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HOW TO ONBOARD REMOTE EMPLOYEES

Intitiate new employees and create a thriving
remote-workplace culture



The State Of Onboarding

Recent months have seen many businesses move to remote work or hybrid work setups, and it's already clear that we are set to see long term changes in the way we work.

A big reason for this are the enormous benefits remote work offers including a smooth recruitment process and high levels of employee productivity all the while saving tons of money.

In today's business landscape, remote workforce management can no longer be a mere contingency plan developed in the face of a crisis. Instead, it must be integrated as a long-term strategy to leverage the advantages of a hybrid workforce.

Now, as most businesses adapt to the new normal and resume their hiring processes, HR managers and leadership are facing significant challenges in the onboarding of remote employees.

A Forbes report suggests that [organisations are still catching up](#) with their remote working plans, as they continue to tweak the tactics that they've already implemented and find any room for improvement. This can be ascertained by the fact that only 33% of these companies have a well-planned strategy with a remote onboarding component to it.

Additionally, a report by SHRM shows that out of [93% of organisations that deploy onboarding programs](#) for new hires, 68% use online tools. These undoubtedly come in handy when managing a remote workforce and onboarding new employees to it.

Only 12% of employees strongly agree their organization does a great job of onboarding new employees.

Another big concern for the leaders is that remote employees cannot understand and embrace the company culture well enough to be a contributing member of the workforce. [Only 27% of them state](#) that they have a strong and thriving culture, but they don't know if remote working tools can bring the team together in a way that the traditional workplace does.

These statistics show that although the leaders are becoming more confident with remote working, there's still much room for improvement. From hiring an employee to promoting a healthy company culture, they need to work on some critical gaps to ensure an effective remote workplace strategy.

Benefits of an Effective Onboarding Process

To ensure that business goes on as usual, managers are taking a more customer-centric approach for their external processes. But for an effective business continuity plan, the HR department also needs to streamline its internal processes.

Out of all internal processes, onboarding presents its own set of challenges, especially if the new hire has to start working remotely from his/her first day.

The trouble is that not many HR leaders have much experience in managing and building a remote team. And unfortunately, a bad onboarding experience can taint an organisation's reputation among its employees. Not only this, a bad hire hurts the company's performance as well as the culture it aspires to promote.

According to [Brandon Hall Group's 2015 Talent Acquisition Study](#), over 95% of organisations of varying sizes make bad hires every year. This holds power to taint the organisation's reputation among its employees as well as the competition.

However, a streamlined onboarding process offers several benefits to the employees and the employer, both.

The following are some of the main benefits of an excellent remote onboarding experience.



1. Enhanced Talent Acquisition Method

A positive onboarding experience leaves a good first impression on your new hires and prevents them from getting lured away by your competitors. The entire onboarding process is enhanced with easy-to-use tools that the applicant can easily access from their homes' comforts.

These tools allow them to send their application, interact with HR, and remain updated with their application processing plan. This systematic approach to hiring and onboarding builds a more professional image of your company in the mind of your potential new hire.

Moreover, when the word gets around, your employees will inform other people in the industry about the well-planned remote onboarding process they experienced at your organisation. This also helps promote a good company culture to get in touch with some of the best talents in the industry.



2. Increase In Employees' Productivity

It is no secret that an employee is the most productive in his/her first six months of employment. During this period, the employer can train and engage the employee, but many companies fail to realise the importance of this onboarding process.

Situations such as no access to the project board due to technical difficulties or software malfunction on the first day of the remote employee's job can leave them demotivated, thereby affecting their productivity.

But a successful onboarding process ensures that the employers invest their time, commitment, and resources to prepare the new hires for their respective roles. Also, when the top management of the company supports the employees, their engagement levels are bound to increase, which in turn positively impacts their efficiency and productivity.

Hence, it is safe to say that remote working holds the [power to boost the morale of your employees](#) only with the right strategy. When poorly done, it can only breed inefficiency, embarrass the company, damage team harmony, and demotivate employees.

3. Higher Employee Retention Rates

As remote working gains popularity, onboarding is becoming more critical. According to a [report by Forbes](#), the first few days at the job ends up being the deal-breaker for many employees who do not experience a smooth onboarding process.

Most of the newly-hired employees complained that their job position was not described in detail during the interview while others showed reluctance to adapt to the office politics.

Remote onboarding further adds to these complications due to lack of communication, so every business needs a streamlined onboarding process.

Checking up with your employees regularly and fostering meaningful relationships among the project teams can improve retention among remote employees. Employee recognition is essential for your business processes, and the company values their opinions and decisions.

4. Instills A Better Company Culture

Company culture not only portrays how your employees perceive you but also determines the success of your business. Thus, a streamlined onboarding process introduces the potential employee to your remote company culture in a more articulate manner.

Also, it encourages your remote team to maintain open communication and transparency that is highly critical during remote working. Starting with a few ground rules established during the onboarding process, you can even promote water cooler chat to feel engaged with their team members even when they are distributed.

7 Tips For A Successful Remote Onboarding Process

As more and more companies realise how effective remote working has proved to be during the pandemic, many of them are still encouraging their employees to work remotely even as the lockdown has started lifting.

Bringing in new team members when the entire organisation is working remotely has proven to be quite a challenge. But that still doesn't mean that it can't be done.

The following are seven of our best tips on getting new hires and ensuring that they see themselves as an indispensable asset to the company.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a grey blazer, is lying on her back on a desk. She has a wide, joyful smile and her eyes are wide open. Her arms are raised above her head. In the background, there is a laptop, a blue cup, and a smartphone. The scene is lit with a soft, blueish light, creating a calm and positive atmosphere.

7 Tips For A Successful Remote Onboarding Process



Tip #1: Cultural Onboarding

A training session is held on complete information about the company in a traditional workspace, including its history, values, and culture, whenever you hire an employee. But in a remote workplace, introducing the company culture to a new employee is the biggest onboarding challenge.

When the entire staff is working remotely, it cannot be easy to make them feel like a part of the team. That's because remote workplaces lack the type of human connection that traditional workplaces nurture.

To introduce your company culture to a new remote employee, you can utilise the power of video conferencing to help them meet the rest of the team. Schedule video meetings with the team members that the new hire will be working with closely.

Hold informal Q&A sessions to introduce them to the department heads visually. Communicate your team values so that the new hires can understand the company culture and what is being expected from them.



Tip #2: Spread Core Values

Even though you are working remotely, it is still necessary for you to transmit your company's vision and values to the new hire. This ensures that the new remote employee connects with their workplace, work ethics, and other team members.

Also, setting values harnesses your company culture towards a positive turn. For a remote employee, your company's values and vision give them a basic understanding of how your organisation works and how they can contribute to a positive work environment.

A McKinsey report suggests that leaders need to push the entire company forward by setting a clear direction and communicating effectively among their team members.

To emphasise the importance of your company values to your new remote hire, you need to prioritize them in every conversation you have with the staff from day one. Once you get them on board, set a weekly email trend where the employees have to notify you of instances where they integrated the company values in their daily work.

You can also use employee engagement tools like Unipos to build a more connected work environment where you can communicate your company's values more organically.

This will not only make them feel more connected with their colleagues but also with the entire organisation.



Tip #3: Employee Resources

The essential part of remote working is offering the employees enough resources to perform all their easily. For this, they need the right tools, software, and home office equipment that facilitate productivity.

Providing employee resources also represents an opportunity to connect remote employees to the company culture.

To ensure a smooth onboarding process, prioritize their comfort even if it means sending over a work desk and chair to their homes. Other essentials of remote work include laptops, desk computers, or tech that they require to execute their job correctly.

Offer them onboarding packets that consist of your company's merchandise, such as hoodies or bags. Or you can send them necessary office supplies, including folders, pens, paper, calculators, etc.

Moreover, to create the most comfortable onboarding experience, you can check if they have a stable internet connection. If not, you can send your company's IT personnel so that they can set up a new internet connection.

These are some of the most important considerations that need to be accounted for so that your employees do not face delays while contributing to the company's performance.

During the transition to remote work this year, employees struggled with 3 principal challenges: VPN access (38%); Wi-Fi connectivity and reliability (37%); and video conferencing apps (35%).



Tip #4: Build Network

Life can get challenging for new hires, especially when they virtually join the workplace. This is why remote networking needs to be a part of the company culture, helping employees make connections.

To ensure a well-crafted onboarding experience, you need to incorporate mechanisms that enable making such connections rather than managing them.

It is necessary for the new hire to feel connected with the entire organisation and not just with the team members but also to contact them frequently.

When employees foster these connections based on similar interests and values, they can easily integrate with their new workplace.

Our research suggests that [70% of remote employees](#) miss informal chats in their traditional workplace. Thus, in remote working conditions, companies need to focus on virtual communication channels to enable water coolers to make small talk with senior employees.

You can also leverage virtual employee engagement tools such as Unipos that offer an internal directory that holds information on all the employees.



Tip #5: Supercharge Communication

Communication is the biggest challenge of remote working as the employees are distributed, and real-time or personal contact is impossible.

The foundation of effective remote work communication is technology. You will be relieved to know that several online tools and platforms are available where employees can connect and collaborate.

All you need to do is find the right channel that aligns with the requirements of your company. You can leverage chatting apps and platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Slack for quick communication to facilitate collaboration.

Or you can utilise video-conferencing apps such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom to enable face to face interactions among employees.

Set the role of each communication channel and determine the tone and the range of topics discussed via that platform. This removes any room for confusion among the remote employees about the kind of posts they need to make on a specific communication channel.



Tip #6: Mentorship & One-on-Ones

Mentorship is an important investment for employers who want to build the best talent pool. Now when it comes to a hybrid workforce, employees want to continue their learning journey.

So, if your company already has a well-defined mentorship program, this is the time to leverage it. You can either transform the entire program or make it more interactive for your employees.

But if you don't have a mentorship program, you can start one by asking the top leadership to share their knowledge through virtual sessions.

A well-planned virtual mentorship program offers significant career development opportunities along with an increase in productivity.

This also keeps the new remote team busy while ensuring that they find industry-specific knowledge that could increase their career prospects.



Tip #7: Collect Feedback

After putting your new remote hire through an extensive onboarding process, you need to check in with them regularly to gauge the effectiveness of your approach and the progress of the newly hired employee.

This way, you can easily Recognise the milestones they have achieved during the entire process. You can also assess any issues and address them in real-time so that the employee does not face any more challenges.

Regularly assessing your new hires' needs also means collecting feedback from them that can be later utilised in streamlining the onboarding process. You can easily check-up with your employee either through a simple email or a video call for a more personable experience.

The Bottom Line

It's evident from the current business scenario that although leaders have gained confidence in remote working, they still need to work on critical gaps in remote organisational effectiveness.

This makes it imperative for them to learn how to hire remote employees and promote a healthy company culture among their remote and hybrid workforce.



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Unipos can help you
onboard your remote
employees?**

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contact@unipos.me



+44 7412 411340

Effectively Onboarding Remote Employees

Unipos helps remote teams to connect, recognise and celebrate one another, creating collaborative, inclusive and purpose-driven company cultures.

Users send messages, along with virtual points, to their teammates, thanking them for small, everyday collaborations and providing positive feedback.

The platform allows companies to culturally employees, organically spread core values, and build a more productive organisation, no matter where your employees are.



Do you want to find out how Unipos can help you onboard remote employees?

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+44 7412 411340

