STRUCTURE THE ONBOARDING

How to Sabotage a Business Manager's Onboarding in 7 Easy Steps

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Seven common mistakes explain why a Business Manager's onboarding fails in SSIs. A deliberately provocative article to identify onboarding pitfalls to avoid from recruitment.

Every business manager in an ESN or Consulting and Engineering Company is different. But the reasons for their failure are often found in mistakes repeated over and over again.

This article presents 7 cumulative solutions to ensure the failure of your Business Managers.

But even before talking about integration, let's start with a point that is often overlooked: the **recruitment** itself. It happens too frequently that a business manager is selected for their oratorical skills without asking a question that is nevertheless essential: are they genuinely interested in the topics of their future clients and consultants?

The job of a BM relies on the ability to understand technical, organizational, or business contexts, without being an expert, but with a genuine intellectual curiosity. Without this sincere interest, the client relationship rings hollow, exchanges with consultants lack depth, and the positioning of profiles becomes mechanical or even awkward.

It's not a problem of competence: it's a question of interest. And **without interest, there is no commitment.**

Let's now move on to the mistakes that directly concern the integration phase.

1. Assigning them to an overwhelmed or absent senior

Putting a new BM under the responsibility of a "mentor" who has neither the time, availability, nor sometimes even the desire to accompany them, takes the risk of letting them drift from the very first days. The trap here is to think that "the senior will explain to them in a few words because they have the experience." But experience is not always synonymous with pedagogy. And above all, an overwhelmed manager, focused on their own goals, will tend to postpone or botch the onboarding exchanges.

Result: the junior moves blindfolded, takes on bad habits, or develops erroneous beliefs about the job. The mentor ends up thinking that "the problem is the new hire." Vicious circle guaranteed.

2. Believing they understood the job on the first day and thus that competence will follow automatically

Because a new BM asks the right questions, seems comfortable speaking, or quickly takes initiatives, one might be tempted to conclude a bit too quickly that they "already got the job." This projection flatters the recruiter's ego... but creates a dangerous gap. Understanding the broad outlines of a position is not enough to master its subtleties.

A BM who seems autonomous too early may no longer dare to ask questions. They act "as if," advancing on fragile foundations, and may collapse at the first difficulty. A successful integration requires accepting that **learning is progressive**, even if the first signs are encouraging.

3. Letting them learn only by observation without structured fundamentals or serious training

The idea that "the field is the best teacher" is very widespread... and very misused. Yes, observing peers is useful. But without a framework of learning, initial training, or methodological framework, observation becomes vague.

A common example: the new BM attends a prospecting call or a candidate interview without knowing what they should listen to, analyze, or retain. They leave with an impression rather than a learning. Worse: they may replicate ineffective practices without knowing.

Observation alone is never enough. It must be structured and accompanied.

4. Having short memory about their own learning curve

Many managers, having become efficient with experience, forget how quickly they progressed themselves... or how long they struggled before understanding the workings of the job. This professional amnesia is formidable. It leads to expectations disconnected from reality.

"In their place, I had already signed a client at this stage."

Very well. But is this reality or what are you telling yourself? Did you have the same tools, the same portfolio, the same team around you? What was the economic situation?

This biased comparison creates a climate of impatience that can stifle the BM from the start.

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5. Letting them go in all directions to "test" them and assuming they will know how to self-regulate

Some supervisors think the best way to spot talent is to give as much freedom as possible at the start to see who does well. This isn't empowerment; it's disguised abandonment.

Launching a BM on several fronts at once—prospecting, recruitment, managing a consultant in an interproject—without prioritization or guidance is like putting a beginner at the wheel of a car without a dashboard. They will move forward, yes. But in which direction and at what cost?

Autonomy is not improvised. It is built.

6. Putting pressure with only quantitative indicators and expecting quick results

"How many files sent? How many calls? How many meetings?"

These indicators are useful... but devastating if they become the sole compass. A new BM must certainly be active but above all **learn to do well** before learning to do a lot.

However, quality is not measured solely by numbers. By forcing immediate results, we push for short-term behaviors: pushing unqualified profiles, poorly prepared calls, sloppy candidate interviews. The result: a false sense of activity, little value, and sometimes lasting damage to the company's reputation.

7. Not giving meaning by not explaining the interdependencies between their different roles

This last point is often underestimated. We train BMs in silos: on one side commercial development, on the other recruitment, and then one day, the management of consultants.

But the real job is the articulation of these three dimensions.

When a BM understands that recruiting a good consultant is also creating future business opportunities, or that properly supporting a consultant in an interproject can revive a client relationship, they begin to lead. Otherwise, they merely execute. Meaning is what allows good decision-making even when one does not yet have all the experience.

These 7 mistakes are of course not the only ones, but they already cover the major reasons for the failure of business managers in ESN.

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