



Remote **ONBOARDING**

Your guide to successful remote onboarding

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THE PROCESS OF ONBOARDING REMOTELY

Remote onboarding has never been so important. With the pandemic ebbing and flowing it is essential that business is as flexible as possible in the workplace and remotely. Working from home has been revolutionized as companies realise that productivity often rises, and attitudes have definitely changed in 2020.

However, induction practices need to align with new expectations and employee needs. In the best case, induction gives your new employee an objective view of your company, organisational culture, and work ethic. This will allow them to better integrate into the workplace as this can be difficult as a remote worker.

What is required is a sense of welcome and a feeling that the employee is very much part of the team.



1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

An employee's first impressions of an organisation have a significant impact on their integration. This is both within the team and their level of job satisfaction. This is important as churn is costly. Think of the conversations they will have with others about what you did and how you did it. Word of mouth is incredibly powerful, especially as people are more than happy to spread the word, good or bad, online to all their networks.

2 ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

Onboarding is an opportunity for a business to welcome a new recruit, and help them settle in. Ensuring they have the knowledge and support required to perform their role can reduce stress and increase integration. This is essential for successful onboarding. The more help and information available the quicker people can start contributing to an organisation

3 ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Currently the ultimate challenge, and most basic, of working and onboarding remotely is the lack of face-to-face interaction with team members. The atmosphere within an office environment can teach the new hire valuable lessons especially when it comes to company culture and making connections with their colleagues. As this is not appropriate, in the main, other solutions need to be developed. However, there has been so much experience regarding the use of technology people are naturally overcoming their suspicions and need for offline meetings as often.

4 WHAT WORKS

Communication challenges can stifle the pace of the onboarding process which is why it is imperative to know what works well, and what doesn't. Ask for opinions, ask for advice. People may well be using technology in a smarter way so do ask your workforce what could improve what you do already.

TRY TO CONSIDER THESE



SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Do try to figure out what common challenges employees face when joining your business. You will not have to look far for the answers. Your existing employees can give you the information and will welcome the opportunity to voice any observations, information or concerns. Give people credit for their ideas and even ask if they might help with developing remote onboarding. They will know exactly what information was required and how the whole process made them feel.



CONDUCT SURVEYS

As a part of developing a new employee orientation process, you can survey your existing employees, both remote and onsite. This lets you know which challenges are specific to remote, alongside the general pain points new employees face while integrating into your company flow and culture. Pain points are not criticisms or faults, but points for learning and development and should be seen that way.



IDENTIFY WEAK POINTS

Based on the opinion of your existing employees, identify at least four to five significant concerns. Understand the issues at the root of these and work to fix those issues long term. This is how organizations become stronger and function more effectively. It really is an opportunity to develop the company culture. Now really is an ideal time to review, reappraise and revise current strategies.



BRIDGE THE GAP

Think about how your new employee onboarding program could mitigate the issues observed through the survey. Address these key issues by setting up systems and processes to overcome them. Then incorporate these into your onboarding process. It will help you attract and keep staff and that is very important for the growth and development of any company. Churn can be very costly, disruptive and impact negatively on staff morale.

WHAT TO DO PRE - ONBOARDING

It is a good idea to take time out before you begin any onboarding process. Consider how you want your new employee to feel and what are the really salient points they must know by the end of the onboarding process.

HAVE THE RIGHT TECH IN PLACE

Send new hires IT hardware and manuals but test what you are sending first. Do not assume all is well. Order computers and other hardware remote workers need well ahead of their start date. Confirm they have received all necessary equipment, logins and other information for their work and ask your IT department to assist them with setup, if necessary. Certainly a welcome from IT would be a supportive gesture.

PREPARE A WELCOME PACKAGE

- 1 Be creative here. Send them a gift or branded goods, a welcome card that is personally signed by the team or something that will give them that WOW factor and be excited to join your company. The aim is to create a sincere gesture and a positive, welcoming first impression.
- 2 You should also create an introduction document or 'bible' for their role. This should include a list of handy tools that your company uses, where they should be downloading apps and any logins/passwords they may need ready for their first day. Let them know the best form of contact for the rest of the team and any current regular meetings you have in place. People should feel confident that they have support and the ability to answer their own basic questions.
- 3 Set out and send them a schedule for their first day so they know what to expect. This is also a great time to include all legal and formal documents (tax, payroll etc.). Consider using an e-signature tool, like HelloSign or DocuSign, so that employees can add their signatures digitally and share contracts with you in a secure environment.

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WHAT TO DO ON THE FIRST DAY

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| 1. Go through a list of tasks that help them learn about the role, their direct team and its goals. Give them a real opportunity to ask questions. | 2. Create accounts in all your company productivity, security, HR and communication tools. Put yourself in your new employee's shoes and think about every need or eventuality that you could deal with in advance. |
| 3. Align their LinkedIn profiles/social media (if relevant) and add them to your website - make them feel welcome and a real member of the team! | 4. You can even get them to write a short bio to send to the team so everyone can get to know them on a personal level. A handy platform for this is Confluence. |
| 5. Set-up 1:1 video calls with direct managers and important partners/colleagues to get to know who they will be working with. Don't let anything look like it's an afterthought. People will be feeling slightly uneasy in a new role so this process can make them settle in more quickly and become productive. | 6. Share a list of articles from your company knowledge base. |
7. Sit down and agree their goals for the first 30, 60 and 90 days. Doing this together allows them to ask any questions and creates accountability. A great platform for this is MiroBoard which helps to track everything they need to learn.



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CHECKLIST BEFORE CANDIDATE FIRST DAY

- 1 It's important to keep information clear and pertinent. Outline expected tasks, culture, processes, expectations and deadlines
- 2 Get the IT straight, preferably before someone starts so training sessions, passwords, access etc. are set up and tested
- 3 Sort and check IT infrastructure. Don't assume someone has the right tools and access. Create a spreadsheet for each role so the process runs smoothly and aiding swift integration
- 4 If necessary, send the hardware via carrier – ensure it is disinfected first and evidenced.
- 5 Consider how your new employee can be integrated and made to feel welcome. Work with the team on 'video welcomes' and ways to show interest and excitement at what a newbie offers
- 6 Consider a neat, carefully branded 'care package' as a nice gesture of welcome. It doesn't have to be flashy or expensive; it's the gesture that counts
- 7 Make sure everyone that should know, is actually in the loop regarding new hires. Maybe informal meetings and even a brief one-to-one will show that a new hire matters and is significant
- 8 Consider asking the right people to mentor or buddy a new starter. Allow them to familiarise the new recruit regarding town halls, dept meetings etc.
- 9 Make short, medium- and long-term plans so new employees gain an overview of what's happening, what's expected and where they fit into the bigger picture.
- 10 All these things will underscore a new candidate's feeling about the role, their decision to accept and how they feel about the company. Do not underestimate the role of these 'pre-flight' basic checks.

WHAT TO DO IN THE FIRST WEEK

INTRODUCTIONS



This should be done on their first day. It really is key to making new employees feel welcome. Maybe think about setting up a buddying or mentor system where they have one person to lean on during their first few weeks of working for your company. This will alleviate feelings of separation or isolation when working remotely.

Keep people feeling connected by introducing social events for the team online – this could be a beer over Skype or tea and biscuit breaks on Zoom.



Take what fits best with your team and think about how you can get this online – ever tried eating lunch on facetime with a complete stranger? Try it, you might be amazed at its effect!

It's also a great idea to ask your team to individually reach out to a new hire after their first week. This can simply be a brief introduction about who they are and what they do. This gives the new hire a background on what they do in their role and how they can potentially help.

CREATE TRAINING GOALS

- It can be overwhelming starting a new job and trying to take in all the information thrown at you.
- Keep this in mind with your new starter and set smaller milestones for them to reach to make sure you're happy with their progress and they feel less overwhelmed.
- The initial targets and goals for the first 30 days should be agreed as soon as possible. However, do make sure to check in regularly regarding how they're finding the tasks and whether you might possibly need to revise initial strategies and targets.



CONTINUING TO WORK IN THE FIRST WEEK

CREATE REGULAR CHECK-INS

- It is your responsibility to be continuously proactive in creating regular check-ins and ongoing training for your new starter, especially for the first 6 months of their employment. During check-ins try to be mindful regarding the discussion of personal and professional goals. Also appreciate and recognise any new ideas they may have and give suggestions or encourage those for further learning.
- *Important Note: The new employee should be comfortable to express their personality and demonstrate how they like to work. Don't try to force your way of working because it's been fine so far, be open to change! A new approach might be just what's required right now.*
- Explore a variety of ways to keep in touch with your team until you can establish what works best.
- There is an abundance of video calling platforms, conference call apps and instant messaging options you can use.
- Speak with the team and your new starter to gain feedback on how they feel things might be improved or what is working well.

WELCOME FEEDBACK

- You should also welcome all feedback, not just on the entire onboarding process, but also how productive and efficient the business is as a whole. It is important to check-in with your new starter. This is not just on how they're finding the workload/tasks at hand, but also to make sure they have an opportunity to voice their opinion.
- Also, make sure important appointments such as employee reviews are booked in advance so it's not 'out of sight, out of mind'.
- Staying on top of these activities will improve employee performance and engagement, especially as the mid and final probation reviews are the most essential!



STAY CONNECTED - SOCIALLY!

- With remote working, it's no secret that it can get lonely and not all new starters will find it easy to open up to a team of faces on a screen. It is just as important to ensure all of the legal and fine details are right as it is to keep your team socially engaged and active.
- Make it your priority to keep everyone updated on ideas to maintain fitness and being active at home and any online groups they can join for exercise or mental wellbeing. Schedule regular social events online – checkout the House Party app for a few ideas.
- Also do not forget to include remote workers in ALL company social events - online or in-person.
- Give new starters examples of how you've previously celebrated company success or what you do for Christmas parties! Let them know they will be appreciated. Demonstrate that wherever you can.

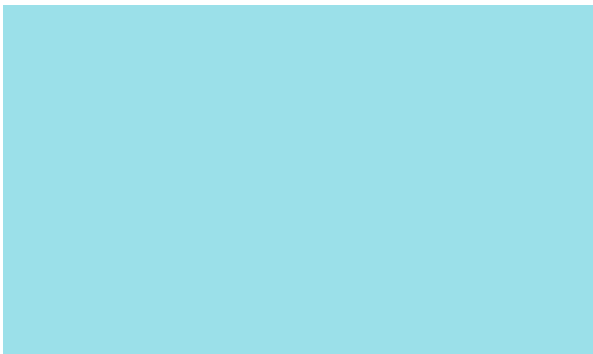
REMEMBER THE FOUR E'S

To ensure you're creating the best cultural fit for your new employee you can always follow the four E's and make sure they are all covered at some point during their onboarding journey.



ENGAGE

- » Don't let it get to the point where the new employee feels left out. Likewise, the entire team should be regularly checked on, asked for their feedback and be included on relevant business decisions.



EDUCATE

- » This is a huge part of the onboarding process and must be done correctly. Ask each new hire how they work best and adjust to each individual.
- » Maybe include the rest of the team to educate on areas of their expertise.



ENCOURAGE

- » Make sure a new hire is encouraged to take part in team activities and make a conscious effort to get to know them personally. Ask specific questions to get feedback on their role or specific tasks to get them into the habit of doing this regularly.



EMPOWER

- » Recognise and reward the small wins. Any progress is still progress and it's important to celebrate and compliment new starters.



SUMMARY

Overall, the main thing to consider in developing the onboarding process effectively is to make people feel welcome. Also, encourage open conversations and feedback and then evaluate your onboarding process after every hire – there is always room for improvement! If you react positively to feedback, progress will be made. Ask new hires as they go through the process if there is anything that's missing. Even a survey midway might be useful to capture the moment in a snapshot.

For more information or to find out more about onboarding and remote onboarding you can contact Mike Meyrick by email at mike@meyrickconsulting.com



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Mike is a highly experienced international executive search consultant specialising in leadership recruitment, with a proven track record of delivering high quality candidates to clients across many different sectors and global locations. Having recruited C-Suite and senior level executives he has filled many niche confidential positions and is regarded as an extremely professional recruiter operating with the highest level of integrity.

Mike has 20+ years' experience in the retained search market and has recruited for many blue chip organisations, as well as several start-up businesses. Working in partnership with clients his role is to source exceptional candidates to best match their requirements by providing a fully integrated recruitment solution.

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