

## HIRING DURING A PANDEMIC



### HIRING DURING A PANDEMIC: POSTING THE ROLE AND FINDING CANDIDATES REMOTELY

As we are adapting and changing our workplaces around COVID-19, many organizations still have jobs that they need to fill, and may need to hire a remote employee depending on the role. Many people and organizations have been forced to quickly adapt to functioning remotely, but the hiring process may look different than a few months ago. Hiring remote employees can help you to fill roles, but it can come with new challenges and considerations.

#### Posting the Job

As you create the job posting, determine if the role is going to be remote permanently, or just until your employees are able to be on-location. Many job posting websites require you to select one of these options to set expectations for applicants. Although many of your employees may be currently remote and will return to the office when possible, consider the benefits of hiring permanently remote employees. Permanently remote employees can help to avoid the uncertainty of where their roles will be located in the future due to COVID-19, or other emergency situations, and can reduce the number of people in your office when you return to help with social distancing. You also are not limited to the candidates in your area. You can hire candidates who are outside of the commutable area of your office or physical location, which can allow you to find talent wherever they live, potentially increasing the diversity of your organization. Hiring someone who has experience working from home or who wants to work remotely permanently will help you find candidates who can thrive in that environment.

#### Virtual Career Fairs

Life and work have certainly changed and have increased the need to find potential candidates where they live. Your organization may have previously held career fairs to find applicants to fill a large amount of open roles, but social distancing most likely brought an end to this. This has become easier with the use of virtual career fair platforms (everything from basic free applications with a simple web page, chat windows and appointed times to talk with recruiters to an elaborate set-up which mirrors a physical job fair in its design and how it is experienced – including an exhibit hall with rooms where candidates can learn more about your company). Your company will want to determine if a virtual career fair will meet its recruiting needs based on how many jobs it has to fill and what type of platform will fit both needs and budget.

When choosing a platform and participating in a virtual career fair you need to remember that you are

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collecting personal details from candidates. As soon as you store such information the company is responsible for taking appropriate measures to ensure that it is kept securely and used appropriately. You'll want to work with a hosting provider that has invested significant time and money to ensure that their systems are as secure as possible and comply with privacy laws.

Creating a virtual career fair, however, is relatively easy. It can be done in-house or by working with the vendor's support staff. Pre-built templates walk users through the virtual recruiting process step-by-step, from developing the initial welcome area to building individual booths and setting up chats. There are several ways to give job candidates well-rounded information on what it would be like to work at your organization as well.

A virtual career fair is only as successful as its promotion – you'll need to market through email, social media and other channels. The more you promote it, the more likely it is you'll reach potential candidates – work with your marketing team.

Last, but not least, once your virtual career fair is over, it is no different than any other recruiting method – you'll need to follow up with potential candidates, answer any additional questions they may have and schedule interviews.

### **Remote Technology**

When posting a job that is usually in an office or physical location that will now be remote, there are some additional components to consider. One aspect is technology. On-location employees typically use company equipment at the office, but this will be different for remote employees. Whether the candidate is remote permanently or temporarily, it is important to determine what equipment, software, furniture and other items they will need and what will be provided, and be sure to state this in the job posting. For example, you may not be able to provide your employees with computers and require them to use their own and to have reliable home internet and telephone line. It's important to be clear in the job posting what will be required and provided for equipment. You will also need to consider whether stipends or reimbursements related to remote work, such as equipment and Internet/phone plans, should be provided, and may wish to highlight such provisions in your job description. Indeed, some states require the employer to cover such costs. Data and cyber security are other areas of consideration, as the needs in a remote context may vary from those on-location.

### **Schedule Flexibility**

You should also consider what the work schedule will be and communicate it in the job posting. Many job schedules revolve around the offices operating hours, but you can now consider if the role can have any schedule flexibility. A flexible schedule can help to attract candidates, especially those who have caregiver responsibilities. There may be different types of flexible schedules available, including a compressed work week, alternative hours outside of the regular workday, and even not tracking time as long as the job is accomplished. With that said, It is important to make sure that an employee's schedule adheres to applicable employment laws, such as wage and hour and overtime requirements, and meets the needs of the business. Within those parameters, a discussion with employees about what schedule flexibility would benefit them can help to determine what schedule flexibility your

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organization can offer. Many employees value work/life balance when it comes to work, and flexibility may also assist in employee retention.

### **Applicant Tracking**

Due to the economic downturn that COVID-19 has brought, you may find yourself with a higher number of applicants than normal. One of the most work-intensive part of hiring is reviewing applicant resumes. This has been made easier with the use of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) which provide recruiting and hiring tools for companies. These systems can collect and sort thousands of resumes. In addition, some applicant tracking systems can automatically compare resumes to the job description.

The system keeps all the resumes in one place, helping recruiters and hiring managers stay organized and can save time by automatically highlighting top candidates. Some recruiters still choose to glance at every job application that comes through their applicant tracking system to ensure they are not missing a good candidate. In this case, most take a quick glance at the applicant's past highlights, job titles, and companies.

There are several ATS options available and what your company chooses to use (or not) will depend on your hiring needs today and in the future. Once you sort the resumes, it will be time to reach out and recruit, which is discussed in our [Recruiting Remotely](#) article.