



TenStep Supplemental Paper

1 September 2003

Get Entry-Level Employees up to Speed Quickly with a Boot Camp Approach

One idea for you to consider for training entry-level employees is the concept of a development boot camp. The boot camp can be a full formal curriculum or it can consist of a number of related experiences to help new employees adjust as quickly as possible. The term boot camp has military connotations of drill sergeants yelling in the faces of new recruits, but in the corporate world they are, of course, not that harsh.

Benefits of the Boot Camp

The main objectives of a boot camp are:

1. To provide a safe environment to learn and transition from the college world to the corporate world.
2. To train people to use the languages of the company. Depending on where they went to college, many new employees may not know the development environment.
3. To build competency in the organization's development infrastructure. There are many things to understand about the work environment that are unique to the organization. For instance, how do you build production jobs? How are the jobs run? How are tapes and disks managed?
4. To explain the processes and procedures. Even if you find companies that use similar technology and tools, every company has their own set of internal processes and procedures. Everyone needs to learn them and they are explained in the boot camp.

Of course, one of the intangible benefits is that employees can meet and socialize with others in the same situation.

Benefits to the Company

There is a lot of value that is provided early on to all the new boot camp participants. But what is in it for the company? Actually, there is great benefit to the project and support teams as well. After a new employee has gone to boot camp, they know the general development languages and tools, the specific development environment, and the development processes and procedures. Obviously these people can be productive much more quickly than if they had started directly onto the team.

There are Many Alternatives in Between

This environment is especially good for companies that do a lot of hiring of entry-level people. If your company hires a handful of entry-level people, it probably does not make sense to have a full boot-camp environment. However, there are alternatives. You first need to start with an understanding of the training objectives you are trying to achieve. Then determine the best way to accomplish the objectives at your company.



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You also don't have to provide formal internal training for new people. In most places, you can easily arrange for external technical training at local companies. This combination of internal indoctrination, external training, as well as a mentor (or buddy) can be a powerful combination to get new people up and running as quickly as possible.

The key is to do something. If your company thinks through what it wants to accomplish in a new employee indoctrination process, you will find that the program can easily be created, strengthened and expanded to the benefit of the new employee and the company.