8 Keys to Hiring Great Remote Workers

Even before there were social distancing mandates driving the prevalence of remote work, there was a lot of evidence that remote workers deliver productive results to business owners. There has actually been conclusive evidence that employees who spend a bulk of their working hours outside of the office are vastly happier and more productive.

Recent research from Gallup shows that 43% of workers already work remotely some of the time, and an in-depth study conducted by Gallup in 2017 showed that those workers who spend about three to four days of the week working offsite are substantially more engaged in their jobs than their traditional counterparts who are stuck behind desks all day. The logic behind this productivity boost is actually quite easy to understand; by giving workers more control over their personal lives and permitting them to schedule their lives accordingly, companies are making them happier and more fulfilled as they enable Average Joes to become workplace superstars.

1. Cast a Wide Net
Don’t assume that staying local will inevitably be safer, more cost-effective and fruitful — there are many benefits to embracing remote workers. The best person for the job might live in a different geography. If you (or your new employee) don’t want to take on the gamble of relocating, you should be comfortable having them work, at least temporarily, remotely. In this way, you’re putting primacy of their capabilities above their location. Your focus as the hiring manager can be on whether a candidate has the skill set, temperament and passion necessary to be effective.

2. Opt for Virtual Interviews
Think deeply in advance about the skills, attributes and competencies you’re looking for in a candidate, and design specific questions to ask that dig into each one. If there are multiple people interviewing the same candidate, make sure that you have questions prepared ahead of time. Assign specific competencies for each interviewer to dig into. Identify soft skills that would be ideal for the role and design questions for each interviewer accordingly, taking into consideration some characteristics ideal for remote workers, like bias toward action, ability to prioritize, excellent communication skills, strong work ethic, etc. Consider having each interviewer start or end with a lighthearted question to put the candidate at ease. Gather feedback promptly after the interview by soliciting feedback or hosting a post-interview debrief.
Use Your Network
Ask teammates to spread the word. Employee ambassadors are vouching for your workplace and culture is a powerful influence. Word of mouth recommendations for people with a strong track record of working independently while maintaining strong professional relationships are gold. Encourage your colleagues to share open jobs on social media and recommend people in their network who could prove to be good matches.

64% of Glassdoor users would recommend their employers to a friend.¹

Leverage Your Employer Brand
Quality candidates — wherever they’re located — are always hungry for information about a potential employer. Providing that information on Glassdoor allows you to set your company apart from the competition by showcasing your values, company culture, perks and benefits. And in a less-than-booming economy or times of uncertainty, it matters every bit as much — if not more. Use Glassdoor to help make a positive, memorable impression on potential candidates so you can attract, hire and retain top remote talent now and in the future.

86% of employees/job seekers are likely to research company reviews and ratings when deciding where to apply for a job.²

Conduct a Great Virtual Interview
Be prepared. To ensure that a virtual interview has all the formality — even gravity — of an in-person interview, it’s important to avoid the temptation to let a virtual interview be as casual as a phone screen might be.

Here are some ways to ensure the meeting goes off without a hitch:

✓ Re-read the job description and candidate’s resume and write down questions to ask the candidate.

✓ Ensure that everyone in the interview loop has accurate information about who the candidate will report to, plus what the main job responsibilities will be. Are there any reasons you might not want to take this job? If so, why?

✓ Check Glassdoor for any recent reviews of your company, particularly for reviews in the department or concerning the role the candidate is interviewing for.

✓ Make sure everyone in the interview loop has a clear understanding of how they’ll be expected to submit feedback after the interview.

✓ Make sure the candidate knows the people he or she will be interviewing with in advance so they can come prepared with answers of their own.

✓ Use videoconferencing to be sure you’re having a meaningful and vibrant and (somewhat) face-to-face interaction.

1. Source: Glassdoor Internal Data, March 2020
2. Source: Glassdoor/Harris Poll, September 2019, US
Crosscheck for Mission and Values Alignment
Just because someone won’t be in-house on the regular does not mean that aligning with mission and values is not important. In fact, it may be even more important for a remote employee to feel a fire lit under them in terms of their commitment to and passion for the work. Be sure to screen or mission and values alignment before making an offer to a remote candidate. You want to be sure that they’re fired up about the fundamental importance of the work to keep them motivated even from a distance.

Consider Benefits that Appeal to Remote Workers
An on-site gym, unlimited snacks and catered lunch at HQ are meaningless to the remote employee. Consider instead options like gym memberships, access to coworking spaces, unlimited PTO, professional development programs, and discounts at local stores.

Make Expectations Clear
Remote or not, no one can succeed if what success looks like is unclear. Make sure remote employees have clear instructions and achievable milestones and key performance indicators that guide them as they work from home. Part of what makes a great remote worker is great leadership, so it’s incumbent on managers to demonstrate leadership by giving clear, concise instructions that can be executed even if you’re not present to immediately answer questions.

The top 3 factors that job seekers consider when comparing companies are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>compensation and benefits</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>work/life balance</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>employee satisfaction</td>
<td>51%</td>
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To get involved in the conversation on Glassdoor and start managing and promoting your employer brand, unlock your free employer profile.