Addison Group

Post-Pandemic Hiring E-Book

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A Hiring Roadmap for a Post-Pandemic World

Hiring looks and feels different in a post-pandemic world. In terms of processes, HR teams have adjusted their hiring and staffing strategies to accommodate stay-at-home orders and new health and safety regulations.

When you widen the scope beyond process changes to examine the workplace as a whole, you find ongoing conversations about remote work and **whether or not it'll be permanent.** While organizations like **Twitter** have decided to permit fully remote work forever, others have chosen to return to in-office operations when it becomes safe. Or, **in the case of Amazon**, open even more physical offices.

For the foreseeable future, however, remote work is essential and the ability to succeed in a distributed organization is becoming even more important. A large portion of this success hinges on hiring.

HR professionals are pivoting their hiring strategies to adjust to remote work while at the same time developing a path forward for long-term success. Research from our **latest workplace report** shows that 89% of hiring managers have adjusted their hiring and staffing strategies due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for 56% of them, this is the first time they have performed hiring activities remotely.

Given such rapid change and continued uncertainty, it's critical for leaders to establish hiring best practices — remote or otherwise. This new hiring arena requires individualized hiring experiences, increased supervisor involvement from day one, and a rebuilding of the relationship and engagement opportunities we've lost to remote totality.

Hiring managers, recruiters and employees must consider the full spectrum of hiring nuances post-pandemic, from interview to onboarding. The following e-book is your roadmap to success.

/01

The Post-Pandemic Recruiting Process

Traditional relationship-building opportunities have all but disappeared.

To mitigate the loss of face-to-face, relationship-building opportunities, focus on creating a high-touch recruitment process. One of the key aspects of a high-touch process is early team involvement — from setting role requirements to meeting prospects. Both the hiring manager and the greater team should have an understanding of the parameters of the role, required skills and the desired qualifications for a new hire. In addition to adequate background preparation, the entire team (from recruiters to team members) must also be prepared to host effective, mutually valuable interviews — regardless of the medium.

The Candidate Search

With over half of hiring managers performing hiring activities remotely for the first time, there is hesitation about where to start. But you should begin by carefully evaluating your initial candidate search.

With leaner budgets and a saturated candidate market, it's critical to determine exactly what you are looking for in a candidate. Establish the parameters of the role and the necessary skill sets. After you have established these factors you can determine how quickly you'll need the new hire to join your team, which location you need them near or if you're open to hiring a remote candidate. Use the following three steps as a guide to shape your search:

01. Identify the skills and experience needed during the pandemic — and beyond.

The demand for certain skills has changed since COVID-19. You need to decide if the skills you once looked for to fill a certain role are still appropriate during and post-pandemic. Our survey found that 26% of hiring managers prioritize remote technology skills in new candidates and 23% are looking for candidates with the ability to work in a self-directed environment. The bottom line: Be selective about your desired skills. With an abundance of online conferences, trainings and certifications available, focus on candidates who are continually looking to better themselves through ongoing education. By narrowing your search, you'll interview higher quality candidates and minimize the risk of hiring someone who is unable to rise to the challenge of an ever-changing work environment.

26%

of hiring managers prioritize remote technology skills in new candidates.

02. Look internally to fill gaps.

Determine the resources you need to sustain and grow your business, and evaluate the skill sets of those already employed at your company. If you identify any gaps, determine which ones you can fill with internal hires or by job sharing. There may be an opportunity to leverage current employees' time to generate the best return on investment, like promoting employees in whom you've already invested significant time and training. Then, backfill needs with full-time hires, or consider hiring freelance, contract-to-hire or part-time workers if it better suits your budget. Additionally, don't overlook the value of college internships — for interns that prove to be smart, talented and a good fit, you have already fostered a connection that will make hiring easier and less expensive.

03. Expand your search geographically.

While the pandemic may have narrowed the skills we expect from candidates, it's widened the opportunity for obtaining higher quality talent. With effective remote interviewing in place, you can open up candidate pools geographically, even on a global scale. Candidates who may not have considered your organization in the past due to its location may now be a good fit as a remote worker. Lean on a recruiting partner to help you expand that search: The candidate pool will increase significantly, and your partner will have access to a qualified candidate network and do most of the heavy lifting in the initial search. You will also need to prepare your team with virtual interviewing best practices and training.

> **Candidates who may not have considered your organization in the past due to its location may now be a good fit as a remote worker."**

### Dos and Don'ts

✅ **Do** expect more from your candidates.

❌ **Don't** overlook internal hires.

✅ **Do** open up your search geographically.

Virtual Interviews

Whether your organization plans to remain fully remote, strictly in-office or implement a hybrid model, virtual interviewing is likely here to stay. Our research showed that 48% of hiring managers who chose virtual interviewing as the most significant new benefit to their hiring strategy plan to implement it permanently going forward. With virtual interviewing becoming the new norm, it's important to think about how you can prepare your team for success in this environment. The following are our data-driven best practices:
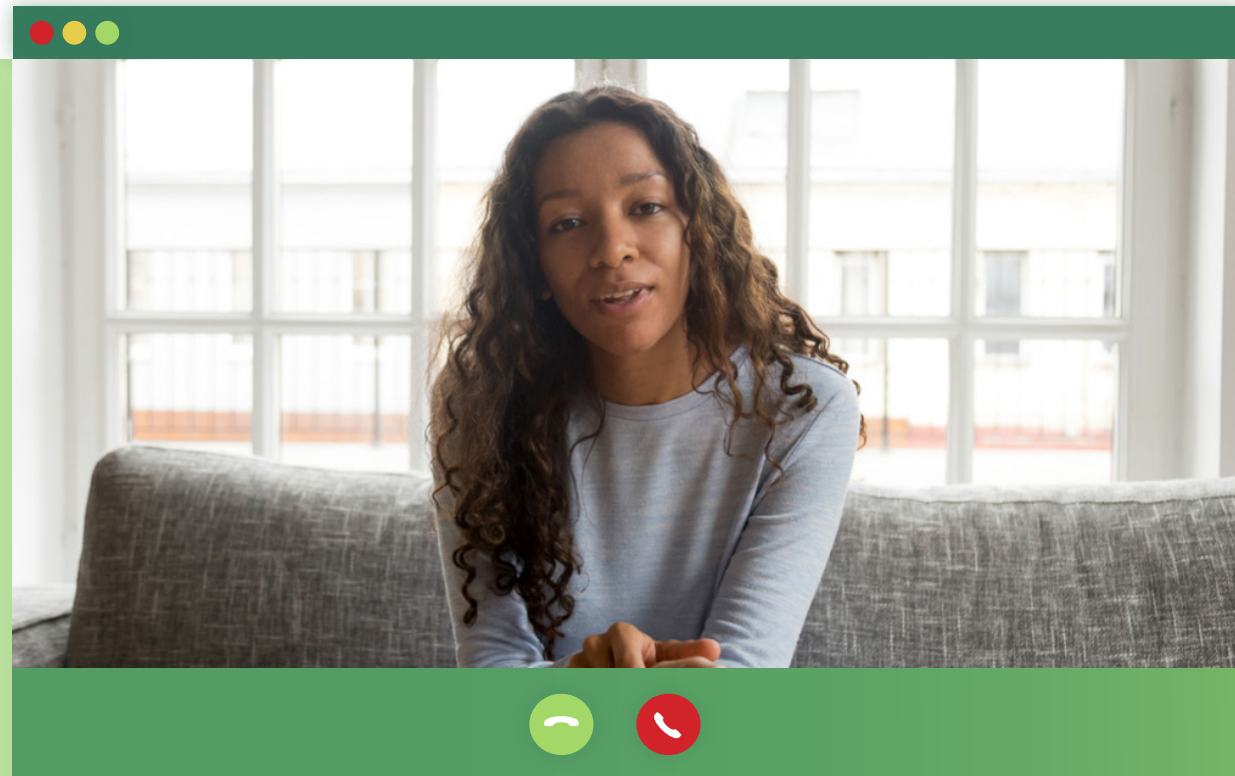
01. Find the right mix of mediums.

Virtual interviews became essential when stay-at-home regulations hit. But as we transition to a post-pandemic world, you'll need to decide which roles actually benefit from virtual interviews and which rely on — at the very least — a final in-person meeting. For example, it wouldn't make sense to have in-person interviews for roles that are fully remote, regardless of the pandemic. But for roles that will eventually require in-office attendance, or even more, roles that are client-facing or at a higher level, you'll want to meet them in person.

48%

of hiring managers who chose virtual interviewing as the most significant new benefit to their hiring strategy plan to implement it permanently going forward.

02. Make sure you are fully prepared.

Prior to a virtual interview, both you and your team should do the same preparation you'd expect from a candidate — dress appropriately, clean up your surroundings and mute any notifications. And don't forget about the technical components of the interview. Make sure the video and audio are working on your computer, and don't forget to install the latest update for whichever videoconferencing platform you use. Finally, make sure you aren't frazzled — or worse, late. Give yourself enough time between meetings to collect your thoughts and get ready for the call, ideally a 15-minute buffer.

❝ **Both you and your team should do the same preparation you'd expect from a candidate."**

03. View candidates with a more critical eye.

Not having the ability to meet candidates face-to-face can make it difficult to gauge things like engagement, interest and focus. But you can still evaluate candidates based on punctuality, effort and communication skills. Is the candidate proactive in making sure they have everything they need for the interview? Did they download the program needed for the call (or did they forget and join the meeting late)? Also look for candidates who try to make a connection. It can be more challenging to connect over video, especially when there is an added expectation for candidates to build rapport over virtual mediums. Make sure you do your part here as well — replying to their thank you email or staying in touch throughout the process — and take note of candidates that go the extra mile to connect.

Dos and Don'ts

❌ **Don't** completely rely on one interview medium.

✅ **Do** prepare for the interview — both yourself and the tech.

❌ **Don't** neglect to build rapport with candidates virtually.

/02

Remote Onboarding

Remote onboarding is a departure from the traditional, relationship-building process we are used to — but it can still be successful.

Make remote onboarding more effective by creating a comprehensive plan for every stage of the process: That includes culture and relationship building — successful remote onboarding hinges on supervisor involvement happening early and often. But it also includes thoughtfully setting up the training necessary to ensure new hires can get up to speed quickly and be productive in their roles.

Remember: Remote onboarding is not one-size-fits all. Success depends on fine-tuning your plan to fit the complexity and parameters of the role, and accounting for the nuances of remote work.

Culture and Engagement

The initial months of a new hire's experience are the most critical for establishing engagement momentum. In fact, **over a quarter (28%)** of new employees quit their jobs within the first 90 days. While weekly, in-person check-ins may have been adequate for the in-office work environment, in a remote environment you can't let a day go by without checking in with a new remote employee. Frequent, focused communication is key. You need a solid onboarding communication plan to keep new hires engaged, informed and involved in the culture remotely. When building out your plan, consider the following:

Send a message

01. Set up team introductions.

Forty percent of hiring managers consider team introductions the most challenging aspect of the remote onboarding process. How can we remotely replicate natural interactions among employees? To start, make sure you have a comprehensive list of all necessary introductions with the team and any other coworkers across the organization. Setting these up virtually takes longer than natural, in-person introductions, but it's an important part of helping new hires settle in and feel like part of the team. All team members should "meet" the new hire and identify opportunities for collaboration. Set up weekly meetings and team-building activities so new employees can engage with their colleagues on a consistent basis.

40%
of hiring managers consider team introductions the most challenging aspect of the remote onboarding process.

02. Provide new employees extra support.

This is a difficult time to start a new job, so ensure new employees feel comfortable asking questions or sharing feedback. They don't have a desk neighbor, so they need additional resources for problem solving. Create a daily, 15-minute touch base between the supervisor and new hire. This not only provides a consistent platform for communicating goals and expectations, but gives the new employee a daily opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns. In addition to these check-ins, you can assign a mentor outside of their practice area — someone they can potentially ask more candid questions. When combined, these meetings may feel like over-communication, but they foster an environment where goals and expectations are consistently clear and support is unwavering.

> " Frequency of contact, buy-in from your team and cross-functional support are critical to making sure [new] employees ramp."
> (Kimberly Tamez - VP, People Development at Centre Technologies)

03. Create culture through other touchpoints.

The remote first-day experience should feel somewhat like an in-office first day, and ensuring this happens must be a priority for any HR team. You may have to get creative, so gather your team and brainstorm unique ways to share aspects of the company culture and build cross-team relationships through non-obvious touchpoints — which can be helpful in boosting morale for current employees as well. Ship company branded gifts in a welcome box — business cards, stationary, coffee mugs, etc. To build cross-team connections, have someone from each service area give a walkthrough of their department's responsibility and relationship to the new hire, rather than relying solely on HR or a handbook to do so.
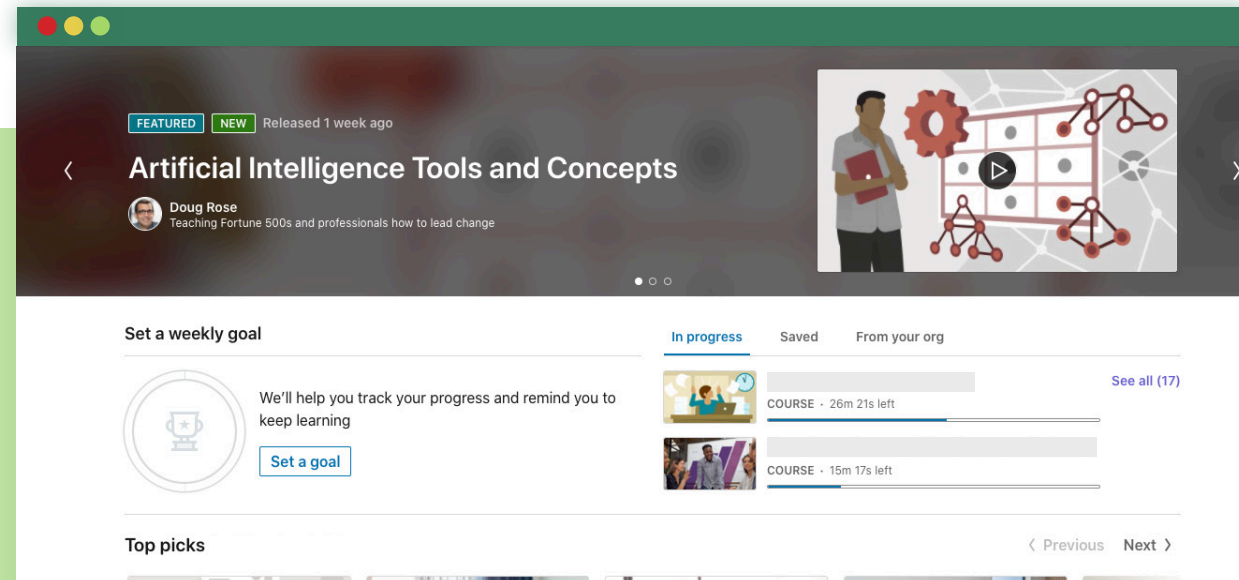
Dos and Don'ts

- ✅ **Do** introduce the team early.
- ❌ **Don't** forget to provide extra support.
- ✅ **Do** make it a priority to communicate culture.

Technology and Training

Outside of culture and engagement, don't forget about the technical aspects of onboarding and the challenges of virtual training. Our research showed that 38% of hiring managers believe technology onboarding and setup was the most challenging aspect of the remote onboarding process. Hiring managers are now navigating password and security protocols, unfamiliar videoconferencing platforms, in-the-moment tech troubleshooting and more, all without an in-office IT team to ask for assistance.

However, despite these pain points, training is critical for getting new hires ready to work and be productive, no matter where they are working from. The following best practices can help ease the friction of delivering a valuable remote training experience to new hires:

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01. Prepare both technology and documentation ahead of time.

It's critical that HR prepares new hire paperwork accurately so IT can ship laptops or configure network security and user passwords in a timely manner. Nothing communicates unprofessionalism and a lack of support like not having the tools you need to be successful when you start a new job. Alongside the technology, create documentation you can immediately share in the first welcome email. Avoid overwhelming new hires with too much information (hint: handbooks are not digestible). Instead, opt for a one-pager that provides basic logins, contacts, health and safety protocols and frequently asked questions.

We implemented a pre-employment test to assess computer and technical skills — some [skills gaps] we may have been able to tolerate before, we were not able to, depending on the position.” (Morgan Williams, MBA, Human Resources Manager, First Investors Financial Services, Inc.)

02. Convert L&D efforts to meet post-pandemic needs.

Skills training is an essential component of new hire success. Doing so remotely, however, introduces some friction: 53% of hiring managers consider skills training the most challenging part of the remote onboarding process. Technology training is key, especially for remote workers. Don't assume every new hire has experience working with a certain suite of digital tools. If they are learning how to use your tech stack for the first time, you can easily map out an entire curriculum. You must also convert all other training materials to virtual mediums. While PowerPoint decks function adequately when accompanied by an in-person presenter, videos and interactive platforms can better service remote workers.

53%

of hiring managers consider skills training to be the most challenging part of the remote onboarding process.

03. Reinforce virtual learning.

Unfortunately, virtual courses can't always replace the real thing. To address gaps in training, leaders can reinforce learning through other means, such as staff meetings, internal podcasts and blogs, book clubs, panel discussions, newsletters and social media. Finally, supervisors can regularly deploy employee surveys to assess the effectiveness of training, solicit feedback and then adjust the program as necessary. These times are "unprecedented" for a reason: No one is expected to become an expert in training remotely, but with flexibility and a willingness to adapt to feedback you can come close.

Dos and Don'ts

- ❌ **Don't** put off HR and IT documentation.
- ❌ **Don't** let L&D efforts slip.
- ✅ **Do** solicit feedback from new hires.

SIDEBAR

Virtual connection is essential, but in-person is as valuable as ever.

While modern technology allows us to communicate seamlessly, there is no digital communication platform that can successfully convey critical, nonverbal messages. In an increasingly virtual world where remote connections are vital, don't underestimate the critical benefits that face-to-face interactions still provide:

Trust

It's difficult to convey warmth and understanding over video — even more so over the phone. When communicating sensitive topics, face-to-face interaction remains the gold standard for fostering high levels of trust and emotional connection.

Team Building

Informal team interactions (i.e., grabbing a morning coffee or chatting in the kitchen) are more important than you may realize. These impromptu face-to-face conversations are essential for building camaraderie among teammates, bonds that quickly translate to higher engagement, productivity and quality of output.

Culture Creation

Virtual work environments fail to encourage the creation of "organizational norms," or those familiar ways of doing things that define a place of work. Without that base of culture, it's easy for employees to lose out on building critical social cohesion and feelings of togetherness.

The bottom line:

The bottom line: While remote work has many proven benefits, not all professional situations translate seamlessly into the virtual work environment. Consider the value of face-to-face interactions as you develop your plan for a hybrid work environment.

The Right Post-Pandemic Hiring Partner

The influx of remote opportunities means geography is no longer a barrier to hiring — and candidates have likely widened their job searches as a result. Business leaders must remember that in addition to preparing for the new hire's arrival, they must also consider the needs of today's talent pool: Do you offer remote flexibility? What are the benefits for working parents? What has your COVID-19 response plan looked like and how may it change in the future? Top candidates will have no problem leaving an organization or finding an opportunity elsewhere should you fail to meet their evolving needs.

Currently, you might be working with limited resources, but recruitment is still essential to the success of both your team and the organization. However, the geographically wider candidate pool, influx of unemployed workers seeking a new role and the

pressure to stay productive amid a global crisis can all weigh heavily. Let Addison Group manage the process for you.

Addison Group is more than a recruitment partner, we can provide an entire roadmap for navigating hiring in a post-pandemic world. With visibility into organizations of all shapes and sizes, we have a unique vantage point to observe what's going on in the market and how that translates to your individualized search.

Many organizations are navigating the unknown and trying to prepare for the future of hiring. Partner with the experts at Addison Group for a clear path forward.

Contact us to get started.

Addison Group provides:

Comprehensive Recruiting Services.

We service organizations across functions and industries, including information technology, finance, healthcare, human resources, engineering, administrative and digital marketing. Our full suite of consulting and recruiting services provides the specialized touch necessary for delivering top talent to your organization, no matter the role, location or specific parameters.

A Consultative Approach.

Our methods are built on decades of experience, relationships and a network of U.S. offices. We work to fill specific positions and solve unique business challenges by leaning on our deep understanding of position skills and competencies, industry dynamics and company culture as we hand select your candidates.

About Addison Group

A recognized leader in professional services focused on specialized staffing, executive search and consulting, Addison Group delivers the talent and capabilities organizations need to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage and business growth. We offer a full suite of recruiting and consulting services across multiple functions and industry sectors, including information technology, finance and accounting, healthcare, human resources, administrative, engineering and digital marketing. Known for its people-first culture, Addison Group combines deep expertise, client and candidate relationships, and a growing network of offices across the U.S. to provide national reach with a localized touch.

To learn more visit Addison Group.