

How to onboard and recruit during a pandemic

By Nicol Myburgh

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People. They are the organisation's most important resource. The right people will drive the energy of the company, help build and maintain a positive culture, and ignite intrapreneurship and innovation. But these people have to be nurtured and engaged to ensure they don't evolve into the wrong people and become toxic to the business. So how should organisations proceed? The answer to this question rests in just one word - carefully.



Image source: www.unsplash.com

Onboarding and recruiting people during the pandemic requires foresight and careful planning. Many people are still uncomfortable with an in-person chat, so you need to interview them over video, which doesn't always show the full picture. You also have to put a lot of thought into the hiring and onboarding process so that people feel informed and connected.

The first step is perhaps the most obvious, but one that companies can forget – the right technology and kit. If the office is still working remotely, even if only for a percentage of the week, then people need to have the right technology to stay in touch and on top of their jobs. This has to be followed with an in-depth induction plan that's communicated often and actively seeks out feedback.



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Unpack your current onboarding process

Take your current onboarding process and unpack it thoroughly so you can adapt it properly to the new way of working. We've found that just recruiting and onboarding someone is often not enough – new employees need contact with other people. Adapt your process to include new ways of networking with different staff members and set up opportunities for people to connect regularly that aren't just meetings and work.

It's hard for people to start at a company in normal times, but in the pandemic, the complexities are more pronounced. Companies need to make life as easy as possible for those arriving at a new company, not by parking in the staff garage, but by logging in from the kitchen.

People are completely isolated and can't have their daily chat or connect to members of their team. Address this by being as transparent as possible and involving people on multiple fronts.



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Consider creating a role that's focused on staff integration and retention, someone who ensures that people feel part of a team and the company. This can be done by an existing staff member or by a consultant who specialises in this type of engagement. Ease the roadblocks as carefully and systematically as possible so that new and old employees are constantly engaged and connected – it's hard work, but it's worth it in terms of employee retention and wellbeing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicol Myburgh, head of CRS Technologies HCM Business Unit

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