

ONBOARDING FROM HOME

Your guide to hiring, retaining and onboarding
new workers whilst working remotely.

WELCOME

This guide will help you navigate the new territory many employers are finding themselves in by outlining best practice advice for onboarding new members of staff when you and your workforce are working from home.

This is a new challenge that we are all facing together, but don't let it become a problem because we have the technology and expertise to make it work. The key factor for success is to remain positive and supportive of your new hire, and to encourage your team to put every effort into welcoming them to your organisation.

Ask your consultant if you have any concerns at any time. They will be very happy to help.



SHOULD I EVEN MAKE AN OFFER NOW?

If you're reconsidering making an offer or you're having doubts about an offer you've already extended, don't worry, this is a sensible response to the current climate but there is no cause for alarm.

Take a long-term view

Remember why you needed to hire in the first place, nothing has changed long-term and you still need the expertise and experience that this candidate can offer.

Skills shortages are still very real

There is still a dramatic shortage of skills and this is unlikely to change after this period of uncertainty has ended. If you've found a candidate who can provide the help you need, lock them down with an offer now.

Show your supportive side

How you act in the next few weeks will reveal a lot about how you care for their wellbeing. Be supportive and continue in a manner as close to 'business as usual' as possible, and you'll earn their loyalty in the future.

TRY RECORDING A SHORT VIDEO



If your new employee is working from home, they may be inundated with emails. Cut through the noise with a short video introduction.

What should you do?

- Welcome them to the company
- Be excited for them to join your team
- Explain a little more about the next steps and early onboarding process
- Let them know that remote working is no barrier and that you'll do everything you can to make things work.
- Share the video with them privately, either directly over the phone or via a LinkedIn message.

MADE AN OFFER? KEEP THEM ENGAGED

Once you have made an offer, it's of prime importance that you make every effort to support them during their notice period. In the current climate, they need to feel a sense of security and support from you, or they may drop out of the process.

Be mindful of their emotions

Your new candidate is leaving the security of their current role to come and work for you. This is a big decision even before you consider that their early days with your organisation might comprise entirely of remote working. This may prove intimidating, so it's important to stay in regular communication and impress upon them a sense of safety, community and belonging.

Beware counter offers

The first and last weeks of an employee's notice period are the times when they are most likely to receive a counter offer from their current employer. Focus extra attention during these times.

Get them involved

During this time, try to get them involved with their team, particularly if they have any direct reports. This can be a challenge when everyone's working remotely, but there are things you can do to give them a sense of the community they'll be joining.

How to keep a candidate engaged during their notice period

- Enter them into a group chat, on WhatsApp, Skype or similar, with their immediate team. Introduce them and encourage discussion
- Schedule one-to-one video calls with key team members
- Schedule 'coffee time' – informal video meet-ups for immediate team members to get to know their new colleague
- Send email updates, 'what's happening in the department', so that they can hit the ground running

WHAT WILL THEIR FIRST WEEK LOOK LIKE?

Onboarding a new member of staff completely remotely might not be something you are used to, but it can be a huge success – just adapt your current processes and offer some extra support, and your new employee will thrive.

First, review your normal process

Take a detailed look at how you normally onboard a new starter. It's likely that much of that process can be moved onto a virtual platform without losing too much interaction. Here are some things to prioritise

Home access: Not necessarily part of your existing process, but it's vital to ensure that your new hire is able to access their files and emails smoothly from day one. Ensure as much preparation is made in this regard before they officially start.

Compliance: Boxes need checking and forms need signing. It's the same in every job. Use DocuSign or similar software to make this process easier for remote workers

Training: Any required training, health & safety, anti-corruption or similar, should all be accessible online for new users to complete as soon as they have access to your systems from home

Technology: Make sure they have everything they need to do their job properly. In particular, ensure they have the correct video call software and are confident with it.

Set up (virtual) meet and greets

One part of your onboarding process that shouldn't be neglected is the focus on meeting new team members.

Do a wider team greeting: Make your new starter feel welcome by celebrating their addition to the team. This can be as simple as introducing them on a group conference call – ideally over video so they can begin to put faces to names.

Set up one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders: Just as you should when a new hire starts in person, you should plan video calls with key stakeholders and other members of staff to talk over their responsibilities and how they would fit into your employee's new role.

Make things as structured as possible

As your new hire starts to become familiar with the company and what their day-to-day should comprise of, it's important to create a clear structure.

Check in, don't check up: Book out meetings every day between your new starter and their line manager. Allow at least an hour to discuss anything they have in mind and to make immediate deliverables clear.

Set clear expectations, daily: Have a call or video meeting in the morning to make sure the employee knows what to expect from the day and can plan out their activity. As their first week goes on, these should become shorter or be cancelled entirely as the new starter gains confidence and knowledge of key projects.

Ask them to compile questions: Working in an office lets new starters ask their neighbours and managers simple questions throughout the day. This is more difficult when working remotely, so ask them to compile a list of questions as they come up, so you can cover them in your daily meeting.

Be understanding

Even if your organisation had implemented flexible working in the past, onboarding a new starter entirely remotely is bound to be a new experience both for managers and employees themselves.

Get to know them: Without having face-to-face contact it can be easy to focus on the tasks ahead, but spend time getting to know them personally too.

Look after wellbeing: It's a stressful experience, moving jobs, and even more so in the current climate with so much uncertainty. If you have wellbeing programmes, let your new starter know about these – or just be open for a chat.

Be forgiving: Onboarding remotely is a relatively new concept, there will be a learning curve. Learn from any mistakes or hiccups and be forgiving and supportive. This will help you retain your new worker and streamline the process for any more remote hires.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

After you've successfully onboarded your new team member and the crisis has passed, you'll need to decide to reintegrate your team into the office, or you may find that large-scale remote working has been beneficial to your business and want to continue with it.

If you choose to integrate more remote working into your business-as-usual, there are several benefits to you and your staff, including:

- Better wellbeing as workers can improve their work-life balance and avoid a commute
- More equality in the workplace as working parents can more easily manage childcare
- Improved employee attraction and retention
- Access to a wider pool of skilled job applicants

Whatever you decide to do, rest assured that Hays consultants will be on hand to help recruit the people you need to make your business a success.

If you have any further questions or concerns about hiring in the current climate, please contact us at clientmiddleeast@hays.com