

Your guide to virtual onboarding

Tips and resources for teams
navigating a new world of work

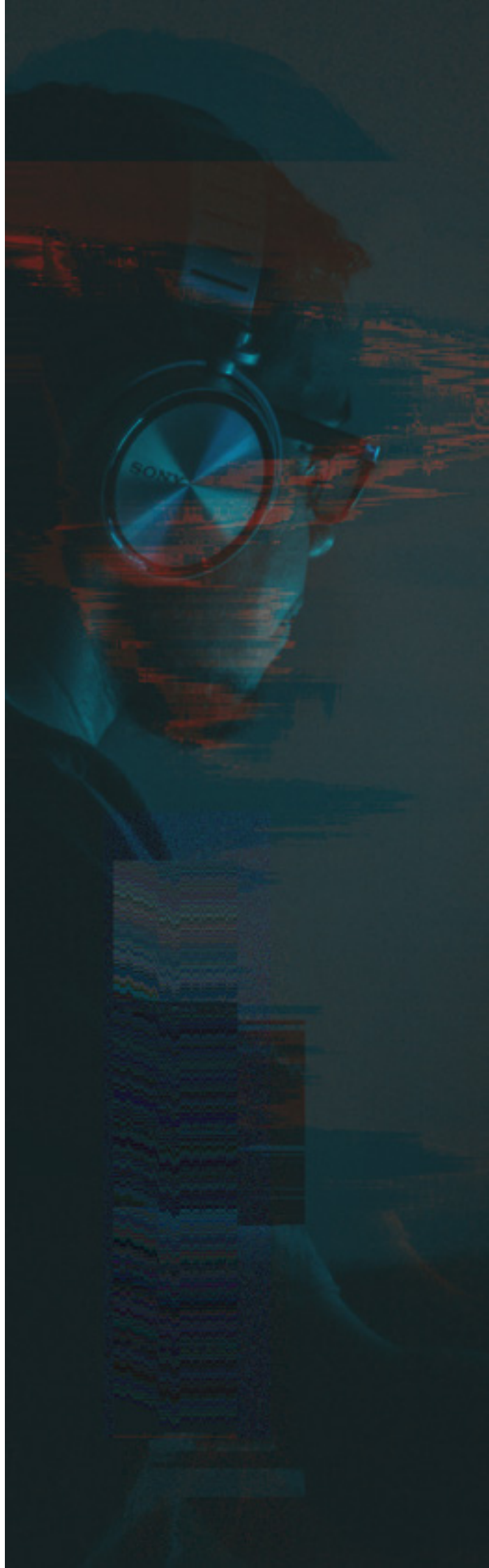
Let's start at the very beginning

After spending weeks, if not months finding that all important new hire, the time has come for them to start. You and your colleagues have invested a lot of time shortlisting, interviewing and deciding on the best person for the role. Unfortunately, this is where the onboarding fails for a lot of organisations.

Onboarding starts the day they accept, not the day before they start.

The process does not have to be complicated, it simply has to be organised. Studies have revealed that companies with an organised onboarding process can improve employee retention by 82%.

Amid the current uncertainty, it has become more important than ever, especially as we mobilise the workforce and make the shift to remote working, to ensure new hires are effectively onboarded to your company. Without physically being able to enter your office, how can these new employees be effectively integrated in to your team? We're here to provide our experiences of what our most successful clients are doing to navigate this process.





Preboarding is just as important

Strong onboarding doesn't just start from your hire's first day.

According to SmarterMedium, it should cover everything from their offer acceptance, through to their first 90 days. One of the most crucial times in this process though, is the period between offer acceptance and their first day at work. This falls in to the domain of 'preboarding' – a subset of onboarding which is often overlooked.

Preboarding involves making your new team member feel welcome and at ease. When starting a new job, it is human nature to question your decision to change jobs. Preboarding is an essential part of candidate nurturing. It can be as simple as staying in contact with them before their first day and answering any questions they may have, to sending an email to everyone in the company announcing their arrival. It can also involve emailing through any relevant employee paperwork so they can complete these formalities in their own time. This means they can spend their first day learning what is expected of them and working towards delivering value.

To design an effective virtual preboarding process, here are our tips:

// Prepare for them

Preparation is key! It not only communicates that you are on top of things as a company, but it also highlights to your new employee that you have put in time and effort to prepare for their commencement. You want to ensure they feel welcome and prepared for their first day. As their first day will be completed remotely, it is important that they have the right tools and resources available to them. To prepare for this, you should order laptops and other hardware they will need well ahead of their start date. Courier them a laptop, mouse and keyboard so that they can get started. Be prepared and they will feel valued and at ease.

// Ensure they are set up

In this same vein, it's important that all other tools and systems are set up to facilitate their remote work. This means ensuring that your new hire is provided with a log in, email address, access to your company's VM, etc. These are the basics. You should also provide them with the contact details of all the people they will be working with, and virtually introduce them to their new team.

// Help your new remote employees complete HR paperwork

Having your new employee sign employment contracts and other legal documents can be time-consuming, if they need to print, scan and email all copies or send them via mail. Consider using an e-signature tool, like HelloSign or DocuSign, so they can add their signatures digitally and share contracts in a secure way.

// Surprise and delight

Without physically being in the office, it's much more difficult to convey your company's culture and establish that human connection with your new-starters. This is why you should make the effort to incorporate a human-touch, even in this digitally-driven work sphere. A great example of how you can go about this is through surveying your new hire to learn some of their favourite things. For example, you can ask them what their favourite snack is, what their favourite song etc.. You can then take this information to develop a welcome package that will delight them. For example, you can have their favourite snack sent to their door on their first day, as well as their favourite song emailed to them. Favourite food, why not arrange for a lunchtime delivery?

How to virtually onboard new hires

So how can you go about onboarding your new hires when their first day in the office is not actually in the office? How do you get them up to speed without physically being present to guide them through everything? Now, more than ever, we are seeing the power technology can have. So what can you do to ensure you continue to provide a strong onboarding experience, even as it moves into the virtual sphere?

1 // Introduce yourself

There is no doubt that your new hire will be feeling quite nervous on their first day. Couple this with not being able to visit a physical office and interact with their new colleagues, and things can become slightly overwhelming. To help your new recruit settle in, set up a video conference call at the start of their first day. Use this time to formally introduce yourself, talk them through your team members, familiarise them with the company and what you're currently working on. This will be appreciated, whilst putting them at ease.

2 // Send a welcome package

Take the information you have gathered in preboarding to send out a welcome package to surprise and delight your new hires. This can be anything from company merchandise, to a welcome letter from your team or CEO, to personalised gifts like their favourite snack, or a gift card from their favourite shop. Any of these gestures will make them feel welcome and part of the team.

3 // Use collaborative technology

Starting a new job can be daunting, especially when your first day is conducted remotely. Communication with your new hire will ensure they feel as much at ease as possible. Use the technology available to you to get in touch and welcome them to the team. Collaborative tools such as **Zoom**, **Microsoft Teams** and your company's intranet, can really help in getting your new recruit on board and integrated into the fabric of your company. In saying this, it's important to...

4 // Check in regularly

You want to decrease any unease or stress experienced by your new hire if they are to have a positive onboarding experience. The best way to go about this is to check in regularly to see how they're tracking, especially in their first week. You want to remind them that they are not working in isolation, and that you are there to support them. You should also be available to answer any questions they may have. Use any of your existing collaboration tools to do this, so if you are unavailable someone in the team can jump in and help. The key is to be consistent with communication.

As a hiring manager, why not try:

- // Develop and share a task calendar after your new hire's training and onboarding sessions
- // Define long and short term goals
- // Schedule weekly one-on-one meetings to discuss upcoming projects, progress and resolve potential issues

5 // Introduce them to the team

Did you know that having friends at work makes you love your company more? ([SHRM](#)) You should be facilitating work friendships from the very beginning, which begins during the onboarding process!

When your entire office is working remotely you don't have the luxury of going out for a team lunch or drinks. You need to rely on your trusty friend, technology. Set up a team Zoom call so your new-starter can put faces to names and get to know everyone. Use this initial call for introductions and encourage sharing personal anecdotes. What are their hobbies and interests, are they a dog or cat person? These things will break down barriers. From there, you can start a chat group on **Microsoft Teams** or **WhatsApp**, where you can maintain communication.

Don't forget to add your new hire to one-on-one and group calls with:

- // Their co-workers
- // Their manager and direct reports
- // Employees from other departments they'll work closely with

6 // Formulate a database

Use your technology to make the onboarding process as smooth as possible. We suggest creating a database of your policies and procedures that your new hire can refer back to when needed. As part of the pre-boarding process, you can email them a link to this site, which they can then peruse in their own time. This will ensure they are not overwhelmed by information on their first day, and can settle in easily.

7 // Help them understand your communication tools

Describe the best ways to contact team members and how to troubleshoot communication technology.

If relevant, provide manuals on how to set up:

- // Their company email
- // Group messaging tools
- // Video conferencing software
- // Webphone application

8 // Culture matters

It can be easy to overlook culture when onboarding a remote hire, but you have to be careful not to. Your culture can be the difference between whether your new hire stays or leaves. Keeping your culture strong no matter what, is imperative. This can be simply done by checking in regularly with your new team member, not only to see how they are tracking with work, but also on their mental wellbeing; or investing time in team calls so they can get to know everyone better. It's all about making your new hire feel valued and welcomed, not left behind.

To get your remote employees up to speed on your company culture, it's good to share:

- // Your digital employee handbook
- // Any presentations or literature on your company

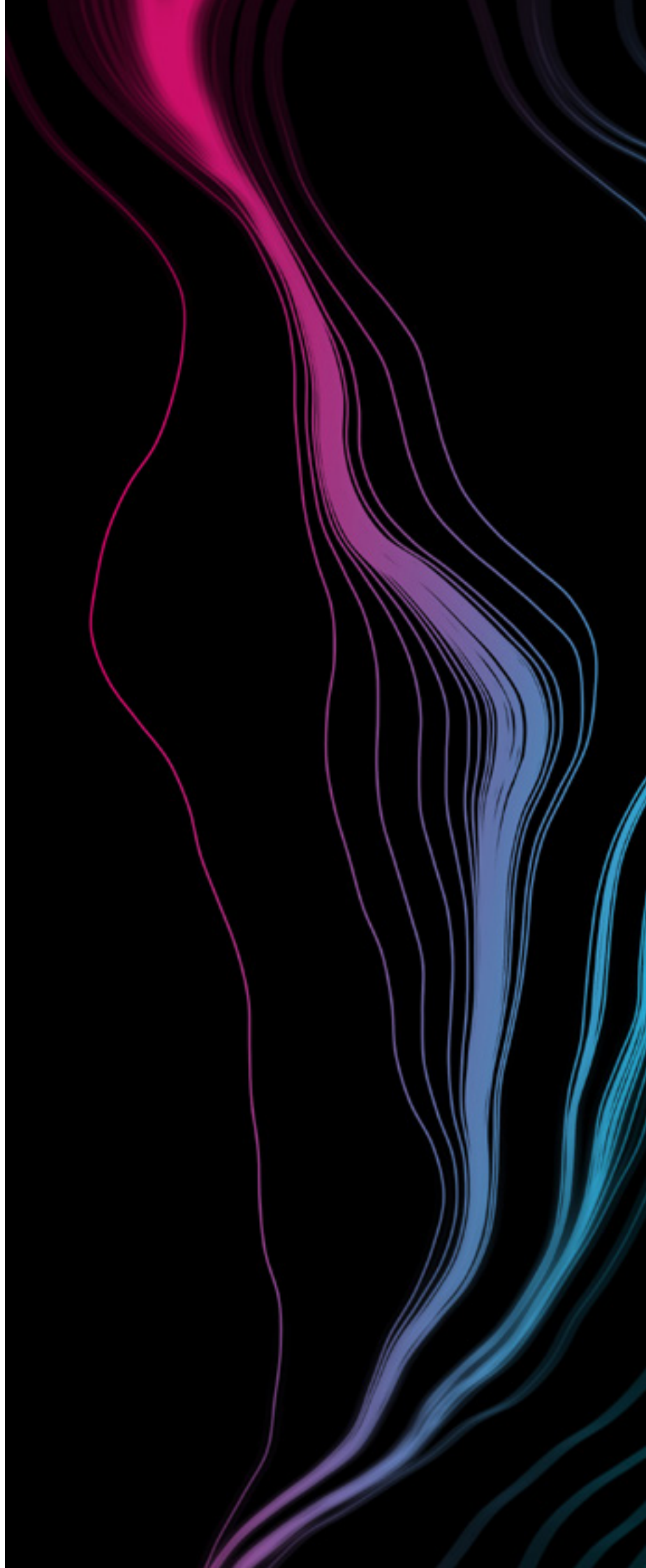
Training and induction



Training and induction are important elements of bringing a new hire on board. Your new team member needs to be across your working processes in order to deliver their best work.

What can you do to design a strong training and induction program?

Here are our suggestions:



1 // Develop a training plan

It's a great idea to develop an e-learning system, whereby your new recruit can work through online modules in order to be inducted and trained. This is beneficial for both you and your new team member. They can work through the modules in their own time and take notes to really learn what is expected of them. You can also use this system to introduce them to your culture and values. You want to increase their speed to competency, and this is a great way to do so without sacrificing too much of your own time going through every single detail. This ensures you won't miss anything, and they will have all the information they need to succeed.

Arrange role-specific training. It's often challenging to train remote employees, as real-time communication is usually limited. To effectively train remote workers:

- // Use interactive training courses that are user-friendly and include games and quizzes to boost engagement
- // Record product demos to better explain features through video
- // Follow up after each training session to answer questions

Arrange a training session with your IT department. Remote workers should get familiar with:

- // File-sharing applications and cloud backup software (like Box, Google Drive, Dropbox, Carbonite)
- // Computer security (for example, how to lock laptops and install anti-virus software)
- // Password management and data encryption tools to protect their devices

2 // Conduct a WH&S induction

Safety is paramount, even when working from home. Even though you aren't physically in the office, you still need to maintain the health and safety of your team members. It's a good idea to put together a working from home WHS checklist to ensure your team members are adhering to guidelines as to what constitutes a safe working station. This can cover everything from the workstation set up, to electrical safety, to emergency preparedness. Ask your new hires to send through an image of their workstation and clarify with them whether they are observing each of the guidelines.

Other useful resources



[Effective onboarding for teams](#)

[How to conduct a virtual interview](#)

[How to set up a work from home station](#)

[How to manage a remote team](#)

[How to manage outcomes not hours](#)

About Talent



Talent is a global technology and digital recruitment specialist. We are the largest independently-owned and operated people placement and solutions business in the United Kingdom and Europe, with over 300 employees worldwide.

We are on a mission to redefine recruitment by creating the most rewarding and empowering experiences for those we work with, bringing the human element to the forefront of everything we do. We will continue to innovate with this focus and respond to the shift towards freelancers and the changing workforces of the future through Talent Engage. And through our charity Talent RISE, changing the lives of young people who have experienced barriers to employment by providing education, training, life skills and opportunities help them gain independence and purpose through employment.



Any questions?

Feel free to get in touch

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