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worldwide

RECRUITMENT DURING COVID-19 AND BEYOND

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How has COVID-19 impacted the skills you need in your organisation now and tomorrow? How will your recruitment plans need to change to handle this new era of work?

In this guide we share insights to help you answer these vital questions.

RECRUITMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR NOW

Organisations have two main talent challenges – one is preserving their current workforce, and the second is ensuring that they have the right skills and professionals in place for the longer-term.

Workforce planning

You should use the time now to assess the skills needed for what your organisation will look like coming out of the crisis. This may include hiring for new permanent skill sets and making use of a contingent workforce as operating models shift.

- As organisations emerge from the crisis, you will need to be able to attract and hire key skills as quickly as possible, while adhering to compliance requirements.
- Alternatively, you may see peaks and troughs in your business that will continue to be hard to predict, which may require you to hire temporary or contract workers to meet these demands.

Regardless of which stage your organisation is at in terms of recovery, demand for niche or emerging skills will remain.

Starting now to assess for the skills you'll require will ensure that, when your organisation is ready, you'll have access to the talent needed to deliver on organisational changes or respond to market opportunities. Refer to the checklist on the following page to help build your plan.

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How to assess skills gaps and identify critical hires

The skills in demand are changing rapidly in response to shifting operating models and the economic and social pressures resulting from the pandemic. You should look urgently at your own circumstances to identify critical roles. As many organisations move to more online working models, demand for skills in areas such as IT is likely to increase.

Some other examples include:

- As retailers focus on e-commerce models, there is an increased requirement for digital skills across both marketing and technology. This includes software developers, data scientists, cloud infrastructure specialists, digital marketing and UX/UI specialists.
- Increase in hiring for IT security roles across all organisations, as employers look to set up and defend infrastructure to support continued remote working.
- As the country gets back to their places of work, those working in maintenance trades will be needed to ensure buildings that may have stood idle are safe, clean and operationally sound.

- The expected rise of new legislation and changes to operating procedures that will need to be implemented within organisations as we shift to a new way of working will increase demand for legal professionals and also for change management experts to communicate the changes to the wider organisation.
- There will be demand for construction workers from a range of disciplines as projects that may have been delayed begin again.
- Demand for telephone and online customer service contact staff across all industries.
- To fulfil the nation's requirement for critical supplies, such as food and medical equipment, there is more pressure than ever on the manufacturing and supply chain industry.
- There is a surge in demand for both permanent and interim HR professionals, particularly for SMEs who need expert support as they manage their workforces through the changes ahead.

Your recruitment process

Until social distancing measures ease, your recruitment processes and protocols will need to remain virtual.

If you've already set some of this up, now is the time to review how it's working to ensure you can progress candidates through your process. If you've yet to address this, our checklist [on the right](#) will help you to adjust your recruitment and attraction processes and protocols to suit your new operations.

Areas you may want to look at include:

Advertising roles

- Refer to working arrangements and shift patterns in all of your job descriptions, advertising and recruitment websites.
- Explicitly state what working equipment will be provided to candidates if they are expected to work remotely.

Dealing with applications

- Ensure that your organisation is set up to receive online applications, and review connectivity and compliance of your applicant tracking system to other new tools that you may have added to your suite of recruitment tools.
- Ensure that your hiring managers are enabled to review applications swiftly. This may include the ability to send and read CVs online and via smartphones, for those without access to printers when working from home.

“ Work closely with your IT department to ensure that it is possible to virtually (and quickly) onboard your new starters. This will help you provide a seamless and consistent employee experience. ”

Interviewing candidates

- Ensure that all hiring managers receive the right support and training to run effective virtual interviews. You can refer to our checklist on the right for some useful training and resources.

Onboarding new starters

- Work closely with your IT department to ensure that it is possible to virtually (and quickly) onboard your new starters. This will help you provide a seamless and consistent employee experience. You may need to consider investing in or upgrading technology platforms to facilitate this.
- You should also put together a robust digital induction programme for new starters to ensure they receive the same level of support.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Consider how your EVP will need to evolve for the new era of work. Get feedback from your staff about what aspects matter most to them, as well as what they've enjoyed and what's worked well. Ask about their wellbeing and personal development needs. This won't give you all the answers but will help to form your thinking on how your EVP may need to adapt.

CHECKLIST

Workforce planning

- i. Assess your short-to mid-term workforce requirements for the future, including:
 - The skills you will need post lockdown
 - Contingency plans for staff whose roles have changed (redeploy, redundancy, attrition)
 - Identify important skill sets and critical hires now
 - Seek approval for critical hires now and start the hiring process
 - Consider making use of a contingent workforce
- ii. Work with [Hays](mailto:clientmiddleeast@hays.com) to understand the latest market updates for your sector/industry. Get in touch via email: clientmiddleeast@hays.com
- iii. Look at which areas of your organisation may see a surge or dip in demand and output, and plan your resources effectively

Recruitment process

- i. Decide the changes you need to make to your current recruitment process to enable you to attract and hire the best talent quickly
 - Decide which roles can be done remotely and consider this when advertising for new roles
 - Ensure your hiring managers have the tools to review online applications
 - Confirm that all your tools and technology used for recruitment connect to your ATS and any other required systems
 - Ensure your hiring managers have the right training and technology to perform virtual interviews
 - Confirm your ability to onboard and induct new starters
 - Review other digital tools for your hiring processes to improve efficiencies

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

- i. Consider how longer-term changes to working arrangements and business operations will impact your EVP

RECRUITMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Employers should start to look holistically at how their operating model may continue to evolve in the new era and what the knock-on effect of this will be on the workforce and skills they require?

Being able to decide how you want to bring back your workforce and what working arrangements you will offer in the future will really help to shape this thinking. A more dispersed workforce will mean you can access talent from wider geographic locations and so you will need to evolve your recruitment messaging accordingly.

The rate of digitisation has rapidly increased, but how else will this impact your business operations? You'll need additional technology and IT skills to support this ongoing investment. How will your organisation access and hire for the technology skills required?

How will the way you interview and assess candidates need to evolve? Will the future outlook mean investment in more sophisticated technologies such as VR to improve the candidate experience?

As you think about the agility and other soft skills that are needed to operate in the future, does this mean a shift in candidate assessment for evaluation of soft skills, such as resilience, adaptability, problem-solving and team-working?

Looking into the mid-term, have you considered if there will be skills shortages? These are present in so many industries and addressing these sooner might help you to fill these gaps while talent is more readily available.

This crisis may have shaped your future needs unexpectedly, but it doesn't have to define your business. As you consider your staffing and hiring position, the questions below may help.

1. Does your organisation want to offer more or less flexibility to employees in the future?
2. Has the geographic location requirement of roles in your business changed?
3. How does your employer value proposition and employer branding material need to evolve to maintain competitiveness if workplace arrangements are permanently changed?
4. What skills will you need in your workforce?
5. What areas need a strategic talent roadmap, for example, IT?
6. Will you want to hire more gig workers and make greater use of a contingent workforce to address skills gaps?
7. What soft skills will you need to assess candidates against when hiring?



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 want to view more advice and tips on managing in the new era, please visit our management hub hays.ae/manage-from-home. Or, if you have any further questions or concerns about hiring in the current climate, email us at clientmiddleeast@hays.com.