

Successfully **onboarding** new starters in lockdown

How do you effectively onboard staff 100% remotely?

Successful recruitment in lockdown may seem like an impossible feat; how can you hire somebody you've never met, have them work 100% remotely, and integrate them into a team they are unlikely to meet for several weeks or even months?

Video calls have evolved to a point where they are interchangeable for face to face meetings or interviews. This is particularly useful at the moment but has long been widely used in the interview process by clients or candidates who are time poor or where location is an issue.

Hiring remotely may seem scary at first, but the issue of remote onboarding is separate entirely; company inductions often involve long days in boardrooms, digitised swipe/photo entry cards, meet and greets and a whole host of company equipment. In short, it seems unfeasible to replicate remotely.

That's because it is; rather than seeking a way to replicate the minutiae of welcoming a new team member, it's time to consider your onboarding processes and understand what really adds value and what can be foregone without losing quality or value.

Analyse your existing induction plan

What is vital, what can be put on hold, and what can be scrapped all together? This will prove a useful exercise for the long term, allowing you to cut out any unnecessary steps you're taking just because 'that's how it's always been done'.

Be thorough

From psychometric testing to understand how remote work from day one will impact your new team member to assessing their existing technology capabilities and know-how, you need to be prepared to manage the physical and psychological effects of remote onboarding. Don't assume that everybody has a desk or strong mobile signal in their home, nor that they know the difference between a HDMI and a USB.



Invest in technology and equipment

Ensure that you provide everything that your new starter needs to succeed remotely, from laptops and monitors to notepads and pens. Ask about the mobile signal where they live and organise a booster if necessary. When working remotely, it's more important than ever to have everything you need to do your job well, so resist the temptation to cut corners to save costs.



Treat this as a new normal

Rather than viewing remote onboarding as a different process, mirror as many of your normal activities as possible. If there's normally a pile of branded goodies or a welcome card on their desk, pop one in the post instead. Mimic the first day lunch or drinks via Zoom or Hangout, so everybody in the team gets to put a face to a name. You can even organise takeaway to be delivered to everyone if logistics allow!

Communicate often and clearly

There's no point pretending this is normal or ideal; we are all having to very quickly adapt to a new situation and it is OK to acknowledge that. Be honest that you're figuring the process out as you go along and be willing to adapt where needed.

Prior to start dates, make people aware of the planned process, even if it's as simple as letting them know there is no solid plan right now. Understand that people will have concerns about when (and if) they will be joining you given the high-profile redundancies and furloughs littering the press, so keep them up to date. If things get behind schedule because of supplier issues or logistics, keep people informed.

Be available

Line managers need to be more available than ever for their teams when working remotely, especially new starters. Make sure you set aside time to nurture these relationships and maintain a distinctly 'open door' policy; the last thing new starters need is to feel like a burden. Consider setting up a 'buddy' system too, assigning a trusted team member as your back up for times you're not available yourself.

Actively seek feedback

Listen to – and action – feedback on how the process is working for new starters. Being seen to be making changes where advised will ensure people will feel comfortable giving feedback and will forge a strong, open forum from the beginning.

In a climate where it is unclear when things will get back to normal, you can't simply freeze recruitment for vital roles. Remote onboarding may seem unconventional but with the right processes in place it is entirely achievable.

To learn more about how InfoSec People can manage your remote hiring and onboarding strategy, **get in touch today**