

On-Boarding Advisory Operational Plan for the Aquarium

BMTP5019

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1. Project Context

This advisory report provides an onboarding operational plan for a new aquarium attraction in Swansea. Incorporating education, immersive visitor interactions, and marine conservation (Swansea.Gov.UK, 2026). Families, students and international tourists are the primary target market for this attraction (Mansfield, 2022). The attraction would also face strong seasonal demand patterns during holidays and times with significant travel activity (Swansea.Gov.UK, 2025), (Swansea.Gov.UK, 2026). An experienced-driven service model with a high level of customer engagement is used by attractions like aquariums. Demanding that workers provide continuous, educational, and emotionally meaningful encounters (McNally et al., 2024).

In environments like aquariums, onboarding plays a major part in guaranteeing service quality and improving the visitor experience through fostering an efficient job transition, early productivity, and staff retention. Maintaining consistent and excellent guest experiences requires a well-organised onboarding program that facilitates new employees' easy integration into their roles. This is crucial in settings where visitor satisfaction and operational success are directly impacted by employee engagement (Kapu and Byrd, 2026).

Additionally, improving employee satisfaction and retention, effective onboarding also improves service quality. Supportive onboarding increases employee satisfaction and retention rates, which reduces turnover challenges that may negatively impact the visitor experience. Onboarding procedures that include training, mentoring, and clear communication help promote a positive workplace culture. This can foster employee motivation and engagement which are both vital for front line staff who frequently deal with visitors. Moreover, resulting in knowledgeable and attentive service, improving visitor experience (Guilbert et al., 2025).

2. Problem or Opportunity Identification

Onboarding difficulties can have a big impact on customer satisfaction, staff productivity, service quality, and brand reputation. Inadequate training, insufficient mentoring, and irregular feedback are examples of onboarding errors that can cause employee dissatisfaction and negatively impact their productivity. The lack of assistance during the probationary period may lead to demotivation and challenges adjusting to job requirements and organisational culture, which may have detrimental impact on guest interactions and service delivery (Akmad and Akmad, 2025).

High employee turnover, seasonal demand changes, a reliance on short-term or untrained people, and high emotional labour paired with higher service demands are just a few fundamental concerns that tourism and hospitality organisations face. Poor pay, insufficient incentives, and limited opportunities for professional advancement are all associated with high turnover, which has a damaging effect on employee retention and satisfaction (Lukanyo Stemele, 2025), (Stemele, 2025).

Without an effective onboarding system, the new aquarium in Swansea risks inconsistent service delivery that harms the visitor experience, as employees may not fully understand standards or procedures. Leading to low employee confidence, which reduces the quality of interactions in what is meant to be a high-contact, experience-driven environment. Poor onboarding also contributes to early staff turnover, increasing recruitment and training costs. Over time, these issues will weaken the aquarium's brand identity, resulting in inconsistent conservation messaging and overall mission.

3. Academic Theory & Literature

Theories such as the Service-Profit Chain (SPC), human capital theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory can provide valuable frameworks for improving onboarding processes at an aquarium attraction by linking employee management practices to customer satisfaction and operational outcomes.

The Service-Profit Chain can help improve employee satisfaction resulting in better service quality, meaning it will also increase customer satisfaction. Customers then are more likely to become loyal which will increase profit for the attraction. This theory highlights the relationship between client expectations, employee satisfaction, and internal service quality which are crucial in settings like aquariums. According to this method, onboarding should promote a positive company culture that supports customer service objectives in addition to teaching skills relevant to the job (Aribi et al., 2024).

Human capital theory highlights the importance of developing employees' skills and knowledge as factors that promote organisational success. Organisations should invest in education and training to ensure employees are equipped with the correct knowledge and skills which improves productivity. This will lead to better organisational performance due to development. Structured training and programs to help employees' skills can also help staff gain the confidence needed to contribute meaningfully to the aquarium's operations (Aribi et al., 2024).

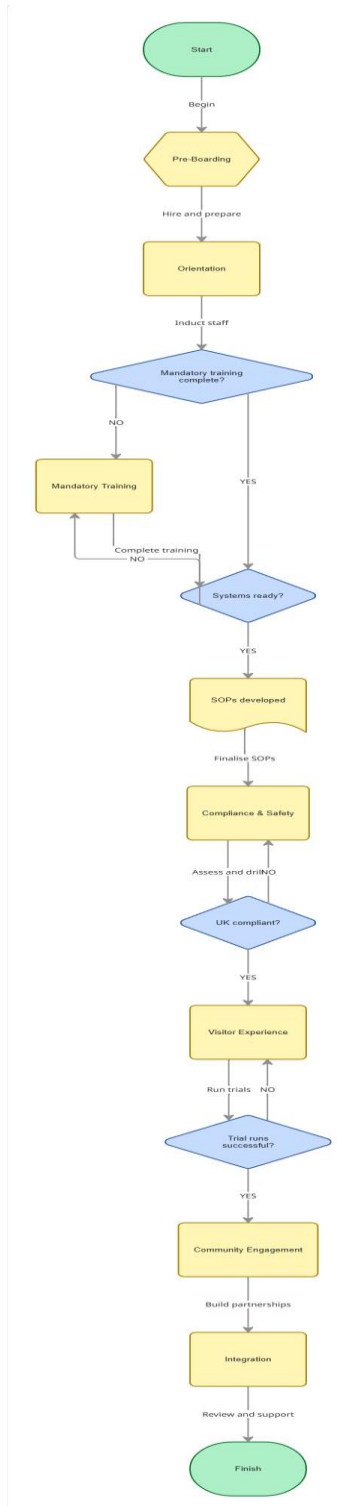
This motivation theory called Herzberg's two-factor theory informs us that there are two types of factors which can influence staff motivation. The Hygiene factor including salary, working conditions and company policy. The motivators such as achievement, recognitions, responsibility and career growth. Applying this theory to the Swansea aquarium shows why a structured onboarding framework is essential. It can strengthen factors by giving staff clarity, stability and a positive first impression of the working environment. It can also help employees feel a sense of purpose, understand their role and see opportunities for development. By addressing both sets of factors, onboarding increases employee satisfaction, boosts motivation and reduces early turnover. Ultimately minimising operational challenges for the aquarium, ensuring staff are confident, committed and able to deliver a high-quality visitor experience (Garg et al., 2025).

4. Advisory Operational Plan

4.1. Objectives

1. Ensuring a smooth onboarding process for all staff members.
2. Establish high standards of animal care, visitor experience, and operational safety from day one (EAZA, 2018).
3. Align all team members with the aquarium's mission, values, and brand identity.
4. Achieve full operational readiness prior to public opening.
5. Minimize risks related to compliance, health & safety, and environmental management (Office, 2026).
6. Promote sustainable working practices, including responsible resource use and environmentally conscious behaviour.
7. Encourage strong collaboration and communication between teams such as animal care ("Animal Care & Management | Association of Zoos & Aquariums", 2019), education and operations.
8. Prepare employees to handle emergency situations correctly by following established organisational procedures (EAZA, 2018).
9. Strengthen staff skills to engage visitors, providing accurate, interesting and accessible information about exhibits.
10. Develop role- specific abilities so employees can carry out their key responsibilities dependently within an expected timeframe.
11. Ensure employees understand and follow all health and safety protocols.
12. Minimise employee turnover within the first three months.
13. Improve overall employee engagement and satisfaction scores.

4.2. Key Actions/Strategies



Pre- Boarding: Finalize hiring across departments. Provide role specific training and expectations.

Orientation: Deliver induction programme including values, safety, policies, culture and customer service standards.

Training (Mandatory): Animal welfare and ethical care standards (“Animal Care & Management | Association of Zoos & Aquariums”, 2019). Health and safety procedures. Emergency response protocols. Customer service excellence. Ensure operational systems setup are ready to use. Standard operating procedures must be developed for all departments.

Compliance and Safety: Conduct risk assessments and safety drills. Establish incident reporting and escalation procedures. Ensure compliance with UK regulations on animal welfare, environmental protection and workplace safety (Office, 2026).

Visitor Experience: Train staff on storytelling, engagement, and educational delivery. Prepare signage, exhibits and interactive experiences. Conduct trial runs with test audiences.

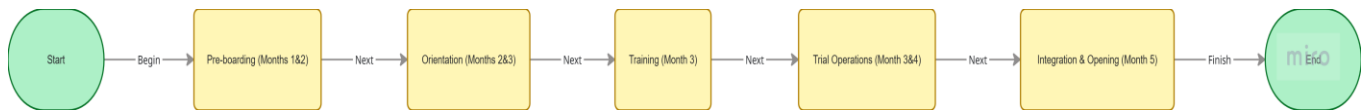
Community engagement & stakeholders: Engage with local authorities, schools and tourism partners. Develop partnerships for educational programs and conservation initiatives.

Integration: Weekly check-ins, feedback surveys and performance reviews.

4.3. Who is responsible

Several important positions within the company share accountability for the onboarding procedure. The HR Manager will oversee recruitment processes, handle employment contracts, and plan the first phases of employee onboarding (“HR Manager Job Description | Indeed”, 2023). The Operations Manager will oversee the entire onboarding program, making sure that every department is ready and that everything goes well from beginning to end (JobTitles Directory, 2026). Specialised training related to animal care and habitat preparation will be overseen by the Head Aquarist. The Health and Safety Officer will assist compliance and safety by providing necessary safety training and ensuring that all procedures adhere to legal requirements. The visitor experience manager will create and conduct customer service and visitor engagement-focused training to influence quality of guest experiences. All operational systems necessary for day-to-day operations will be implemented and tested by the IT Lead. Prior to opening, the Marketing and Partnerships Lead will oversee community engagement initiatives and plan marketing campaigns. These positions work together to create a thorough and well-coordinated onboarding structure.

4.4. Timeline



This timeline shows start to finish on how long pre-boarding (1-2 Months), Orientation (1-2 Months), Training (1 Month), Trial Operation Systems (1-2 Months) and Integration/Opening (1 Month). This timeline allows for every department to ensure everything is ready by the time of the opening, including staff, systems (IT), facilities and regulations.

4.5. Resources Required

The project uses a variety of resources, including financial elements like hiring expenses, training supplies, employee wages, and system installations, as well as human expertise like trainers, departmental managers, and onboarding coordinators. It also depends on vital physical resources, such as IT infrastructure, training facilities, safety gear, and instruments for caring for animals. While external assistance from regulatory advisers, veterinary consultants, and conservation specialists guarantees compliance, welfare, and best practice guidance across all sectors, technological systems such as ticketing software, monitoring platforms, and communication tools enable efficient operations.

4.6. Expected Outcomes

On opening day, a workforce that is competent and well-trained will be in place, and all departments will have smoothly operating systems. Complete regulatory compliance and high standards for animal care have been reached, guaranteeing ethical and responsible operations. Strong collaborations with the local community and important stakeholders will ensure that visitors have an interesting and unforgettable experience. When taken as a whole, these factors help lower operational risks, boost launch efficiency, and ensure long-term success.

5. Impact on Service, Hospitality & Guest Experience

By enhancing employee capability, service consistency, guest pleasure, and alignment with the aquarium's broader goal, the onboarding plan will greatly enhance the organization. In line with the ideas of Human Capital Theory, which highlights that staff skill development results in increased productivity and better service quality, the organization improves employee competency from the start by investing in organised training and ongoing assistance. Employees are more capable to provide visitors with meaningful and engaging encounters when they have a solid awareness of marine life, conservation messaging, and the aquarium's educational objectives. In addition to improving the visitor experience, this gives employees a sense of self-worth and confidence in their work, which promotes motivation and long-term engagement (Ross, 2024).

Improved service consistency across all departments is one of the onboarding process's primary benefits. Standardised training guarantees that all staff members comprehend service standards, convey precise and consistent information, and uphold the organization's values and brand tone. This lessens the unpredictability that is frequently observed in tourism and visitor-facing settings, where uneven service delivery may have a detrimental effect on visitors' impressions. Regardless of the service member a tourist interacts with, the aquarium guarantees a dependable, excellent experience by setting clear expectations early on. This consistency helps to build a solid, unified organisational culture and becomes a pillar of operational excellence.

The aquarium's overall service philosophy, which emphasises education, conservation, and meaningful public engagement, is further supported by the onboarding plan (Construction, 2026). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene elements that prevent unhappiness and motivators that actively promote employee satisfaction and performance, can be used to understand these values, which are ingrained throughout the training process. The aquarium reinforces important motivators like purpose, accomplishment, and recognition by outlining organisational values early in the onboarding process. Employees start to internalise the aquarium's objective and comprehend how their work affects significant conservation and educational results. This encourages workers to view themselves as representatives rather than just service providers, turning their work from regular service delivery into a mission-driven experience. As a result, the onboarding process increases motivation by nature, strengthens employee commitment, and promotes behaviours that

support the aquarium's long-term objectives in addition to lowering potential discontent by offering clarity and discipline (Nickerson, 2025).

In the end, increased guest happiness and loyalty are a direct result of these staff competency, consistency, and alignment gains. Employees who are engaged and well-trained are more likely to produce memorable interactions that make a lasting impression, offer tailored experiences, and successfully respond to visitor enquiries. This is consistent with the Service-Profit Chain, which shows how customer satisfaction. is driven by employee capacity and contentment, resulting in positive reviews, customer loyalty, and effective word-of-mouth marketing (Stobierski, 2025). Thus, implementing the onboarding strategy not only improves internal operations but also supports the aquarium's long-term growth, financial viability, and reputation (CIPD, 2024).

6. Conclusion

The advisory operational strategy shows that onboarding is a strategic HR function that is crucial to attaining service excellence in the travel and hospitality industries rather than just an operational need. Effective onboarding gives employees the structure they need to get ready for the fast-paced, diverse demands of visitor engagement in a high-interaction, seasonal setting like the Swansea aquarium. The approach directly addresses issues like fluctuating staff levels, the necessity of continuous service delivery, and the significance of effective conservation-focused communication by integrating academic theory with practical, context-specific procedures.

In addition to providing training for their positions, the gradual onboarding strategy guarantees that staff members are inspired, self-assured, and committed to the aquarium's goal from the start. This alignment promotes operational uniformity across departments, improves the tourist experience, and strengthens service quality. In the end, a well-thought-out onboarding system supports the Swansea Aquarium's long-term success, improved organisational culture, and increased guest overall satisfaction.

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