

occupop



The Ultimate  
**Guide to Hiring  
Remotely**



# The Ultimate Guide to Hiring Remotely

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A practical and proactive guide for anyone looking to upgrade your process for hiring remotely

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# Introduction

Remote work. Those 2 words have taken on a whole new meaning since March of 2020. With just over one year into pandemic restrictions, there are still many questions and issues about remote work. Hiring remotely continues to be an issue for businesses everywhere.

Working remotely used to be a luxury for lucky employees who had a choice. During the pandemic, it became a necessity for every worker except the most essential.

As restrictions lift or lessen, we're moving towards a hybrid model. And some companies will want to push towards a return to in-office work for most, if not all, of the workforce.

But they'll probably face some resistance.

A study by the **McKinsey Global Institute** found that *"Business and financial services are a large share of the UK economy..... and it has the highest potential for remote work among the countries we examined. Its workforce could theoretically work remotely one-third of the time without a loss of productivity."*

At Occupop, working in distributed teams is already ingrained into our culture, but for many companies, the move to remote working is a significant shift. We understand the challenges and have helped support companies like PrepayPower, Boylesports, and PREM Group throughout the pandemic towards a remote hiring model. Occupop empowers teams of all sizes to hire the best people, no matter where your colleagues are located. Our recruitment software enables a structured hiring approach that makes the purpose and process clear for each hiring manager and gives teams the confidence that interviews are efficient, streamlined, and productive.

Our goal with this guide is to offer practical advice and guidance to help you and your team adjust your process to hiring remotely. We'll be focusing on interviewing, hiring and onboarding, but you'll also find tips on recruiting technology and building a remote company culture.

Ready? Let's dive in.





# Hiring in 2022 - What's changed?

Remote work creates some problems, especially for employers. Working remotely has increased employees' confidence in their ability to perform. Candidates have become even more selective about the companies they want to work for.

The pandemic was a paradigm shift in the workforce. The **Merriam Webster** dictionary describes a paradigm shift as *"an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way"*.

That's pretty much what happened as a result of the pandemic.

In a big way.

And 2022 means that hiring employees has changed yet again as restrictions lessen and companies re-open.

If businesses want to compete, they'll definitely need to shift their paradigm to accommodate the new workforce and enhance (or develop) their EVP (employment value proposition).

Why?

**The Harvard Business Review** surveyed 2,800 candidates about their experiences in the recruiting process. A whopping 65% of respondents reported that they ended the application process with a company because they found some aspects of the job or company *"unattractive"*.

Recruiting was hard enough way before the pandemic hit. Then everything turned upside down.



## We can think of it in 3 stages:

**Pre-pandemic** – continued competition for good candidates; new advances in sourcing methods and technology to source good candidates.

**Pandemic restrictions** – boom! A big part of the workforce went remote overnight and hiring became even more difficult.

**2022** – and then there's this year. We still have restrictions but it's very variable. Many employees and businesses have gotten used to working from home. And don't want to give it up. Other businesses want some or all of their workforce back in the office. And the majority of businesses will have to consider a hybrid, distributed work model.

*“The world was already transforming, but now the changes are much easier to see.”*

Dion Love, V.P. in Gartner's HR practice in Harvard Business Review.





# The new workforce

We're also in a unique hiring position in history. This is the first time that the workforce is comprised of so many generations – at the same time. In addition to all of the other variables, understanding demographics is vital to appealing to the best candidates.

In 2022, there are 5 generations in the workforce ranging from 1965 – 2012 (Gens X, Y, & Z). With more seasoned adults experiencing better health and activity levels, the 2022 workforce even includes workers in their 60's, 70's and 80's!

Studies also show that Millennials (or Gen Y) comprise as much as 35% of today's workforce. And the trend is expected to continue.

***“It's a really interesting time to talk about the multi-generational workplace,” says Jameson International Graduate Programme head Sinéad D'Arcy. “There is such a lot happening in the workplace and the workforce at the moment. The workplace is changing, and models of work are changing.”***

***For the first time, we have five generations working together in the workplace. Each generation has different motivators and organisations have to understand them.”***

This wide age span brings great diversity of skills and knowledge but also challenges. Capitalise on this opportunity by addressing the differing needs of all age levels.

# Remote vs. in-office vs. distributed hiring

Traditional perks for in-office workers can be challenging to provide to off-site workers. How do you maintain a sense of fairness and equity?

On-site employees traditionally received tangible perks like daily fruit boxes or a premium parking spot. Perceived perks included higher visibility and access to management.

What can you offer remote or hybrid workers that equals the value (perceived or real) of what is offered to in-office workers?

***It's critical for companies to understand and plan for the differences between in-office and remote/hybrid employees.***

- Identify and clearly communicate the remote hiring and retention strategy.
- Ensure that recruiters have the resources to implement the strategy.
- Identify an equitable and competitive compensation and benefits package across locations.
- Identify, communicate, and support the work culture.
- Identify and resolve differences in workforce models.
- Plan for remote workers that can't travel for in-person company events.

It's such a different model that new terms have worked their way into the language as a result of the pandemic's effect on the workforce:

**\*Zoom** – an actual company that quickly became the most common way to have video communications.

**\*Remoteliness** – a combination of the words remote and loneliness due to a feeling of isolation.

**\*Key or essential workers** – employees who had to be on the job site due to their critical duties.

**\*Distributed workforce** – a blended work model with employees in different locations.





# Should recruiters be chauffeurs or drivers?

A leader in the recruiting industry described the traditional role of a recruiter as a chauffeur. The hiring manager tells the recruiter where they want to go, and the recruiter shows up with a shiny new candidate.

In this model, the recruiter doesn't always receive sufficient information about the business objectives driving the need for the position.

Search Netflix job postings for recruiters and you'll see the title "Recruiting Researcher". Netflix feels that this better reflects the deeper level of business knowledge and influence needed for the recruiting role.

The recruiter "drives" the process by asking leading questions of the hiring managers to determine not just "who" is needed but "why" the role is needed and the impact that the position is expected to have on business objectives.

This becomes even more critical in remote recruiting and should be identified before recruiting begins.

- ✓ Why does this job exist?
- ✓ What needs to change?
- ✓ What jobs can be remote and how will it work?
- ✓ How will managers manage remote workers?



# Recruiting done differently

Businesses still need to protect themselves from legal issues by using legally compliant documents and processes. Like traditional job descriptions that succinctly outline the job requirements.

But a remote world calls for creative approaches as well.

In addition to a job description, try something a little more human to highlight jobs.

A good example of this is **Gusto**, a payroll and benefits platform designed for small businesses, it set itself apart from the crowd with a simple, heartfelt statement at the end of its job posts that perfectly encapsulates why they want to create diverse teams.

***“Our customers come from all walks of life and so do we,”***

The job advert reads:

***“We hire great people from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because it makes our company stronger.”***



## **Make sure candidates know what your business provides to remote workers:**

- Company-provided computer, laptop, tablet
- Remote office budget
- Upgrades to existing equipment or services
- Mobile phones or paid plans
- Company-provided subscriptions to online resources and apps necessary to perform duties



# Trends in recruiting technology

In a remote world, workers are perhaps even more reliant on technology. So, employers need to provide the proper resources to ensure that their workforce is as productive (and satisfied) as possible.

But advances in technology happen so rapidly. It can be overwhelming to stay current, let alone identify and evaluate the appropriate technology for your business.

However, there's no question that, in order to stay competitive, companies must stay as current as possible. Try looking beyond the standard and obvious methods of attracting candidate.

What about these technology trends that include high- and low-tech hiring tools?





# Gamification in recruiting

Anyone who has participated in an online rewards program is familiar with the concept of gamification (applying game elements to business processes). In recruiting use, applicants play a selection of games that evaluate their aptitude for jobs.

To start using gamification in hiring, determine at what stage you'll ask candidates to play games. Usually, gamification will be more useful in the 'job application' and 'assessment' hiring stages.

More and more companies are using it in recruiting as well as in employee engagement initiatives and it can be a great way to make your remote hiring process more fun and engaging.

**The following are some creative examples to inspire your hiring from companies incorporating gamification into their hiring process.**

- **Unilever** uses gamification to assess a candidate's skill set and determine their fit for the job using brain games and artificial intelligence. Candidates play neuroscience-based games to measure inherent traits, then have recorded interviews analyzed by AI.
- At **Formaposte**, a French postal service, candidates participate in an interactive experience that simulates a week on the job. Using the Jeu Facteur Academy, the company was able to reduce their 25% turnover rate to just 8%.
- The **Deloitte Leadership Academy**, a prominent global executive training company, uses the game Badgeville for brand development and knowledge sharing. Added benefit – great for hiring!
- Industrial technology giant **Siemens** uses their game Plantsville in a work simulation of the job responsibilities of a manufacturing plant manager. Not surprisingly, their hiring process improved significantly. Candidates loved using games to understand the company and the specific job they were applying for.







## AI (Artificial Intelligence)

There are numerous ways to use AI in recruiting but interactive chatbots may be one of the most common. Candidates from anywhere in the world can obtain information about your company or job at any time that is convenient to them.

In essence, a chatbot is working for you around the clock.

## Mobile recruiting

Have phone, will travel. With so many people relying on their phones, mobile recruiting will continue to be an expectation of job seekers. But make sure your website displays correctly on all mobile devices as well as computers.

## Hiring for soft skills

Soft skills are increasingly being recognised as critical in business. Candidates who not only have the technical skills but also excel at collaboration and communication have the whole package.

## Internal recruiting

Managers want to keep a good performer doing the same job. So, recruiting internally isn't always the first thought when filling a position.

But developing employees for their next promotion is a great way to grow your talent while building loyalty and length of service. And an unexpected bonus?

Your happy employees will be happy to tell potential candidates how happy they can be as well if they come to work for your company!



## Employee videos

Speaking of happy employees, enlist their help in your recruiting efforts. There is great value in creating videos of employees discussing honestly in their own words, why they work for the company and what they like about it. The genuine voice of your employees will help the person applying to the role to ascertain if the company is a good fit for them, as much as they are a good fit for the company.

## Video resumes

How about an option for qualified candidates to upload or actually create their own video on your website?

You could provide some questions that they could address in their video. Or they could use it as a video intro/bio of their suitability for the job and why they chose your company.

HotJar famously uses this technique in their hiring processes. The video stage uses 5 standard questions and these are standard no matter what the role. They are standard because the video stage is purely culture fit to see will they match culturally.

Bottom line, there are a number of ways that companies can engage with good candidates. The action item is – start somewhere.





# Interviewing for remote workers

You've done all of the prep work and now you're ready to interview your top candidates. Almost.

When conducting remote interviews, there are a few more things that need to be addressed.

## Logistics

- Provide system/bandwidth and log-in credentials to candidates in advance.
- Try adding the candidate's time zone when scheduling the interview in order to avoid confusion.
- Ensure that needed equipment is scheduled and correctly set up.
- Test it prior to the meeting and adjust as necessary.
- Obtain contact information for the person that will be on-call to correct any issues.



## Questions

Successful interviewers prepare for interviews in advance whenever possible. Review the qualifications and identify additional questions targeted specifically to the job requirements.

Remote hiring adds another layer of complexity. It's also important to ask questions designed to assess a candidate's odds of success working remotely.



# Aptitude & experience with remote work

## Gauging experience and sample interview questions

- **What have you learned about yourself during the pandemic?** This is a great open ended questions and an opportunity for more in-depth, follow-up questions.
- **What does working remotely look like for you?** Identifies if candidate understands the reality of working remotely.
- **Alternatively - What are the benefits and disadvantages of working remotely?**
- **Depending on the level of the position, ask questions about being engaged/keeping a team engaged.** A big challenge for team leaders and management in general.
- **How do you establish a work-life balance while working at home?** Remote work on a regular basis is still somewhat new for many businesses and workers so this is an important point.
- **Describe a time you had to be quite strategic/agile in order to meet all your top priorities while working remotely on a team project?** Will give an insight into day-to-day approach while embracing the challenges of remote working.
- **Tell me about a time you were able to be creative while working remotely or with distributed team members.** What was exciting or challenging about it?
- **Which technology and tools have you used to work remotely in the past?** See correlations with your current remote tools (e.g. for file sharing, communication tools, project management, etc.)?

Keep in mind that you also want to hire for development potential, not solely for work experience. There is a wide variety of questions to choose from. Use a credible source of interview questions to ensure compliance and use a standard evaluation process with all candidates.





# Onboarding for remote work: Fostering connections remotely

Now that you have your candidate on board, your work is done, right? That was a test!

If you want them to stay on board, you have to make sure they have all the information they need to perform successfully. Of course, they need to participate in some sort of orientation because employees must be paid, receive benefits, comply with government regulations, receive policies, etc.

It should be as easy and painless as possible.

However, onboarding is an ongoing and inclusive plan to convert a new hire into an employee.

After the background screening is approved, get busy welcoming and including your new team member!

## Tips and tools for onboarding remote employees

- Have a virtual welcome aboard with team members. If possible, send a food delivery or gift cards so everyone can have a meal “together”.
- Send the new hire something tangible that welcomes them on board. Water bottle with company logo, pens with their name on it, etc. Those little touches reinforce their team connection every time they use the gift.
- Monitor the hand-off to the new team/manager and be available for questions.
- Ensure that managers maintain frequent contact with new hires as if they were in the office. And that they talk about future plans/projects that the new hire needs to know about.
- Advertise the new hire internally and externally, as appropriate.
- Spend as much time in the first days educating the employee about your company, the business you’re in, competitors, opportunities, resources, etc.



# After the hire

Congratulations! You've laid the foundation for a successful hire.

Now, how do you keep them? Keep in mind that turnover is a recurring issue in workforces around the globe.

In 2021, The CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) published a survey of HR practices in Ireland.

Of the 500+ responses, 37% of companies had experienced increases in voluntary employee turnover. And 62% of those respondents attributed the turnover to better opportunities elsewhere. Competition for good workers continues.

**The solution? Develop and maintain a great work culture to encourage retention.**





# How to develop a great remote work culture

Go back to basics. One of the best ways to do that is to form strong connections with your employees. It's surprising how many managers, and companies, don't do this as well as they should.

Building a solid, recognisable company culture doesn't happen overnight but it's an integral part of employee engagement and retention.

There are important foundational things that need to be in place before getting to the fun stuff, the virtual cocktail making parties and online games.



- Besides being the legal and right thing to do, a good diversity and inclusion plan is like a welcome sign hung up in front of the building.
- Clearly stated expectations and duties in written job descriptions and timely performance appraisals that develop employees.
- Training and performance measurements tied to compensation and advancement opportunities.
- Develop a mission or vision of behavior towards each other and include it in every aspect of the business.
- Studies often claim that “employees don't leave companies, they leave managers”. Promote an environment that holds management accountable.
- Provide meaningful development opportunities and career advancement.
- All of that won't work without an excellent, competitive compensation and benefits plan. But it won't hold people in a poor work environment either.



## After the basics

The next priority for business leaders in having intent. As in, the continual active intent of building a great culture. However, intent is only the beginning. Getting to the end result will take follow-through, maintenance and tweaking.

And the most critical point of building a remote work culture? From the C-level down, every leader must demonstrate their commitment to the culture with every word and action.

This may not be as simple as it sounds. Now, more than ever before, soft skills are critical. Leaders need to model the behaviour they want to incorporate into the remote culture.

Start at the beginning by reviewing the current work culture and determine what's working and what needs to be changed. Communicate what the expectations for working remotely look like.

**Mission and vision statements** are great, but do employees internalise them enough to live by them? Studies show that a good story grabs people's attention and easier to remember. Tell the company's story and history and infuse it with company values to make it memorable.

**Communication** seems so obvious but isn't always as thorough as it could be. SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) recommends telling employees "what the company is doing, how you're doing it, and what is likely to happen next. Help them feel confident that any scenario has been accounted for."

**Meetings** are critical in a remote world to maintain connection and enhancing the work experience. There's a variety of alternatives to traditional meetings that can be just as effective:

- New hires – introduce the new hire to everyone possible but especially everyone in the C-suite. From the CEO and down, leaders can reinforce the employee's feeling of being part of a greater team.
- Huddles – Informal, maybe impromptu, mini-meetings. The focus can be on relationship-building rather than work-related. Just have conversations.



- All-hands – definitely plan in-person meetings and events and strive for all-hands attendance. Everyone may not be able to attend in-person, but they can attend virtually. Plan ways to include remote employees in everything, even if it's modified for virtual interaction. Group virtual employees together whenever possible at one location so they can participate virtually in the larger meeting.
- Walk-the-floor – some leaders do a virtual walk-the-floor at random intervals just to check in with employees. A quick, simple note just to check in strengthens the connection.

**Team building** strengthens connections with each other. Employees can outline parameters for meeting etiquette so that everyone feels they have an equal opportunity to communicate and share. And that their input is truly valued. Observe interactions or gaps and address them quickly.

- Build team traditions – one company cooks meals together virtually.
- Provide trust-building opportunities – discussions on “safe” topics
- Group discussions (with a moderator to keep things on track) about favorite apps, type of music, pets, etc.







**Technology** - Obviously, technology is indispensable to working remotely. It's also critical to staying connected with employees.

- Chats – Use an app and keep it fluid so that employees can jump in and out of impromptu chats.
- Video conferencing – The many virtual meeting apps.
- Support “affinity” groups – video gamers, pet lovers and others with special interests can find and network with their “tribe”.
- Use apps like carrot.io to share company updates, employee congratulatory shout-outs, newsletters.

**Development** – A survey about working remotely by TELUS International found that 68% of employees “want virtual workshops and continued learning opportunities.” Almost the same number of respondents wanted weekly staff meetings, regular feedback from managers, and schedule flexibility.

Make the remote work culture rich with learning and development opportunities. Both work-related and for personal development.

## Leaders are key to maintaining a great work culture

Leadership is the core of a good company culture. All of the great ideas in the world won't make a solid work culture without top-down support. If leaders don't believe in the culture, employees won't either.

Leaders have to be out in front refreshing the message and making changes whenever needed. In other words – leading.

It looks like it might be working in Ireland.

Mary Connaughton, Director of CIPD Ireland summed up the success of the Irish people and businesses throughout the pandemic in this way:

***“The levels of resourcefulness and agility displayed by Irish business and workers since this time last year could never have been anticipated.”***

**And that's how you pull together and make a team.**





## Conclusion

When it comes to working remotely, it's important to be agile and quickly adapt your hiring process for remote hiring. We hope that we've given you some fuel for thought in this guide, for concrete next steps. Occupop is here to support you – we empower teams of all sizes to hire the best people, no matter where your colleagues sit.

Our recruitment software enables a structured hiring approach that makes the purpose and process clear for each hiring manager and gives teams the confidence that interviews are efficient, streamlined, and productive. Our system promotes remote collaboration with a ton of features to drive efficiencies for small businesses, especially in this remote environment. These include candidate workflows, automated notifications and tasks for each member of the hiring team, and one central point of hiring truth that keeps everyone on track and in the loop on hiring progress.

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd like to learn more about how our product has helped teams like PrepayPower, Boylesports, and PREM Group throughout the pandemic and beyond, embrace a fully remote hiring model.

# occupop

Occupop is a beautifully simple recruitment software built for SMBs. More than an ATS, we help businesses be great at hiring through our suite of features – so businesses can hire the best people and build the best teams.

To learn more, visit  
**[occupop.com](https://occupop.com)**