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MODERN ONBOARDING TOOLS AS A MEANS OF STABILIZING ORGANIZATIONAL STAFF

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Abstract

The article explores the role of modern onboarding tools as a means of stabilizing organizational staff in competitive markets. It emphasizes the importance of human resource management and onboarding processes in enhancing employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness. The study highlights the lack of technological refinement and clear guidelines in onboarding processes in many companies. Through a comprehensive analysis, the authors identify and classify various onboarding models, such as traditional, situational, group, and virtual mentoring. They also emphasize the need for socialization and adaptation measures, including creating detailed adaptation plans, conducting team-building exercises, and integrating mentorship programs. The research is based on a survey conducted among employees of SPC "Advismash" LLC, which identified onboarding challenges such as lack of information and insufficient managerial support. Recommendations are made to improve onboarding through pre-employment procedures, mentorship systems, and structured adaptation programs. These measures aim to reduce staff turnover, improve employee morale, and foster a positive organizational culture.

Key words

onboarding, mentoring models, personnel management, employee adaptation, socialization, onboarding challenges, mentorship programs, organizational culture, human resource management, employee engagement.

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1. Introduction

In a competitive market, human resources are one of the key factors determining an organization's economic position. Major issues in a company's operations can arise when leaders prioritize financial,

production, material, or sales issues over personnel management, which underpins all these areas. In today's world, the importance of human resources management in the overall management system is increasing, indicating that business competitiveness largely depends on effective social management.

One of the key areas in personnel management is the creation and development of onboarding systems within the organization. Currently, the onboarding process in many organizations lacks technological refinement, with no clear guidelines or rules on managing key personnel issues.

The relevance of this study stems primarily from the fact that the onboarding procedure is designed to ease the integration of new employees into the organization, ensuring their socialization and adaptation to new working conditions.

2. Research methodology

The methodological basis of the study is a set of general scientific and specific research methods. The theoretical foundation of the work is based on the scientific works and methodological developments of domestic and foreign scholars in the field of organizational management and personnel management. During the preparation of the article, methods such as formalization and abstraction, the relationship between the concrete and the abstract, the logical-semantic method, analysis and synthesis, classification (for determining the essence of employee onboarding in enterprises), the systemic approach, and structural-functional analysis (for studying the elements of organizational employee onboarding and developing mentorship program procedures) were used.

3. The essence and characteristic features of onboarding

One of the elements of the personnel management system in an organization is onboarding management, which has become a key factor in increasing job satisfaction, work performance, and reducing employee turnover. The formation of such critical employee attitudes as job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational loyalty leads to increased activity, initiative, responsibility, and involvement, ultimately resulting in the overall effectiveness of the organization. In modern organizations, responsibility for employees' career development lies not only with managers but also with the employees themselves, who must be able to adapt to a changing environment through the continuous development of professional knowledge, skills, and personal growth. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and respond effectively to them is the foundation of successful employee onboarding and adaptation.

There is no single definition of employee onboarding among researchers. After analyzing and summarizing the literature, the definitions can be divided into three main groups:

- 1. Most commonly, onboarding is interpreted as the employee adaptation process to various conditions, such as:
 - he work environment (V. M. Muzychenko, J. Shabanova),
 - external and internal conditions (E. V. Maslov),
 - working in new conditions for the employee
 (N. D. Strekolova, G. K. Kopeykin),
 - the workplace and workforce (E. Malinina) (Liubomudrova, Smolinska, 2009).
- 2. Many researchers argue that onboarding is a twoway process, viewing it as mutual adaptation between the employee and the organization (Zakharkevych, Ostapchuk, 2020). This view is shared by N. Shatalova, M. Burnosov, A. Khorev, T. Ovchinnikova, and others.
- 3. A third group of economists details the organizational processes that occur when a new employee is hired. From this perspective, onboarding is a process of:
 - ntegration and consolidation of the individual (I. Yurasov, B. J. Serbinovsky),
 - professional and social orientation of the employee (M. I. Petrov),
 - introduction to the organization's activities
 (G. A. Dnistryansky),
 - mastering professional and social functions
 (N. K. Mausov, O. M. Lamskova),
 - or embedding the employee into a new organizational and production environment (P. A. Maluev, J. E. Melikhov) (Pavlov, Kushniruk, 2012).

In our opinion, onboarding is a holistic, dynamic, continuous, and relatively stable process through which an individual transforms themselves and their environment, spurred by the tensions arising between them.

Employee onboarding represents a continuous, dynamic process that:

- aims to balance employees' needs with the means to meet them,
- includes introducing employees to a new production environment and social community, allowing them to adopt work conditions and norms, and influencing the surrounding environment,
- foresees overcoming potential challenges initiated by both the organization and the employee.

4. Evaluation of the effectiveness of employee onboarding processes at the enterprise

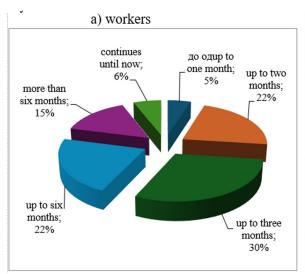
To identify onboarding issues, we conducted a survey among employees of SPC «Advismash» LLC using a developed questionnaire. The research was conducted in February 2024, with respondents who have worked at the company for no more than three years.

According to Figure 1, we can observe that the onboarding period for most workers and office staff lasts up to three months—57% and 65%, respectively.

Thus, most employees complete the onboarding process within the standard timeframe. However, it is noteworthy that a certain percentage of workers (21%) and office staff (14%) experience onboarding periods extending beyond six months.

We also found out the opinion of employees of SPC "Advismash" LLC about the reasons for the complexity of onboarding: "perception of the team", 'working conditions', 'professional duties' or 'living conditions', Fig. 2.

It turned out that the most difficult thing for the



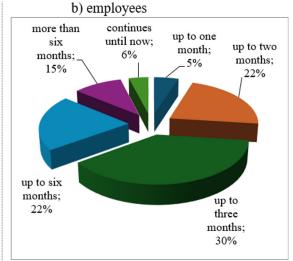


Fig. 1. Opinion of the respondents of SPC "Advismash" LLC about the duration of their onboarding. Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of the survey.

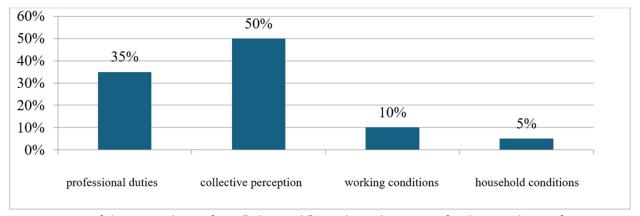


Fig. 2. Opinion of the respondents of SPC "Advismash" LLC about the reasons for the complexity of onboarding.

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of the survey.

newcomers to the company is to adapt to the team, i.e. to go through the process of socialization (50% of the answers) and get used to performing professional duties (35%).

We also identified the main obstacles to the rapid onboarding of employees of "Advismash" (Fig. 3). It turned out that the majority of respondents - 58% - did not receive any support in the onboarding process.

According to the respondents, Fig. 4, the main obstacles to rapid onboarding at SPC "Advismash" LLC

are:

- lack of necessary information about the organization
- 30%
- lack of assistance from work colleagues 20%;
- lack of assistance from the direct supervisor 15%;
- lack of clearly defined professional responsibilities
- 13%;
- hard work (12%) 5 respondents and unfriendly attitude of the team - 10%.

Further, the survey of employees revealed that

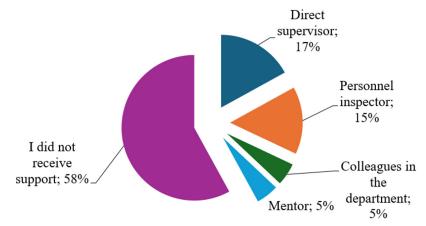


Fig. 3. Opinion of the respondents of SPC "Advismash" LLC about the obstacles to onboardin. Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of the survey.

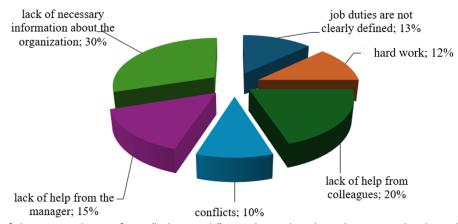


Fig. 4. Opinion of the respondents of SPC "Advismash" LLC about the obstacles to rapid onboarding of employees.

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of the survey.

more than half of the employees - 54%- needed two weeks to get accustomed to the workplace and memorize the location of the company's divisions. For 37% respondents, receiving full information necessary for effective work and for 28% respondents, receiving effective feedback from a mentor and manager took place only during the first month of work. Reducing the level of uncertainty and anxiety in 34% respondents occurred only during the first year of work, mastering the basic norms of corporate culture and rules of conduct in 32) respondents occurred during the first six months of work.

The majority of employees start feeling comfortable and part of the organization after six months of work at SPC "Advismash" LLC - 39% employees, accept the goals of the organization, support its mission, philosophy of doing business, the majority of respondents start more than two months of work in the organization, feel an increase in job satisfaction and the development of a positive attitude towards the company as a whole, employees 40% also start feeling after working for two months. The system of interaction with colleagues, according to the majority - 33% - is established within two months

of cooperation. Based on the analysis, it was found that the enterprise essentially lacks targeted activities on onboarding and socialization of employees. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a set of measures to develop and implement onboarding and socialization programs for the company's employees. Such activities should result in the full inclusion of personnel in the new organizational space, quick perception of the organizational environment by newly hired or newly appointed employees, awareness of their professional role and professional rights and responsibilities. This should ultimately create the preconditions for reducing staff turnover and improving overall performance.

5. Improving onboarding processes in organizations

Based on the analysis of scientific literature, we propose to organize staff onboarding in certain stages. Thus, the first stage lasts even before the employee's actual work in the organization and includes the following organizational procedures:

- Identification of the level of readiness of a

potential employee to work in the organization (the experience of previous professional activity in the specialty or lack thereof is determined. If a potential employee has performed similar work before, the period of his/her onboarding will be minimal);

- equipping the workplace of the newly hired employee (ensuring the operation of equipment, the availability of a personal workspace, information support for work performance);
- development of an adaptation letter a work plan for the adaptation period.

Thus, a special place in the onboarding procedure is given to the adaptation letter. An adaptation letter is a document prepared before the arrival of an employee, which includes those measures that are necessary for the successful completion of onboarding (Lavin Colky, Young, 2006). When prepare the adaptation letter, we studied the practice of foreign companies and, based on this, determined the following structure: employee profile; training schedule; practical tasks; results of the adaptation period.

The next stage is an introductory one, which starts from the first day and lasts for the first week of work at the company. During this period, the employee should receive as much information as possible about the organization, its structure, relationships between departments, etc.

However, the information should be clearly delineated in time so as not to overwhelm the newcomer with new information. In this regard, we recommend that you draw up an indicative schedule of information messages for the newly hired employee. For example, on the first day, we suggest familiarizing the employee with the new workplace and handing him or her an employee handbook containing information about the company, its structure, contact numbers of departments, etc. On the 2nd or 3rd day of work, we recommend showing a promotional film about the organization, describing its history, areas of activity, partners, customers, and introducing the company's management.

On the 4th day of work, it is advisable to make a personal acquaintance of the newly hired employee with the company's management to increase his personal perception in the organizational environment. During the 5th day of work, we consider it advisable to conduct a small team-building training with the employees of the unit to which the employee is hired. This can be a brainstorming session, team problem solving, a situational game, or even informal teamwork on a logo, advertising, etc. Any manager can conduct such training, and it will not require significant time and resources. In addition, in the practice of foreign companies, there

is a "Welcome" training, which includes an interactive or self-presentation part that obliges the newly hired employee to leave the "comfort zone" (Anderson, 2017).

The next and longest stage of the onboarding program is the third stage, which is called integration or onboarding (Francis, 2009). At this stage, the employee should receive maximum assistance in onboarding to the new professional environment (Francis, 2009) (Lavin, Young, 2006) (Stein, Christiansen, 2010). Undoubtedly, it is at this stage that the role of a mentor is actualized, who explains and demonstrates various aspects of work and directs the activities of the newly hired employee.

The onboarding period can last from several weeks, months to 1-2 years, depending on the position. The most important stage of onboarding is the period of one to three months. During this time, the newcomer must master a new activity and get to know the team.

According to the results of the survey, most employees do not fully understand the corporate culture of the company, how production processes work, etc. To solve this problem, we propose to shoot a film about the company that may contain information about: the history of the company's creation and formation processes, characteristics of the products, corporate life (this block can usually include video footage of corporate events: holidays and sports tournaments), interviews with managers, key employees, a tour of the company with a story about the activities of various departments.

Studies of staff development practices in domestic companies (Chornobyl, 2015) show that successful organizations consider mentoring as a strategically important element of the staff development system, putting to the fore the task of forming unique knowledge, skills and competencies of employees, developing their potential, shaping behavioral models that meet the organization's development goals, increasing staff engagement and innovation activity. It is not surprising that mentoring has become a key strategy in the management of many organizations (Bauer, 2007) (Bauer, 2011) (Best Practices: Mentoring. United States 2012) (Different Types Of Business Mentoring Models) (Establishing a Mentoring Program).

6. Implementation of Mentorship Programs at the Enterprise

Research on personnel development practices in domestic companies (Liubomudrova, Smolinska, Hrybyk, 2009) shows that successful organizations consider mentorship as a strategically significant element of their personnel development systems. They prioritize the formation of unique knowledge, skills, and competencies among employees, the development of their potential, the shaping of behavioral models aligned with organizational development goals, and the enhancement of employee engagement and innovative activity. It is not surprising that mentorship has come to be regarded as a key strategy in managing many organizations. Consequently, mentorship models themselves have evolved, and it would be a mistake from the perspective of personnel development practice to overlook these changes (Bauer, 2007).

The benefits that organizations gain by creating

mentorship programs are evident. However, underestimating the role and potential of mentorship in personnel development processes leads many companies to view it merely as a tool for training newcomers. In our opinion, this problem is primarily due to a lack of sufficient information about new approaches to organizing mentorship in modern organizations. Based on the analysis of publications and analytical reviews on the subject (Bauer, 2011), we have identified and described new mentorship models used in foreign companies that can be successfully implemented in domestic organizations. Figure 5 characterizes the most common mentorship models in practice.

The Traditional Mentorship Model (or «one-on-

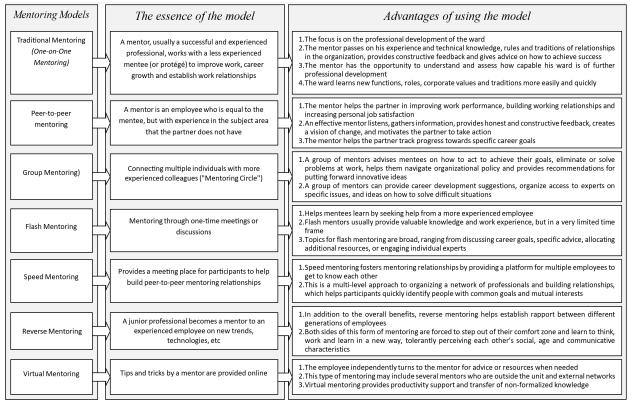


Fig. 5. Characteristics of Mentoring Models.

Source: Compiled by the author based on (Zakharkevych, Ostapchuk, 2020).

one» mentorship) is an interaction between a more experienced specialist and a junior employee over a certain period of time (3-6-9-12 months). Typically, mentors and mentees are selected based on specific criteria such as experience, skills, personality traits, and more. Close personal relationships are usually established between the mentor and mentee, which helps ensure an individualized approach to the employee and creates a comfortable environment for development. The mentor can promptly respond to deviations during training and encourage achievements. Practice shows that development programs for young employees with high potential,

combined with this mentorship model, not only help fully realize their abilities but also contribute to retaining and securing future company leaders.

A variation of this model is Situational Mentoring, which involves the mentor providing necessary assistance whenever the mentee needs guidance and recommendations. Generally, the mentor's role is to ensure immediate responses to situations that are significant for the mentee. However, it should be noted that mentors, by definition, hold a higher status, and their mentees may encounter difficulties in building relationships due to differences in status and generational affiliations. Additionally, mentors

may perceive their mentees as competitors, especially when it comes to career advancement.

Some of these barriers can be partially overcome when both participants in the mentorship program are in similar positions, as in the Peer Mentoring model. This model can be implemented in two forms. The first option involves pairs of junior employees, one of whom already has some experience at the company and becomes the mentor, while the other—a graduate or trainee—is just starting work. This model is highly effective in attracting and retaining talented youth when combined with integration training programs. However, the personal qualities and competencies of a beginner mentor may not be sufficient for the deeper development of the mentee, so the mentorship program should be supplemented with other forms. The second option is based on the interaction between two employees holding the same positions, with the mentor being the one who has more experience, knowledge, or skills in a specific subject area necessary for the other employee. This model is used when the mentee has been transferred from another company department, such as a regional office or branch.

When an organization lacks a sufficient number of mentors, Group Mentoring can be applied—a model in which one mentor works simultaneously with a group of 2-4-6 mentees. Direct communication occurs periodically, typically once or twice a month. However, it is important to consider that the lack of personal interaction may negatively affect mentees' motivation and, consequently, the outcomes of the development program. Therefore, it is recommended to combine group mentoring with other forms of mentorship.

Many organizations are hesitant to implement mentoring programs, believing that such activities may require significant organizational resources, such as time, space, and access to information. Experienced employees who could become mentors often do not have sufficient time to dedicate to mentees without compromising their primary responsibilities. However, there are mentoring models that can address these challenges.

Short-Term or Goal-Oriented Mentoring involves the mentor and mentee meeting according to a prearranged schedule to establish specific goals aimed at achieving short-term results. The mentee is expected to put in effort between meetings to demonstrate progress and achieve the set goals.

Speed Mentoring consists of one-time meetings between employees and senior-level mentors or HR development specialists. These meetings aim to build relationships with individuals who share common challenges and interests. Such sessions help participants formulate and set individual development and career growth goals based on information from authoritative sources, exchange ideas and personal experiences, and establish mentor-mentee relationships («peer-to-peer»).

Flash Mentoring is a new mentorship concept described in a review by an independent human resource management agency under the U.S. government (Van Velsor, Leslie, 1995). The essence of this model is that employees wishing to act as mentors participate in short, one-hour meetings with potential mentees, during which they can share their life experiences and career development advice. After this meeting, participants decide whether they would like to continue the mentoring relationship. Mentors and mentees are selected with minimal criteria, and mentees can request resumes from multiple mentors to compare their qualities and capabilities. Once a mentor is assigned, they may decide after the first meeting whether to continue or terminate the relationship. If both parties see potential for collaboration, they proceed with implementing the mentorship program.

Flash mentoring has many modifications. A standard flash mentoring session involves a one-time meeting, either in person or via telecommunication technologies, between a more experienced employee (mentor) and a less experienced employee (mentee), which can last from a few minutes to several hours. Sequential flash mentoring involves the mentee working with two or more mentors, each of whom holds a series of one-time meetings, for example, weekly over the course of a month. Speed mentoring is a type of sequential flash mentoring where mentors and mentees meet for just a few minutes and then immediately switch to another mentor/mentee and so on. Group flash mentoring involves one mentor working with a small group of mentees. This technique can also be implemented as group speed mentoring.

The use of information and communication technologies, such as video conferencing, platforms for distance learning, talent development and assessment, online social networking services, and communities of practice in personnel development systems (Liubomudrova et al., 2009), naturally led to the emergence of virtual mentoring. A study of participants in a virtual mentoring program (Stein, Christiansen, 2010), conducted over two years, revealed significant changes in the perception of the value of such programs by mentees, who are now more focused on knowledge sharing than on receiving encouragement and support from the mentor.

Participants noted that virtual mentoring, as part

of the development process, can help with career building, provide access to more learning resources for acquiring new knowledge and skills, facilitate ongoing and creative communication, and use social networks to engage other professionals and obtain diverse information. This makes mentoring programs more accessible to a wider range of employees. This model is particularly useful when the mentor and mentee cannot frequently meet in person. However, as with distance learning, personal meetings should still occur to allow participants to communicate without the mediation of internet technologies.

Often, the main obstacle to implementing mentoring in a company is the difficulty of selecting mentors and mentees, which requires specially trained evaluators and the development of mentor profiles. However, even when all this is done, employees may simply show no interest in participating in mentoring programs. Self-Directed Mentoring is based on a completely different approach. The key difference from the traditional model is that neither mentors nor mentees are specifically selected—experienced employees voluntarily nominate themselves to be added to a mentor list.

The obvious advantage of this model is that the list includes only those who genuinely want to take on this challenging and responsible role. At the same time, the employee seeking a mentor can choose the person who they believe will provide the best help and support and be most compatible with them. In our opinion, self-directed mentoring can be successfully used as one of the self-development tools for employees at LLC NVP «Advismash.» Initiative and responsibility are indicators that a mentor is ready to voluntarily invest in the development of their mentee, who, in turn, encourages the mentor's self-development.

Creating mechanisms and a culture of development requires engagement from employees at all levels of the organization, regardless of age or status. However, older employees often face difficulties when learning new technologies and working methods, which can be addressed through the Reverse Mentoring model. Similar to traditional mentoring, this model involves interaction between two employees. However, the experienced, highly qualified professional—older in age, experience, or position—becomes the mentee of a younger employee who acts as the mentor for new trends, technologies, and similar areas. For many organizations, this model helps solve the problem of insufficient IT and internet communication skills among older employees, improves their motivation, alleviates concerns about their future in the organization, and fosters understanding and friendly

relationships between different generations.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning Team Mentoring, which helps quickly prepare potential successors for managerial positions. Two or more mentors work together or separately with one or a group of mentees to help them achieve specific development goals, covering essential practical aspects of managerial activities. This is arguably the most complex mentoring model to implement, but its use in preparing future leaders can yield better results than any other model. Team mentoring is particularly beneficial when a company is actively expanding, such as opening new branches, or when there is a real risk of losing key managers or specialists, and the company has no talent pipeline.

Based on the models described in the literature, we can note that for modern organizations, it is possible to propose the simultaneous introduction of several mentoring models: self-regulated mentoring, partnership, goal-setting and reverse mentoring. It should be noted that mentoring should be voluntary in the organization and provide for the appointment of a mentor only to a person who has agreed to it.

However, it is unlikely that employees will be willing to be mentored if they are not properly motivated. Thus, we consider it appropriate to introduce a system of financial incentives for mentors - 10% of the salary for the period of mentoring and another 5% of the one-time remuneration in case of successful onboarding. At the same time, we recommend setting the standard period of initial onboarding of a newly hired employee at 2 months, and if the newly hired employee has professional experience.

Thus, the creation of mentoring programs is a complex but necessary solution for a modern organization, as an effective personnel development system needs tools that provide an integrated and individually oriented approach to the formation of its human resources. Mentors help to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supplementing the knowledge gained by the mentee during formal training with practical experience. Mentoring helps talented and ambitious young employees plan their careers and develop relevant skills and competencies, becoming more independent, responsible and goal-oriented.

Mentoring contributes to the transmission of the organization's values, vision and mission to all levels of the organization through a close relationship between the mentor and the mentee, helping them to understand and make the necessary changes in their individual work style and behavior.

7. Summary

The generalized results obtained give grounds to formulate relevant conclusions and proposals of theoretical and practical importance. Thus, as a result of the systematization of scientific literature, the following definition of staff onboarding is formulated: a dynamic, continuous, holistic and organized process of mutual adaptation of an employee and an organization, which allows ensuring the employee's successful "entry" into the organizational environment, assimilation of the norms and principles of organizational culture, awareness of their place in the organizational hierarchy and consolidation of their professional rights and responsibilities.

Practical recommendations for improving the organization of onboarding and socialization of personnel in modern socio-economic conditions have been developed. To form an effective onboarding system, we propose when hiring a new employee to

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the company, to give them an employee handbook; to solve the problem of lack of knowledge about corporate culture, products manufactured by the company, and main production processes, we propose to make a film about the company and show it during the first month of onboarding; after the first working day of the newcomer, it would be desirable, in our opinion, to have a friendly dinner with them; team-building trainings will help to adapt the staff faster and better.

The conditions for implementing a mentoring program have been determined. The basic models of mentoring used by domestic and foreign companies have been worked out and it has been determined that in addition to the traditional model, self-regulated mentoring, partnership, goal-setting and reverse mentoring can be used. The system of motivation of mentors is formed and the expediency of its application at the enterprise is substantiated.

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