

The First 90 Days Playbook for New Hires

Your framework for setting
commercial FMCG hires up for
success



About This Playbook



Introduction

In the fast-paced world of FMCG, time is money, and a new hire's first 90 days can make the difference between long-term success and costly turnover.

The recruitment process may have ended when your chosen candidate signed their contract, but their journey to become a high-performing, fully embedded member of your team has only just begun. The truth is, even the most talented sales and marketing professionals can falter without a clear, structured onboarding plan.

That's where this playbook comes in.

We want to help prevent you from having to re-enter a recruitment process!

We've distilled years of experience placing senior FMCG commercial talent into a practical, step-by-step framework designed for a smooth probation period.

This playbook focuses on helping new hires integrate, feel supported, and set themselves up to pass probation successfully while building the foundations for long-term engagement.

It's about people, culture, and connection... They say first impressions are everything... make yours count, and top talent wanting to stay.



Month 1: First 30 Days - Immersion and Relationship Building

Laying the Foundations

The first 30 should focus on **immersion**. Helping your new hire understand your business inside and out, while building relationships that will underpin their success.

By their first probation review, your new hire should feel welcomed, connected, and supported.

There is a blank checklist towards the end of this playbook for you to use and tick off as you work through the first 3 months.

Culture Immersion Checklist

◉ Welcome & Vision Briefing

Share the company story, values, and “why we do what we do.” Provide a clear overview of the organisational structure and team dynamics.

◉ Team Introductions

Arrange 1:1 sessions with direct reports, peers, and key stakeholders to understand how people work together.

◉ Cultural Immersion

Show how your culture works in practice. Meetings, decision-making, informal routines, and communication norms.

◉ Brand/Product/Market Immersion

Deep dive into your brand, product, and market.

◉ Operations Exposure

Tour production facilities, warehouses, and supply chain hubs to understand processes and constraints.

◉ Initial Check-In

Month 1 probation review: Discuss how they are settling in, address concerns, and clarify expectations for the probation period.



Month 2: Observation & Feedback Loops



Reinforce belonging, establish good working habits, and maintain open communication.

Key Actions:

- ◊ **Early Wins & Observations** Encourage early contributions that demonstrate competence and back up what you heard in the interview.
- ◊ **Regular 1:1s** Schedule weekly or bi-weekly catch-ups to provide support, answer questions, and give constructive feedback.
- ◊ **Cultural Checkpoints** Reflect on how well they are aligning with team norms, collaboration, and company values.
- ◊ **Team Engagement** Include them in cross-functional projects or social interactions to deepen relationships.
- ◊ **Probation Review Preparation** Summarise achievements, observations, and areas for growth in preparation for your second formal probation review.

Why the ‘Mid-Point’ Probation Review is So Important

The second probation review is a key and important opportunity for you to assess your new hire. You have a month’s worth of information and observations, which should give you a good indication of whether your new hire is demonstrating what they told you in their interview.

If they are performing as you expect, record this along with any builds you wish them to focus on, and encourage feedback from them also - remember, they might be performing how you expected, but if they have concerns with you, this is where you can address these before they become a bigger issue for your new hire.

If you have any concerns about your new hire at this stage, these should be clearly discussed and put in writing, and made clear that failure to address these concerns could result in the probation period being extended or failed.

Phase 3: Embedding & Commitment

Ensure the hire feels fully integrated, supported, and motivated to stay long term.

Key Actions:

- **Ongoing Feedback** Move to a monthly feedback rhythm to encourage continuous improvement and open dialogue.
- **Celebrate success** Recognise achievements, both small and large, to reinforce belonging and motivation.
- **Development Conversations** Discuss long-term career aspirations and potential growth paths within the organisation.
- **Team Alignment** Continue fostering strong relationships across the team and company.
- **Final Probation Review** Conduct a comprehensive check-in, reflecting on integration, engagement, and future contributions.

Leadership Tips for Probation Success

- ✓ Focus on relationships and cultural alignment, not just performance metrics.
- ✓ Make feedback frequent, constructive, and two-way.
- ✓ Encourage participation in informal events and social activities. Culture is often learned outside meetings.
- ✓ Be patient: Integration takes time, and a supportive approach often leads to longer-term retention.

Your 3 Month Probation Checklist Tool

Don't miss a thing when onboarding your new hire.



Probation Phase	Checklist	Key actions/ Observations/ Notes
Month 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send welcome email and key info <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce company story, values and vision <input type="checkbox"/> Share organisational structure & team overview <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange 1:1s with team members and key stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Assign a buddy or mentor for cultural guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Observe team norms and communications styles <input type="checkbox"/> Complete month 1 probation review <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify early wins and contributions <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule weekly/bi-weekly 1:1s for support and feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Check alignment with company culture and team norms <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage participation in cross-team projects or social events <input type="checkbox"/> Summarise achievements/concerns and observations for mid-point probation review <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Month 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to a monthly feedback rhythm <input type="checkbox"/> Recognise achievements and monitor any concerns highlighted in month 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss long-term career aspirations and growth opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen relationships across teams <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct final probation review <input type="checkbox"/> 	



Final Thoughts

A great onboarding experience and probation period isn't just a formality, it's a powerful opportunity. When used well, these first few months give both you and your new hire the space to assess, adjust, and build the foundations for a successful long-term partnership. It's a time to watch skills in action, but more importantly, it's a chance to see how someone fits into the culture, adapts to your ways of working, and contributes to the team dynamic.

Treat probation as a two-way feedback loop. The new hire needs clear, consistent input from you to understand how they're performing and where they can grow. At the same time, you should actively seek their feedback on the onboarding process, team environment, and any challenges they've faced. This open exchange builds trust, strengthens engagement, and ensures that both sides are set up for success.

A well-managed probation period means fewer surprises, stronger relationships, and higher retention. By using this checklist and keeping communication flowing in both directions, you not only improve the chances of the new hire passing probation, but you lay the groundwork for a committed, high-performing team member who wants to stay and grow with your business.

If you want further support on how to support new hires, visit our [website](#) for lots of tips and tools on our [resources](#) page.

Or, contact us directly for no obligation advice.



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