

# Top tips for recruiting and managing the "Work Anywhere Workforce"



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Due to COVID-19, many employees are working remotely, and many don't want to return to the office. According to a Gallup poll, an estimated 62% of employed Americans were doing their jobs remotely as of April 2, 2020 — up from about 31% just two weeks earlier. More and more, employees are considering working from home long-term and even relocating to other areas since they aren't tied to an office. These employees comprise the Work Anywhere Workforce (WAWF).

Companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Shopify, and many others have already said their employees can work remotely indefinitely. On-demand access to data via the cloud, video conferencing, and mobility are all leading to a reimagined look at work in 2021.

This new focus on the dispersed workforce drives challenges for HR and hiring managers. However, there are viable solutions for managing the anywhere workforce.

## Rethink how you recruit the Work Anywhere Workforce

In the past, employers were limited by geography in their search for candidates. If your company is remote-friendly, you may wish to rethink the recruiting process, onboarding steps, candidate experience, and even your company operations. While the talent pool will increase, so will the competition. Rethinking your recruiting and onboarding process to make it remote-work and remote-hire friendly will be essential for success in this new

mobile workplace.

The Work Anywhere Workforce is looking for remote-first or remote-friendly employers and will expect the candidate experience to reflect this flexibility. Your employer value proposition might need to be rethought to reflect this new environment.

For example, you may have previously highlighted work/life balance, but in this new remote work environment that is no longer a key differentiator, it is expected. Instead, focus on how you support remote workers. Recruiters and HR teams should consider if they need to expand their employer branding efforts as the pool of recruits is broader these days. Modernizing and digitizing your recruiting strategies now can set you up for success in the post-COVID-19 world. This new world requires a diversified approach to reach talent, including programmatic/targeted job advertising.

The so-called "new normal" has set the stage for improved productivity, reduced turnover, better access to diverse talent, and lower costs.

## **Interviewing effectively**

For the Work Anywhere Workforce, the "new normal" is here to stay.

They've proven they can perform their jobs remotely, and they don't particularly want to go back to a brick-and-mortar office. More and more employers have moved the recruiting, onboarding, and hiring process online due to the pandemic. As we move into a long-term shift to virtual onboarding, it might be time to review your recruiting and onboarding process.

One way to help is by ensuring a smooth interview process.

### **Here are some tips for hiring managers and recruiters:**

- Make sure your space is well-lit.
- Set up your space so that you're looking at the computer camera, not a monitor.
- Check that your computer is charged or plug it in.
- Use headphones to reduce background noise.
- Test your audio.
- Silence notifications.
- Clarify what to do if you lose connectivity during the interview.
- Let the interviewee know that it is ok if a pet, roommate, or child enters the room during the interview.

## **Onboarding across the miles**

Once you've gotten through the interview, virtual onboarding should aim to make new hires feel welcome and become familiar with the company — just as they would if the onboarding was in person. Using webinars, video chats, pre-recorded videos, gamification, and instant messaging can all play a part in virtual onboarding.

A great virtual onboarding process will help remote employees build connections to their team, expose them to communications and productivity tools, and boost their engagement. Consider pairing new employees with a buddy they can reach out to for one-on-one support.

## **Spreading company culture**

Now that you have employees spread potentially across the country or world, it's time to ensure that the employee experience works remotely. How do you ensure that the company culture, values, and strategy are shared among the Work Anywhere Workforce? Creating authentic and personal connections with employees and

building an engaged remote workforce will be a challenge in 2021 and beyond. Typical team building and bonding activities are not as easily done via video chat or Slack.

Training managers to help them develop and engage employees who aren't face-to-face will be one fundamental way to ensure employees stay engaged and motivated.

### **Some ideas include:**

- Using communication tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, or Zoom.
- Providing touchpoints for employees and interaction (team meetings, virtual "open office hours," or "happy hour").
- Supporting employee wellbeing through regular check-ins.
- Encouraging boundaries.
- Making time for fun and conversation.
- Providing opportunities for inclusion

Remote work can make it harder to connect, but it isn't impossible. Taking the time to meet virtually one-on-one and coordinating ongoing team development can go a long way to successful team integration.

## **Security and technology**

The flexible workplace is a big challenge for IT. Not only do employees need modern tools, but IT must also deliver, secure, manage, and support their devices remotely.

Protecting company assets against cybersecurity threats is more difficult when employees are working remotely. Companies have to prioritize security and train employees to recognize phishing scams and malicious data exposure. In addition, implementing regular password changes and two-factor authentication are now priorities for companies with remote workers. IT teams are also using cloud services to enable employees to access files and work from anywhere.

You'll have to identify the technology that best serves your organization.

## **Benefits of the Work Anywhere Workforce**

While there are some challenges for employers when it comes to remote work, there are also benefits.

"A Gartner, Inc. survey of 317 CFOs and Finance leaders on March 30, 2020 revealed that 74% would move at least 5% of their previously on-site workforce to permanently remote positions post-COVID 19."

Many CFOs like the concept of a remote workforce because it reduces cost. Businesses will no longer need to invest in real estate spaces to hold every employee. Instead, they may look at the office as more of a collaboration space.

In addition, many employees feel they are more productive when working remotely, with 69% of U.S. workers saying their productivity has improved since going remote in a recent KPMG survey.

Above all else, prioritizing people should be the focus as we move into 2021 and beyond.

Happy, healthy, and productive employees benefit the bottom line and stay engaged, regardless of where they are working. Each company will have to address their business needs and balance them with their employees' needs and desires.

**Additional Resource:** Read more on [what the future of work will look like](#) post-COVID.