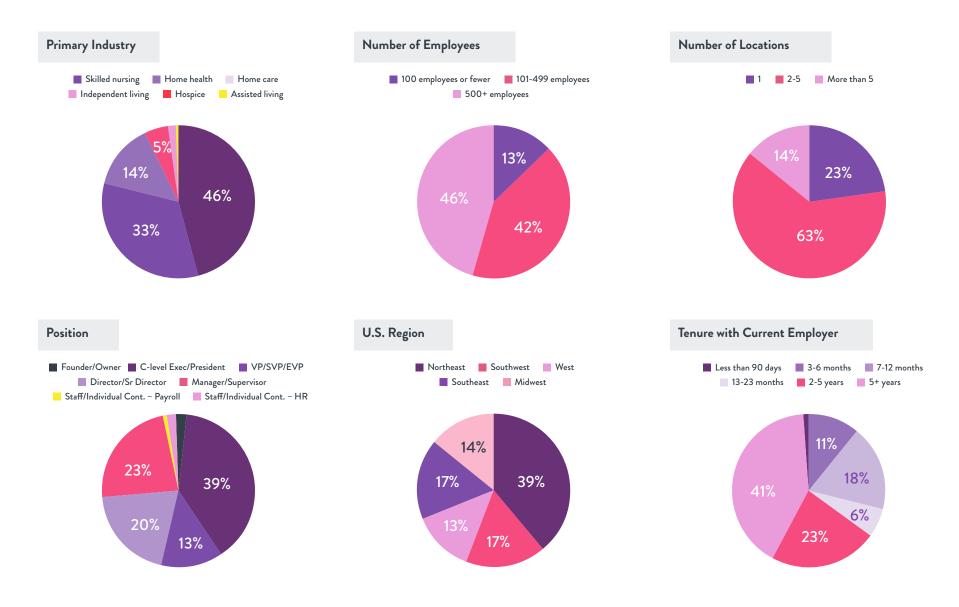


# About the Viventium Caregiver Onboarding Experience Report

The Viventium Caregiver Onboarding Experience Report was conducted between November and December 2023. We gathered responses from 175 administrators and 220 caregivers working in the post-acute care industry across the United States.

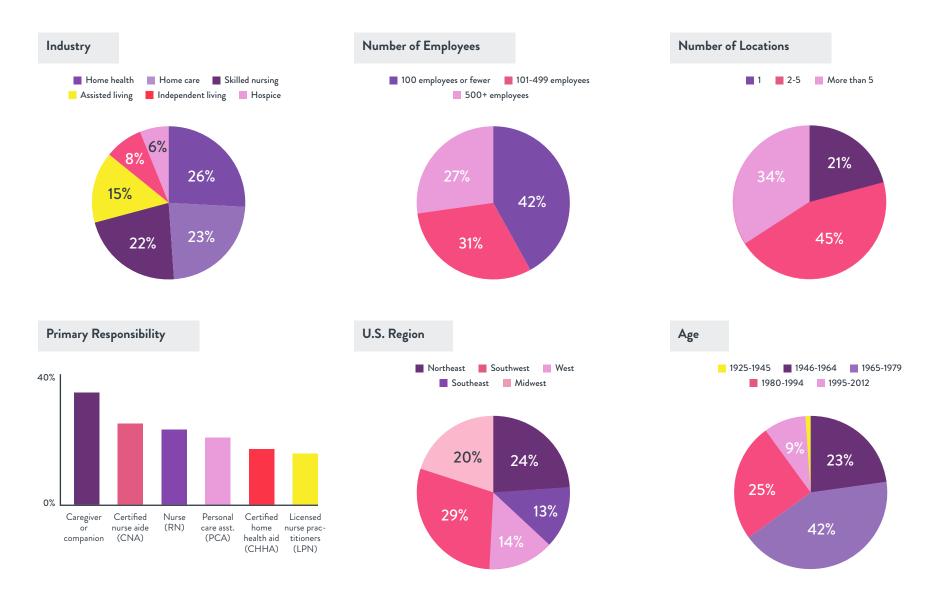


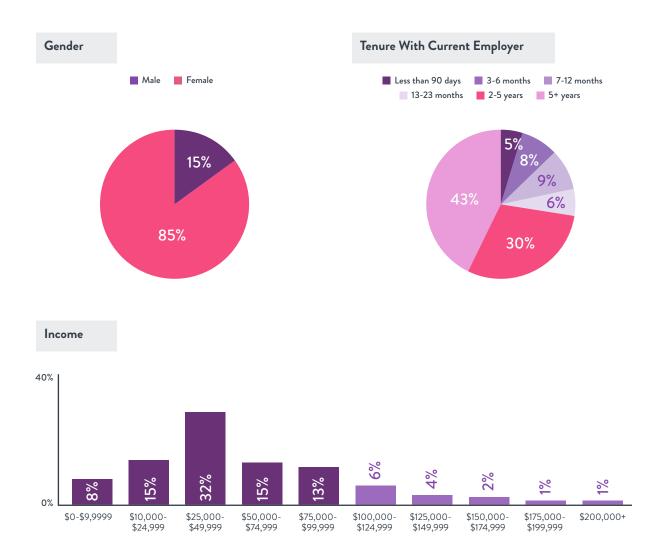
## Administrator Demographics





# Caregiver Demographics





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