

glean

The 2023 Onboarding Survey Report

The costs of outdated onboarding and best-practices
to improve the new employee experience

Research report

In collaboration with OnePoll



Table of contents

Executive summary	3
The signs of struggle	4
The cost of incomplete onboarding	7
The tools to thrive	9
Methodology and research	12



Executive summary

Record employee [resignations](#) and [hirings](#), a revolutionary, once-in-a-lifetime shift in the way we work, SaaS sprawl and information overload – it's all made onboarding a nebulous, turbulent, and often unsatisfactory affair. Gallup found that only [12%](#) of employees strongly agreed that their organization provided a great onboarding experience.

With how essential great onboarding is for long-term employee success, it's no wonder that employee turnover reaches as much as [50%](#) in the first 18 months of employment. The turnover isn't just nail-bitingly expensive – it results in the further loss of knowledge and degrades company culture and know-how irreparably. Critical business knowledge, processes, and context becomes harder to establish and pass down. This results in further onboarding difficulties, as new employees have fewer veterans to lean on during the process.

In our pursuit to discover why today's onboarding processes fail to meet expectations, our research revealed how many employees are silently surviving, not thriving, as a result of inadequate onboarding – and how it's ultimately resulting in costly, preventable turnover.

The reality?

Onboarding isn't just a formality anymore. It's the key to setting employees up for long-term success, and a formative part of the employee experience that needs to be rediscovered through the lens of information discoverability and accessibility.



The signs of struggle



Recruitment, employee retention, and ideas of company loyalty have been in turbulent flux. Organizations have lately seen a record number of employees come and go, and accommodating all that change isn't easy.

However, the commonly touted label of "Great Resignation" is misleading – it's not that workers are simply quitting and refusing to work. Rather, it's that job hopping has become more commonplace for the modern and incoming labor force as they search for variety, opportunity, and upward mobility.

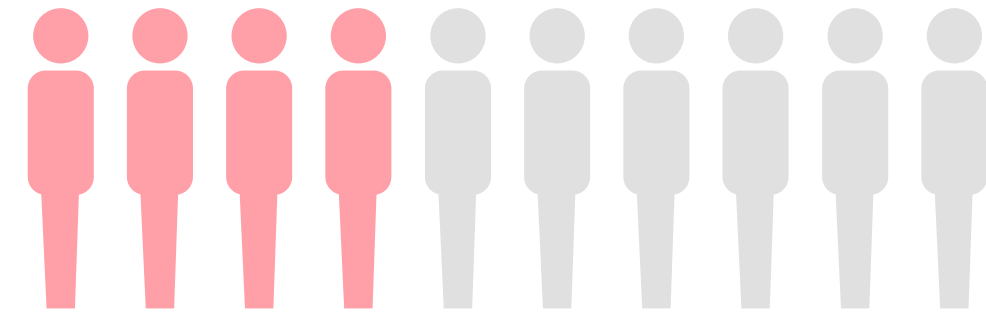
At a glance

- **21%** of millennials changed jobs within the past year, more than three times the number of non-millennials. ([Gallup](#))
- **Six out of ten millennials** are considering new job opportunities. ([Gallup](#))
- Gen Z employees changed jobs **134% more often** than they did in 2019. ([Axios](#))
- **25%** of Gen Z's are looking to move on from their current employers within the next six months. ([Linkedin](#))

Amidst the shift, institutional knowledge becomes harder and harder to grow, establish, and pass down. This simultaneously results in onboarding

becoming more difficult, as newer employees have fewer veterans to lean on during the process.

Incoming workers struggle to find the information and people they need



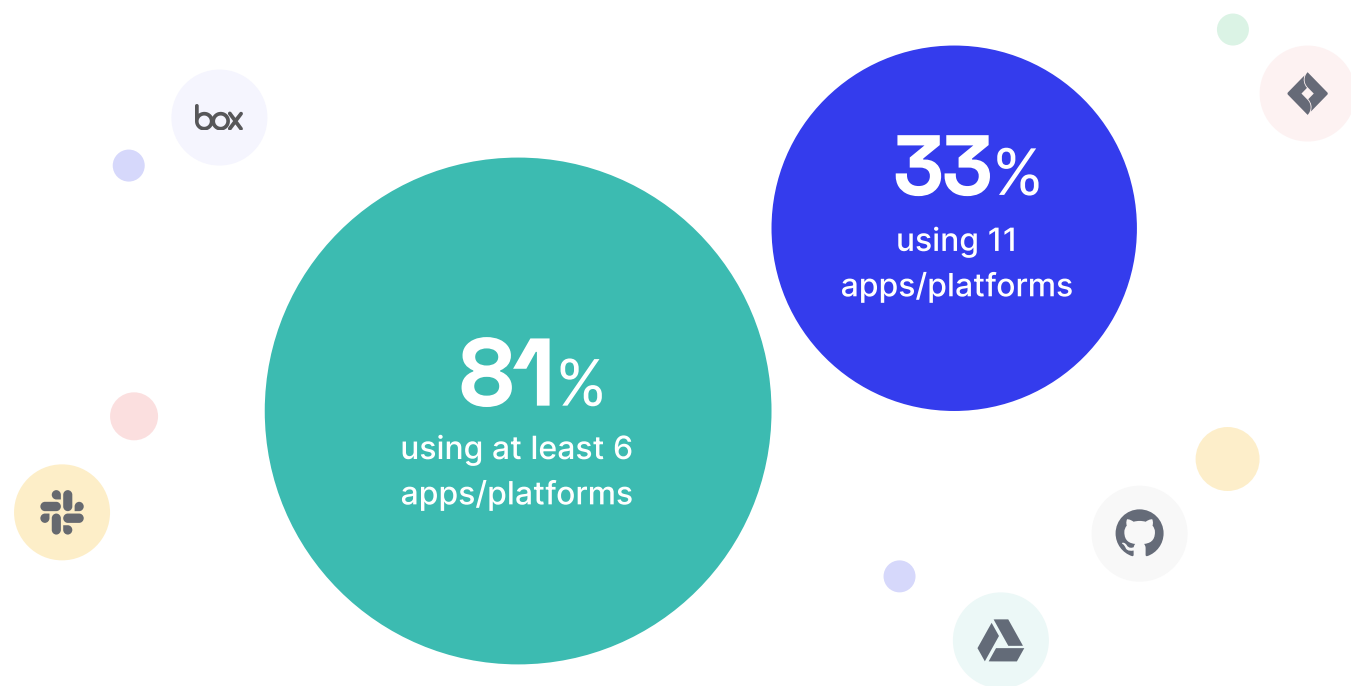
38% of the incoming generation of workers (ages 18-25), reported being largely lost when it comes to knowing who to tap for answers or resources.

Unfortunately, a critical part of the employee journey has largely remained unchanged for many teams – onboarding. This essential, yet oft neglected process has further suffered as many teams transition to working entirely remotely or in hybrid environments, on top of utilizing a plethora of digital tools and processes to fill the gaps.

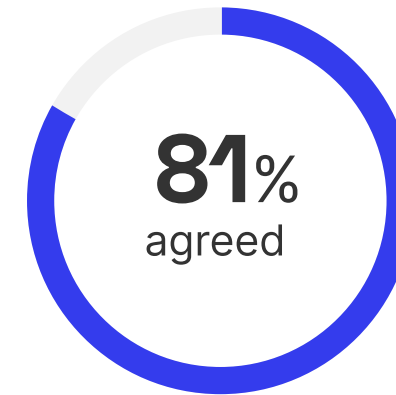
Meeting up in the office, building fast partnerships, and streamlining collaboration isn't as easy anymore. Survey respondents noted that, compared to resources like company intranets and informal team

meetings, tools like Slack, Google Drive, Box, and email were considered the least helpful during onboarding – likely only contributing to confusion as workers scramble to get up to speed with a deluge of disparate tools.

Workers are overloaded with apps

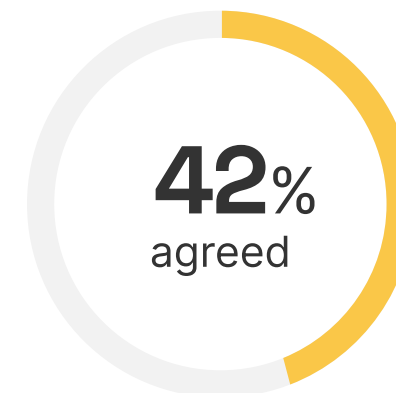


Survey findings discovered that the ever-increasing volume of information knowledge workers have to absorb, combined with the variety of software that has to be accessed and learned, makes old methods like onboarding checklists or first-week orientations either woefully inadequate or simply too overbearing. Newer employees consequently face serious blockers when it comes to learning something new or getting started on projects.



“ I felt overwhelmed with information throughout the onboarding process at my current company. ”

The difficulty in pinpointing accurate information and resources on demand doesn't end in the employee's first few weeks. Information scatter and the lack of a searchable source of truth continued to impact employees in their day-to-day work, making it more difficult than ever to acquire or verify information.



“ Information at my work is generally too scattered throughout different platforms. ”

It's the perfect storm for onboarding employees and most are getting lost in the waves, resulting in generations of workers that identify as 'survivors' rather than 'thrivers'.



The cost of incomplete onboarding

Unhappy workers disconnected from their work now unfortunately make up the majority of the modern workforce. 85% ([Gallup](#)) of employees are not engaged or actively disengaged at work. Research also uncovered that the **majority of workers consider leaving a role within 1-2 years if they're not thriving**, putting most workers at constant risk of leaving.

Insufficient onboarding results in attrition

63%



of workers consider leaving their roles within 2 years of employment if they're not thriving in their positions.

Considering that it costs up to nine months of an employee's salary ([Gallup](#)) to find and onboard a replacement – not to mention leaving a concerning gap within the team – it's a costly and preventable scenario that many organizations haven't prioritized solving yet.

Companies don't only pay when employees leave, however. Even the most productive, star employees that stay can burn valuable time and resources due to fragmented knowledge sources or rushed onboarding. Research uncovered that information search ate up considerable time out of knowledge workers' days – and a general hesitation to bother coworkers led to further struggles and inefficiency.



Workers waste countless hours struggling to find the information they need

Workers search for a specific piece of information

35 times per week...

...and they'll spend up to

13 minutes searching on their own before asking for help...

...losing almost

1 full day of work per week searching for information.



The tools to thrive



So what do employees need to thrive at work? **The response is universally clear – it’s a strong relationship with the company’s resources, information, and people.**

Top signs of thriving employees

Respondents chose these three signs as the strongest indicators of a thriving employee:

- **43%** Can direct others to the right resources.
- **42%** Knows where to find the information they need.
- **40%** Establishes strong relationships with colleagues.

Reaching these comfortable relationships all starts with better knowledge sharing and accessibility during onboarding. Without these elements, onboarding becomes mired in hesitation and ambiguity. Most of our survey respondents (72%) noted that they were concerned about asking too many questions when they started in their current position. Whether due to imposter syndrome or a matter of general courtesy, workers often don’t speak up enough when knowledge gaps begin to form during their first months at work – and as demonstrated by recent research, often remain unfilled, hindering productivity and burning valuable time.

Organizations need to ensure that onboarding employees receive a unified, searchable source of truth. It needs to be able to comprehensively collect institutional knowledge across multiple channels, and be accessible and searchable at will. Filling knowledge gaps with the least amount of friction needs to be the priority.

Employee satisfaction and empowerment relies on information access



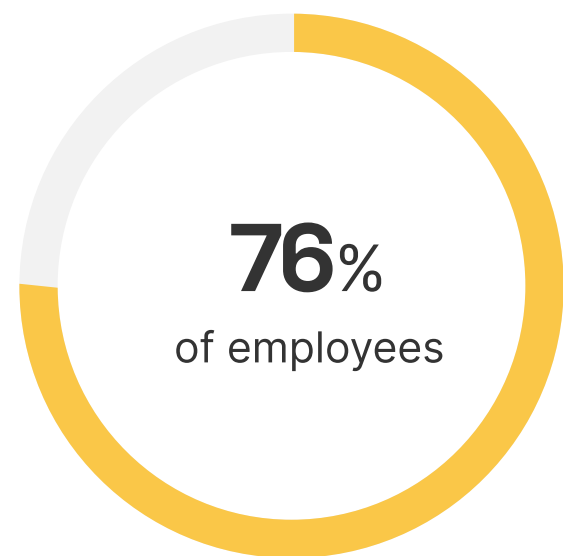
Workers believe that access to information without having to ask for help improves productivity and empowers them.



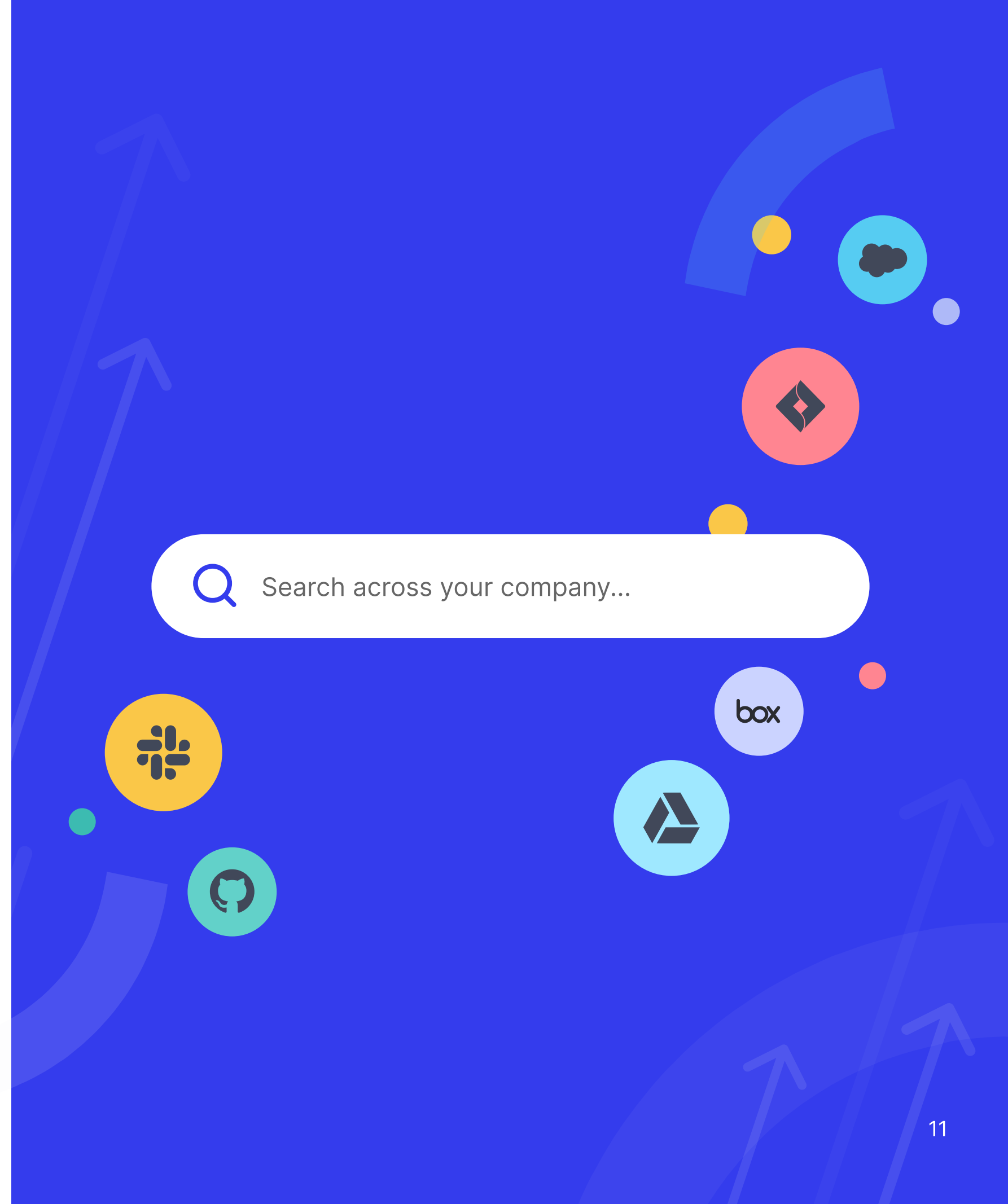
Workers agree that feeling empowered in their role keeps them engaged and connected at work.

Yet, establishing that font of readily flowing knowledge isn’t easy. Manually indexing knowledge, regularly updating relevant documents, and establishing a written culture of keeping track of information is hard work. Simply storing all your information in bulk isn’t the solution either. Onboarding employees need to have some idea of what information needs to be prioritized.

Modern onboarding requires a solution that streamlines the process at both ends. It needs to be capable of saving countless hours by automatically indexing and prioritizing knowledge from across the organization, and then in turn making the information as accessible as possible through high-quality search and discoverability. It's the key to enabling workers to harness the maximum potential of your organization's wealth of knowledge from day one – setting them up for sustainable, long-term success that builds both employee success and happiness.



Are much happier at work being able to find what they need without having to ask questions.





Methodology and research

How was the survey conducted?

Research was conducted by OnePoll, which surveyed over 2,000 knowledge workers throughout the United States on what they thought it meant to thrive within a new position. Respondents were exclusively either hybrid or remote office workers.



Search across all your company's apps.

Ready to modernize your onboarding experience and set your employees up for long-term success?

Get a demo of Glean today, and join other leaders that have chosen Glean as their champion of information accessibility.

[Get a demo](#)

Canva  samsara  databricks

 grammarly **okta**  rubrik

 CONFLUENT  **PLAID**