Guide to Hiring Remote Employees

Justworks

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INTRODUCTION

Guide to Hiring Remote Employees

Knowing how to effectively hire and lead remote workers has never been more essential than in the current business environment. Technology has made it possible for more jobs to be performed remotely than ever before, a reality that can potentially benefit companies of all sizes, including startups and established organizations.

→   Hiring for distributed teams allows companies to identify and bring on the best talent without being geographically restricted to a small radius near an office location.

→   Companies don't have to invest in relocating employees to specific locations when team members can do their work remotely.

→   When employees work from home, employers can invest in top talent that drives the success of their organization, rather than ever-increasing brick-and-mortar expenditures. Managing a distributed team means less need to divert capital away from innovation and revenue generation to fund increasingly costly physical locations.

As the number of telecommuters in the workforce grows, and companies place greater importance on building cohesive and productive distributive teams, it's essential to know how to effectively recruit, hire, and manage remote employees. It's also critical to be aware of key compliance and **company culture** considerations associated with building and leading a distributed team.

More and more employees seem to prefer remote work, for a wide range of reasons. A few key reasons that remote work appeals to people include:

→ Commuting-related time/expenses

→ Schedule flexibility

→ Having work-life balance concerns

→ Having safety concerns

→ A desire to reside outside of a major metro area

→ The cost of real estate in locations with the best employment potential

While the reasons may vary, telecommuting is a fact of life for many businesses, especially in the world of startups. Whether you're building a remote team from the ground up or **transitioning to a remote workforce**, it's important to master the core elements of building and managing a distributed workforce.

Recruiting Remote Workers

When it comes to recruiting the right candidate, there's a lot of overlap between hiring for the commuting world and hiring for the remote workplace, but there are some additional things to consider. You'll still want to focus on things like requisite skills and company values, but you'll also want to make sure that candidates either have or are committed to developing the additional skills to make your distributed team work.

Recruiting

Company Careers Page

Establish a strong employer brand by building out a solid careers page on your company website. It should not only provide information about current job openings, but also details on the company's commitment to building a dispersed workforce, as well as unique insights regarding what it's like to work at your organization.

→ Make it completely clear which jobs are remote and which, if any, require on-site work.

→ Enable candidates to easily search for or view remote work opportunities.

→ Provide information on the company culture, factoring in remote team members.

The careers page on your company's website should provide helpful, easy-to-digest information to job seekers while providing a streamlined, transparent application process. It should be obvious to applicants that your company is tech-savvy enough to meet the needs of people seeking remote work opportunities.

External Recruitment Advertising

When it comes to advertising remote job openings via external resources, there are quite a few options to consider. In addition to utilizing popular search sites, research other platforms that specialize in remote or flexible work opportunities. Make sure that any job announcements are very clear about the remote nature of the job.

Remote Internship Program

You may consider **building and running a remote internship program**. Not only will this type of program help build your employer brand and help to advance your industry, but it can also be a part of your long-term recruitment strategy. People who excel as remote interns today just might be ideal candidates for your distributed workforce in the future.

Remote Employee Screening Considerations

Receiving applications is important, but chances are that not everyone who applies is going to be a good fit. Not only do you need to screen for specific skills, competency, and subject matter interest, but you also need to make sure candidates are prepared for remote work. When **interviewing for telecommuting jobs**, try to get a sense of how candidates will interact with coworkers in a remote workplace.

Consider Previous Remote Experience

People who have been successful as part of a distributed team likely have a more realistic understanding of what it takes to work and communicate as part of a virtual team. They may require less of an adjustment than someone who is new to working remotely, but that doesn't mean they will necessarily be the best fit.

→ Ask those with remote experience to discuss their previous remote working experiences.

→ Get them to provide details so you can get a sense of whether they really know the world of remote work, or if they just have experience with teleconferencing and communicating through email.

→ For those who don't have remote work experience, ask them to share thoughts about how a previous job they had would have been structured if it was a remote position.

Verify Expectations for Remote Work

Whether someone has previous remote work experience or not, it's important to get a sense of their expectations for the job, including the work itself, as well as how the work is to be performed (remotely). Ask questions designed to tell if they can identify, acknowledge, and discuss the perks and challenging aspects of a remote workplace.

→ Why are you interested in performing this type of work in a remote environment?

→ What do you see as the biggest challenges to doing this type of work remotely?

→ What do you find the most appealing about working remotely?

→ What do you see as the biggest stressors associated with remote work?

→ How would you go about building solid working relationships with remote peers?

→ How would you describe your approach to scheduling a remote work day?

Look for Creativity

Since a candidate won't be part of your immediate office environment, making sure the person has creative energy and the ability to adapt in different work situations is essential. Look for **signs of creativity** at work or in other aspects of their professional life. Indicators of creativity may include:

→ Different and varied work experiences

→ Jobs that require innovation

→ Side projects or freelance gigs

→ Comfort with multitasking

→ Ability to manage time effectively

→ Commitment to professional development

This can help identify candidates suited for remote work versus those who will be more comfortable performing single tasks in a traditional office setting.

Have a Rigorous Screening Process

No single set of rules applies to every company or job, whether the business is a startup or an established organization. Put in the extra time to find the right person. Never settle for the best option from a group of candidates where no one is a good fit.The best option from a group of individuals who aren't suitable can still turn out to be a bad hire.

Onboarding Remote
Team Members

Onboarding Remote Team Members

Once you decide to hire an individual, the next step is to begin integrating the person into your workforce. Since the new hire won't be interacting with coworkers around the office, there are special considerations for virtual onboarding. Justworks CEO Isaac Oates advises, "Making each employee feel like they're part of the circle is essential to a functioning workplace."

→ Implement **virtual onboarding best practices** to update the onboarding process.

→ Use a **virtual onboarding checklist** to track progress and ensure consistency.

→ Streamline and simplify new-hire setup with the **Justworks platform.**

→ Follow key tips for **how to welcome a new employee** to promote belonging.

→ Implement a **peer mentoring program** to help new hires become fully integrated.

→ Use data from **onboarding survey**s to improve the recruiting and onboarding process.

Managing a Remote Team

Managing a distributed workforce is undeniably different from managing on-site employees. "Managing remotely requires rigorous and disciplined communication," says Oates, who acknowledges both the importance of a widely distributed workforce and the difficulties that come with maintaining a positive work environment.

"Managers must let employees know that they're aware of the quality of a remote employee's work and what they're doing while at work, even remotely," Oates advises. "Sometimes reviews should be even more thorough, especially if improvements need to be made. When it comes to handling reviews and feedback (both positive and negative), a remote manager's job means more time and effort."

→ Prepare managers to hire and train a remote team that will thrive.

→ Train managers how to avoid **common mistakes with remote employees.**

→ Provide managers with a **new hire goal setting worksheet** to use with remote employees.

→ Look for ways to simplify and improve the **performance review process.**

→ Provide managers with tools to craft effective performance improvement plans.

→ Prepare managers to deal with common concerns, such as helping with **work-life balance** or leading through **seasonal stressors** and **wellbeing challenges.**

Remote Team-Building Considerations

Building a strong, remote team is not something managers can do on their own. "It requires a commitment from all members of the team to make it work," Oates cautions. He notes that distributed teams should get together in person, and isolated employees should work harder to maintain a constant relationship with coworkers.

→ Provide appropriate **collaboration tools** to facilitate effective remote team communication.

→ Train remote team members on **how to improve communication** with their coworkers.

→ Utilize a **getting-to-know-you questionnaire** for new remote employees and their peers.

→ Encourage employees to meet for virtual coffee breaks or share remote lunch hours.

→ Provide meaningful **virtual team bonding** opportunities for distributed teams.

→ Utilize **virtual learning and development** experiences to keep teams engaged.

→ Implement virtual **employee resource groups** to help like-minded employees connect.

→ Adapt traditional shared experiences, such as **holiday parties**, for distributed teams.

Culture Matters

Company culture is critical for every organization. Not only does it impact whether employees want to work for the company, but it also impacts innovation, **productivity**, customer satisfaction, and the bottom line.

→ Companies that have a distributed workforce may be well-served by **building a remote-first culture**.

→ As your business expands, be sure to **scale strategically** so as to avoid negative impacts on the company's culture.

→ Be proactive in seeking to **maintain your company culture** as the organization grows, while also expanding it to encompass remote team members.

Remote Hiring
Compliance Overview

compliance

Employers also have to consider compliance. All of the employment laws that apply in a traditional work environment are also applicable in a distributed workforce. However, there are some special compliance considerations for companies that have a distributed workplace with **employees in multiple states**. Here are a few of them:

→ You'll need to know and **follow the rules of all states** where you have employees, as remote workers are often not employed within the company's home state.

→ Different states have different **payroll tax requirements**, and different requirements around things like workers' compensation, disability and/or family leave insurance, and unemployment insurance and reporting. You'll need to stay on top of each state's filing deadlines, income tax rates, tax changes, and **supplemental wage** factors.

→ Availability and pricing for benefits also varies among states, so effectively **delivering benefits in a remote environment** can be complicated.

→ Some states have specific training requirements, such as periodically providing **harassment prevention training** that covers certain topics.

→ Many states or municipalities have specific **sick leave requirements** or mandatory paid leave programs.

→ Department of Labor requirements can also vary by state, including minimum wage requirements, how payroll deductions must be handled, and when final pay is due.

Multi-state payroll complications and benefits availability are just a few key reasons **why working with an outsourced HR partner** can be beneficial. Justworks not only takes care of much of the employment-related compliance filings for customers, but also helps small businesses and startups get access to healthcare coverage and other important employee benefits. These are critical **considerations for online businesses** and others that hire remote employees.

Succeed in the World of Remote Work

Creating a distributed workforce requires a greater investment of time and energy, but it's becoming more and more essential in today's working world. For a company and its brand, a dispersed workforce is able to reach places a centralized one simply can't.

Remote hiring requires effort, but it's often worth it. Justworks can **help your company put its best foot forward** in your quest to build a strong, distributed team staffed with the top talent you need to thrive in the current business environment and beyond.

Justworks helps free entrepreneurs and other business leaders to focus on what matters: building their business and their team. Its intuitive platform helps you handle payroll, benefits, HR, and compliance – all within a user-friendly dashboard. Manage team workflow, employee documents, paid time off, and more for employees near or far.
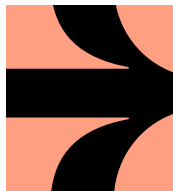
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