

How a 90-person UK Recruitment Firm Cut Client Onboarding from 3 Weeks to 5 Days

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How a 90-person UK recruitment firm cut its client onboarding time from 3 weeks to 5 days?

The founder of a 90-person recruitment firm found out his onboarding was broken the day a signed client cancelled. The client had gone quiet for three weeks after signing, then sent a short email saying he had gone with someone else. When the founder called to ask why, it had nothing to do with the recruiters or the candidates they'd sourced. The client said he just hadn't heard anything since signing, so after a week and a half he'd assumed the whole thing had stalled.

That call is what got Konsyte in the room. The firm had grown from twelve people to ninety in under four years, mostly by hiring senior recruiters away from competitors and letting them keep running their desks the way they always had. Nobody had ever written down what a new client's first few weeks were supposed to look like. Some consultants sent a welcome email the same day a contract was signed. Others waited until they had a shortlist ready, which could take two weeks. One team ran a proper kickoff call every time; another skipped it if the client seemed experienced enough. Clients who'd worked with three different consultants at the firm had three different first experiences, and none of them had been told what to expect or when.

Konsyte first mapped out what had actually happened during those three weeks and then compared it with what the founder thought was happening. The reason for the cancellation became clear pretty quickly.

There was no written scope or timeline when the client signed, so there was no clear way to tell if things were on track. The intake process was also inconsistent. The consultant had started building a shortlist based on assumptions rather than a proper brief, and there was no communication with the client while this was happening. After the kickoff call, nothing was scheduled until either the shortlist was ready or the client stopped waiting.

Konsyte and the founder rebuilt the process around the first five days: a same-day message after signing, an intake call within 48 hours using a standard set of questions, a written recap, and a short check-in on day five.

The founder initially questioned the need for that last check-in when there was no update to share. Konsyte's point was simple: the problem wasn't that there was no progress; it was that the client couldn't see any progress. Sometimes, a two-line update was enough to reassure the client that things were moving.

The firm rolled the new sequence out to every consultant, with one person made accountable for each step so it didn't drift back into six different versions of onboarding. Three months later, clients were seeing results in five days instead of waiting weeks and most early cancellations had stopped.

If this sounds familiar — book a free 30-minute Strategy Health Check at konsyte.com

