

REMOTE WORK

Remote Onboarding: A Week-by-Week Guide to the First Month

Remote Onboarding

Having a strong virtual onboarding program is critical when you're adding new hires to a remote or hybrid (part in-office, part at-home) team. Onboarding is important for all employees, of course, but bringing on new hires who will be working remotely can pose unique challenges.

Remote Employee Onboarding Tips and Best Practices

While the goals of onboarding are the same whether you're bringing on remote team members or employees who will work in an office environment, simply replicating your procedure for in-person onboarding via a video conferencing platform isn't the best approach. Instead, it's better to adapt your approach based on [virtual onboarding best practices](#).

Week 1: Building a Strong Foundation for Success

The first week of virtual onboarding should focus on helping new remote employees navigate their transition into the organization. Use an [onboarding checklist](#) to prepare so that the new hire forms completion process is as organized and seamless as possible.

- Send a swag box that includes useful items bearing the company's logo that new hires can use in their home office space (like a mouse pad or charging station) along with some apparel (like a baseball cap or t-shirt).
- Provide required notices and complete required documentation, such as Form I-9 verification, payroll, benefits administration, and compliance training. Use a tech-forward solution like Justworks to help [streamline these tasks](#) and other aspects of new hire setup.
- Provide an overview of the organization's history and culture, ideally via a combination of interactive computer-based training, pre-recorded videos, or live virtual discussions.
- Gamify the process of getting to know the organization with a company-focused scavenger hunt. Provide a list of things that employees will find within the overview materials and award a prize, such as another swag item, when the list is complete.
- Send an introductory message via email or a collaboration app to the full team to introduce each new hire. Include a fun icebreaker, such as "[two truths and a lie](#)," to initiate conversation and establish a personal connection.
- Introduce new hires to the full company, using any method that is appropriate for your organization's culture. This can be done with an email, a newsletter or intranet announcement, or updating the organizational chart.

Week 2: Becoming Part of the Team

Week two should focus on helping new hires start to become part of their immediate team. Since group cohesiveness is impacted any time a new member joins, garner buy-in and participation from your veterans — this is for their benefit too!

- Managers should hold a 1:1 dialogue with new remote hires as soon as they're finished with orientation. Start by asking what questions or concerns the new employee might have after week one, then offer a preview of what to expect in the coming week.
- Incorporate new hires into recurring meetings, being sure to allow time for [team building activities](#) as appropriate.
- Assign new hires a peer buddy, who will serve as a non-supervisory point of contact for navigating the company's culture, systems, and norms.
- Host a virtual coffee break or lunch hour for the team as a way of allowing for the full team to interact face-to-face via a virtual collaboration tool. If budget allows, send a pizza or boxed lunch to each member's home (or other workspace).
- Encourage new hires and members of their immediate team to schedule brief virtual chats so they can get to know each personally and professionally.

Week 3: Navigating the Organization

During week three, new hires should start to learn more about how their role serves the team, and how their team fits within the context of the larger organization.

- Start the week with another 1:1 session, this time addressing questions or concerns for week two and setting expectations for week three.
- Foster organizational awareness by introducing new hires to employees in other departments so they can get a sense of what happens in each part of the organization. These key stakeholders might be managers or individual contributors, depending on the seniority of the new hire.
- Provide product and market training that focuses on helping new hires develop a strong sense of how the organization creates value, how its products and/or services are unique, and who its target customers are.
- Encourage new hires to get to know coworkers in other departments through opportunities to connect via organization-wide [team bonding activities](#).
- Incorporate new hires into regularly scheduled company-wide meetings.

Week 4: Full Speed Ahead

With so much accomplished during the first few weeks of onboarding, the last week in the first month should focus on what new hires need to move ahead in their roles.

- Managers should hold a 1:1 with new hires that focuses on a dialogue about the employee's impressions to date, what questions may linger, if there are any real or perceived barriers to success, and to establish what comes next.
- Work closely with new employees to start the process of participative goal setting. Adapt this [goal setting worksheet](#) as a tool to use when collaborating with new employees to set goals and develop action plans.
- Managers can start providing specific performance feedback at this point, as well as clarify performance expectations and review key metrics associated with successful performance.
- Ensure that employees are aware of available [learning and development opportunities](#) so they can continue to grow as professionals, whether through strengthening their current skill set or adding new capabilities.

Prepare Remote Team Members for Success

By using these tips and best practices to design a remote onboarding process that works, you'll be proactively taking steps to prepare the newest remote members of your team to become successful in their new roles. By establishing a strong connection for each new hire to the organization and their team, you'll likely find that your new and improved approach to remote onboarding can have a [positive impact on employee retention](#) and, ultimately, bottom-line results.



Want To Get Started?

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